

TONALITY IN THE FIRST BOOK
OF DEBUSSY'S PRELUDES

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PREFACE

This paper attempts to explore the extent to which Rudolph Reti's concepts of melodic and harmonic tonality are useful in describing Debussy's Preludes. It is hoped that this work will provide a basis for the examination and comparison of various other musical compositions, representative of different styles, in terms of tonality.

I should like to thank Dr. Beverly Parker, my supervisor, for the assistance she has given me during the preparation of this paper. I also express appreciation and thanks to Mrs Heather Gale, my typist, while to my family and friends, thank you for your patience and encouragement.

The content of this thesis, except when specifically indicated in the text, is my own original work.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-four Preludes of Debussy are published in two books of twelve preludes each. Three years exist between the publication of the first and second book, with the former appearing in 1910. These compositions, while endearing themselves to both pianist and listener, also occupy an important place in musical history and, like the Preludes of Chopin, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin, are short, independent works.

The musicologist Rudolph Reti maintains that there are two types of tonality in music. One is based on harmony; this he refers to as harmonic tonality. It is the familiar tonality of classical music. The other type is manifest through melody only; this he refers to as melodic tonality.¹

The present writer accepts that there are two types of tonality and these are elucidated in Chapter I. Having established both types, analyses of Debussy's use of specific scales, modes, chords, and parallel successions of chords, show how he was able to establish a new concept of tonality. This new concept is seen in relation to Debussy's Preludes in Book I and an analysis of the main tonics in each of these works is essential to the understanding of this concept.

Debussy warns us against taking any literary suggestion too seriously, however, a relationship between the establishment of the tonics and the inspiration behind each title can be shown, and this relationship is the final consideration in this paper.

¹ Rudolph Reti, Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1958), pp. 7 - 18.

CHAPTER I

TONALITYA) A Broad Definition of Tonality

Tonality in the broadest sense of the word means loyalty to a tonic. One tone or pitch sounds central to the overall feeling of a passage, and musical functions are experienced in relation to this central point. A striking phenomenon of music is the fact that throughout its evolution a great many pieces give preference to one tone (the tonic), which forms the tonal center to which all other tones are related. Although nearly all music has some kind of tonical focus the means of achieving tonality have varied considerably throughout history. One can formulate two types of tonality which Reti refers to as melodic and harmonic tonality.¹

B) Melodic Tonality

Example 1, cited by Reti, is according to him, representative of melodic tonality. An analysis of this example will best explain melodic tonality.

¹ Rudolph Reti, Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1958), pp. 7 - 18.

Example 1 : Jewish Chant (according to Idelsohn).



A striking feature of Example 1 is the prominence of the note E which represents a central melodic point, a "tonic", with the whole melody being understood mainly through its relationship to this basic note. It should be observed that one can interrupt the musical line at any point and still bring it to a reasonable close on E. Numerous returns are made to tonic E. It is also frequently repeated. The melody has no harmonic accompaniment. It actually resists classical harmonization. A change of certain notes, phrase lengths and rhythms would be necessary in order to harmonize this melody in the familiar classical way. The melodic shape is held together by one note which acts as a central point and is binding to the composition as a whole. The formation of this central point is horizontal rather than vertical as in classical tonality.

Melodic tonality is traceable far back in the history of music. Modern scholars such as Idelsohn provide information on Jewish music together with examples of some of the earliest Biblical chants believed to have been established in the 5th Century B.C. Many examples have survived in synagogues to the present day and use melodic tonality.

A number of different melodic formulae were relied on for the main types of Jewish chant. These vary depending on which book of the Bible is being chanted. Each book has a particular mode usually based on a tetrachord scale (eg., D - G, G - C), with its own tonic. Example 2 shows the same text sung using three different modes each with its own tonic. These modes are the Pentateuchal mode on tonic G, the Penitential mode on tonic D, and the Prophetic mode on tonic E.

Example 2 : Jewish Chant.

G
Wa-ye-hi a-hav ha-de-ba-rim ha-el-leh

D
Wa-ye-hi a-hav ha-de-ba-rim ha-el-leh

E
Wa-ye-hi a-hav ha-de-ba-rim ha-el-leh

There is a strong resemblance between Jewish chant and certain melodies of Gregorian chant. The latter also consists of a single-line melody and uses a free rhythm like Jewish chant. There is no specific time-signature for these chants, while the number of beats in each bar also varies. Specific modes are used for Gregorian chant and each mode has two tones of special importance; the finalis or final, which is usually the last note in the melody, and the reciting tone or cofinalis, which is the second most important note. The melodic shape of both chants is held together by a specific note which binds the whole. On interrupting the musical line at any one point, a reasonable close can still be made on the tonic in both cases.

C) Harmonic Tonality

Reti refers to classical tonality as harmonic tonality because it is rooted in harmony and specific harmonic progressions.

According to Willi Apel this type of tonality became firmly established only after 1650 when the relative importance of chords built on the different degrees of the scale were able to be determined in relation to a key center or tonic.¹ Major and minor scales gradually replaced the old church modes and harmonic tonality developed. The primary triads (chords I, IV, and V), built on the "tonal" degrees of the diatonic scale form the basis of classical harmonic tonality, and a gravitational tendency towards the tonic is always important. This particular tonal organization was already implicit in much music of the Renaissance, especially that written in the latter half of the 16th Century. There was a gradual development in musical composition to include the writing of four voices. The emergence of cadences with four voices was therefore made possible and these cadences became common practice. This is an important feature of harmonic tonality.

The formation of the central point or tonic is different in harmonic tonality to melodic tonality ; there is no longer a single melodic line in harmonic tonality, and melody and harmony are inter-related in the closest possible way with the harmony supporting, shaping and determining the melodic curve. As a result of this close inter-relationship, melodies are rhythmically and melodically far less free than examples of melodic tonality. Meter is generally constant throughout a piece with few tempo changes in a movement, and the number of beats in each bar is the same. Melodically intervals are relatively fixed in order to fit in with the regular phrases which are set off by

¹ Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 371.

fairly predictable cadences. In harmonic tonality, tonics can be formed horizontally and vertically. Example 3 demonstrates this point in the familiar perfect cadence.

Example 3 : Perfect cadence.



The note B shows a strong tendency to want to move to C horizontally, while root G implies the dominant chord and vertically this chord has a strong tendency to want to move to the tonic chord. Example 4 illustrates harmonic tonality :

Example 4 : Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata K.V. 576, bars 1 - 8.¹

Compared with Example 1, the above example shows less rhythmic and melodic freedom. The overall meter is $\frac{6}{8}$ and the number of beats in each bar remains constant. Four-bar phrases govern the melody with an imperfect and perfect cadence in bars 4 and 8 respectively. The melody is not held together by a single note as closely as can be seen in

¹ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sonata K.V. 576 (München-Duisburg: G. Henle Verlag, Urtext, n.d.).

melodic tonality. The construction of specific phrase lengths and the importance of cadences alter this. An interruption of the melodic line at any point, followed by immediate resolution on the tonic, would disrupt the length and symmetry of phrases. In Example 4 the two notes marked X, desire resolution to tonic D, while tonic resolution in other places would destroy the sense of line and beauty of the phrase. The shape of the melodic line depends mainly on the vertical formation of tonics in the specific chord progressions.

CHAPTER II

SCALES, MODES AND CHORDS : Their Relationship
to Melody and Harmony in the Preludes of Debussy.

A) Introduction

Debussy did away with the harmonic limitations of the preceding period and yet retained the spirit of tonality. He was able to do this by no longer relying on the diatonic scale with its customary classical progressions emphasizing cadence points. A discussion of the scales and modes that replaced the old major and minor scales is necessary, because together, these are basically responsible for the structural organization behind both melody and harmony. Through the use of specific scales and modes, and a desire to change the function of chords, Debussy was able to establish a new concept of tonality. Analyses of examples of scales, modes and chords taken from the Preludes in Book I, will help to form a basis for understanding the tonality of Debussy.

