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The Influence of Franz Liszt's Structural Style on
the Music of Claude Debussy: An Analytic Comparison
of the Années de Pélérinage and the Preludes.

An Honors Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Department of Music

By

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Note

The following musical editions were used in this paper:

Liszt, Franz. Années de pèlerinage. Première Année: "Suisse."
Urtext. Munich: G. Henle Verlag.

Liszt, Franz. Années de pèlerinage. Deuxième Année: "Italie."
Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1975.

Debussy, Claude. Préludes I and II. Original editions.
Paris: Durand et Cie.

PREFACE

If you were to ask a French musician what composer exerted the strongest influence on the piano music of Claude Achille Debussy (1862-1918), the answer that you would invariably receive is "Chopin." This attitude has been the common one among music critics and analysts (not only French) since the time of Debussy's death, and even to suggest that the music of Franz Liszt (1811-1886) could have in any way influenced the music of Debussy is enough to bring forth loud remonstrations from the music world . . . or else total silence.

It was the latter of these that I experienced while speaking to a French pianist who was scheduled to play six of the Debussy Préludes at an upcoming concert. During dinner, when the conversation turned to the music of Debussy, and in particular the Préludes, I mentioned to the performer that I was intending to write an honors thesis that would attempt to show that the formal and structural styles developed by Liszt, and used by him in Les Années de pèlerinage, exerted a strong influence on the formal and structural styles that Debussy used in the composition of his two books of Préludes. I had been anxiously awaiting the opportunity of discussing this point with a musician who was as familiar with the Préludes

as was this artist. However the conversation was somewhat shorter than I had hoped, for as soon as I had finished putting forth my theory, the pianist turned to me and said: "That is your opinion.," and that, as far as she was concerned, was the end of our conversation. I was, to say the least, somewhat dismayed, but I then realized that a strongly French musician would probably never admit to any "outside" influences on a composer as important to a nation as Debussy is to France.

CHAPTER I

In spite of the fact that there is almost no written evidence to suggest it, it is the intention of this paper to show that the formal and structural styles employed by Liszt in Les Années de pèlerinage did indeed exert a noticeable influence on the way in which Debussy constructed the music presented in his two books of Préludes. This theory originated in the present author's mind (although it was not thought of as a topic for an honors thesis until a year later), after having been introduced to Debussy's Deux Arabesques. Having taken a course in the music of the Romantic period in which several piano pieces by Liszt were a part of the listening assignment, it became evident that there was a remarkable similarity between the first of the two Arabesques by Debussy (dating from 1888) and "Sposalizio" by Liszt (dating from 1838). When it came time to decide on a topic for this thesis, it seemed that it would be interesting to explore just how close a similarity there was between the formal styles of these two composers.

When I first began the research for this paper I found that I was almost totally alone in my belief that there was a demonstrable influence of Liszt on Debussy. This problem is

compounded by the fact that after his death, Liszt became very unpopular in the musical world and very few people wrote anything at all concerning his music. Everything that had been written about it emphasized the aspect of Liszt's virtuosity, and negated his talents as a composer of serious music.

However, there is one person with unquestionable musical integrity who seems to believe that there is a direct line connecting Liszt and Debussy. That person is Paul Henry Lang. In his book, Music in Western Civilization, Lang discusses the problem that the Romantic composer faced concerning a suitable framework in which the new music of the era would fit. Speaking of Liszt, Lang says:

He saw the cause of failure in the post-Beethovenian symphonists, for he recognized the impossibility of expressing modern ideas in traditional forms and declared that form must be the result of the expression of the idea. But the road to the new idiom was not clear; the explorer had to start out on the¹ broad highway to find his way to the forks.

A little later on Lang refers to Liszt as the innovator of a new style which was free of Chopin, and yet had a definite influence on Debussy. He says:

Here Liszt emerges as an independent innovator, the first musician who saw clearly that even Chopin's admirably original method of composition would not suffice for the foundation of a new style, for the new art which was lurking about the classic scene could not rise from the ruins of the old; it had to break completely with the past and to develop its own aesthetic principles.

He threw himself wholeheartedly into this new world of sonority, and the individual pieces of his Années de pèlerinage testify to the art at which he arrived through his transcriptions. Let us single out one piece from the many fine compositions in this collection: 'Sposalizio.' The whole composition is based on one sound phenomenon: a chord. From it Liszt derives both his melody and his accompaniment. He presents this dissected chord sometimes slowly and majestically, sometimes fast and imperiously, and at the end the arabesques, formed from the same material, envelope a melody in the middle parts. The very same arabesques return in one of Debussy's early piano pieces, showing an unequivocal continuity in the development of style and Liszt's role in the formation of "modern" music.²

This passage indicates that there is good reason to believe that Liszt did exert some sort of influence on Debussy and that it might be possible to show that although the Préludes do not bear as obvious a resemblance to the music in the Années de pèlerinage as does the first of the Arabesques, there is nonetheless a similarity in the way in which the pieces are put together.

As stated earlier, it is next to impossible to find any information regarding a connection between Liszt and Debussy. There is however, a great deal of material that has been published proclaiming the folly of such a project. For example, in an article entitled "Claude Debussy, Poet and Dreamer,"³ Lawrence Gilman says that to search for any influence that Liszt might have had on Debussy is fruitless. What makes this article so interesting is that it was written

in 1906, eighteen years after the Deux Arabesques were published. From this it seems evident that Mr. Gilman had either not looked into the music of Liszt, or that he was of the "anti-Liszt" camp so popular at that time. In response to this we turn to the work of P. H. Lang once again.

The strongest original incentive toward a new tonal center came from Liszt, who appropriated the state of intertonality reigning in the development sections of the classic sonata form, making it the foundation of his whole formal-tonal architecture. He was also the first to employ a "neutral tonality" based on the whole tone scale which subsequently became one of the earmarks of the impressionistic style, and to create a great elasticity in the interpretation of tonality by deleting enharmonic differences and by advocating the simultaneous use or mixing of two tonalities. . . . Liszt's initiative bore its most delicate and artistic fruits in Debussy's music, volatile, tender, and poetic, in which harmonic subtleties abound.⁴

Another type of argument that appears frequently in the literature is that which says that Debussy's music has no form at all. A good example of this is in an article by L. M. Peppercorn, called "The Piano Style in Debussy's 'Préludes.'" In this article Peppercorn says:

. . . Even in cursorily glancing through these pieces, one is struck by the scarcity of genuine themes. Instead we find mere motives or, at the most, bits of themes, melodic fragments, averaging about two bars in length, and followed more or less inconsequently by new motives. The majority of the motives are melodic in construction, only a minority chordal. But there is also a third class, half one, half the other; basically chordal, but

with the notes of the chord dissolved, with the help of auxilliary notes, into a more melodic tune . . .

. . . . One can see that Debussy did not state his themes a priori for later working out. Rather one gets the impression of his sitting at the piano and trying in an improvisatory frame of mind to express his mood of the moment. That is perhaps the reason why, with a few exceptions, there is no "working" of the motives, for "development" in the ordinary sense of the word, being mostly an affair of the intellect, has no place in a piece conceived of in terms of impression and color. One motive or design succeeds another, only in the rarest cases having reference to it or growing out of it.⁵

Judging from a statement such as this, it would seem that the author had indeed only looked cursorily at the music. Surely if Mr. Peppercorn had examined the music contained in the two books of Préludes more carefully he would have been able to notice that there are definite formal structures in these pieces and that they are not simply "improvisations." One of the aspects of the music which gives the greatest impression of improvisation is the harmony. As compared to traditional harmonic formation, the freedoms which Debussy takes in the formation of the harmonic structures in these pieces are much like the apparent freedoms taken by Liszt as he was trying to free music from some of its stricter harmonic bonds.

Edward Lockspeiser, probably one of the most widely acclaimed authorities on Debussy, demonstrates in his two volume work, Debussy: His Life and Mind, that Debussy had,

as early as 1889 formulated an intricate harmonic system made up of ambiguous chords. The purpose of this new system was to ". . . undermine the rigidity of the tonal system and thus, as he believed, to enlarge the range of harmonic expression."⁶ Lockspeiser also says that Debussy later cultivated improvisatory features into his music so that the music "should seem not to have been written down."⁷ Therefore, the tonal ambiguity which, according to Lang, Debussy inherited from Liszt, combined with Debussy's own ideas of harmonic relationships can fairly well explain Mr. Peppercorn's view that the music in the Préludes is without "development."

