STRUCTURAL MODELS IN DEBUSSY'S LATE WORKS

by

ULYSSES SANSETSU LOKEN

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Dr. David Riley, Chair of the Examining Committee

Date:

Committee in Charge: Dr. David Riley, Chair
                                Dr. Jack Boss
                                Dr. Leslie Straka

Accepted by:

Leslie Straka, D.M.A.
Director of Graduate Studies, School of Music and Dance

LECTURE-DOCUMENT ABSTRACT

Ulysses Sansetsu Loken

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Title: Structural Models in Debussy's Late Works

In Claude Debussy's late works one sometimes encounters passages with unclear and seemingly fragmented structures. Performers often make interpretive decisions based on musical structure, and understanding these problematic sections is a necessary step in developing an informed interpretation. While current research identifies possible models and compositional predilections that may have influenced the fragmented style of Debussy's late works, the passages in question have yet to be subjected to a comprehensive analysis.

This document begins with a survey of current research on Debussy's late style, and of new types of narrative structures that may have influenced his thinking on musical form, which developed in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century poetry, visual arts, and early film editing techniques. It continues with a presentation of analyses of these "fragmented" sections from a selection of late works that include his chamber sonatas and solo piano works. The analyses use a reductive analytical approach and result in illustrative reductive graphs that reveal their underlying structure.

The analyses of these pieces unravel some of Debussy's techniques for creating both a fragmented and yet unified structure, looking both to the extra-musical influences that Debussy may have used as models, and to the specific musical interpretation and

results of his experiments with these models. These studies of Debussy's late chamber

works are relevant for performers in terms of informing and developing an interpretation,

and to theorists as case studies for Debussy's use of fragmented structural models.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Ulysses Sansetsu Loken

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
San Francisco State University

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Musical Arts, Collaborative Piano, 2017, University of Oregon
Master of Music, Piano Performance, 2010, San Francisco State University
Bachelor of Music, Piano Performance, 2008, San Francisco State University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Faculty, Academy of Art University, 2010-2013

Staff Accompanist, City College of San Francisco, 2008-2013

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2014-2017

Promising Scholar Award, University of Oregon, 2013

Teaching Associate, San Francisco State University, 2008-2009

Graduate Assistant, San Francisco State University, 2008

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, Debussy began editing a new French edition of Chopin's works, the

Èdition classique, which was meant to replace German editions that had been circulating

in France at the time.[1] Health problems and the outbreak of WWI had contributed to a dry

compositional spell for Debussy, and the task of editing Chopin's works satisfied both his

intellectual and financial needs. While working on the editing project he was inspired to

compose once again. In the summer of 1915, he ended a musical drought with one of his

most productive compositional periods, writing *Et blanc et noir, Douze Etudes,* the

Sonata for Cello and Piano, and the Sonata for Harp, Viola, and flute. He put aside

editing work to compose full time, remarking, ". . . I've been writing like a madman, or

like a man condemned to die the next morning."[2] His choice of words is insightful,

perhaps a statement about the awareness of his mortality and his failing health. After such

a long break from composing, Debussy remarked he had to "relearn how to compose,"

saying, "It was like a rediscovery and it's seemed to me more beautiful than ever!"[3]

In these late works, Debussy turned to classical forms. He abandoned descriptive,

extra-musical titles and instead composed etudes and sonatas. While in many of these

works he returns to clearly-defined forms and tonal-modal musical materials, Debussy

continued to experiment with and expand his harmonic language and formal structures.

Another characteristic in these late works that is at odds with his newfound classicism are

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[1] Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 62.

[2] Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style,* 6.

[3] Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style,* 6.

moments of fragmentation, where the music shifts back and forth between seemingly

unrelated materials.

In the passage below from his Etude XI, *Pour les Arpèges composés*, abrupt

changes of key signature, contrasting materials, and performance directions creates a

musical texture comprised of a mélange of seemingly unrelated materials.

Example 1.1 Debussy, *Pour les Arpèges composes*, mm. 27-33.[4]

Because performers often make interpretive decisions based on musical structure,

understanding these problematic sections is a necessary step towards developing an

informed interpretation. Though much of the scholarship on Debussy's musical language

focuses on his harmonic and pitch materials, particularly from the most commonly

performed early- and middle-period works, scholars have more recently scrutinized

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[4] Claude Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band V*. (Leipzig: Peters, 1970): 72.

music of his later period, focusing not only on harmony and pitch, but also on structural and formal innovations. These studies identify Debussy's proclivity for fragmentation in his later works, and suggest extra-musical models and compositional predilections that may have influenced the fragmented style in his late music.

One of the first studies on the form and structure of Debussy's late works, from Richard Parks' book, *The Music of Debussy* (1989), describes a method for analyzing form in Debussy's music:

> *It considers the importance of architectonic hierarchy in Debussy's designs and its nature in the instrumental and vocal works to show how Debussy's schemes evolved from naïve designs of charming regularity to those of remarkable fluidity and astonishing complexity.*[5]

In the ninth chapter, "Form and Proportion," he discusses the difficulties of analyzing Debussy's music with an analytical taxonomy developed for tonal music. Due to the fact that concepts such as phrase, period, and cadence can be difficult to apply to Debussy's music, he instead focused on two aspects of form: ". . . *morphological form*, which is manifest in features and devices that generate patterns through the temporal disposition of musical materials; and *kinetic form*, which is manifest in qualities of vitality and mutability."[6] Morphological form looks at the disposition of events in time, which create derivatives of ternary, rondo, or variation forms, for example. Kinetic form looks at the direction and changes of motion that are created through the interaction of various changing parameters with organizational features. These interactions give the music a sense of goal direction.

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[5] Richard S. Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 203.

[6] Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy*, xi.

Parks applies a modified Schenkerian analysis to study Debussy's music, and though much of Debussy's music lacks an "*Urlinie* and harmonic fifth-relationships,"[7] prolongations, linear progressions, and bass arpeggiations are still present, and can be represented in reductive graphs. Because identifying where sections begin and end can be difficult with this music, Parks uses "Form-Defining Parameters" to distinguish between sections. These parameters include: meter, tempo, successive-attack activity, sonorous density, harmonic resources, thematic/motivic resources, repetition/recurrence, quality of texture, orchestration, register, and loudness. These parameters create a flexible tool for distinguishing formal sections in the complex musical fabric of Debussy's late music.

In her dissertation, *Interpreting Discontinuity in the Late Works of Claude Debussy* (1997), and her book, *Debussy's Late Style,* published in 2009, Marianne Wheeldon makes an important contribution to the writings on Debussy's late music. Her dissertation examines discontinuity in Debussy's music applying Stockhausen's concept of moment form as a model for analysis. Citing the impact of Debussy on the Darmstadt composers of the mid twentieth-century, she draws a line of influence from Debussy's experiments with fragmentation to Stockhausen's experiments with aleatoric forms, which he developed into "Moment" form in the 1960's. In moment form, each moment or section of music is independent, so that an indeterminate ordering of each moment would not rely on or influence the surrounding moments. This independence makes them interchangeable, allowing for multiple orderings. Wheeldon argues that ". . . Stockhausen's aesthetics of moment form are especially pertinent to Debussy's late

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[7] Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy,* 4.

works composed immediately before and during the First World War."[8] She says of the discontinuities in Debussy's works:

> *These musical ideas do not aim toward a climax or resolution but proceed linearly, with no one musical idea hierarchically more significant than another. These musical ideas may never be referred to again in the course of the composition, and their individual character and musical autonomy juxtapose, rather than connect, with surrounding musical sections.*[9]

Wheeldon acknowledges the difference between Stockhausen's moment form, which has permutational and variable forms, and Debussy's discontinuous successions of ideas. However, she argues there is a similarity in the way that both types of works are perceived by the listener. Wheeldon uses reductive, but not Schenkerian techniques to analyze this music, building on Parks' earlier studies from a decade earlier.