B) Scales1) The Whole-Tone Scale

Example 5 : Two Existing Versions of the Whole-Tone Scale.



The whole-tone scale originated in the music of the Far East. At the Paris Exposition of 1889 (held to celebrate the centenary

of the French Revolution) Debussy heard musicians from the Far East, Java, Bali, and Indo-China. He was fascinated by the music of the native orchestra, the gamelan, which revealed a new world of sounds. It was here that he heard the whole-tone scale. Harmonically and melodically this scale is limited owing to the presence of only one kind of interval. The feeling of tonal center is completely dispelled owing to the equal distance between all the notes. Traditional harmony depends ultimately on gravitation towards points defined by the semi-tones in the diatonic scale. Gravitation is no longer present. Debussy uses the whole-tone scale in various ways in the Preludes :

(i) A whole prelude can be written in the whole-tone scale.

"Voiles", uses the whole-tone scale to a greater degree than any other prelude. With the exception of six bars marked "en animant" which are pentatonic, and the chromatic figure in bar 31, the prelude is built completely on the whole-tone scale.

(ii) Fragments of a prelude may use the whole-tone scale.

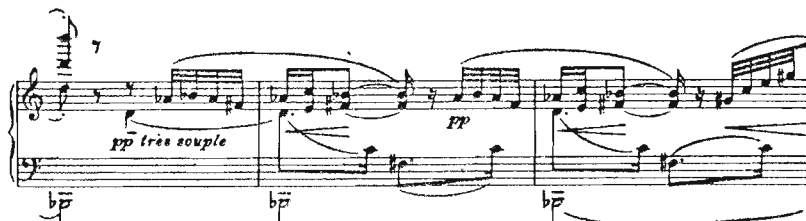
This scale and the pentatonic scale are often combined. In Example 6, the semiquavers use both forms of the whole-tone scale. This scale is combined with the pentatonic scale in bar 26.

Example 6 : "Le Vent dans la plaine", bars 22 - 27.¹

- (iii) Double third passages frequently occur using the whole-tone scale as seen in the opening of "Voiles".
- (iv) In passages using the whole-tone scale, the movement of voices tends to be horizontally determined rather than vertically determined. There is no real harmonization of melodies; a form of counterpoint exists. The two combined melodies in Example 7, are independent of each other, with their horizontal movement being important.

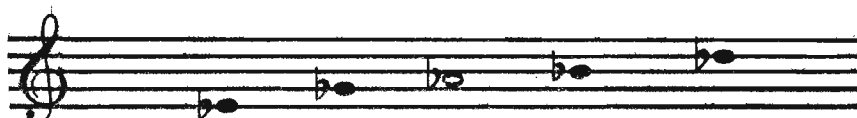
¹ Claude Debussy, Préludes for piano, Book I (Paris: Durand, 1910). All excerpts of the preludes are taken from this edition.

Example 7 : "Voiles", bars 22 - 24.



2) The Pentatonic Scale

Example 8 : The Pentatonic Scale.



The pentatonic scale is one of the oldest scales and occurs in music of nearly all ancient cultures including China, Polynesia, Africa, parts of Europe, as well as that of the Celts, Scots and American Indians.¹ A considerable number of Gregorian melodies are pentatonic. Like the whole-tone scale, and unlike the major and minor scales, the pentatonic scale includes no semitones. Although on its own it has no basic tonic, melodic landmarks are established because not all the intervals are equidistant. The following example is written in the pentatonic scale :

¹ Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 653.

Example 9 : "Voiles", bars 42 - 47.

In the above example, E flat becomes a melodic "tonic" over the B flat pedal through syncopated accentuation : E flat falls on the second quaver in each bar of four quavers. It is stressed in the first two ascending runs by an accent. The lowest note in all three runs is E flat. In bar 45, E flat is the longest note in each group of parallel octaves. This passage combines harmonic and melodic tonality because although E flat is melodically stressed, B flat is heard as the traditional dominant of E flat.

C) Modes

Example 10 : The Six Main Modes.

The Dorian Mode

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The Phrygian Mode*The Lydian Mode**The Mixolydian Mode**The Aeolian Mode**The Ionian Mode*

The origin of Debussy's modal structures is found in the medieval modes and even earlier examples. Each mode has its own peculiar characteristics that contrast it with the major and minor scales. The semitones are placed in different positions which enables one to determine which mode is being used. In Debussy's music, one note is generally rhythmically stressed while all other notes revolve around it. This note has a tonic function and a second important note may also be prominent having a dominant function. Often one's only real clue as to which mode is being used is in listening. The use of modes gives unity to small sections of the preludes and like the whole-tone and

pentatonic scales, provide a new basis on which to build melodies. Examples of four of the six main modes are taken from different sections of the preludes and analyzed in terms of how they affect Debussy's tonality.

Example 11 : "La Danse de Puck", bars 1 - 6.

The image shows a musical score for "Capricieux et léger (Op. 138)". It consists of two systems of piano notation. The first system shows the first three bars, starting with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The second system shows the next three bars, ending with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking and a "retenu." instruction. The music is in 3/4 time and features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

The Dorian mode with tonic F and dominant C is introduced. There is regular rhythmic alternation of F and C on beat one in each bar. The F - C pattern provides an harmonic axis suggesting harmonic tonality. On examining a Bach fugue which is "pure melody", most people would say its tonality is harmonic because it is based on tonic and dominant relationships, and sometimes includes the subdominant. The only difference between the theme of a Bach fugue and the theme in the above example is that the implied dominant in bar 2 here, is not a major chord as it belongs to the Dorian mode on tonic F. The implied chord is now minor.

Example 12 : "La Cathédrale engloutie", bars 1 - 6.

Profondément calme (Dans une brume doucement anore)

Although the prelude ends in C major, the Phrygian mode with tonic E is introduced. The bass pedal comprises an open fifth with the root doubled. This pedal settles on a low E and B in bar 5. E sounds as a tonic. In bar 5, the fifth B, suggests harmonic tonality but the lack of a third in the chord, and the emphasis through a held tone and depth seem more like melodic tonality. The ascending crotchets in bars 1, 3 and 5 move in parallel fourths and fifths suggesting the earliest form of organum. The notes E and B in these bars in the top voice are emphasized due to the interval leap of a fifth. B falls on a strong beat in 4 but not in 2. In bar 6, E is the highest note in the ascending line and is played in three octaves simultaneously and repeated several times.

Example 13 : "La Cathédral engloutie", bars 28 - 40.

The first five bars of Example 13 are in the Ionian mode on tonic C.

This mode resembles a C major scale. Bars 33 - 40 change to the Mixolydian mode on tonic C due to the introduction of B flat.

Although there is a change of mode the tonic is static which shows this note to be established by other than purely harmonic means. C is sustained as a low bass pedal throughout the passage. Example 13 also begins and ends on a C major chord. The dominant G is also stressed. It is sustained in its major and minor form in the Ionian and Mixolydian sections respectively. The tonic chord of C major is also held in bars 32 and 34.

Example 14 : "La Cathédrale engloutie", bars 47 - 54.

Un peu moins lent (Dans une expression allant grandissant)

Example 14 is written in the Aeolian mode on tonic G sharp. This note is the lowest in the passage and forms a bass pedal. It is also the highest and lowest note in the first phrase, and the unison G sharp in bar 49 shows this note to be the tonic rather than C sharp. The first phrase ends on a B which is the third of the tonic triad on G sharp, thus using harmonic tonality. The second and third phrases both begin on G sharp with the first ending on B and the third ending on D sharp which is the fifth of a G sharp major triad.

D) Chords

Dominant seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords are common in Debussy's Preludes. Their use is indicative of the functional disintegration in harmony. The clear-cut harmonic shapes of classical tonality became gradually obscured. With the use of these chords remaining unresolved, and the frequency of intervals such as the second and seventh appearing in these chords, a new concept of dissonance arose. These dissonant tones occur in such a way as to reduce their "shock" value to a minimum and heighten their "sound" value to a maximum.