In most cases, when a researcher attempts to prove that one composer had a definite influence on another, it is necessary to prove that the latter would have been exposed to the music of the former, and that the former is of a great enough stature that his music would actually be able to exert such an influence. However, Liszt was such an influential figure that it seems unnecessary to prove this, since it would have been impossible that Debussy could have escaped exposure to his music. In fact, Debussy once met Liszt in Rome, in November of 1885, when he and another pianist (Vidal) played a four-hand arrangement of Charbrier's Valses Romantiques for the older composer. During this same visit Liszt also played for Debussy, which prompted Debussy to say at a later date:

"I have heard only two fine pianists, my old piano mistress . . . and Liszt, whom I heard in Rome."⁸ It is not known exactly what Liszt played for Debussy, and although there is no proof of it, Lockspeiser says that it is possible that Liszt performed some of his later piano works, such as "Nuages gris," "Bagatelles sans tonalité," or "La lugubre gondola." Although, according to Groves these pieces were not published until 1927,⁹ there is no reason to believe that Liszt would not have played them for Debussy. Of all his works for the piano, these later ones were the furthest removed from classical ideas of tonality, and most closely related to Debussy's harmonic style. But no matter what was played, it is certain that Debussy was well enough aware of the music and reputation of Liszt to be influenced by the older man's style.

It is important to point out here that although Debussy may have used some of the formal ideas put forth by Liszt, this in no way detracts from his own originality. That is not the point of this paper. What is hoped to be shown is that Debussy, in searching for a suitable form for the expression of his music, came to rest upon the structural styles and ideas that Liszt used in his music. It should be remembered that Debussy had no conscious thought or desire to be revolutionary.¹⁰ His only intention was to write music that would allow him to express himself freely. However, he discovered

that in order for music to be able to do this it must have some shape or form. Therefore it is in no way derogatory to say that Debussy used the structural style of Liszt in his music, for it is merely a manner of organizing the music that is being borrowed, not the music itself. Indeed, if one were to attempt to show a similarity in the sonant aspects of the music itself, the most that might be found is one or two harmonic similarities, but not much more.

The major formalizing characteristic that the two composers have in common in the works that are to be discussed in this paper is the use of a motive or thematic device from which the entire piece is built. Lang has already briefly mentioned above how Liszt went about doing this in "Sposalizio." It is this same type of thematic generation that can be seen in the Debussy Préludes.

Of course, it would be absurd to assume that all of the Préludes will conform to this idea strictly, for that is not in the nature of the music nor of the composer. The formalizing ideas for the pieces act only as a way of organizing the music, not restricting it. Therefore, when one comes across what appears to be a new motive somewhere in the middle or at the end of a piece, it doesn't mean that Debussy has abandoned this design for structuring his pieces, but that he has simply applied a looser and freer interpretation of the original idea. This

type of relaxation of the rules appears constantly in music, regardless of the era from which it comes. Obviously, since Debussy has done away with traditional harmonic relationships, there is no way that his music is going to conform to classical forms such as the sonata structure which are so dependent upon traditional harmonic relationships. In fact, one of the major complaints about Debussy's music is that it appears to be "cadenceless."

This type of music, then, is going to require some new organizing style, and as indicated above, there is no reason to doubt Debussy's assimilation of Liszt's formalizing techniques.

CHAPTER II

The problem of form, or more specifically, the way in which a composer is able to combine musical ideas into a logical, coherent and expressive piece of music, is a problem that has always perplexed composers gifted with truly original musical ideas. Liszt was no exception to this. He did, however, manage to overcome the problem of attempting to put new ideas into old forms. His solution was to abandon the older forms and to develop new ones which led to an entirely new style. Although there are many historians who do not give Liszt credit for the development of this new style in which his musical ideas could be expressed far more clearly, it is evident that he was indeed the first to truly employ such a style. According to Lang:

Liszt's great innovation and achievement consisted in proving that it was possible to create a well rounded and logically organized piece of music without forcing the ideas into the established frames of traditional forms.¹

As previously shown, many musicologists have overlooked the true worth of much of Liszt's music. One of the major reasons for this oversight is owing to Liszt's early fame as a virtuoso at the piano. Perhaps because he was a virtuoso, and was regarded as the finest pianist that ever lived, Liszt felt it necessary to indulge in a goodly degree of exhibitionism and showmanship.

It cannot be denied that much of Liszt's piano music was written to please the public's desire for keyboard pyrotechnics. The twelve Hungarian Rhapsodies are good examples of this sort of deliberate, and it might be added, vulgar, showmanship. What the critics have failed to realize, however, is that this is only one aspect of Liszt's music. Simply by looking at the various publications of his music it is evident (as in the case of the twelve Transcendental Études) that as he grew older, Liszt revised much of his music in order to deemphasize the virtuoso aspect and to accentuate the more important aspects of the music itself.

A good example of this type of biased view can be seen in Brockway and Weinstock's book, Men of Music:

Liszt was a composer. His separate works number between 1300 and 1400. (Most are transcriptions of other composers' works). Of his wholly original pieces, some are among the most popular music ever composed. These, almost without exception, are not of high musical quality . . . The truth is that Liszt was first a performer, and only later, and secondarily, a composer.²

It is opinions such as this that help to explain why very little in-depth research has been done concerning the serious music of Liszt. It is, almost without exception true that musicologists have failed until fairly recently to consider Liszt the composer as an important figure in the development of modern music.³

One of the few early works to show the importance of Liszt in

the development of a new style is D. G. Mason's Great Modern Composers. In this book the author discusses the problem of structure that Liszt faced when he was trying to put his musical thoughts together into a coherent form. Contrary to the opinions of many musicologists, Liszt was always concerned about structure and its importance in serious music. In the following passage, Mason speaks of Liszt's development of the "symphonic poem." Although it is not the symphonic poem with which this paper deals, the basic concept of this form is what is used by Liszt in Les Années de pèlerinage as a means of attaining continuity in the music.

Liszt, with his keen analytic intelligence, realized that some definite plan of thematic statement and development was indispensable, and with his thorough technical education and vigorous musical imagination found the means at hand for attaining it . . . His scheme was to build on two or three generating motives as many sections as were required by the programme, the expressive qualities of themes being modified from time to time as the programme might require. Thus musical unity, coherence, interest were maintained by the retention of the generating motives--however transformed they might become--and by using related keys for the various sections.⁴

Another description of the Liszt style, this time more specifically related to the music with which this paper is concerned, comes once again from Lang:

His (Liszt's) melodies (as we can see in "Sposalizio" or in Les Préludes) are generally founded on a terse and seemingly simple basic figure or motif. This motif is then elaborated

and even the accompanying figures develop out of it; an eminently symphonic conception. Individual melodies derived from this basic motif are handled sometimes in a similar manner, sometimes in a contrasting fashion, and sometimes all of them meet in a sort of apotheosis at the end . . .⁵

These two passages clearly indicate that Liszt, when faced with the problem of form in new music, overcame the problem by creating a new structural style.

Claude Debussy, fairly early in his career, encountered the same problem as Liszt: how to put the musical ideas that were in his head into some practical, coherent form. As a young man Debussy came strongly under the influence of Wagner's music, but as he matured he realized that this type of music did not coincide with the musical spirit of France. The chief pre-occupation of German composers of the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries was the attempt to "outbuild Beethoven and outblow Wagner."⁶

Debussy was the antithesis of the German musical ideal. He realized that for his own salvation and for that of modern music he had to abandon the chase after the colossal and return to smaller ideas. This decision came about not only from a conscious empathy with the musical spirit of the nation, but because Debussy was also very strongly influenced by other branches of the fine arts, specifically painting and poetry.⁷

In the 1880's, two of the most important movements in

modern art began: impressionism in painting and symbolism in poetry. The impressionistic school of painting was founded by Manet, Pissaro, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Guillaumin and Cézanne.⁸ Debussy was strongly drawn to the ideas expressed by the impressionists in their paintings because they were able to evoke an atmosphere rather than record an entity. Although this approach to art appealed greatly to Debussy, and his music has been labelled "Impressionistic," it was actually from the symbolists that he derived many of the ideas expressed in his music.