In contrast to Wheeldon's analyses, in which she claims that the ". . .musical ideas do not aim toward a climax or resolution. . . ," my analyses reveal they do in fact aim towards a goal that can be shown through reductive analyses. Instead of thinking of these passages in terms of moment form, my analyses employ Jonathan Kramer's concept of multiply-directed linear time, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

In her later work, *Debussy's Late Style*, Wheeldon contextualizes Debussy's late period works by exploring the biographical and political circumstances that influenced his late style; the influences of Couperin, Franck, and Chopin; and his use of cyclical form in the Cello Sonata. Though intended for a broader audience than the dissertation, with fewer analyses and examples, the wider historical perspective on his late style is valuable.

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[8] Marianne Wheeldon, "Interpreting Discontinuity in the Late Works of Claude Debussy (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997), 17.

[9] Wheeldon, "Interpreting Discontinuity in the Late Works of Claude Debussy," 61.

Rebecca Leydon proposes another way of interpreting the fragmented structures in Debussy's late works. In her 1997 dissertation, *Narrative Strategies and Debussy's Late Style*, and an article, "Debussy's Late Style and the Devices of the Early Cinema," she posits that Debussy became aware of new narrative possibilities that emerged from early cinematic editing techniques, which he adapted to his musical syntax. Leydon borrows from Anthony Newcomb's narratological approach to musical analysis, which she applies Debussy's music. Narratology, a theory borrowed from literary criticism and the philosophy of history, is a way of "understanding units larger than sentences. . . ,"[10] a method where narrative is viewed as "an ordered series of 'functions' . . . a process by which a paradigmatic plot—is deduced from a repertoire of texts."[11] For example, the first narratological studies by Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp analyzed a collection of folk tales and extracted from them common narrative structures so that "the basic unit of the tale is not the character but its function."[12] Some might be more familiar with this idea as it appears in Joseph Campbell's "The Heroes Journey," where he finds common narrative structures or "functions" from a variety of creation myths, folk tales, and religious literature from across different cultures.

Newcomb applies this idea to music, studying the "codes that were used to order "functions" that could be deduced as a narrative. In his article, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth Century Narrative Strategies," he describes his approach:

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[10] Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," *19th Century Music* 11, no. 2 (Autumn, 1987): 164.

[11] Anthony Newcomb, "Sound and Feeling," *Critical Inquiry* 10, no. 4 (Jun., 1984): 632.

[12] Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-century Narrative Strategies," 165.

> *. . . in instrumental music one can see musical events as tracing, or implying at any given moment, a paradigmatic plot—in the sense of a conventional succession of functional events. The question then becomes: how does the composer handle this narrative; what is the nature of the interaction between paradigmatic plot and succession of events in the individual movement or piece? This issue is not purely formal-structural. It might be seen as going to the very heart of musical meaning, which lies in modes of continuation.*[13]

Leydon takes this idea and makes a similar case using the early film editing techniques as "modes of continuation." She applies these to musical analogues in Debussy's late works. Leydon proposes that Debussy was influenced by the "new paradigmatic modes of continuation" that changed the "classical narrative syntax of traditional storytelling media." She claims that Debussy used as models techniques such as ". . . the "fade," in which the screen gradually turns black; the "dissolve," in which an image gradually disappears while another emerges; the "cut-in," an instantaneous cut to a close shot; the juxtaposition of different camera angles; and the varieties of special effects involving stop motion tricks, adjustment of film speed and direction, double-exposure of the film and matted images,"[14] as analogues for musical events. She continues, in her article, to correlate some of these cinematic techniques with specific passages in Debussy's etudes and sonatas. Leydon's approach is compelling, as the cinematic analogies can help to make sense of the fragmented structures in Debussy's late works. However, because of the specificity of the filmic devices Leydon references in her modes of continuation, they might be too narrow to convincingly apply them to the analysis of music. Certainly, some structural similarities might exist between filmic technique and passages in Debussy's music, but it is impossible to know with certainty if

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[13] Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," 167.

[14] Rebecca Leydon,"Debussy's Late Style and the Devices of the Early Silent Cinema," *Music Theory Spectrum* 23, no. 2 (Autumn, 2001): 218.

he had them in mind while composing. Perhaps a more general approach would be more appropriate.

Another scholar, Avo Somer, takes a purely musical approach to the analysis of fragmented passages in Debussy's music. In his article, "Musical Syntax in the Sonatas of Debussy: Phrase Structure and Formal Function," he examines how in returning to classical forms, Debussy was influenced by the music of Couperin and Franck, and modeled aspects of his compositional style on their works. Somer identifies how Debussy was influenced by their particular use of period and sentence forms. Focusing primarily on the instrumental sonatas, Somer examines Debussy's preference for sentential structures, showing how they contribute to the fragmentary quality of Debussy's music. He points out how sentential structures allow Debussy to introduce thematic material in the presentation, and then fragment and develop the musical ideas, even modulating to unexpected keys, in what Somer refers to as "divergent cadences,"[15] in the continuation. Somer's focus on the phrase structure, without resorting to extra-musical ideas to explain surface level disruptions, is useful when analyzing the late works of Debussy, which can at times appear to unfold without a clear sense of form. Somer's technique of identifying phrase units, whether sentential, period or hybrid forms, is helpful in clarifying the larger structure and continuity of Debussy's late works. His concept of "divergent cadences" is useful for identifying formal units in seemingly unrelated modulatory sections.

Present scholarship has identified fragmentary structures in Debussy's late music, developed methods for analysis, presented extra-musical analogues, and noted compositional proclivities that contributes to his late style. However, the analyses in these

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[15]Avo Somer, "Musical Syntax in the Sonatas of Debussy: Phrase Structure and Formal Function," *Music Theory Spectrum* 27 no. 1 (Spring 2005): 67.

studies tend to focus on the entire composition, providing a larger perspective, but they do not examine the problematic sections fully. My analyses focus primarily on these fragmented and problematic sections, revealing not just their existence, but also the methods and techniques Debussy uses to create fragmentation and coherence, and hidden progressions that create a sense of goal direction. A closer examination, like the case study below, reveal structural elements that are useful for performers when working out an interpretation of these passages, and for theorists analyzing the discontinuous structures in Debussy's late music.

The following case study of Debussy's Etude XI *Pour les Arpèges composes,* shows the results of a more comprehensive analysis of one such passage. Rebecca Leydon has remarked on the structural similarities between the passage and the filmic technique of "duplication," which is a "Repetition of short fragments with a disjunctive interface between the statement and its repetition." Indeed, this section seems to mix unrelated materials together creating the musical equivalent of ". . . film-makers who wished to show two things happening at once. . . ."[16]

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[16] Rebecca Leydon,"Debussy's Late Style and the Devices of the Early Silent Cinema" *Music Theory Spectrum* 23, no. 2 (Autumn, 2001): 229.