These chords exist purely as combinations of sounds for their sonorous effect. Examples 15 and 16 illustrate the use of dominant ninth and eleventh chords.

Example 15 : "La fille aux cheveux de lin", bar 17.



Example 16 : "De pas sur la neige", bar 15.



Debussy uses the added sixth chord frequently. "Les collines d'Anacapri," and "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest," both end on an added sixth chord showing that chords are regarded as entities in their own rights, and are no longer considered in terms of their role within the harmonic progression. Examples 17 and 18 taken from the above mentioned preludes respectively, show these chords again existing purely as combinations of sounds without resolution.

Example 17 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 94 - 96.



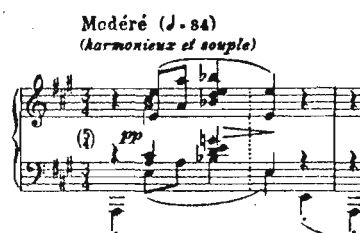
Example 18 : "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", bar 71.



Escaped chords occur frequently in the preludes. These chords may be the upper or lower neighbour chords of the tonic or dominant of the existing tonality as illustrated in the following examples : if A

is the tonic, a chord sequence of triads built on the following notes may result : A B A G sharp A. If A is the dominant, the following chord sequence of triads may result : A B flat A G sharp A. In Example 19 the added sixth chord on beat three has B flat and D as upper neighbour tones to A and C sharp respectively. The chord formed on beat three has momentarily escaped from the existing A major tonality. Although it uses neighbour tones to A major with A therefore being emphasized through melodic tonality, the notes are foreign to A major with the exception of D and E. In some instances the escaped chord or chords may not form upper or lower neighbour chords to the tonic or dominant, they may move further afield.

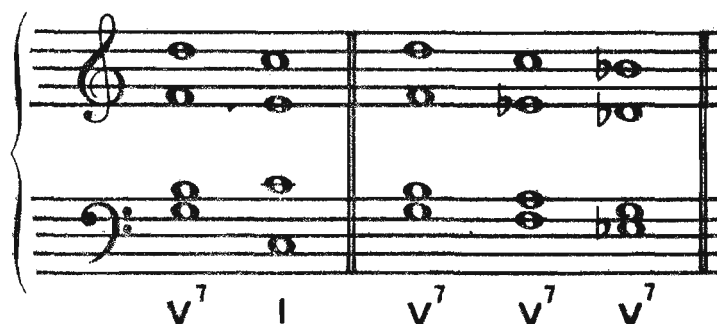
Example 19 : "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", bar 1.



Parallel successions of chords are common in Debussy's Preludes. These occur in different forms.

- a) A succession of parallel seventh chords is common. These chords have no resolution as in traditional harmonic tonality, and tonality is temporarily suspended. Example 20 shows traditional practice as opposed to a chain of unresolved parallel sevenths in non-traditional music.

Example 20 : A Resolved Seventh Chord Followed by a Chain of Unresolved Parallel Sevenths.



Example 21 : A Succession of Parallel Sevenths in "La Cathédrale engloutie", bars 62 - 64.

b) Parallel chords in root position occur frequently. The following examples show four different appearances of these chords.

Example 22 : "Danseuses de Delphes", bars 11 - 14.

In Example 22, a succession of major and minor chords ascend stepwise in parallel motion. The solo quality of the melody is minimized through parallelism. The lowest note in each chord does not function as a provider of traditional harmonic progressions. The parallel chords do not help to establish the overall tonic which is B flat. The only B flat chord of significance is the final chord in the passage.

The bass pedal F however, is established through harmonic tonality. This note is independent of the parallel chords and is the dominant of B flat.

Example 23 : "Des pas sur la neige", bars 5 - 7.



A succession of major and minor chords descend stepwise in parallel motion in Example 23. The ascending melody above these chords is independent of the bass harmonies. Tonic D of the prelude is emphasized here. It is sustained in the final D minor chord longer than the other chords, and is the lowest chord in the sequence.

Example 24 : "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", bars 34 - 36.



In Example 24, a succession of major chords move in parallel motion with their roots a third apart. There is more movement between these parallel chords by comparison to those in Examples 22 and 23. They therefore appear to play a more active roll in establishing the overall tonic which is A. The upper note in the succession begins on G the leading-note of A flat major and ends on G sharp the leading-note of

A major. This is significant in that Debussy wishes to return to A major which he is now able to do in bar 37, after the short modulatory passage which begins at bar 28 which was in A flat major.

Example 25 : "Minstrels", bars 55 - 57.



A succession of major chords including C sharp minor, move in parallel motion with their roots a second or third apart. Example 25 like the previous example, shows a fair amount of movement between the parallel chords. These chords also play a fairly active roll in establishing the overall tonic G. Note A is established in the outer voices on a portion of beat one in bar 55 while its dominant E falls on beat one, again in both outer voices, in bar 56. These two notes (A and E), are upper neighbour tones to G and D, the overall tonic and dominant of the prelude. Tonic G and dominant D are again heard in bar 57. They are the first and last chords in this bar. The tonic is established both harmonically and melodically in Example 25.

E) Scales, Modes and Chords : A summary of their overall effect on Debussy's melody and harmony.

According to Rollo Myers, "Debussy was perhaps the first composer in whose hands harmony becomes melody".¹ Passages written in the whole-tone or pentatonic scales are frequently melodically rather than harmonically conceived. Example 7 shows a form of

¹ Rollo Myers, Modern French Music (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 88.

counterpoint existing between the two melodies with no real harmonization of the melody. Example 9 using the pentatonic scale, shows no traditional harmonization of the melody and all the chords present are restricted to the five-note pentatonic scale with the "tonic" E flat mainly melodically emphasized. Passages using the whole-tone and pentatonic scales are generally transparent in texture and as a result of note-restriction in the chords, harmonic function of these chords is minimized. Although on their own, these scales have no basic tonic, a note may take on a tonic function as seen in Example 9.

In the modal examples analyzed, tonality can be melodic or harmonic or there may be a combination of both types. These passages vary in texture, with chords relating to the particular mode in use and not functioning in the traditional harmonic sense. The parallel chords in Example 13 belong to the Ionian and Mixolydian modes in their respective sections and there is no traditional chord progression. Perhaps the chords seen in Example 13 might be called "chordal melodies". The passage is simply a single melody which with its parallel voices forms a chord which progresses horizontally to the next chord. The chords in this example relate to the particular mode in use. The dominant chord in bar 29 is major as in the diatonic scale because this passage is in the Ionian mode on tonic C. The dominant in the remaining bars becomes a minor chord because the mode has changed to the Mixolydian, with tonic C remaining. In the Dorian, Aeolian and Mixolydian modes, the dominant becomes a minor chord. This change greatly affects the idea of cadencing which is so important to harmonic tonality. Another important change is the lack of raised leading-note in four of the six main modes. The Lydian and Ionian modes are the only ones with a semi-tone between the leading-note and upper tonic.

In the use of all the different chords and parallel successions of chords, resolution is almost non-existent. The numerous dissonant tones occurring, exist purely for their sound value. In the parallel successions of chords, tonality is suspended depending on the relationship between the chords. If movement between the chords is slight, their roots being only a tone away from one another, a static quality is evident, and the chords contribute little to tonality. However, if movement between the chords is greater, their roots being more than a tone apart, with changes in direction, the chords can help to establish tonality. This tonality may be melodic or harmonic or a combination of both types as in Example 25.

As a result of Debussy's use of specific scales, modes, chords, and parallel successions of chords, his melodic and harmonic style of writing altered, and led to a new concept of tonality.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSES : The Main Tonics of Each Prelude
and How They are Emphasized.

Chapter III analyses the main tonics of each prelude and the ways in which they are harmonically and melodically emphasized.

A) Danseuses de Delphes

The prelude is in ternary form with a simple key structure defining the three sections. Part I comprises bars 1 - 10 and stresses the tonic key B flat; Part II comprises bars 11 - 20 and stresses F the dominant of B flat and Part III begins at bar 21 and gradually returns to the tonic.