The leader of the symbolists was Stephen Mallarmé, with whom Debussy became acquainted in 1887. It was through their poetry that the Symbolists tried to destroy the "tyranny of direct statement."⁹ They sought instead to evoke thought and description, to suggest, to symbolize, and thus to build up an impression of a thing rather than to describe the thing itself.

Nadia Boulanger says of Debussy's music that

. . . the desire to conceal art by art, to suggest, imply and insinuate rather than to state outright the hidden relationships which guide the sequence of one's ideas, is thoroughly characteristic of Debussy's music and is likewise a master motive in the technique of symbolist and impressionist poetry.¹⁰

Now the question arises as to how Debussy was able to put the ideals of the Symbolists into a musical form. What was this form and from where did it come? As was stated earlier, Debussy had no intention of causing a musical revolution, and was convinced

that his music would be only for himself and his friends.¹¹ Therefore, since the older forms, with all their confining rules, would never suit a music whose basic tenet was to suggest something rather than to state it, it was necessary to find a newer, more suitable musical form.

It was shown earlier that Debussy was quite aware of Liszt's music, and in fact that even met the older composer, so there is no reason to doubt that Debussy might turn to Liszt's style to express his own musical ideas.¹² After all, the organization of Liszt's music, although highly structured, gives the impression of freedom from the restrictions of the older forms, and it was just this freedom that Debussy desired for his music. "The greatest freedom and spontaneity within the most restrictive bounds--that was what he sought."¹³

Unfortunately, the very freedom that this style allows Debussy has caused critics to assume that there is little or no organizational element in the music of the Préludes. This attitude was shown above in the statement by Peppercorn that the Préludes appear to be of an improvisatory nature. This fact helps to explain why so little research has been done to trace the origins of Debussy's style in the Préludes.

CHAPTER III

In this section of the paper analyses will be done on Liszt's Années de pèlerinage and Debussy's Préludes. By comparing the structural and formal similarities between the two, it can be shown that there is good reason to believe that Debussy used Liszt's organizational techniques to construct the music found in the Préludes.

Part I

The music contained in Les Années de pèlerinage was published in its final form between the years of 1855 and 1883. However, individual pieces from the three volumes were composed and published much earlier than this. The first volume, "Suisse," appeared in its entirety in 1855. This volume consists of the following pieces: "Chapelle de Guillaume Tell;" "Au lac de Wallenstadt;" "Pastorale;" "Au bord d'une source;" "Orage;" "Vallée d'Obermann;" "Eglogue;" "La mal du pays;" "Les Cloches de Genève." All of these pieces appeared in 1836 under the title Album d'un voyageur, but were withdrawn and rewritten, and were re-released in 1855 under the title Années de pèlerinage. Première Année: "Suisse."¹

The second volume of works is called, Années de pèlerinage,

Deuxieme Année: "Italie." This volume consists of ten pieces, the last three of which were added in a supplement called Venezia et Napoli. The titles of these pieces are: "Sposalizio;" "Il pensieroso;" "Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa;" "Sonetto 47 del Petrarck;" "Sonetto 104 del Petrarck;" "Sonetto 123 del Petrarck;" "Après un lecture du Dante;" "Gondoliera;" "Canzone;" "Tarantella." All of these pieces were originally composed between the years 1838 and 1849, but did not appear in their final form until 1858.²

There is a third volume of the Années (1858), but the music contained in it was not used for this paper, so it is unnecessary to do more than just mention it.

The purpose of this paper is not to do a thorough analysis of all music in the Années de pèlerinage and the Préludes, but to attempt to demonstrate that there is sufficient similarity between a number of individual compositions to show that Debussy used Liszt's structural style in the Préludes. Therefore I have only used certain selections by each composer. They are: "Chapelle de Guillaume Tell;" "Au bord d'une source;" "Le mals du pays;" "Au lac du wallenstadt" and "Sposalizio" from the Années, and "Danseuses de Delphes;" "Le vent dans la plaine;" "Voiles;" and "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir," from the Préludes.

The first piece to be examined is "Chapelle de Guillaume

Tell," from the first book of Années de pèlerinage. There are two basic musical subjects in the entire piece, and the first of these appears in the first two measures (Ex. 1). The second motive, which begins in measure 21 (Ex. 2), and extends into measure 22 can be seen to actually be a rhythmic derivative of the first motive.

Ex. 1

Ex. 2

Although this piece is written with the key signature of C major, Liszt begins it with a highly ambiguous tonality. The first motive is introduced with union⁵_n G's, which Liszt then builds around by adding notes above and below. Therefore, the first note is a G, the second sound is a chord consisting of F

and A, G's two nearest letter neighbors, and the third chord is an E minor triad, which is made up of the notes a third above and a third below G (although these are altered to fit the key signature). It is just this type of tonal ambiguity that eventually leads to the tonal ambiguities to be found in the music of Debussy.

Having introduced the basic motive, Liszt then goes on to use and embellish it for the rest of the first section (up to the introduction of the second motive in measure 21). Liszt uses this first motive as both an introduction and as a coda in this piece, and indicates this by setting apart the first and last appearance of the theme with double barlines.

These barlines at the beginning serve not only to set the theme off rhythmically and melodically (for it is on these two facets of the motive that most of the work is based), but also harmonically. It can be seen that, beginning in measure four, after the double barlines, the key of C major is established with a I-IV-I chord progression. In this way Liszt has separated the main building block of the piece from the body.

The next time that the double barlines appear is in measure 76, where Liszt suddenly takes the music from the key of C major and emphasizes the opening motive in a modified form of the key of Ab major. (Modified in that it was necessary to use a D rather than a D flat to follow the pattern established

in measure 1. See Ex. 3.)

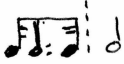
Ex 3

Liszt has broken the composition into three basic parts. The first part goes from measure 1 to measure 20, and is built out of the opening theme (Ex. 1). The second part begins at measure 21 and goes to measure 51. This section is built out of the second theme (Ex. 2). The third part begins in measure 52, where there is a return to the first theme, and an expansion on it which lasts until the end of the piece. It is interesting to note that in the coda (after the second set of double barlines) Liszt combines the two motives for the first time (i.e., the rhythmic motive of the first section and the melodic motive of the second).

The first section of the piece is based on the idea of enlargement. In the first two measures the theme is presented in its barest form. In the next three measures the same motive is repeated at a different scale degree, and with enriched and enlarged chords. By the time measure 13 is reached, the little

motive that occurred in measures one and two is now made up of four note chords in the treble and arpeggios in the bass (see Ex. 4).

The musical notation for Example 4 consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains three measures. The first measure has a whole note chord with notes G4, B4, D5, and F5. The second measure has a whole note chord with notes G4, B4, D5, and F5. The third measure has a whole note chord with notes G4, B4, D5, and F5. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains three measures. The first measure has a whole note chord with notes G2, B2, D3, and F3. The second measure has a whole note chord with notes G2, B2, D3, and F3. The third measure has a whole note chord with notes G2, B2, D3, and F3. The word "dolce" is written above the first measure of the lower staff. The word "rinforz." is written above the third measure of the lower staff. The number "15" is written above the third measure of the lower staff. The number "2" is written above the second measure of the lower staff. The number "3" is written above the first measure of the lower staff. The number "1" is written below the first measure of the lower staff. The number "2" is written below the second measure of the lower staff. The number "3" is written below the third measure of the lower staff. The number "1" is written below the third measure of the lower staff. The label "Ex4" is written below the first measure of the lower staff.

The second section, which begins at measure 21, is based primarily on harmonic alterations accompanying the rhythmic motive of , which outlines the interval of a 6th. That this section is constructed on a rhythmic basis is evidenced by the brief use of the rhythmic structure of the first motive in measures 29 and 30 (see Ex. 5). Since it is only the rhythm

of this motive that is being used here, it can be seen that Liszt is able to take a very basic rhythmic structure, and make legitimate music from it by using it in its entirety (here and in the first motive, measure 1) and by using just a part of it (the second motive, measure 21).

29

Ex. 5

dim.

ff vibrato

The second section continues until measure 52, at which point there is a return to the first motive. The second section can be broken down into two smaller subsections, with the dividing point at measure 38. From measure 21 to measure 38, the accompaniment for the rhythmic motive shown above is a tremolo in which the harmonies shift very subtly with the alteration of one or two notes in the chord by half steps. From measure 38 to measure 52 the second motive is presented in octaves and chords, with the interval that is ascended having been diminished from a sixth to an augmented fourth (see Ex. 6).