Example 1.2. Debussy Pour les Arpèges composes mm. 25-28.[17]

Despite the sense of disruption and change of character from the first section of the piece, a "short-short-long" motive (see Example 1.3 below) that was established in the opening of the etude continues through this section.

[17] Claude Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band V*. (Leipzig: Peters, 1970): 72.

Example. 1.3 Debussy Pour les Arpèges composes mm. 7-10.[18]

In m. 26 the short-short-long motive is played in the left hand; beginning on the second half of the first beat, the upper voice of the chords create the melody, D#-C#-F#. It then reappears at m. 27, with the melody G#-A-Eb, however, it mixes two key areas, the new key of E major, and the old key of A-flat major (See example above). The material of this passage can be divided into two types: pandiatonic chordal material, in E major, as established in m. 26, which uses the material from the A section of the piece and prolongs a single harmony through chords of extended harmonies; and the material in A-flat, which tends to be melodic in nature.

After the cadence into m. 26 and the statement of the primary motive through extended harmonic chords, m. 27 links the two tonal areas, beginning the motive in E major, and ending on an E-Flat seventh chord, the dominant of A-flat major. This phrase is then repeated, but continues with an interjection, a descending melody in the key of A-flat in mm. 29-30. At m. 31, the primary motive comes back, this time with a *scherzando*

[18] Claude Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band V*. (Leipzig: Peters, 1970): 71.

11

feeling, and expanded with repetitions, reestablishing the key of E major, before being interrupted again in m. 33 by another melodic fragment in E-flat, the dominant of A-flat major.

Example 1.3 Debussy Pour les Arpèges composés mm. 28-33.[19]

The *scherzando* motive comes back, but is interrupted by a harmonic shift leading to the dominant, B major. At m. 37, the music comes to rest on a second inversion B major chord, but is interrupted by another fragment in E-flat major. This time, a trill on E-flat and F is modified to D# and E, linking the modulation to B major. The final statement of the *scherzando* version of the primary motive is in B major, and comes to a close at m. 45 on a B major-seven sharp-eleventh chord. The A-sharp of the B major-seventh chord becomes the link for a common tone modulation back to A flat major, with the A-sharp turning into the B-flat that links the section to the opening B flat, the 9th of

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[19] Claude Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band V*. (Leipzig: Peters, 1970): 72.

the A-flat tonal center of the piece, of the A section. The transition section uses fragments of the short-short-long motive, and a ii-V-I cadence in mm. 48-50 that brings back the opening motive.

Example 1.4 Debussy Pour les Arpèges composés mm. 48-51.[20]

At first, the B section doesn't seem to make much narrative sense, alternating between two keys with seemingly unrelated melodic fragments. However, if the strands of music are pulled apart, register and voice leading connect the melodic fragments.

Examining the separated strand of the measures in the key of A-flat, from mm. 24-50, we see how the melodic fragments lead from one to the next. In example 1.5, the lower system is a reduction of mm. 25-37, and the upper system is the extracted section in A-flat. The extracted measures begin with the C-B-C in m. 24 and then skip to m.27, where the melodies are stepwise and in the same register. The repetition of the fragment in m. 28 leads to a descending melody, which is interrupted by chordal figurations in mm 31-32.

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[20] Claude Debussy, *Klavierwerke, Band V*. (Leipzig: Peters, 1970): 74.

Example 5 Debussy, Pour les arpèges composés, mm. 24-40

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Though displaced by an octave, the C at the end of m. 30 leads to the B-flat in m. 33, and then the E-flat displaced by an octave in m. 38. Finally, a common tone modulation brings the melody back to the middle register of the piano in m. 46, leading back to the recapitulation of the A section.

In this section, Debussy combines two simultaneous strands of music. The chordal sections are more static, establishing the new tonal realm of E major through pandiatonic, extended-chordal writing. This strand shifts in mm. 36-37 to B major, giving the section a sense of progression as it leads to the dominant of the new key. The B major harmony also provides Debussy with a pivot point from which to modulate subtly back to the A-flat, as discussed above, with A-sharp of the B major 7th chord reinterpreted as B-flat, the 9th of the A-flat chord. Meanwhile, the melodic strand in A-flat helps create momentum through the static chordal figures by weaving through the texture with a melody that is fragmented by the interruptions, but connected through voice leading. Though it might not be immediately clear to the listener or performer, these fragments are connected and help add cohesion to the section.

In subsequent analyses of Debussy's late works, I will apply a similar analytical methodology to the one above, looking for purely musical forces that create fragmentation, continuity, or both. Rather than beginning with extra-musical analogues and mapping them onto musical forces, I will let the evidence of the page guide my understanding of Debussy's musical processes.

CHAPTER II

ABSTRACTION OF FORM, MULTIPLICITY, AND THEORIES OF TIME

Debussy did not compose in a vacuum, and changes to his compositional style reflect the changes in turn-of-the-century modern art that deconstructed straightforward narrative and imagery, and led to increasingly abstract forms in literature, visual arts, and music. Debussy is often referred to as an impressionistic composer, a term that is imprecise and too narrow to describe the extra-musical influences on his musical language. If one considers that impressionist painting was a movement of the late 1860's that continued into the early 1890's, labeling Debussy as an impressionist composer limits the breadth of his possible influences, and does not account for the possibility of his growth and change as a composer. While it can be argued that Debussy was influenced by some of the ideas of impressionism, his association with the rapidly-evolving artistic movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly symbolism, as well as other new ideas and aesthetics that developed throughout his life, also continued to be an influence. One must remember that impressionism was just the beginning of the modern-art movement, and Debussy was also exposed to expressionism, cubism, and primitivism.

Turn of the century Paris was rich in dialogue between artists of all disciplines. A particularly significant influence for Debussy was his friendship with Stephane Mallarmé, who led the symbolist movement in poetry and prose with his ideas and theories of art. Debussy was introduced to Mallarmé and regularly attended a weekly gathering at his home alongside other important artists, writers, and musicians. Mallarmé's theories were influential not only to Debussy, but also to the entire modern

art movement. His ideas resonated with a trend toward abstraction, placing more importance on the subjective world than the objective. As the symbolist poet Gustave Kahn explained, "the essential aim of our art is to objectify the subjective (the externalization of the Idea) instead of subjectifying the objective (nature seen through the eyes of a temperament)."[21] The symbolists took part in a dialogue, exchanging ideas about the arts, aesthetics, and philosophy that enriched their respective arts. At these gatherings, Mallarmé, who was older and more established than Debussy, would often discuss and lecture on aesthetics and philosophy, much of which filtered into Debussy's own views.

In the late nineteenth century, Mallarmé wrote prose and poetry described by his contemporaries as ". . . difficult and obscure,"[22] a description that was also given to some of Debussy's late works. Mallarmé concerned himself with the form and structure of words, specifically, trying to move away from ". . . a particular limited and limiting conception of continuity: the tyrannical aspect of the sentence."[23] Similarly, Debussy suggested to "think forms," not "sonata boxes,"[24] when composing. Mallarmé felt that language, and particularly ordered sentence structures, limited the conception of reality; that language, and sentences with their formal continuity, became the focus rather than the objects in them. By setting up clauses and not finishing them, interjecting unrelated

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[21] Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968): 50.