In Part I (see Example 26) six of the ten bars begin with an octave B flat on beat one in the bass. Four of these six bars have a chromatic ascending melody in the inner voice which begins on B flat. The tonic chord B flat is established on beat one in four of the opening ten bars. This chord also ends the phrase in bars 4 and 9. A strong movement from the tonic to the dominant and back to the tonic exists between beats one, three and one in the opening two bars. Part I is built of two similar five-bar phrases and each phrase ends with the following progression, IV - V - I. In bars 3 - 4, A is a neighbour tone to G, while G forms an appoggiatura or neighbour tone to F which is the dominant of B flat. In these same bars, A also moves to B flat by implication. It is as if G - A, G - A is reaching for tonic B flat. While the tonic and dominant are established using melodic tonality in bars 3 - 4, Part I relies mainly on harmony and harmonic progression

and is basically diatonic to B flat. Although there are no obvious four-bar phrases as in traditional harmony, there is symmetry between the two existing five-bar phrases. These factors show the predominance of harmonic tonality over melodic tonality in Part I.

Example 26 : "Danseuses de Delphes", bars 1 - 10.

The musical score for Example 26, "Danseuses de Delphes", bars 1-10, is presented in three systems. The tempo is marked "Lent et grave (♩.44)" and the character is "doux et soutenu". The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The right hand plays a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords and a bass line. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and pianissimo (*pp*). Harmonic markings "IV V I" are placed below the bass line in the second and third systems, indicating the chord progression in the left hand.

In Part II, the dominant F is stressed in two main ways. It is held as a long bass pedal in the first four bars, and in bars 18 - 20, F is the final chord in the succession of three chords which descend stepwise in root position. Although pedal F is the dominant of tonic B flat which gives harmonic emphasis, F does not generate dominant harmonies and is independent of the parallel chords.

In Part III, tonic B flat is stressed at the beginning of each melodic phrase in bars 21, 23, 25 and 26. The full chord in each of these phrases is only completed on the second half of beat one and therefore stressed through a syncopated effect. In bars 27 - 28, notes A, G and F, which also featured in bars 3 - 4, are emphasized. They are the highest notes in these bars. From bar 25 to the end an open B flat

octave is heard in the bass on the strongest beat of the bar preceded by its dominant. The tonic B flat is finally heard as a single detached low bass note with a B flat chord tied against it.

Summary

Tonality is almost entirely harmonic. The overall ternary form relies on movement from the tonic, to the dominant, and back to the tonic. The material is mainly diatonic and traditional harmonic progressions and cadences are a common feature.

B) Voiles

"Voiles" uses the whole-tone scale to a greater degree than any other prelude. With the exception of six bars marked "en animant" which are pentatonic, and the chromatic figure in bar 31, the prelude is built entirely on the whole-tone scale. In this scale every note is equidistant from every other note and therefore the scale could begin on any note and still retain the same scale pattern. This means that no single note acts as a tonic in the whole-tone scale as is the case in traditional major and minor scales. The perfect cadence between the dominant and tonic is also impossible since no perfect fifth is present in the scale. Although the whole-tone scale by itself has no tonic, certain factors tend to establish B flat as the main tonal center of the prelude.

- i) B flat is constantly repeated and when it is not repeated as a minim, it sets up a rhythmic ostinato which begins at bar 5 and varies slightly.
- II) The lowest note in the bass throughout the prelude is B flat, and this position gives it added prominence.

iii) B flat is closely related to the other notes in the composition's overall design. In Example 27, B flat is the highest and final sustained note in the opening two-bar motive. In Example 28, B flat becomes a pivot. A flat and C are both a major second away from B flat and together they precede it, while B flat is sustained longer than any other note in the group. Throughout the prelude, melodic tonality is emphasized.

Example 27 : "Voiles", bars 1 - 2.

Modéré (♩. 66)
(Dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant)

Example 28 : "Voiles", bars 22 - 23.

In Example 29, E flat becomes a "melodic tonic" over the B flat pedal through syncopated accentuation. E flat falls on the second quaver in each bar of four quavers and it is stressed in the first two ascending runs by an accent. The lowest note in all three runs is E flat and in bar 45, E flat is the longest note in each group of parallel octaves. Example 29 shows a combination of melodic and harmonic tonality, because although E flat is melodically stressed, B flat is heard as the traditional dominant of E flat.

Example 29 : "Voiles", bars 42 - 47 .

Summary

Traditional harmony is normally associated with the major and minor scales. It is absent in the prelude due to the use of the whole-tone and pentatonic scales. With the exception of the six pentatonic bars, tonality is almost entirely melodic with there being a constant relationship to the central melodic point B flat. The six pentatonic bars (see Example 29), although using no perfect cadence in which the leading-note is followed by the tonic, expose a relationship between E flat and B flat which is based on harmonic tonality.

C) Le Vent dans la plaine

The prelude is in ternary form. Part I comprises bars 1 - 27; Part II comprises bars 28 - 43 and Part II begins at bar 44 with a recapitulation of the opening idea and continues to the end. Although some sections contain rather ambiguously defined tonal centers there

are others which are clearly defined. The main tonic binding the composition is B flat which features prominently in Part I and Part III.

The keysignature of six flats suggests either G flat major or E flat minor, but the repetition of the B flat pedal in numerous bars suggests that B flat has a tonic function. It appears that bars 1 - 8 fall into the Phrygian mode on B flat. In these bars, B flat and C flat form an ostinato figure with B flat being given more emphasis. This note falls on the beat and it has a recurring pedal function. B flat is also the lowest tone in the passage. Tonality is melodic rather than harmonic in bars 1 - 8. E flat becomes the new tonic in bars 9 - 12 (Example 30). A dominant seventh on E flat appears in inversions in the descending right hand chords and E flat is stressed as a low bass pedal. The original tonic B flat now becomes the dominant of E flat using harmonic tonality.

Example 30 : "Le Vent dans la plaine", bars 9 - 12.

The texture in bars 15 - 20, resembles the opening eight bars, with a shift of tonic from B flat to B double flat. The new tonic is stressed in much the same way as was the tonic in the opening section, however, the ostinato figure is now on B double flat and C flat. In bars 22 - 27, no single tonic is suggested. The diminished fifth (G - D flat) is prominent in bars 22 and 24. The fifth falls on beat one and it is sustained as a pedal point. In bars 25 and 27 the augmented fourth (A flat - D) which is the same as a diminished fifth is prominent.

The fourth like the fifth also falls on beat one and functions as a pedal point.

In Part II, many different tones are emphasized. Example 31 shows three different tones stressed in a short space of time in "explosive" chords.

Example 31 : "Le Vent dans la plaine", bars 33 - 34.



Tonic B flat returns in Part III and it is stressed in much the same way as was the tonic in bars 1 - 8 in Part I. In addition, B flat is now heard as an inner voice pedal in bars 46 - 47 and in the last six bars it is sustained throughout the bass as a semibreve. Finally, the last two bars which include B flat, should be played in the quietest possible way so as to still allow the sound to vibrate - "laissez vibrer."

Summary

Within the various sections, the numerous pedals forming tonics are generally melodically established. The overall relationship between the sectional tonics and the main overall tonic which is B flat, is both melodic and harmonic. In Example 30, E flat and B flat are stressed. B flat is heard as the traditional dominant of E flat and this relationship is therefore based on harmonic tonality. The overall

relationship between the tonic E flat in Example 30 and the main tonic B flat is also harmonic, because E flat is a perfect fourth away from B flat. In contrast with Example 30, bars 15 - 20 use melodic tonality. B double flat is melodically stressed, and because this note is a neighbour tone to the main tonic which is B flat, melodic tonality governs the existing relationship between these two notes.

D) Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir

The main tonal center of the prelude is A. Although richly varied harmonies occur frequently throughout the prelude, an overall unity is achieved through the recurrence of passages that emphasize tonic A. This note is firmly established at the beginning and end of the prelude.