Allegro vivace

f energico

Ex. 6

The third section begins at measure 52, where there is a return to the theme that began in measure 4. In this section the accompaniment has become far more complex. Here the simple accompaniment of the first presentation of the theme has been expanded to include different inversions of the chord which is used in the theme. (See Ex. 7.) The rest of this section, up through measure 75 is based entirely on this theme.

ff

Ex. 7

The piece ends with the use of the short introductory motive discussed above. This motive is now in the key of A minor and is combined with interjections of the second section motive (see Ex. 8). The work continues in this fashion until the last three measures, where a second inversion C major chord is maintained in the treble while the same chord is outlined in the bass in root and second inversion positions, employing an augmented version of the rhythmic values of the second section motive.

It is evident from the analysis above that the entirety of "Chapelle de Guillaume Tell" is based on only two simple motives, with the second being a rhythmic derivation of a part of the first. This is the essence of the Lisztian style used in most of the pieces contained in the first two volumes of the Années de pèlerinage, and a structural format which Debussy employed in many of the Préludes.

The next piece to be examined is "Au bord d'une source," also from book one of the Années de pèlerinage. The two basic "generating motives" in this piece are the melody in the first two measures and the continuous use of sextuplet 16th-notes throughout the piece. Both of these motives can be seen in the first two measures (see Ex. 9).

The melodic motive, as it is stated in measures 1 and 2, is repeated in measures 3 and 4 with a slight alteration at the

Ex. 8

Musical notation for Ex. 8. The piece is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 12/8 time signature. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. The bass clef staff provides accompaniment with chords and single notes. The notation includes various articulation marks such as slurs and accents.

Allegretto grazioso

First system of musical notation. The tempo is marked "Allegretto grazioso". The mood is "dolce tranquillo". The key signature has two flats and the time signature is 12/8. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs. The bass clef staff has a more rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1 and 2. The instruction "sempre staccato" is written below the bass staff.

Second system of musical notation. The treble clef staff continues the melodic line with eighth notes and slurs, including a fingering of 5. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment with eighth notes and rests, including a fingering of 2. The instruction "sempre staccato" is repeated below the bass staff.

Ex. 9

end of the motive which leads the tonality from Ab to B major. In measures 5 through 9 there is a complimentary melody that is based on the first melody, and is actually an outgrowth of that melody (see Ex. 10). Through the extension of these two complimentary melodies and the continuous use of the rhythmic motive of sextuplet sixteenth-notes Liszt is able to build this entire piece.

The musical notation for Example 10 consists of two staves. The upper staff features a complex melodic line with a sextuplet of sixteenth notes, marked with '1 2' above it. The lower staff contains a simpler melodic line with rests and some notes. The key signature is three flats (Ab major). The notation includes various accidentals and a '5' above a note in the upper staff.

Ex. 10

The first development of the melodic motive comes in measures 13 through 16 where Liszt embellishes the melody by inserting eighth-note chord tones above the melody on every third

eighth-beat of the measure. The addition of these eighth-note octaves creates a rhythmic pattern that is used later as the basis for further development of the melody (see Ex. 11).

13

sempre dolce e grazioso

7

2 7

7

Ex 14

In measure 17 the key changes from A-flat major to E major and the melody that is complimentary to the basic melodic motive is developed greatly, as can be seen in example 12. The melody is marked with arrows. Measures 19 and 20 are very interesting because they return to the key of A-flat, but the melody and accompaniment are almost exactly the same as those in measures 17 and 18. The only change lies in the key signature. Measures 21 and 22 are a continuation of the development of the complimentary melody.

After five measures of ascending and descending passages (measures 23 through 27) there is a brief restatement of the original melodic motive in measures 28 and 29 (see Ex. 13).

Musical score for measures 17-18. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is *p tranquillo*. Measure 17 features a treble staff with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 18 continues with similar textures. Fingerings are indicated: 4, 1, 8, 1, 8, 8 in the treble; 3, 2, 1 in the bass. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 18.

Musical score for measures 19-20. Measure 19 continues the treble staff melody with eighth-note chords and a bass staff with eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 20 features a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass staff with eighth-note accompaniment. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 20. A small asterisk (*) is located at the end of the bass line.

Ex. 12

Musical score for measures 28-29. The piece is in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. Measure 28 features a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass staff with a dotted half note. Measure 29 continues with similar textures. Fingerings are indicated: 3, 3, 1 in the treble; 1 in the bass. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 29.

Musical score for measures 30-31. Measure 30 features a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass staff with a dotted half note. Measure 31 continues with similar textures. Fingerings are indicated: 3, 3 in the treble; b, b in the bass. A fermata is placed over the final chord of measure 31.

Ex. 13

As was stated earlier, the rhythmic pattern which resulted from the embellishment of the original melodic motive in measure 13 (see Ex. 11) becomes a device for the growth of this piece. This can be seen in measures 31 and 32 (Ex. 14), where the melody is on the first and third eighth-beat of each triplet in the bass. The rhythmic accents of this melody are the same as those that resulted from the embellishment in measure 13.

31

8

5 3 4 5

3 1 2 3 2 3

un poco marcato

Ex 14

The original melodic motive appears once again in measures 41 through 47, and is more thoroughly embellished through the addition of sixteenth-note octave figures above the melody, and chords added below (see Ex. 15).

42

2

3

8 8 8

Ex 15

Measures 51 through 54 are a duplication of measures 19 through 22 (part of which is shown in Ex. 16), with the only difference being that the tonal center of these measures is A flat, as compared to E flat in measures 19 through 22 (see Ex. 16).

51 *tranquillo*

Ex 16

In measures 55 through 58 the original melodic motive is once again stated, and from 58 through the end of the piece it is used as the basis for ascending and descending passages of sextuplet sixteenth-notes.

Once again it can be seen from the examples shown above that Liszt has built an entire piece out of just two basic ideas; one rhythmic and the other melodic. From these two simple motives, which he states in the first two measures, the entire piece is constructed.

The next composition to be considered is a very basic example of the Lisztian technique of organization based on generating motives. The title of the piece is "Le mal du pays." What makes this such a good example for comparison with the

Debussy Préludes is the fact that on the first glance this piece seems to be made up of unrelated bits of melody that have been loosely strung together. However, when the composition is viewed in its entirety it becomes clear that there is a strong formalizing factor which ties all these loose phrases together. That factor becomes evident when it is realized that the first 19 measures of the piece are repeated exactly as written, at an interval of a minor third above the position of the original statement.

The repetition of all the melodic phrases in the first 19 measures gives this work a feeling of organization which is necessary for the listener to be able to comprehend what is taking place in the music. If there were no repetition of this string of melodies, then the piece would indeed make no sense, for it would lack any organizing feature. The human ear needs some structural format that it can grasp onto in order to understand music.

The only real change in this composition comes in measure 47, where there is a variation on the material that begins in measure 20. (See Ex. 17. Since the piece is designed around the idea of repetition it is necessary to include all of it. The measures are numbered in the example.) Here it can be seen that the placement of the melody has been changed. In measure 20 it appears above the accompaniment, but in measure 47 it has

Le mal du pays

Lento *accelerando*

f *p*

3

7

3 3 *rall.* 3

11 (Andantino)

accel. *p dolce* *cresc.* *rinforz.*

2

16

dim.

20 *Adagio dolente*
espressivo assai

5 1 2 1

24

dolcissimo

28

Lento

f

p

accelerando

34

rall.

rall.

38

Andantino

cresc.

rinforz.

43

8

Musical score for measures 47-50. The piece is in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is characterized by a slow, sorrowful mood. The right hand features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes. Measure 50 contains a fermata over a chord.

Musical score for measures 51-53. Measure 51 is marked *dolcissimo* and *rit.* (ritardando). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 52 features a four-measure rest in the right hand. Measure 53 is marked *agitato* (agitated) and shows a change in the right hand's melodic pattern.

Musical score for measures 54-56. Measure 54 is marked *cresc.* (crescendo). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 55 continues the melodic development. Measure 56 features a change in the right hand's melodic pattern and a slur.