[22] Clair Lyu, "The Poetics of the Penult: Mallarmé, Death, and Syntax," *MLN* 113 (April, 1998): 561.

[23] Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style,* 135.

[24] George Craig, "Reading Mallarmé" *The Modern Language Review* 78 (July, 1983): 561.

phrases into sentences, using multiple perspectives and possible interpretations, as well as by displacing text with unconventional topography, Mallarmé created poetry that had to be experienced rather than understood through a straightforward narrative, one that represents the subtleties of nature and the complexities of reality.

The excerpt, below, from *Un coup de Dés jamias n'abolira le Hazard* (Dice Thrown Never Will Annul Chance) cannot be read and understood through a straight-forward reading. For example, at the top of the left-hand page, the phrase *C'ÉTAIT* (*IT WAS*) is written in italicized upper case letters, under which the phrase *issu stellaire* (*stellar outcome*) is placed in italicized lower-case. Across the page, the phrase *LE NOMBRE* (*THE NUMBER*) is placed in italicized upper case letters. Is this passage to be read horizontally as *IT WAS THE NUMBER*, or vertically as *IT WAS (a) stellar outcome*? The displacement and juxtaposition of fragments continually shift, jumping in space, time and perspective, a quality shared by structural forms in Debussy's late music.

Mallarmé's experiments with non-teleological structures, of understanding the experience of reality not through causal relationships, but through the simultaneous experience of multiple perspectives, recalls the concept of "multiplicity," of Henri Bergson, first discussed in his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (English title: *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*) written in 1889. Bergson considers the experience of reality to be comprised of "the immediate data of consciousness," what he calls the qualitative multiplicity in which,

Example 2.1 *Un coup de dés jamias n'abolira le hazard*, Mallarmé.[25]

CE SERAIT

pire

non

davantage ni moins

indifféremment mais autant

C'ÉTAIT
issu stellaire

LE NOMBRE

EXISTÂT-IL,
autrement qu'hallucination éparse d'agonie

COMMENÇÂT-IL ET CESSÂT-IL
sourdant que nié et clos quand apparu
enfin
par quelque profusion répandue en rareté

SE CHIFFRÂT-IL

ÉVIDENCE de la somme pour peu qu'une

ILLUMINÂT-IL

Choit

la plume
rythmique suspens du sinistre
s'ensevelir
aux écumes originelles
naguères d'où sursauta son délire jusqu'à une cime
flétrie
par la neutralité identique du gouffre

LE HASARD

[25] Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un coup de dés jamias n'abolira le hazard, wikisource.org,*
https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Mallarm%C3%A9_-
_Un_coup_de_d%C3%A9s,_1914.djvu/26, (accesed July 28, 2017).

"several conscious states are organized into a whole, permeate one another, [and] gradually gain a richer content. . . . ."[26]

Not only was Bergson's concept of multiplicity influential to the philosophical world, of which Mallarmé and the symbolists were a part, but it also influenced contemporary painting, particularly the cubists. Shortly after the turn of the century, the Cubists started their experiments and ". . . began to influence other of the arts, particularly architecture and the applied arts, but also poetry, literature, and music.[27] Cubism reacted against the established academic belief that the subject of a painting had to refer to an event, a narrative or something "that could be comprehended by the mind."[28] Cubism advocated a formalist view of art where abstraction was exalted above realism. Artists like Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Marcel Duchamp experimented with painting images or objects broken down into their various aspects, analyzed, and put back together on a canvas from numerous viewpoints. Analogous to Bergson's concept of multiplicity and Mallarmé's symbolist theories, cubism was another manifestation of the trend toward non-linearity or fragmentation within the modern arts. In his article "Bergson and Cubism: A Reassessment," Robert Antliff, discusses the affinity between Bergson's ideas and Cubism:

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[26] Lawlor, Leonard and Moulard Leonard, Valentine, "Henri Bergson", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/bergson/>.

[27] Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* 193.

[28] Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* 194.

Bergson's critique of scientific and socially conventional modes of self-representation as unable to signify the personality corresponds to the Cubists' rejection of science and society in an attempt to capture the whole self in a work of art. Moreover, both Bergson and the Cubists define this inner self as existing in heterogeneous time, which cannot be represented with "quantitative" signs. And for Bergson it is the artist who transcends social conventions and obtains a direct cognition of his or her durational being. [29]

Antliff goes on to discuss how "Cubist imagery is not derived solely from observation of the exterior world; it emerges out of the durational flux of consciousness."[30] The Cubist movement, which began in 1907 and peaked in 1914, was a contemporary movement in the arts with Debussy's late style, one more manifestation of the trend in the modern arts towards fragmentation. It is a clear example of the evolution that took place in France, beginning with the impressionist paintings of Monet, their emphasis on color and light, their solidification in the paintings of Cézanne, and the fragmentation in the works of Picasso.

Picasso's painting, *Violin and grapes*, from 1912 can be viewed as a visual analogue to the structural principles in the late works of Debussy as well as the linguistic and topographical experiments of symbolist poetry. When one views the painting, it is clearly a violin. However, it is not a simple, representational rendering of a violin. Rather, it is a complex rendering of a violin from many perspectives. The scroll is seen from a side angle, while the neck is shown from the front. The various planes showing the patina of the violin seem to zoom in showing more and more of the wood grains, perhaps representing the violin at various stages of completion.

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[29] Robert Mark Antliff, "Bergson and Cubism: A Reassessment," *Art Journal*, 47, no. 4 (1988), 343.

[30] Robert Mark Antliff, "Bergson and Cubism: A Reassessment," 344.

Example 2.2 Picasso, *Violin and grapes*, 1912. [31]

Just as Picasso views the violin from many angles, in a fragmented juxtaposition

of images that the viewer must render into a cohesive idea, Debussy fragments his

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[31] Pablo Picasso, "*Violin and grapes*," photograph, 2011, *Wikipedia.org,*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pablo_Picasso,_1912,_Violin_and_Grapes,_oil_on_can
vas,_61_x_50.8_cm,_Museum_of_Modern_Art.jpg (accessed July 27, 2017).

musical structures, experimenting with the way the listener must comprehend the narrative structure. No longer does the narrative unfold in a single direction, but in many. Thematic ideas are broken up, and reassembled and interlaced into a mosaic that creates a complex narrative.

While Bergson's concept of multiplicy, Mallarmé's symbolist theories, and Picasso's cubist paintings offer examples of the many ideas that permeated the contemporary trends in the arts of the turn of the century, it is an elusive endeavor to attempt to show any direct influence on Debussy's compositional strategies. Though visual and linguistic analogues can be useful references for understanding the artistic milieu of the time, direct correlations, like Rebecca Leydon's filmic "modes of continuation," offer a rather narrow and specific interpretation of Debussy's compositions.

In his *The Time of Music*, Jonathan Kramer provides a broader and more generally applicable method of conceptualizing fragmented and non-linear passages of music. One of the central ideas in Kramer's book is that "musical time is both linear *and* nonlinear."[32] He goes on to suggest that music can be linear on a deep structural level, and yet nonlinear on the surface. He draws on the ideas of Susanne Langer, who writes that we simultaneously experience musical time (virtual time) and ordinary, or "absolute," time (the sequence of actual happenings). She explains that music ". . . suspends ordinary time and offers itself as an ideal substitute and equivalent."[33] Within the broader category of

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[32] Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988): 3.