In Example 32 showing the opening motive, A is the first chord that is heard. In the following chord, B flat and D form upper neighbour tones to A and C sharp giving melodic emphasis to A. Between bars 1 and 2, A is preceded by its own dominant suggesting a perfect cadence and therefore harmonic tonality.

Example 32 : "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", bars 1 - 2.

Modéré (♩ = 64)
(harmonieux et souple)

In bars 1 - 14, tonic A is the lowest note in the passage and it forms a pedal. Attention is drawn to A due to its appearance on a different beat of every bar before it is sustained as a dotted minim in bar 9. A new motive written in quavers is introduced in bars 9 - 10

and C sharp and D sharp are stressed through repetition. These notes are combined with other quavers in successive bars and use the pentatonic and whole-tone scales. In bars 15 - 23, C sharp and D sharp form a recurring ostinato figure with D sharp being given more emphasis because it falls on beat one. The relationship between D sharp and the overall tonic A is a tritone, showing the breakdown of traditional harmonic tonality. The opening motive stressing A reappears in bar 24 and A is emphasized in the same way as seen before. In bar 28 there is a semitonal shift from tonic A to tonic A flat with the motive in bar 28 resembling the opening motive. Example 33 shows that A flat is now the first chord that is heard. In the following chord, B double flat and D flat form upper neighbour tones to A flat and C giving melodic emphasis to A flat, which because it forms a lower neighbour tone to the overall tonic A, uses melodic tonality.

Example 33 : "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", bar 28.



E flat forms a low bass pedal in bar 30 and it is the dominant of the tonic A flat which features in the two descending runs in bars 31 and 33 and forms the lowest sustained note in the A flat section with the exception of E flat.

In order to return to the tonic A, Debussy uses a series of chromatically related chords in root position to weaken the feeling of A flat as seen in Example 34. On examining the upper voice in this succession of chords, Debussy begins on G the leading-note of A flat and ends on G sharp the leading-note of A. By doing this, he is able to establish A again which he does immediately in the descending run in

bar 37.

Example 34 : "Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", bar 34 - 37.

la basse un peu appuyée et soutenue

The opening motive reappears in bar 37. It is followed by a short section which emphasizes the tonic C sharp and the relationship between C sharp and the overall tonic A is harmonic because C sharp forms part of the tonic triad of A. An ornamented version of the opening motive appears in bar 44 before the return of the low recurring bass pedal in bar 46. An A major chord in second inversion appears in bars 50 - 53 and this chord is approached melodically by its upper neighbour tones which are F sharp, D sharp and B. In the final bar a single accented A appears in the bass.

Summary

The main tonic A is a central point through which the prelude is understood. A is established both melodically, through neighbour tone relationships, and harmonically. In bars 28 - 36, the dominant pedal E flat and the tonic A flat form a traditional relationship which is based on harmonic tonality. There is an equal interaction of melodic and harmonic tonality throughout the prelude.

E) Les collines d'Anacapri

The prelude is in ternary form and the largely diatonic material has tonic B as a central point in the three sections. Part I comprises bars 1 - 48; Part II comprises bars 49 - 65 and Part III comprises bars 66 - 96. Melody determines form in the prelude and the two main melodies in Part I at bars 14 and 31 are heard again in the recapitulation at bars 66 and 80. Part II is built on a new melody which does not appear in the outer two sections.

The opening bell-like motive (Example 35) appears in all three Parts and therefore gives unity. This pentatonic motive establishes B as being melodically more important than the other notes even though the pentatonic scale on its own has no tonic. B is the first and last note in the motive as well as being the lowest and highest note. This note is also established on beat one in the bar with the interval between the first two notes (B and F sharp) creating movement from the tonic to the dominant. All the notes belonging to the motive are sustained in a chord in bar 2, with B again the lowest and highest note. This motive appears five times in Part I with the last two appearances in bars 42 and 43 in diminution. In Part II it is heard in bars 63 and 65. In Part III it only appears in diminution with its last call in bars 92 and 93 over the tonic pedal B with a crescendo from the low to high B.

Example 35 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 1 - 2.



In the tarantella - melody seen in Example 36, there is a strong suggestion of the Dorian mode on C sharp. The melody centers around G sharp and C sharp which are the dominant and the tonic of this

mode. C sharp is emphasized by being the longest and highest note. The tarantella - melody is related to the overall tonic B in various ways. The first accented note in the melody (C sharp) is the upper neighbour tone to B emphasizing melodic tonality. However, the pedal figure on D sharp and F sharp uses harmonic tonality because these notes are the third and fifth of B major triad.

Example 36 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 14 - 20.

The second melody in Part I (Example 37) is subsidiary, for it appears briefly and only once in the prelude and it is relatively short. It has a minor quality beginning in G minor with its opening notes forming a diminished seventh chord on F sharp which is the dominant of the overall tonic B. This relationship emphasizes the use of harmonic tonality. There is a chromatic descent to A natural in bar 28 which forms part of the dominant seventh on D. Against the left hand melody, a F sharp pedal continues for a number of bars suggesting harmonic tonality because F sharp is the dominant of B major and the leading-note of G minor.

Example 37 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 24 - 30.

The "popular song" in Example 38, begins on the up beat of bar 32 and like the tarantella - melody it is repeated in Part III. This melody is diatonic to B major and a broad analysis of the first chord in most bars established the dominant and the tonic of B showing that the tonality is harmonic. G sharp also features prominently in this melody being stressed through a crescendo and as a result of a tie over the bar line. This note forms a clashing second with the dominant pedal F sharp resulting in a melodic relationship between these two notes which are neighbour tones. While the dominant pedal F sharp remains throughout Example 38 it has been suggested that the prominence of G sharp (the sixth degree of B major) foreshadows the final cadence in the prelude which ends on the added sixth chord of the tonic B.

Example 38 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 31 - 39.

The melody in Part II has been described as a "Neapolitan-type love song", and it is seen in Example 39. This melody is mainly diatonic although the semitone D sharp to E is stressed by falling on beat one and then counteracted by C double sharp to D sharp which also falls on a strong beat. The tonic and dominant chords of B major are stressed mainly through the alternation of these chords from bar to bar as shown in Example 39. The roots of these two chords (B and F sharp), fall frequently on strong beats and very often have a pedal function while F sharp is also given additional emphasis through repetition.

Example 39 : "Les collines d'Anacapri", bars 49 - 58.

Modéré et expressif

Plus modéré

Rubato

un peu marqué

un peu marqué

No new melodies occur in Part III and the final chord already mentioned, is an added sixth chord on the tonic B which is seen in Example 40.

Example 40 : An Added Sixth Chord .

This final chord was foreshadowed in two main sections of the prelude :

- i) G sharp forms the dominant of the Dorian mode in Example 36.
- ii) G sharp is also stressed in Example 38.

Summary

Tonality is almost entirely harmonic with the prelude being mainly diatonic and centering around the tonic B. Traditional harmonic progressions are a common feature and the tonic and the dominant of B are often heard. Although melodic tonality occurs as seen in Example 36, the prominent pedal figure on D sharp and F sharp in the same example uses harmonic tonality because these notes are the third and fifth of B major triad.

F) Des pas sur la neige

The main tonal center is D minor. Although there are many notes and chords foreign to this key in the numerous short sections, overall unity is achieved through the frequent presence of the pedal point on D and the ostinato figure (D - E, E - F). Both these binding elements are present in bar 1.

Bars 1 - 4 (Example 41) use a D natural minor scale. E is emphasized by being the highest note and it forms an upper neighbour tone to the tonic D. These four bars end on a sustained A which is the dominant of D.

Example 41 : "Des pas sur la neige", bars 1 - 4.

Triste et lent (♩. 44)

p progressif et douloureux

piu pp!

Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé.