Musical score for measures 57-60. Measure 57 is marked *rinforzando e più appassionato* (reinforcing and more passionate). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 58 continues the melodic development. Measure 59 is marked *rinforz.* (reinforcing). Measure 60 features a five-measure rest in the right hand.

Musical score for measures 61-64. Measure 61 is marked *Più lento* (even slower) and *dolcissimo*. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 62 continues the melodic development. Measure 63 is marked *cresc.* (crescendo). Measure 64 features a four-measure rest in the right hand.

Musical score for measures 65-68. Measure 65 is marked *Lento* (slow). The right hand has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 66 continues the melodic development. Measure 67 features a five-measure rest in the right hand. Measure 68 features a four-measure rest in the right hand.

been placed in the middle of the accompaniment. Another slight variation is the addition of notes to fill out the accompanying chords. The relationship between the keys of the two sections still remains the same as it was for the other parts. Although the key changes at measure 20 from E minor to G# minor, the same minor third interval is maintained between measure 47 and measure 20 because the key changed at measure 47 from G minor to B minor.

Measures 53 through 60 are an extension of the melodic and harmonic ideas put forth in the section from measure 20 through 27. Here, through the use of sequences and imitative polyphony, Liszt accomplishes the first really extended development in the composition. The melody that he uses for the basis of this development is the one that is introduced in measure 20. This polyphonic development lasts until measure 61, where the melodic and harmonic material that was introduced in measure 24 is used to lead into the close of the piece.

Beginning at measure 61 however, Liszt has altered the intervallic relationship between the sections. Whereas in all the other instances discussed the interval between the sections was a minor third, with the second statement of the music a minor third above the first, here the second statement is a major third below the first (the parts are in G# major and E major respectively).

The last five measures of the piece are a restatement of the first five, except that here the melody is in the bass

where it is given a chordal accompaniment. As is the case with most of the pieces in the first two volumes of the Années de pèlerinage, the very end of this piece uses the same motive as the very beginning, indicating that the piece has undergone all its changes and is now returning to where it began.

This composition was chosen for analysis because it bore one striking similarity to several of the complaints that have been made about the music that is found in the two volumes of Debussy's Préludes. That complaint, as it was discussed above, is mainly that the pieces in these volumes appear to be nothing more than musical fragments that have been strung together. Granted, the formalizing structures of some of the Préludes is not as clear as that used by Liszt in "Le mal du pays," however, there is a significant similarity to Liszt's style to be found in many of the Préludes.

The next work to be analyzed of Liszt's is "Au lac de Wallenstadt." This piece is also rather basic in the way that it is constructed, and it is similar in structure to one of the Préludes, namely, "Le vent dans la plaine." In both pieces the major factor that gives a sense of organization is the continued use of a specific rhythmic motive. In the case of "Au lac du Wallenstadt" the rhythmic motive is a sixteenth-note triplet followed by four sixteenth-notes in the accompaniment (see Ex. 18). This motive is introduced in the first measure

of the piece.

Andante placido

pp dolcissimo eguc

1 2 3 4 5 4 2

Ex 18 *una corda*

The melody, which begins in the fourth measure and lasts until the nineteenth, is then repeated in measures 20 through 35, in octaves. (For the first statement of the melody, see Ex. 19.)

Ex 19

In measures 36 through 53 this melody (or parts of it) is used to establish a foundation, along with the continuous rhythmic motive in the accompaniment, which is firm enough to allow Liszt to wander through different tonalities without in any way diminishing the effectiveness of the piece.

For example, the piece starts out in A flat major, but by measure 46 the piece is in E major. This transition is achieved without too much difficulty by enharmonically spelling the subdominant (D flat) as C # , and lowering the third degree. (This occurs in measure 43. See Ex. 20.) This then becomes the supertonic of B major, which allows Liszt to easily slip into B major. From there the dominant to tonic transition is very simple to apply.

41

Ex 20

In measure 62 the melody returns, but this time rhythmically altered (see Ex. 21). The rhythm of the accompaniment, however, remains unchanged.

un poco più animato il tempo

più forte la mano destra

Ex 21

In measure 79, Liszt returns to the original rhythmic value of the melody, but once again alters the tonality. In this case, through the use of enharmonic spelling, he is able to alter two notes in the accompaniment and melody and change the tonality from A flat to E major (See Ex. 22. The first two measures show an enharmonically spelled E major seventh chord, and the second two show an A flat major chord.)

79

Ex 22

In measures 93 through 98 Liszt uses the rhythmic value from part of the melody to build up to the close of the piece. It is interesting to note that this is one of the few places in the entire piece where the accompaniment pattern is altered (see Ex. 23).

Ex 23

In the final measures of the composition, Liszt uses the melodic subject of the opening melody (see Ex. 18, p. 37) with a diminished form of the rhythm. By changing the meter of these last measures, and separating them from the rest of the piece through the use of double barlines, Liszt has created a coda-like section that is based on material that has already been presented (see Ex. 24).

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, labeled 'Ex 24'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 2/4. The melody in the treble staff is marked 'sempre dolcissimo'. The melody is divided into three measures by double barlines. The first measure contains a quarter note followed by an eighth note, with fingerings 2, 1, 3, 1, 2. The second measure contains a quarter note followed by an eighth note, with fingerings 3, 1, 5, 2, 3. The third measure contains a quarter note followed by an eighth note, with fingerings 5, 3. The bass staff shows a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. The score ends with a double barline and a fermata over the final note.

Although these last few measures are melodically and harmonically related to the opening melody, the fact that Liszt has closed the work with such a loosely related section (as compared to the almost literal restatement of the generating motives seen at the ends of many of the other works from these volumes) indicates a good deal of freedom within the structure itself. This freedom will be discussed later in relation to the music of Debussy that will be analyzed in this paper.

The last of the Liszt compositions to be discussed comes from the second volume of the Années: Deuxième Année: "Italie."

The name of the piece is "Sposalizio." It was stated earlier by P. H. Lang that this work is ". . . based entirely on one sound phenomenon: a chord" (see p. 4). This is perhaps too much of an oversimplification, for there are really two basic generating motives from which all the rest of the material in the composition is derived.

The first motive is the short melodic phrase with which the work opens. The second subject that is used as a building block is the chordal passage that immediately follows the opening melody (see Ex. 25).

Andante

The musical score for Ex. 25 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 6/4 and the key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The first staff has a melodic phrase starting in measure 3, marked 'dolce'. The second staff has a chordal accompaniment starting in measure 1, marked 'p'.

Ex 25

From these two motives Liszt derives all of the melodies as well as the accompaniments in the piece. In the first eight measures the two opening subjects are stated twice each, and then measures 9 through 29 are built out of the melodic motive in measure 1 (see Ex. 26).

Ex 26

una corda

Starting in measure 30, Liszt develops the chordal subject stated in measures 3 and 4 (see Ex. 24, p. 40) and from this derives a melody (see Ex. 26). This melodic development lasts only until measure 38, where another chordal subject is introduced. Although this second chordal section is not directly related to the first, it is close enough harmonically to the first section so that from it, Liszt is able to derive the opening melody. The following example (Ex. 27) shows the first two measures of this new chordal passage (measures 38 and 39) and is followed by the eighth and ninth measures (measures 45 and 46) to demonstrate how Liszt manages to bring forth the melody that was first heard at the beginning of the piece.

Ex 27

una corda

This example has been cited to show how Liszt was able to take what appears to be new material and to derive from it something which has come before. This is, in a sense, the reverse of the traditional technique of taking something old and deriving new material from it. In either case there must be a relationship between the two in order for this procedure to work, and it is a harmonic relationship that Liszt exploits in his development of the first melodic subject from this newer chordal material.

In measures 77 through 108 Liszt creates an arabesque out of the opening melody and combines it with chordal, harmonic and rhythmic material derived from the passage which began at measure 38 (see Ex. 27 and 28). This device continues until measure 108, with much embellishment. (For example, the melodic figure in the bass is made into octaves at measure 91.) There is also some rhythmic wandering that takes place, but never does Liszt wander from the format that was established back in measure 77.

78

dolce armonioso

legato

Ex 28

Beginning in measure 108, there is a return to the original chordal material from measures 2 and 3, but here, rather than having the melody inside the chords, the outermost voices of the chords outline the melody (see Ex. 25 and 29).