[33] Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner, 1953): 111.

musical time, Kramer postulates a number of types of musical time, which includes

multiply-directed time, gestural time, moment time, and vertical time.

Useful for the analysis of Debussy's late works is the idea of multiply-directed

linear time where "direction of motion is so frequently interrupted by discontinuities, in

which the music goes so often to unexpected places, that the linearity, through still a

potent structural force, seems reordered."[34] Kramer explains that there is a sense of goal

direction, even if ". . . more than one goal is implied and/or more than one route to the

goal(s) is suggested."[35] The concept of multiply-directed linear time well describes the

fragmented structures in Debussy's late music. Kramer's concept is more appropriate for

describing his music than Marianne Wheeldon's use of moment time, as developed by

Karlheinz Stockhausen, because Debussy's music, in general, has a sense of goal-

direction. As Kramer explains the concept further, ". . . it is musical processes, not

abstract formal molds, that are reordered in multiply-directed linear time. To have truly

multiply-directed music, linear processes need to be interrupted and completed later (or

earlier!)."[36] In the following analyses, Kramer's concepts of time prove to be a useful

method to approach Debussy's seemingly fragmented musical structures.

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[34] Kramer, *The Time of Music,* 46.

[35] Kramer, *The Time of Music,* 46.

[36] Kramer, *The Time of Music,* 47.

CHAPTER III

SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO

The summer of 1915 was to be a productive one for Debussy. Ending a
compositional drought that had lasted roughly a year, he quickly composed *Et blanc et
noir*, *Douze Etudes*, the Sonata for Cello and Piano, and the Sonata for Harp, Viola, and
Flute. The previous year had been difficult for Debussy, which found him not only
depressed by the start of the first world war, which had started in the previous year, but
also increasingly suffering the symptoms of cancer—diagnosed in 1909, his health
steadily declined until his death in 1918. As discussed in the introduction, Debussy
sought out a new direction in his music, turning to absolute forms and a connection to his
French musical heritage.

The Sonata for Cello and Piano has proved to be a challenge for many analysts.
Though purporting to be a sonata, Debussy's tendency to eschew "sonata boxes," creates
difficulties for those seeking out the normative forms one would expect to find. Musical
material seems to flow freely from one idea to the next, as if improvised, and constant
interruptions of seemingly new ideas complicate the form even further.

In the first movement, the Animando poco a poco (Agitato) from mm. 20-28
seems to take place within a new temporal frame work. Kramer's concept of multiply-
directed time is a useful approach to understanding the passage.

The eight measures seem to interrupt statements of the main theme, which are
stated four times: twice incomplete in measures 17 and 19; a complete form in m. 29,
following the interruption; and once again in m. 33, as the section winds down. The
theme statements build in intensity from one to the next, leading up to the complete

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theme, part of which is quoted in the finale. Though the passage feels fragmented, there is a sense of goal-orientation as the statements of the theme unfold. The interpolated section, in mm. 21-27 interrupts this progress, but at the same time, it helps propel the section to the climax of the movement, which coincides with the full statement of the theme.

In m. 16, rising four-note groups in the cello build to the theme fragment in m. 17, which loses momentum. The piano drops out, and the cello line falls back downward and with a diminuendo. The rising four-note groups begin again in m. 18. The second statement of the theme in m. 19 is more complete, adding an expressive rising third. It also loses momentum, the piano drops out, and the cello line falls back downward where it becomes "stuck" on a three-note ostinato in m. 20.

Example. 3. 1 Debussy, Cello Sonata, mm. 16-21.[37]

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[37] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano (Paris, France: Durand, 1915): 2.

The second statement of the theme in m. 19 ends on a G harmony, the dominant of the next theme statement, which occurs in m. 29 in C. Measures 21-27 interrupt the harmonic movement, delaying the arrival to the theme in C. The section intensifies the arrival to C by prolonging D-flat, the chromatic upper neighbor to C. The harmonic clarity of the opening is interrupted with a disorienting diminished/octatonic harmonic figuration in the piano. The cello continues the three-note ostinato for eight measures, buoyed by the rising figures and momentum of the piano. In m. 28, the cello begins to rise in a series of fourths until m. 29, where the theme is finally stated in full, and once again in m. 33 as the section winds down.

This passage exemplifies the concept of multiply-directed linear time. The passage in its entirety, from mm. 16-34 has a large-scale sense of direction and time, but it is interrupted by a passage that seems to have its own sense of time. There is also a sense of multiplicity in this passage. The ostinato in the cello emphasizes the G that concluded the second theme statement, and continues the melodic fragment associated with the theme. The piano, on the other hand, reinforces D-flat, creating overlapping harmonic areas, and a new musical idea. Thus, this passage can be thought of as containing musical strands moving simultaneously in two directions.

Example 3.2 Debussy, Cello Sonata, mm. 22-29.[38]

Interruption

Final, Complete Statement

Another example of fragmented formal structure occurs in the third movement.

Though the texture seems to contrast from the previous two movements with a

continuous and rippling triplet figuration, there are in fact numerous connections to the

first movement. As Marian Wheeldon has discussed in her article, "Debussy and *La

Sonate cyclique*," this movement can be considered a rondo form with the cyclic theme

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[38] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano, 2.

from the first movement stated unaccompanied and in full at the end of the movement, as well as in transformed statements during "episodic" sections, which recall the turn figure from the principal theme of the first movement.[39] Debussy exploits the nature of the rondo form, with its contrasting sections, to create a movement full of surprising twists and turns.

Table 3.1 Debussy, Cello Sonata, Mvt I, Form Chart

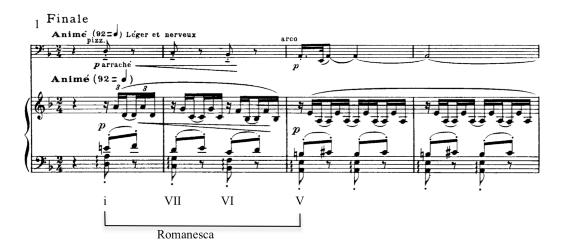| A mm. 1-22	B 23-26	A 37-56	C 57-68	A 115-118	D 115-118	A 119-123
Anime	*Rubato/Stretto*	*1er Mouvt, Con fuoco ed appassionato*	*Lento*	*1er Mouvt*	*Largo*	*1er Mouvt*

Upon closer inspection, one finds other corresponding elements between the third and first movements. As in the first movement, the third movement highlights the interval of a fourth, descending stepwise in the lowest voice from D to A, recalling the opening tonic to dominant progression. In m. 7, beginning on the second beat, the cello states the opening melody, which recalls the melody in the A section of the first movement, but in inversion.