In bars 5 - 7, the outer voices belong to the Dorian mode on D and move in contrary motion. The melody begins on A the dominant of this mode and the second melody note (B natural) is accented and forms an upper neighbour tone to the dominant A using melodic tonality. The introduction of B natural is important because the passage can no longer be in D natural minor scale which has B flat. The third melody note (C) is accentuated with a stress sign and forms the lower neighbour tone to the tonic D. In common with the opening phrase, E is again the highest sustained note, and in bars 6 - 7 it is tied over the bar line. A melodic relationship exists between E and C and the return of D in bars 7 - 8, with E and C being neighbour tones to D. The final chord heard before the new idea begins in bar 8 is D minor which is the lowest sustained chord in the descending sequence.

The harmonies change in bars 8 - 15, and F sharp and its dominant C sharp are prominent in the first two bars in this section. F sharp and C form a tritone on beat one in bar 8 and C moves to C sharp on beats three and four with the resultant chord formed being a dominant seventh on C sharp. Movement between beats one and three in bars 7 and 8 is from the tonic to the dominant which suggests harmonic tonality. In bar 10, C sharp is enharmonically changed to a dominant seventh on D flat. The bass melody in bar 11, begins in A flat minor on its tonic and goes into A flat major. The dominant of the key of A flat (E flat) is emphasized by being the highest note in the passage and by being tied on the half beat. In bars 12 and 13 the tonic triad of A flat major forms part of the melody and A flat is approached by its upper neighbour tone B flat. The tonic A flat in this passage forms a lower neighbour tone to the dominant A of the overall tonic key of D minor. F sharp returns in bar 14 falling on strong beats. In contrast with bars 8 and 9, the tritone established between F sharp and C remains.

In bar 15, C natural prepares for a return to the tonic D in bar 16 with C natural being the leading-note of the Dorian mode on D.

In bars 16 - 18, D and A flat are stressed and the tritone sound features again. A flat is the dominant of D flat (C sharp) which features in bars 8 and 9. In the repeated bass ostinato figure in bars 16 - 18, A flat falls on the beat while this note also ends both right hand phrases in bars 17 and 18. A natural returns in bars 19 and 20 and this note forming the end and beginning of the phrases, is the dominant of the overall tonic D.

The melody in Example 42, is in the Dorian mode on the tonic A flat with the minor version of this triad outlined in the melody. The highest note in the first two bars is E flat which is the dominant of A flat while in bar 23, the tonic A flat forms the peak of the phrase. An A flat - D tritone relationship is again heard in bar 24 and shows the breakdown of traditional harmonic tonality.

Example 42 : "Des pas sur la neige", bar 21 - 25 .

En animant surtout dans
l'expression
p expressif et tendre

sempre pp

retenu - *mf*

In bars 26 - 28, D is again the main tonic with a full D minor chord heard in bar 27. A flat reappears in bars 28 - 31 and the melody is again in the Dorian mode on the tonic A flat with this note emphasized in the same way as seen in the passage which begins at bar 21. A progression of parallel first inversion chords is present now

and these also fall into the Dorian mode on the tonic A flat. In contrast with bar 23, the highest two notes in bar 30 are C flat and A flat which form part of an A flat minor triad.

Example 43 shows the return of D minor in the final bars. In bars 31 - 32 D flat is chromatically changed to D which is followed by C sharp, the leading-note of D minor. The ostinato figure and pedal D both heard at the beginning of the prelude, are again emphasized. The final chord which is sustained and played as quietly as possible is D minor. This chord uses both the highest and lowest register of the piano simultaneously.

Example 43 : "Des pas sur la neige", bars 31 - 36.

(... Des pas sur la neige)

Summary

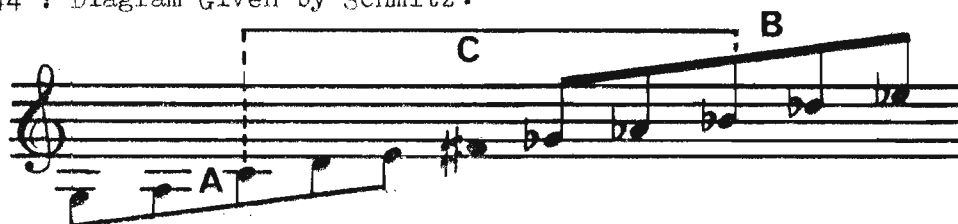
Tonality is predominantly melodic in the prelude with traditional harmonic progressions and cadences being absent. In the passages emphasizing the main tonic D, this note is generally approached from upper or lower neighbour tones. In bars 8 - 9 there is a brief hint of harmonic tonality with the chords moving from the tonic to the dominant but this does not last. The main overall relationship between keys is melodic because A flat and E flat which appear frequently are neighbour tones to A and D which are the main dominant and tonic of the prelude.

G) Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest

The prelude is in ternary form although the divisions are not clearly defined. The pedal points and thematic material are largely responsible for the division of the prelude as follows : Part I comprises bars 1 - 22; Part II comprises bars 23 - 53 and Part III begins at bar 54 and continues to bar 71.

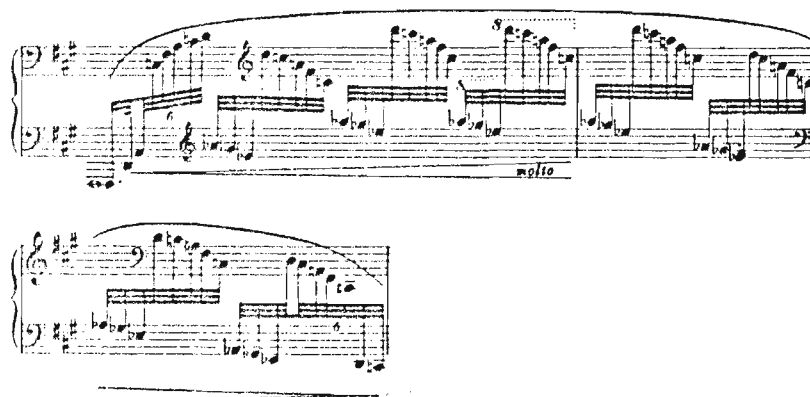
According to Schmitz this prelude is based on the following two separate and opposed pentatonic scales (A and B) and a resultant whole-tone scale (C).¹

Example 44 : Diagram Given by Schmitz.



Although scales A, B and C have no tonic as such, F sharp or G flat forms an axis as seen in the diagram. The main tonic of this prelude is F sharp, and it recurs as a low bass note in thirty-six of the seventy-one bars giving tonal unity. Examples 45 and 46 are only two of many examples based on the two pentatonic scales (A and B) and the whole-tone scale (C) respectively.

Example 45 : "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", bars 5 - 6



¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 148.

Example 46 : "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", bars 19 - 20.



F sharp is given emphasis in a number of ways in Part I and Part III. The opening arpeggiated figure uses a diminished triad built on the low F sharp to which the sixth is also added. In bars 7 - 9, a tremelo is established on beat one between the tonic F sharp and the dominant C sharp. The chords against the tremelo begin with a full F sharp major chord which is sustained longer than the other chords. The tremelo continues from bars 10 - 14 only now a semitone appears between F sharp and its upper neighbour tone G natural using melodic tonality. In Example 47, tonality is both melodic and harmonic. G is an upper neighbour tone to tonic F sharp in the first bar supporting melodic tonality. A sharp and C sharp in bars 17 and 18 respectively, form part of F sharp major triad supporting harmonic tonality. In these two bars, F sharp appears on all the strong beats. It is also played in four octaves simultaneously.

Example 47 : "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", bars 17 - 18.

Revenir progressivement au mouvement Animé

The final four bars of Part I have F sharp as the main pedal heard on the half beat in the bass. In bars 19 and 20, F sharp is the lowest note in the opening sustained repeated chord. F sharp also features in the ascending whole-tone scale run beginning on C natural.