Ex 29

In measure 113 a more simplified version of this same subject is used to lead into a reiteration of the arabesque that is based on the first melodic motive in the composition. The accompaniment in this section is derived from the material that originated in measures 38 and 39. By comparing example 27 on page 42 and example 30 below, it can be seen how Liszt combines these two subjects to bring the piece to a close. However, it is not at this point that Liszt ends the work. Instead, he uses a coda which consists of two chords: E major and C # minor (see end of Ex. 30).

Musical notation for measures 121-122. The right hand features a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure, marked *pp*. The left hand provides a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 121-122. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure, marked *pp*. The left hand has a simple accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 125-128. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure, marked *pp*. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. The tempo marking *poco a poco riten.* is present. The dynamic marking *smorz. poco a poco* is also present.

Musical notation for measures 129-132. The right hand has a melodic line with a fermata over the final measure, marked *ppp*. The left hand has a simple accompaniment. The tempo marking *Adagio* is present.

Ex 30

It should be clear from the examples cited above, that all of the sections of "Sposalizio" are based not on one motive, but two: the melodic subject of the first two measures, and the chordal subject of the third and fourth measures. From these two basic musical ideas Liszt has constructed the entire composition. This is once again indicative of the Lisztian structure employing motivic transformation.

The works that were analyzed in the previous discussion were chosen for the clarity with which they demonstrate the technique of structural organization that was developed by Liszt. Of course, not all of the pieces in the Années are constructed in such an obvious way, but they are generally built on the same principle as those compositions that were examined above. It is important to point out here that these pieces were not considered because it is the intention of this paper to demonstrate in an obvious way the structural style that influenced Debussy. However, it is only natural that in Debussy's music there will be a much freer interpretation of the rules concerning the organization of the musical ideas, since Debussy has attempted to express the musical ideas of a new generation within these bounds.

Part II

Debussy composed the two books of Préludes between the years 1910 and 1913. It seems to be a fairly common attitude that his later works (after 1905, which was the year in which La MÉR was completed) were frankly inferior in quality to what had come before. For this reason many critics of Debussy's music have not given sufficient attention to the Préludes, even though, as a group, they are considered to be some of his finest music.⁴

The technique which Debussy used in the composition of the Préludes is often described as in the following two passages, but strangely enough, as perfectly as these descriptions fit the music found in the Années de pèlerinage, there is never any mention made of a possible influence from these earlier works on Debussy.

Perhaps in the end we may best summarize Debussy's method of composition in the simple definition of Cézanne: 'Je travaille sur le motif.' The "motif" is the generating design or symbol.⁵

Unity of mood is essential in such small pieces, some of them less than forty bars long; and Debussy always sets the atmosphere in the first bar--by a rhythmic figure in many cases, or a particular harmonic colour ("Et la lune descend," "Voiles"), but always simple and unmistakable. The majority of these piano pieces are miniature variations,

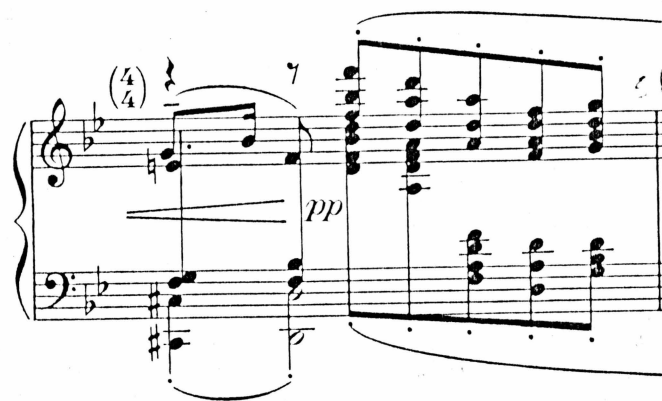
not on themes, but on a few very simple ideas, occasionally purely melodic ("La fille aux cheveux de lin"), more often harmonic ("Ondine," "Les Fees sont d'exquises danseuses"), but generally with a strongly rhythmic interest.⁶

The first of the Préludes that will be considered here is "Danseuses de Delphes." The piece is broken into three basic parts, with a simple tonic-dominant-tonic scheme. There are two basic subjects upon which the entire work is based. The first of these subjects appears in measures 1 through 3 (see Ex. 31). From this one motive Debussy draws three devices for extension. The first is based on the melody in the inner voice; the second is based on the chords which surround that melody; and the third is based on the rhythm of the melodic phrase.

Lent et grave (♩ = 44)
doux et soutenu

Ex 31

The second motive to be used in this work appears in measure four. The parallel harmonies of these descending eighth-note chords, as well as their direction are the bases for the generation of new material out of this theme (see Ex. 32).



Ex 32

Measures 1 through 4 give a rather straight-forward exposition of the themes, with the melodic and rhythmic motives that are to be used later placed in the inner voice. The melody is made prominent here by the fact that the notes of which it is comprised are often outside of the harmonic structure of the chord being sounded with it. (I.e., they are not in direct relationship to the chords, but are usually altered forms of chord tones. For example, the C# in the third beat of measure one (Ex. 31) is the raised fifth of what would otherwise be a normal F major triad.)

The first expansion of the motive in ex. 31 occurs in measure 6, where the inner melody is presented in octaves, but still has the same rhythmic structure, as in its first presentation. The chords that had earlier surrounded the melody, however, have now been expanded and placed on the off-beat (see Ex. 33). This form of motivic development continues until

measure 11, where the direction of the two basic subjects is changed.

Example 33 is a musical score for piano. It features a melody in the upper voice and a chordal accompaniment in the lower voice. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, and the accompaniment consists of chords. The piece is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

Ex 33

In the second section, which is in the dominant, Debussy continues to use the off-beat chordal accompaniment that began in the first section, but has moved the melody to the upper voice and changed its direction (see Ex. 34).

Example 34 is a musical score for piano. It features a melody in the upper voice and a chordal accompaniment in the lower voice. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes, and the accompaniment consists of chords. The piece is marked with a piano-piano (*pp*) dynamic and the tempo marking *doux mais en dehors*. The score includes a triplet of eighth notes in the upper voice.

Ex 34

The descending melody that appears in measure 11 is not intervallically the same as the original melody, nor is it an inversion. However, as is quite often seen in Liszt's music (see page 30), rhythm can stand alone to be used as a device for the growth of a composition. This is exactly what occurs here, for this descending melody can be seen as an outgrowth of the original melodic motive because the rhythm has remained the same.

The ascending eighth note chords that are seen in measure 12 in the example above are derived in a similar manner from the descending motive shown in example 32. Although the intervallic relationship between the chords is not the same, the use of parallel harmony in the chords, and the rhythm of the motive serve to remind the ear of the previous chordal motive.

Starting in measure 18 there is a new form of development taking place. Here Debussy returns to the original melodic motive, but augments both its intervals and the rhythm (see Ex. 35). However, by returning the melody to its original internal position, and maintaining the off-beat chordal accompaniment, this passage can be seen simply as an extension of the original subject. This development continues until measure 25.

The musical notation for Example 35 consists of two staves. The upper staff features a descending melody of eighth notes, starting on a high note and moving down. The lower staff features an ascending eighth-note chordal accompaniment. The piece is marked *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning and *dim.* (diminuendo) above the melody. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4. The example is labeled "Ex 35" at the bottom right.

In measures 25 and 26, Debussy alters slightly the rhythmic structure that was seen in the opening melody (by placing an eighth-rest at the beginning of the bar rather than having the melody begin there), but maintains the melodic line exactly as it was originally stated (see Ex. 31 and 36). In example 36, however, the melody is tucked away inside of the chords. (The melody referred to here is the B flat-B natural-C natural-C# sequence that is in ex. 31 and is seen in the middle of the chords here.)

Ex 36

The musical score for Example 36 consists of two measures. The top staff is in treble clef and contains complex chords with a melodic line tucked inside. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a simple melodic line. Dynamics include *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). The notation includes eighth notes, rests, and various accidentals.

To end the composition, Debussy uses the chordal accompaniment idea that was first used in measure 6 (Ex. 33), but does away with the melody (see Ex. 37).

Ex 37

The musical score for Example 37 consists of two measures. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a simple melodic line. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains complex chords. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianississimo). The notation includes eighth notes, rests, and various accidentals.