Debussy uses several techniques to create multiply-directed time within the movement. One method is through control of momentum with harmonic area and motion. The opening of the movement opens with an homage to the musical traditions of the past, a Romanesca progression.
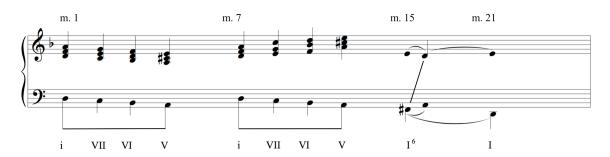
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[39] Wheeldon, "Debussy and La Sonata cyclique," *The Journal of Musicology* 22, no. 4 (Fall, 2005): 675.

Example 3.3 Debussy, Sonata for Cello and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 1-4.[40]

The downward progression, i-VII-VI-V creates a strong sense of motion. By prolonging the dominant chord, Debussy creates a sense of tension and expectation. The momentum is continued in m. 15 with a prolongation of the tonic six-three chord with major mode-mixture. In m. 21, the major-tonic chord is stated in the cello to bring the section to a close.

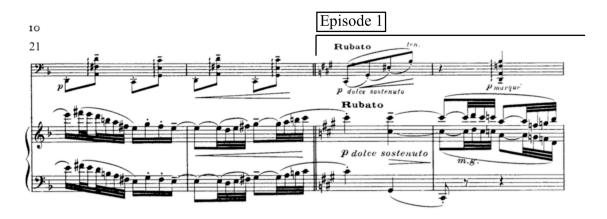Example 3.4 Reduction of Debussy Cello Sonata, 3rd Mvt., mm. 1-22.

The first "episode" begins at m. 23, with an immediate and unprepared change of tempo and key. The tempo shift is quite dramatic and causes a jolt as the melody shifts from thirty-second to quarter-notes. Debussy indicates Rubato and *dolce sostenuto*, which interrupts the previous steady, triplet texture. The brisk and virtuosic diatonic melody and

[40] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano, 8.

directed harmonic progression melts into a sensuous, freely-interpreted melody, which

seems to float above the rising pizzicato chord of the cello. The clear dominant-tonic

progression with the harmony changing every beat gives way to ambiguous and subtly

shifting harmonies: a C-sharp dominant seventh chord and a B half-diminished, changing

once in each bar. The effect created by these changes seems to come out of nowhere,

thrusting the listener into a new scene, the sense of time slowing to a crawl.

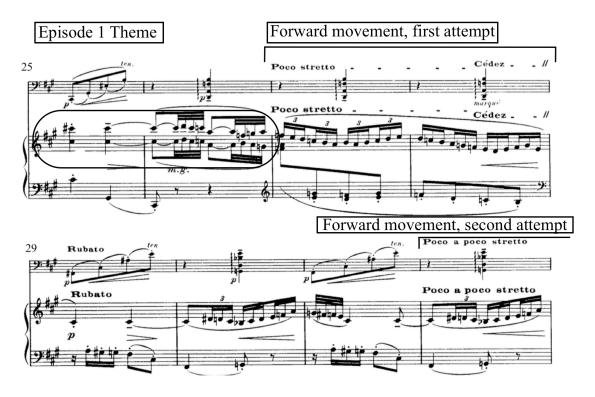Example 3.5 Debussy, Cello Sonata, 3rd Movement, mm. 21-24.[41]

This section not only interrupts the linear time of the opening, but itself consists

of two conflicting times. The stasis of the new section is itself interrupted by *Poco stretto*

sections that recall the motion of the opening.

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[41] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano, 10.

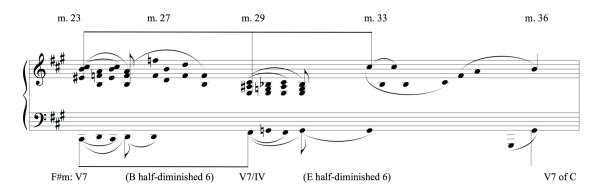Example 3.6 Debussy, Cello Sonata, Finale, mm. 25-29.[42]

The *Poco stretto* recalls the motion of the opening; the triplet figures attempt to propel the music back to the opening tempo, but fail. The theme returns in m. 29, starting again on C-sharp, but registrally displaced two octaves down from the original, and harmonized by F-sharp. Again a stretto begins to propel the music back into motion, and this time gains the upper hand, returning the music to the opening texture and theme.

A reduction of this section reveals the ambiguous and static nature of the harmonic motion that creates a new sense of time. In the upper voice, C-sharp is prolonged through most of the section. Though a large-scale dominant/tonic relationship underlies the harmonic motion of the passage, each structural harmony is decorated with a chromatic half-diminished neighboring chord, which is prolonged, obscuring the larger-scale progression.

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[42] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano, 2.

Example 3.7 Debussy, Finale Reduction, mm. 23-36.

F#m: V7   (B half-diminished 6)   V7/IV   (E half-diminished 6)   V7 of C

Like the interruptions in the first movement, the interruption in the third disrrupts the prevailing harmony by prolonging a tonal center a half-step away from D minor (C-sharp). This harmonic shift, combined with a drastic change in tempo and texture, creates the sense of a new temporal area.

In the second episode, mm. 57-68 (see Example 3.8 below), time slows down once again, unprepared as in the first episode. Like the previous episode, a single note is prolonged in the upper voice: a B flat of an E-flat minor ninth sonority. The left-hand ostinato, alternately oscillating between E-flat and A-flat, creates an ambiguous quartal harmony above which the E flat minor seven sonority hangs, decorated by chromatic neighboring harmonies.

In m. 63, a brief upper chromatic chord, an extended E minor thirteenth chord, decorates the prevailing E flat minor harmony. The E flat minor harmony returns, with a series of chords that seem to dissipate and dissolve into a B flat dominant seventh harmony that dies away (*estinto*).

Example 3.8 Debussy, Sonata for Cello and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 57-71.[43]

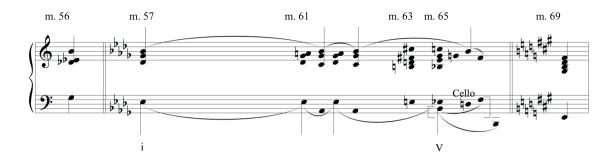Without a traditional harmonic transition, this section ends on the dominant of the prevailing harmony, the switch to an E dominant seventh chord utilizes a tritone relationship, the D and A-flat of the B-flat dominant chord reinterpreted as the D and F-sharp of the E dominant seventh. Like the previous episode, Debussy uses a long-range

[43] Claude Debussy, Sonata pour Violoncelle et Piano, 12

tonic-dominant relationship decorated by chromatic harmonic shifts that unhinge the

sections from their harmonic moorings.

Example 3.9 Reduction of Debussy Cello Sonata, Mvt. 3, mm. 57-69.

Analysis of the temporal interruptions throughout the cello sonata reveals a

compositional tendency for Debussy to use chromatic harmonic shifts, often with an

obscured tonic/dominant relationship that is interpolated within a large-scale harmonic

progression. Combined with textural and tempo changes, the passages disrupt the sense

of progress. The work can be viewed as containing multiple perspectives or temporalities,

which can occur both in juxtaposition and simultaneously.

CHAPTER IV

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

The Sonata for Violin and Piano, Debussy's last composition, was composed in

1917 and performed in May of the same year with the composer at the piano and Gaston

Poulet on Violin.[44] Though the virtuosic violin writing inspired by Radics, a gypsy

violinst—full of trills, slides, and brisk passage work—shines brilliantly in the

foreground, it was originally described by Debussy as a Sonata for Piano and Violin.[45]

Pianists will find this description appropriate as it demands more of the pianist than does

the Sonata for Cello and Violin.