In bars 23 - 34 it is difficult to establish a main tonic. It appears that C could have a tonic function because this note is heard frequently on the beat, however, this is not the case. In bar 26, C, D and B flat, sound like a dominant ninth chord on C, but in the same bar, C, D and F sharp, sound like a dominant seventh chord on D. Chromatic movements in this passage beginning at bar 30 lead to bar 35 where C sharp and B are prominent notes. C sharp is re-iterated in the right hand covering three octaves. C sharp also forms the lowest note of the chord on beat one in bars 35 - 37. The dominant seventh of F sharp is implied with the prominence of C sharp and bass pedal B and this relationship uses harmonic tonality.

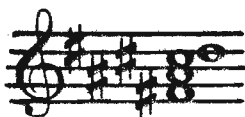
D sharp becomes the main tonal center in Example 48. D sharp is the upper neighbour tone of the overall dominant which is C sharp showing that the choice of keys within a section often establishes an overall melodic relationship with the main tonic or dominant. D sharp is sustained as a semibreve pedal note in bars 43 - 45 while an octave trill is heard in a high register of the piano beginning at bar 47. The chord on beat one in bar 47 also emphasizes the dominant seventh on D sharp. In bar 52 an octave tremelo on D sharp answers the octave tremelo in bar 47.

Example 48 : "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", bars 43 - 53 .

Part III begins at bar 54 and the tonic of F sharp returns. F sharp falls on strong beats and is kept throughout the bar, whereas the other bass tone changes at the half bar. A new motive appears in bar 63 with F sharp emphasized from here to the end. F sharp is the lowest note in these bars with the exception of one appearance of C sharp in bar 69, which suggests movement from the dominant to the tonic. F sharp falls on three of the four beats in the bar, including the two

stronger beats in bars 63 - 66. F sharp is also the highest note in the rolled accented right hand chord in these bars, and in bar 67, it is sustained in three of the four voices. A tremelo emphasizing F sharp, C sharp and D sharp leads in a crescendo to the final accented chord which is an added sixth chord built on F sharp (see next example).

Example 49 : An Added Sixth Chord.



Summary

There is a combination of melodic and harmonic tonality. The prelude is understood mainly through its relationship to the central point F sharp. This note is sometimes approached melodically through neighbour tones, and sometimes it is seen combined with C sharp, its dominant, which emphasizes harmonic tonality. There is a similarity between "Danseuses de Delphes," and this prelude, in that both use an overall ternary form with Part III returning to the tonic. However, the relationship of keys in Part II of "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest" is not an obvious dominant relationship emphasizing harmonic tonality. The dominant C sharp is present, but other notes are also important. Traditional harmonic progressions and cadences are not a feature of this prelude. Use of the pentatonic and whole-tone scales results in a more melodic style of writing.

H) La fille aux cheveux de lin

The prelude is in ternary form. Part I comprises bars 1 - 18 ; Part II bars 19 - 23 and Part III bars 24 - 39. Thematically and tonally Part I and Part III are similar, each having G flat as the main tonic.

Example 50 shows that the opening pentatonic melody establishes G flat as the main note in this phrase. This note is stressed through repetition of pitch and alternation of notes G flat - E flat - G flat. G flat is harmonically emphasized in the plagal cadence between bars 2 and 3, and the tonic chord on G flat is sustained in these bars.

Example 50 : "La fille aux cheveux de lin", bars 1 - 4.

Très calme et doucement expressif (J.68)

The opening melody returns in bar 8 and is accompanied by a chain of seventh chords which all possess G flat. The dominant seventh chords on beat one of bars 8 and 9, are both built on G flat. There is a perfect cadence between bars 9 and 10 with G flat again stressed through pitch repetition and alternation. In bars 10 and 11, G flat is sustained and the melody outlines a G flat triad, with the notes of this triad falling on the beat. This G flat tonality is maintained in bars 12 and 13. The highest and lowest note in these bars is G flat and the bass G flat has a pedal function. In bar 14, G flat is stressed through alternation; while the left hand moves from G flat to A flat, and back to G flat, the right hand moves from G flat to B flat, and back to G flat. After the parallel 4 chords in bar 14, where G flat is the first note in the outer voices of the bar, C flat (the subdominant of G flat) is established in two bars.

In Part II, there is a brief shift of tonal center to E flat which is the submediant of G flat. Harmonic tonality is established in the relationship between these two keys. In bars 19 - 21, an E flat triad is heard on beat one. E flat is also stressed through repetition of pitch and alternation. This note moves to C and then back to E flat, which is sustained as a pedal in bars 19 and 20. It is also the lowest and highest note in Part II. In bar 21 E flat reaches a climax, it is played mezzo forte over the bar line and is the loudest note in the prelude.

Part III begins at bar 24 with the return of G flat, and this section repeats material and tonal centers found in Part I. C flat the subdominant of G flat is touched upon again. In bars 28 - 30, C flat forms a pedal. This pedal is combined with the opening pentatonic melody which is now heard an octave higher than in Part I. The melody seen in Example 51 is the same as the opening melody, and in addition bars 31 - 32 are augmented. E flat minor, (the chord built on the sixth degree of G flat major), is emphasized in bar 31 by being sustained throughout the bar in root position. In bar 32, tonic G flat is sustained in root position.

Example 51 : "La fille aux cheveux de lin", bars 28 - 32.

In bar 33 the parallel 4 chords (which appear in bar 14), recur with G flat emphasized as it was previously. The tonic chord G flat is

established four bars from the end and sustained. Its rolled pianissimo effect lingers on, with the top note of the chord (G flat), being the highest note in the prelude.

Summary

Although the tonic (G flat) is stressed melodically in small ways such as through alternation or by being the highest note in a melodic phrase, tonality is largely harmonic. The prelude is mainly diatonic, featuring traditional harmonic progressions and cadences.

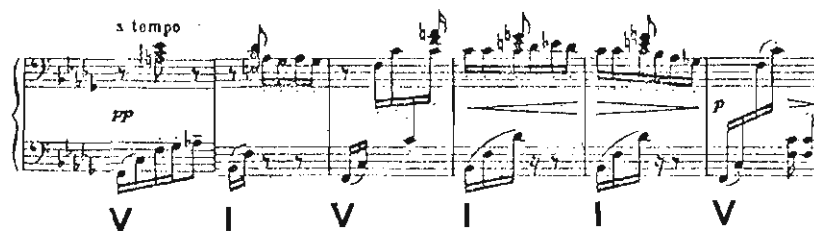
I) La Sérénade interrompue

The majority of the piece centers around F and B flat. These two notes form the dominant and tonic of B flat minor, which is suggested by the key signature. There are only two short passages where neither F nor B flat are central points and these are in the "interruptions" beginning at bar 80 and bar 87. The key here is D major with this chord heard on beat one of each of these bars. Tonic D and dominant A combine to form a pedal point on the first beat of each successive bar.

Dominant F, features prominently throughout the prelude. It is the first note of the prelude and falls on beat one. Through a combination with its upper neighbour G flat, it is emphasized in bars 1 and 2. The phrase in bar 5 begins on F and changes direction on F. It moves through the Phrygian mode on B flat, with F being the dominant of this mode.

In Example 52, alternate bars suggest dominant and tonic harmony with the root of each of these chords falling on beat one. In bars 19 and 20, A natural and B flat are neighbours with B flat being stressed through a melodic approach. This example therefore uses both harmonic and melodic tonality.

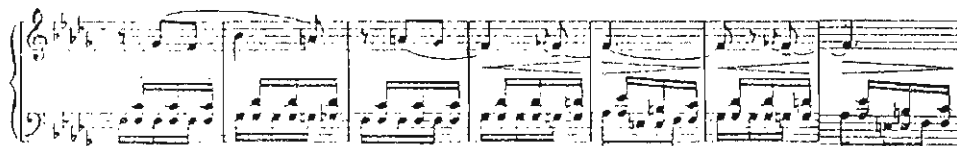
Example 52 : "La sérénade interrompue", bars 19 - 24.



A strumming effect is achieved in bar 25 through the alternation of the fifth on the dominant of B flat minor (F - C), with the neighbouring fifth above and below it. This passage uses melodic tonality. Dominant F, falls on each beat in the bar. There is repetition of material before the appearance of a "Moorish" melody in bar 54.