From the examples cited above, it is clear that Debussy based the whole of this work on the two simple motives that were shown in example 31 (p. 48). The structural format of this piece so clearly resembles those of the compositions from the Années de pèlerinage that were discussed above, that it seems obvious that there was some influence of Liszt on Debussy concerning the structure of the music.

The next Prélude to be analyzed is "Le vent dans la plaine." This work was mentioned earlier (pp. 36 and 37) because of the resemblance it bears to Liszt's "Au lac du Wallenstadt" through its continuous use of a single rhythmic structure. In the Liszt, the rhythmic unit used is a sixteenth-note triplet followed by four sixteenth-notes. In this Prélude the rhythmic motive used is a sixteenth-note sextuplet, with every other note usually a major or minor second or seventh (depending on position) from the note before it. The first eight measures of the Prélude are built on this principle.

Beginning in measure 3 there is a very simple two bar melodic phrase which later becomes an important motive for expansion. Example 38 illustrates both the rhythmic motive mentioned above, and this melodic motive.

Example 38 is a musical score for piano, consisting of two staves. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The right-hand staff features a continuous rhythmic pattern of sixteenth-note sextuplets, with a slur over the first sixteenth note of each group. The left-hand staff contains a melodic phrase starting in measure 3, consisting of a half note followed by a quarter note, with a slur over the quarter note. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex 38

In measures 15 and 16, the first alteration that occurs in the melodic motive also coincides with the first alteration in the notes used in the rhythmic motive. Notice in example 39 that the interval between the sixteenth-notes of the sextuplet at this point becomes a major second because of the B double flat. Here also, the rhythmic position of what amounts to a pedal point (B flat in the first instance, B double flat here) is altered. However, except for the change from B flat to B double flat in the melodic line, the melodic motive is unchanged.

Ex 39

Three measures later. (measure 19), the intervals used in the melodic subject are expanded, but the rhythm of this subject remains the same. At this point the melody goes from a B double flat to an F, rather than to an E flat, as in example 39. The C flat to B double flat interval of the sixteenth-note sextuplet remains unchanged. Therefore, all that has occurred to this point is an augmentation of the linear intervals of the melodic motive that was introduced back in measure 3 (see Ex. 38, p. 53).

The melodic phrase then reappears in measure 36 in its original form, except that the key is different. Whereas the key signature was previously that of G flat, it is now that of C major, although the melody appears to be in A major. The actual expansion of the melodic subject takes place at this point, for this brief melody continues on into a chromatic descending passage, and alters the pitches in the sextuplet (see Ex. 40).

Ex 40

The musical notation for Example 40 is presented in two systems. The first system shows a melodic line in treble clef and a bass line in bass clef. The second system shows the same melodic line in treble clef and a bass line in bass clef, with a chromatic descending passage in the melody. The notation includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a sextuplet marking.

In measure 44 the key signature returns to G flat major and the original melodic subject returns, but is now expanded so that it extends seven bars, rather than only two, as it did when it was first introduced. Here the extension of the melody is simply made up of notes that had occurred in the original

statement of the melodic phrase, i.e., E flat, G flat, B flat and D flat (see Ex. 38, p. 53).

The harmony in this piece also acts as an important motive. It can be seen from the examples shown that each time the short melodic motive is used, it outlines a seventh chord (either dominant or major) with an added ninth. For example, the first statement of the melody as shown in example 38, shows that the melody is comprised of the following notes (including those used in the sextuplet): C flat, E flat, G flat, B flat and D flat. This, of course, is a C flat major seventh chord with the added ninth. When the key changes (see Ex. 40, p. 55), the following notes occur: A, C#, E, G#, and B. These outline an A major seventh with the added ninth. Then at the end, when the melody is expanded, all the notes are members of the original C flat major seventh chord with added ninth.

At the end of the piece, Debussy uses polytonality by juxtaposing a C major chord with a C flat major seventh; then a D flat major chord, and finally a D major chord with the C flat major seventh. Although this would seem to break up the harmonic scheme that had been laid down (i.e., straight ninth chords), Debussy uses the original B flat to C flat sextuplets that began the work in order to relate this section with the rest of the composition.

This work is very difficult to dissect simply because

Debussy has shown a great deal of freedom within what is actually quite a narrow structure. In summary, what he has done is to break down a ninth chord and employ its tonic and seventh as the basis of a continuous rhythmic motive, filling in the rest of the notes of the chord from the melodic subject. There are, of course, places in the music where he alters the tones of the chord (as in Ex. 39, p. 54), but by maintaining the rhythm of both the melody and the accompaniment there is a strong feeling of continuity from one section to the next. The idea of maintaining a rhythmic capsule throughout an entire work is exactly what is seen in Liszt's "Au lac du Wallenstadt."

The next of the Préludes to be looked at is "Voiles." The main building block of this piece, and the one that gives it the greatest amount of continuity, is the use of the whole tone scale. The entire work is built on this one harmonic device. Aside from this, there are two primary motives that are used. The first of these is nothing more than the use of the entire whole tone scale (built on C natural), but with a register change at the end to give it melodic character (see Ex. 41). The second subject is a stepwise melody which grows out of a short motive of A flat-B flat-C, which first appears in measures 7 and 8 (see Ex. 42).

Modéré (♩ = 88)
Dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant

p très doux

Ex 41

très doux

Ex 42

Another device that is used to give continuity to the work, but cannot really be looked upon as a thematic subject, is a pedal B flat that occurs throughout the composition.

Debussy constructs the entire piece out of the two primary motives discussed above. Often, as is shown in example 43 below, he will use the rhythmic structure of the opening

motive (although here slightly altered), and then proceed to expand on this new development of the original idea. (Compare Ex. 44 and 43).

Example 43 is a piano piece in one flat. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand provides a bass line. The dynamics are marked *pp* *très souple* and *pp*. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

Example 44 is a piano piece in one flat, marked *a Tempo*. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ties, and the left hand provides a bass line. The dynamics are marked *p*. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

In measures 33 through 37 there is an expansion on the second major subject. Here the melody is in the outer voices of the left hand (in octaves), and crosses over between the inner and the outer voices of the right hand (see Ex. 45).

pp

pp

Ex 45

From measure 48 through measure 58, it is once again the melody of the second major subject (along with the pedal B flat) that is used as a guiding structure inside of which Debussy is able to set whole tone scale passages beginning on F \sharp and rising to D an octave and a sixth above; and on A flat, rising to E natural an octave and a sixth above.

The work ends with a return to the opening motive (see Ex. 41), in conjunction with the use of the ascending whole tone passages starting on F \sharp (described above).

"Voiles" is a good example of Debussy's use of "generating motives." The work is based solely on two motives, and is

constructed upon the whole tone scale. The use of rhythmic capsules to remind the ear of something that has come before, although there might not be a literal restatement, is a device that Liszt often employed (see p. 40), and is used frequently by Debussy (see p. 60). The similarity in the use of these devices to build whole compositions from one or two measure motives cannot be ignored.

The final Prélude to be discussed here is "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir." This work is built out of the continuously recurring motive that first appears in measures one and two, and out of the chord on which this motive is based. Since there are many musical ideas contained in this piece it becomes difficult to find a melodic or rhythmic relationship between them all, but it can be seen that the greater part of this Prélude is based on a single complex chord, whose members are: A-C#-E-G-B flat-D (see Ex. 46).

Modéré (♩ = 84)
harmonieux et souple

Ex 46

The opening subject, shown in example 46, is the harmonic basis for this entire work, as well as being a recurring subject melodically and rhythmically. For example, this motive is repeated literally in measures 24 through 26. By using enharmonic spelling, Debussy is able to shift keys from A major to A flat major (note the F# to C# eighth notes in measure three of example 46 and compare them with the G flat to D flat eighth notes in example 47). The original motive is then repeated in the new key.

Plus lent

pp *p* *mf*

Ex 47

This motive appears again in measures 31 and 32; and 36 and 37. The outer notes of the motive, which form the melodic line, are used at the end of the piece in the form of sixteenth note sextuplets (see Ex. 48).

Ex 48

Aside from the simple repetition of the motive and the use of its melodic shape, much of the music in this Prélude is derived from the complex chord outlined in this opening motive as well as alterations thereof. For example, measures 9 through 23 have a continuous C \sharp -D \sharp pattern which gives continuity to what appear to be random chords. However, upon closer inspection it can be seen that these chords always build toward a rhythmically emphasized chord that is made up of notes which are derived from the original motive, or alterations of those notes. To make this more clear, see example 49, which shows the continuous C \sharp -D \sharp pattern with chords below. All of these chords are either built directly from the notes in the opening subject, or from ones that have been raised or lowered a half step from the original.