While the first movement of the sonata contains elements of structural ambiguity,

it does not have the abrupt interruptions found in the examples from the cello sonata. The

movement flows as if it were an improvisation, moving from one idea to the next. The

seams, however, feel unbroken, as though each new idea is born of the previous one.

Rather than interpolating contrasting sections within the work, Debussy exploits metric

ambiguity and elides between phrases, motivic ideas, and larger sections, creating a sense

of fragmentation.

In his analysis of the first movement of the sonata, Richard Parks points out a

conflict between the notated meter of 3/4 and the statement of the theme by the violin in

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[44] Léon Vallas, *Claude Debussy: His Life and Works*, trans. Maire and Grace O'Brien (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 266.

[45] Eric Frederick Jensen, *Debussy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 241.

m. 5, which is experienced in 3/2 or a compound 6/2.[46] The opening chords of the piano begin an antecedent phrase from mm. 1-4, and a repetition continues the consequent phrase in mm. 5-8. The statement of the theme in the violin interrupts this phrase, turning the consequent phrase into an antecedent phrase. The overlapping phrases create a sense of multiplicity, of two simultaneous phrases of music that are somewhat independent of each other. Though there is not harmonic conflict between the violin and piano, metric stability is avoided until m. 14, where the piano and violin begin a new phrase together.

What Parks calls a "bifurcation of the phrase,"[47] can also be conceived as two simultaneous strands of music that overlap and move somewhat independently. Jonathan Kramer would call this an example of multiplicity, which falls into the broader category of multiply-directed time. In the first movement of the Violin Sonata, Debussy routinely employs simultaneities and blurred phrases like this example, promoting a sense of conversational improvisation and occasionally, simultaneous but independent phrases.

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[46] Richard S. Parks, "Structure and Performance: Metric and Phrase Ambiguities in the Three Chamber Sonatas," in *Debussy in Performance*, ed. James R. Briscoe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999): 217.

[47] Parks, "Structure and Performance: Metric and Phrase Ambiguities in the Three Chamber Sonatas," 217.

Example. 4.1 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 1, mm. 1-20.[48]

Another instance of an elision of phrases that creates a sense of multiplicity occurs in the recapitulation of the main theme, which begins in m. 149. The violin continues the piano figuration while the piano states the theme for the first time. In this passage, the elision is expanded beyond the level of the phrase to the level of the entire passage. Not only do the phrases overlap to create simultaneous musical strands, but the music also alternates between material from both sections, adding to the complexity of the temporal scheme.

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[48] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano (Paris, France: Durand, 1917): 1.

Example. 4.2 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, mm. Mvt. 1, 139-161.[49]

The violin continues the recapitulation of the theme while the piano returns to the figuration from the previous section. Eliding with the end of the theme in m.160, the piano returns to the figuration from the previous section. The sections are not only elided, but fragmented and put back together, alternating between material from the adjacent sections.

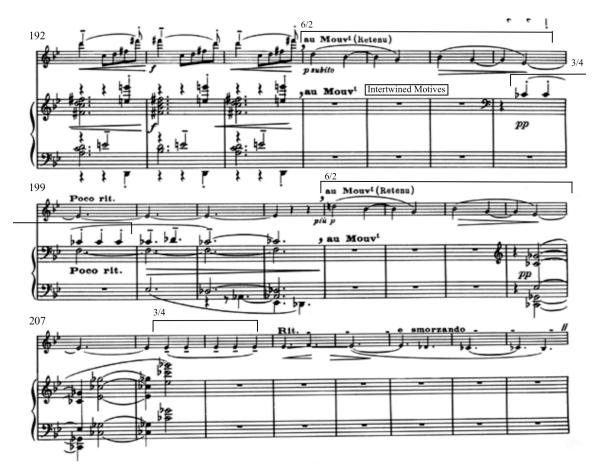[49] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 6.

Example 4.3 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 1, mm. 162-177.[50]

In m. 195, the final statements of the theme begin unaccompanied in the violin, but it is interrupted again by the piano, recalling the repeated note violin theme from mm. 132-136. The violin picks up this theme again in m. 208, and it ultimately becomes the closing theme.

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[50] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 6.

Example 4.4 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 1, mm. 192-214.[51]

The closing section of the movement pieces together motives from the opening with the repeated note theme first stated in m. 32. The movement ends with a sense of multiplicity, with fragments of motives mm. 16, 41, and 132 spliced together in an explosive disintegration of material.

[51] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 7.

Example 4.5 Motivic Material for End of Movement 1.[52]

[52] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 1-5.

Example 4.5 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 1, mm. 223-254.[53]

The second movement of the Violin Sonata hearkens back to the second movement of the cello sonata with similarly ". . . biting dissonance and humor. . . ."[54] Like the first movement, it has an improvised quality and a playfully conversational

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[53] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 8.

[54] Eric Frederick Jensen, *Debussy*, 241.

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structure, flowing from one idea to the next. A steady sixteenth note texture integrates the movement's contrasting sections.

Two *Meno mosso* sections abruptly interrupt the flow of the movement, keeping the steady sixteenth note texture, but creating a sense of stasis by denying a sense of harmonic motion. What follows is a Rubato section that not only slows the sense of time, but seems to reverse it.

The movement begins with an introduction consisting of a set of two rising sixths, which are later recalled in the Rubato section. The rising sixths, first F-sharp to D, and then an augmented 5th, G to a D#, which resolves upward to the sixth on E, are repeated an octave lower in m. 9, leading to a transition into the first theme. The prominent interval of a sixth does not occur again until the Rubato section in m. 79.

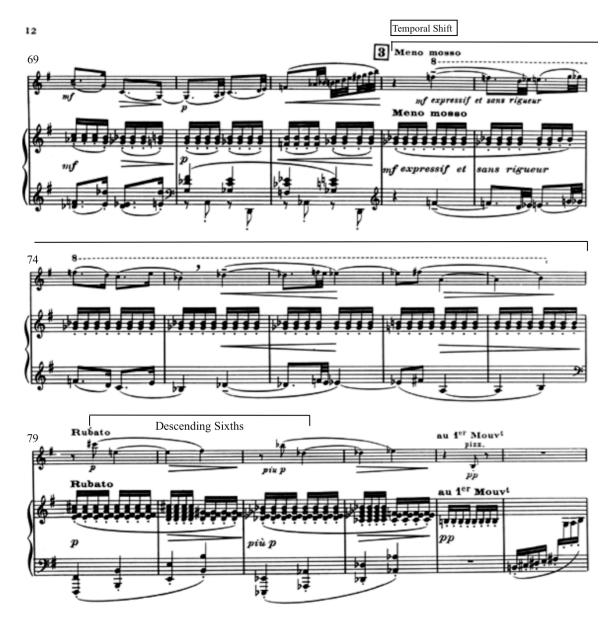Example 4.6 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 2, mm. 1-16.[55]

Here the sixths descend, first from C-sharp to E, and then a step lower from B-flat
to D-flat. The sense of time at the *Meno mosso* changes abruptly, with a slowed tempo
and a static harmony. Subsequently, the rubato section seems to be the introduction in
reverse, an inversion of the sixths from the opening, bringing the music back to the
opening *au Mouvt* material. Though it cannot be argued that Debussy was thinking of the
filmic technique of a "reverse shot," as Rebecca Leydon might insist, the musical

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[55] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 9.

materials speak for themselves. A modified inversion of the opening material brings the

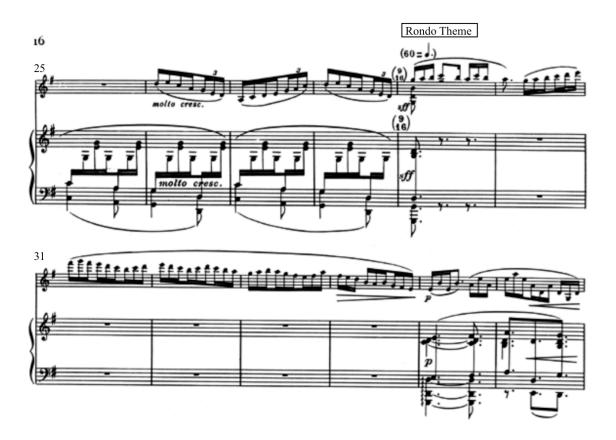listener or performer back to the opening theme.

Example 4.7 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 2, mm. 69-84.[56]

The last movement of the sonata can be thought of as a rondo form. After a

statement of the cyclic theme from the first movement, the rondo theme alternates with

episodes of new material and transformations of the theme.

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[56] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 12.

Example 4.8 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 2, mm. 25-42.[57]

After a central section, *Le double plus lent*, in mm. 85-99, the opening piano

material returns in the new key of F sharp. What follows is a seemingly fragmented

section that can be thought of as variations on the rondo theme.

The first transformation of the theme, in m. 116, *Expressif et soutenu*, changes the

mode to minor, and is accompanied with a waltz in the piano. The shift is abrupt, with an

unprepared harmonic and tempo shift similar to passages of the cello sonata.

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[57] Claude Debussy, *Sonate pour Violon et Piano*, 16.

Example 4.9 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 112-121.[58]

The bass melody in the piano is used as a transition to the statement of the theme, back in its original form, but is destabilized by metric dissonance with the phrasing and hemiola in the piano at mm. 146-151.

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[58] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 20.

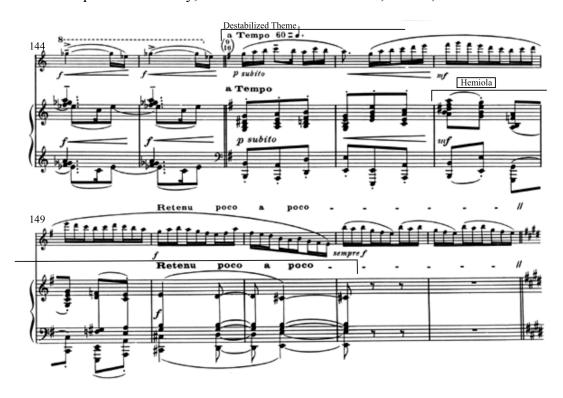Example 4.10 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 146-151.[59]

Debussy then uses a technique found in the cello sonata. The figuration from the end of the rondo theme becomes "stuck," and continues as an ostinato. The ostinato is modified to a new key of E major, underneath which the rondo theme is stated in the piano. This passage is similar to the ostinato passage in the cello sonata, but it also recalls Debussy's first etude, *Pour les "cinq doigts,"* a whimsical take on a Czerny etude, where a five-finger scale in C major is used as an ostinato, while another strand of music plays "wrong" notes in another key and creates a moment of multiplicity.

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[59] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 21.

Example 4.11 Pour les "cinq doigts," mm. 1-15. 146-151.[60]

I. *Pour les "cinq doigts"*—d'apres Monsieur Czerny

The analogous moment in the violin sonata, creates a sense of suspended time. The harmonic shift to E major lifts the listener out of the G major tonality, and the statement of the theme, augmented into eighth notes seems to take place in a slow motion. The music shifts back to G major abruptly, after a half cadence on B, and the theme is heard again in similar fashion, leading to a half cadence on D.

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[60] Claude Debussy, Pour les "cinq doigts" (Paris, France: 1916): 1.

Example 4.12 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 154-171.[61]

The final statement of the theme begins with an ostinato in the piano, which can best be described as a steam engine locomotive gaining in momentum. This passage is perhaps the most "filmic" one in the sonatas, lending some credence to Rebecca Leydon's modes of continuation. One can not help but to see and hear the correlation with the first films of the Lumiere brothers. The directions, *Peu à peu: Trè animé* evoke a train speeding up, above which the final statement of the theme also builds in momentum.

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[61] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 22.

Example 4.13 Debussy, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Mvt. 3, mm. 172-193.[62]

Throughout this sonata Debussy combines multiple strands of music through a number of techniques. In the first movement, he takes advantage of metric ambiguities by eliding phrases to create simlutaneous, independent phrases. In the second movement he creates a sense of moving backwards by disrupting the flow of the tempo and using an inversion of melodic material. In the last movement he develops a single musical idea,

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[62] Claude Debussy, Sonate pour Violon et Piano, 22-23.

the rondo theme, presenting it in numerous perspectives by transforming and intertwining

it with previous motives.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

In performing the late works of Debussy it is helpful to be guided by the trend in

turn-of-the-century philosophy and arts toward fragmentation, non-linear narratives, and

the concept of multiplicity. These ideas changed the way artists and thinkers approached

their work, as seen in examples from the poetry of Mallarmé, the paintings of Picasso,

and the philosophical writings of Bergson. As shown in the analyses above, these

concepts apply equally well to the music of Debussy, where there is a sense of

fragmentation on the surface, but middleground continuity through the underyling

structure.

Particularly useful is Jonathan Kramer's concept of multiply-directed musical

time, which can be used to describe "any musical temporatily that entails several

directions, continuities, linearities, progressions, or species of time."[63] Kramer's concept

is more useful than thinking of these passages as "moment" time, as Mariane Wheeldon

suggests, which Kramer describes as having no goal-direction or sense of progress.

Because Debussy's music has a sense of progression and goal-oriented musical motion,

mutliply-directed time and the idea of multiplicity are more accurate descriptions of his

processes.

For the performer and listener, approaching Debussy's music with the concept of

multiply-directed time in mind allows for the possibility of maintaning a sense of motion

through an understanding of the underlying structure of a "fragmented" passage. Rather

than interpreting these passages as disconnected, they can be heard and performed as a

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[63] Kramer, *The Time of Music*, 146

mosaic of interwoven musical ideas. When contrasting passages are juxtaposed and interspersed throughout one another, performers can draw out the continuity of the interposed sections, or seek out the long-range, hidden chord progressions. In a passage with simultaneous strands of music, the contrast between the ideas can be brought out with dynamics, articulation, and voicing. Thematic transformations can be thought of as multiple facets of the same idea, similar to Picasso's Cubist paintings. Furthermore, by associating Debussy's music with the experimental poetry of Mallarmé, the Cubist paintings of Picasso, and Bergson's theory of multiplicity, performers and listeners have analogous visual, poetic, and philosophical analogues with which to enrich and inform the way they listen to and perform this music.

APPENDIX

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