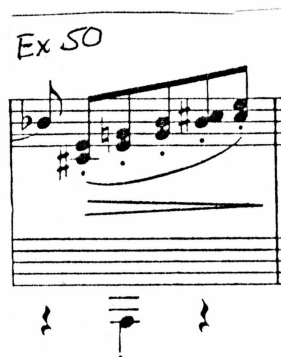
Serrez un peu - - - - - // Retenu - - - //

Ex 49

In the example above, the idea of harmonic relationship becomes evident when it is realized that the chords of longest duration (the half-note chords at the beginnings of measures 19 and 21), i.e., the ones which receive the most stress, are built out of tones from the original chord discussed above. (The notes

here are G-B flat-E; the original chord is A-C#-E-G-B flat-D. Therefore the only change is in the D# in the static harmony accompanying these chords.)

Another example of this use of the harmony is seen in measure 6 (see Ex. 50), where the thirds in the ascending passage are chord members. This occurs again in measure 8.



The use of a part of the original motive as a device for growth can be seen in the use of F#-C# fourth that is formed at the end of measure 2 in example 46. As mentioned earlier, this fourth is used as a device for transposition from the key of A to the key of A flat. (See p. 62). This "sub-motive" is used frequently throughout the work, and an important instance of this is seen in measure 46, where altered forms of the original chord are descending in the bass while the motive of the fourth is used above (see Ex. 51).

Ex 51

The musical score for Ex 51 is written for piano. It begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The score is divided into two main sections. The first section contains three triplet markings over the right hand, with a '7' marking below them. The second section is marked 'En retenant' and also begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. It features a triplet in the right hand and a '6 léger' marking in the left hand. The piece concludes with a few final notes in the left hand.

The Prélude ends with a coda that is neither rhythmically nor melodically derived from the original motive (see Ex. 52). The fact that this coda is made up of new material is not surprising in view of the fact that the piece has such a colorful title. Although it is true that these works are in no way "program" pieces, they are meant to be suggestive of their titles, and therefore this section may be the evocation of the sound of faraway horns, as is implied in the instructions given above it.

Ex 52

The musical score for Ex 52 is written for piano. It is divided into two sections. The first section is marked 'Comme une lointaine sonnerie de cors' and begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The second section is marked 'Encore plus lointain et plus retenu' and also begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The score consists of a series of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. There are four '8^a b.' markings below the left hand notes, indicating the octave of the bass clef. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a single note in the left hand.

This Prélude is very similar to "Sposalizio" in that they both rely very heavily on the harmonies derived from a single chord. It was this fact that led Lang to make the oversimplified statement that "Sposalizio" is based only on one chord. Although it was shown above (see pp. 41-46) that there were really two motives in this piece rather than just the one chord, it could almost be said that "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir" actually is built on one complex chord.

As in "Sposalizio," this harmonic device is used as a generating motive in much the same way as are melodic and rhythmic devices in the other pieces discussed in this paper. That is, different chords were created by altering the position and/or degree of the notes in the original chord (see Ex. 50. The first chord in measure 20 is G \sharp -B-F \sharp . This is the G-B flat-E chord from the original motive raised a half step.); and by using chord tones in a linear fashion (see Ex. 50).

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions

The evidence that has been presented in this paper seems more than sufficient to bring into question much of the scholarly research that has been done on both Liszt and Debussy. In the case of both composers it seems that little more than superficial judgments have been made concerning certain aspects of their music.

It was stated above (p. 2) that Liszt's remarkable ability at the piano, combined with a somewhat exhibitionistic nature led detractors to say that his original compositions were of very little musical worth. Even during his lifetime Liszt realized that his later compositions were not popular and declared that he had no hopes of seeing these late works performed in large cities such as Paris or London. Camille Saint-Saëns, in an article written in 1893, speaks of the problem encountered by Liszt in regard to his reputation and his music.

Liszt, undeniably the incarnation of the genius of the modern pianoforte, saw his compositions, for this very reason, discredited¹ and spoken of scornfully as 'pianist's music.'

The bestowing of the epithet, "pianist's music" is in itself indicative that little research had been done at that

time into Liszt's serious piano compositions. The attitude expressed by such a comment is a closed one, one which must judge the present only in terms of the past. This type of attitude allows no room for change or growth by the composer, but instead views all of his works in terms of his earliest ones.

With Debussy the case is not quite the same. Whereas Liszt was an extremely powerful personality composing music at the end of an era, Debussy was quiet and aloof, composing at a time when there was no single style prevalent. It was a time of post-Wagnerians, attempting to continue in the Wagnerian tradition, combined with totally anti-Wagnerian factions who knew only that they wanted to make a change, but had not the means at hand to do so. This is not to say that Debussy was not a popular composer. During his lifetime he was regarded in many circles as the leader of a new school of music. It was he himself who felt that this was not his role. However, it is very interesting to consider that except for a few major compositions, very little in-depth analysis has been done concerning much of his music.

It seems difficult to understand how anyone who has studied in any depth the more recent history of music could have failed to notice at least, if not tried to elucidate upon, the incredible similarity in style between the works found in the Années de pèlerinage, and those in the two books of Préludes. It is hoped that this paper has served to bring to light, if

only through circumstantial evidence, the probability that Debussy was indeed influenced quite strongly by the structural style of Liszt, and that he made use of the Lisztian principle of motivic metamorphosis in his Préludes.

More in defense of Debussy than in the theory of this paper, it must be said that it is highly unlikely that such a brilliant composer could possibly base two entire volumes of piano works on the theories of improvisation. Therefore, it seems more than likely that there must be some formalizing element involved, and as this paper has demonstrated, that element is similar enough to the organizing elements developed and used by Liszt that there is every good reason to believe that Debussy took over these ideas in his music.

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² Ibid., p. 867.

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⁵ L. M. Peppercorn, "The Piano Style in Debussy's "Preludes." Musical Opinion 60 (August, 1937): 952.

⁶ Edward Lockspeiser, Debussy: His Life and Mind. Vol. I (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962) p. 60.

⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸ Edward Lockspeiser, Debussy: His Life and Mind. Vol. II (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962) p. 44 n.3

⁹ Eric Blom, ed. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. 5th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1968) Vol. V.

¹⁰ Wilfred H. Mellers, "Final Works of Claude Debussy." Music and Letters 20 (1939): 168-178.

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² W. Brockway and H. Weinstock, Men of Music (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1939) pp. 374-375.

³ Such exceptions are: P. H. Lang, Music in Western Civilization, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941); Rey Longyear, 19th-Century Romanticism in Music (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

⁴ D. G. Mason, Great Modern Composers (New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1916. Reprint ed., 1968) pp. 90-91.

⁵ Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941) p. 870.

⁶ Richard A. Leonard, The Stream of Music (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1943) p. 337-365.

⁷ See 6

⁸ For a very informative look at the cultural and artistic movements of the 19th-century, see William Gaunt's, The Aesthetic Adventure (New York: Schocken Books, 1967).

⁹ Richard A. Leonard, The Stream of Music (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1943) p. 348.

¹⁰ Nadia Boulanger, "The Preludes," Rice Institute Pamphlet 13 (April 1926): 153-177.

¹¹ Wilfred H. Mellers "Final Works of Claude Debussy," Music and Letters 20 (1939): 168-176.

¹² Ibid., pp 8-9.

¹³ John N. Burk, "Estimating Debussy," The New Music Review 18 # 208 (1919) p. 79.

Chapter 3

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² Ibid.

³ See Nadia Boulanger, "The Preludes," Rice Institute Pamphlet 13 (April 1926), and Wilfred H. Mellers, "Final Works of Claude Debussy," Music and Letters 20 (1939).

⁴ See Edward Lockspeiser, Debussy: His Life and Mind, Vol. 2. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962).

⁵ Ibid., p. 244.

⁶ Martin Cooper, French Music From The Death of Berlioz To The Death Of Fauré. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) p. 137.

Chapter 4

¹ Camille Sant-Saëns, "Franz Liszt," Century Magazine 45 (February, 1893): 517-524.

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