Example 53 shows the "Moorish" melody which uses notes belonging to B flat harmonic minor. F the dominant of B flat, is stressed in both hands. The left hand strumming is similar to that seen in bar 25, with the tonality being melodic. In the right hand, F falls on beat one in four of the seven bars and F is frequently approached from its upper neighbour tone, G flat.

Example 53 : "La sérénade interrompue", bars 54 - 60.



In the passage from bar 63 - 72, B flat is frequently included in the left hand strumming accompaniment and often falls on beat one in

the bar. The melody in these bars consists of three phrases and each one ends in B flat. This note is frequently approached through its upper and lower neighbour tones in these bars (C and A natural). Tonality is melodic with a strong feeling of B flat harmonic minor present.

In Example 54, F is again the central melodic point. This note is the first and last note as well as the highest and lowest note in the passage. The phrase begins on an accented F which falls on beat one in bar 76. There is a descent through B flat melodic minor to G flat in bar 77. This G flat is an upper neighbour tone or appoggiatura to F. One expects F at any moment, but instead G flat is repeated, and when F finally arrives in bar 80, it becomes the mediant of the new key (F sharp in D major).

Example 54 : "La sérénade interrompue", bars 76 - 80.

From bars 95 - 112, B flat falls on beat one in each successive bass bar. The triad of B flat minor is outlined in the right hand melody beginning at bar 106. In bar 101, the perfect fifth on beat one is approached from the tritone formed in the previous bar on beat one. In bars 100 - 101, E natural (the lower neighbour tone to F) moves to the dominant F. The melody in bar 113 is reminiscent of that in bar 63, having the tonic B flat stressed in a similar way. The lower bass note in the left hand on beat one gradually descends chromatically from F to E flat. In bar 125, F the dominant, returns. The material is much the same as previously heard in bars 125 - 130. In bars 131 - 132, F is emphasized through an upper and lower neighbour chord. In the final two bars there

is a perfect cadence. The final B flat minor triad is approached through parallel motion by its lower neighbour tones (A flat, C and E flat), thus using melodic tonality.

Summary

The main tonal centers are B flat and F. These two notes outline a perfect fifth and form a strong harmonic basis. At times tonality is harmonic with alternate bars emphasizing dominant and tonic harmony. At other times tonality is melodic with these notes featuring prominently as seen in the "Moorish" melodies beginning at bars 54 and 63.

J) La Cathédrale engloutie

It is difficult to establish one main tonal center for the prelude. Different sections have their own tonics which are frequently emphasized through sustained pedal points. Although the prelude ends in C major, the Phrygian mode with tonic E is introduced in bars 1 - 6. The bass pedal comprises an open fifth with the root doubled. This pedal finally settles on a low E and B in bar 5. This E sounds as a tonic. The fifth suggests harmonic tonality, but the lack of a third and the emphasis through a held tone and depth seem more like melodic tonality. The ascending crotchets in bars 1, 3 and 5 move in parallel fourths and fifths suggesting the earliest form of organum. The notes E and B in these bars in the top voice, are emphasized due to the interval leap of a fifth. B falls on a strong beat in 4, but not in 3. In bar 6, E is the highest note in the ascending line and is played in three octaves simultaneously and repeated several times. C sharp minor is established in bars 7 - 12 and E, the mediant of C sharp minor, continues to be stressed. This note is accented and forms a pedal in

two octaves played simultaneously.

In Example 55, many different tones are emphasized. B is stressed in the first three bars. A B major chord is the first and last chord within each phrase before E flat is reached in bar 19. In the bass, B is the lowest note in each bar and the running quavers emphasize tonic B and dominant F sharp. With the exception of G sharp, the accompaniment consists only of B and F sharp. In bars 19 - 21, E flat is stressed. An E flat chord is established on beat one of each of these three bars. In addition, E flat forms a low pedal on beat one in bars 19 and 20. In all three bars the interval of a fifth between tonic E flat, and dominant B flat, is repeated in the quaver runs. Bars 16 - 21 are based on harmonic tonality with the first three bars being diatonic to B major, and the second three bars being diatonic to E flat major. In bars 22 - 27 all the notes belong to C major, and yet even though C appears in nearly every bar with its upper neighbour tone D against it, C is not an obvious tonic.

Example 55 : "La Cathedrale engloutie", bars 16 - 27.

Peu à peu sortant de la brume

sempre pp

p marcato pp

p

marcato

Example continued on page 56.

Augmentez progressivement (Sans presser)

Bars 28 - 32 are in the Ionian mode on tonic C, and bars 33 - 40 change to the Mixolydian on tonic C due to the introduction of B flat. Although there is a change of mode the tonic is static; this shows that the note is established by non-harmonic means. C is sustained as a low bass pedal throughout the passage. The tonic chord on C major is sustained in bars 28, 32, 34 and 40. The dominant chord on G is also stresses, and it is sustained in its major and minor form in the Ionian and Mixolydian sections respectively.

Example 56 is written in the Aeolian mode on tonic G sharp. This note is the lowest in the passage and forms a bass pedal. It is also the highest and lowest note in the first phrase, and the unison G sharp in bar 49 shows this note to be the tonic rather than C sharp. The first phrase ends on a B which is the third of a G sharp major triad, suggesting harmonic tonality. The second and third phrases both begin on G sharp, and while the first ends on B, the third ends on D sharp. D sharp is the fifth of a G sharp major triad and therefore harmonic tonality is again implied.

Example 56 : "La Cathédrale engloutie", bars 47 - 54.

Un peu moins lent (Dans une expression allant grandissant)

Bars 55 - 61 are still in the Aeolian mode, however the tonic is now C sharp instead of G sharp; C sharp being the subdominant of G sharp using harmonic tonality. The first two phrases in the bass begin and end on C sharp which is heard as an octave. The dominant G sharp of C sharp is also emphasized. G sharp is the lowest note in the passage and forms a bass pedal.

Bars 72 - 83 correspond to bars 28 - 39 only the right hand is now transposed an octave lower and the bass undulates with C falling on each beat of the bar. C remains the tonic from bar 84 to the end. It appears as a single low bass pedal in bar 84 while from bar 85 to the end, the bass pedal comprises an open fifth with the root doubled.

Summary

Tonality is predominantly harmonic. Numerous sections have their own tonics which are frequently combined with their dominants and sustained as pedal points. Movement from the tonic to the dominant suggests harmonic tonality even if the writing is not traditionally harmonic. The frequent use of modes, parallel chords and organum, prevent the writing of traditional harmonic progressions and cadences.

K) La Danse de Puck

The prelude is built of five distinct sections. Part I comprises bars 1 - 17, Part II bars 18 - 52, Part III bars 53 - 76, Part IV bars 77 - 86, and Part V bars 87 - 96. Part I, Part III and Part V are built around the opening theme suggesting rondo form. The Dorian mode with tonic F and dominant C is introduced in bars 1 - 6. There is regular rhythmic alternation of F and C on beat one in each bar. The F - C pattern in bars 1 - 6 provides an harmonic axis suggesting harmonic tonality. In bars 8 - 12, there is regular rhythmic alternation of F and G on beat one in each bar. G is an upper neighbour tone to F suggesting melodic tonality. The note on beat one in bars 8 - 12 is the lowest in each bar. A short chromatic passage leads into Part II where E flat is the main tonic with this note being stressed in a number of ways.

In Part II the tonic E flat and dominant B flat are frequently heard in the bass. A recurring tremolo between these two notes begins at bar 24. The lowest note in the passage is E flat which frequently functions as a tonic pedal and is sustained. In bar 30 a dotted rhythm begins, emphasizing E flat and D flat which sound together. E flat is the higher of the two notes with D flat being a lower neighbour tone suggesting melodic tonality. In bars 34 - 35 an E flat triad is emphasized through a crescendo, this chord is then sustained. A similar effect is achieved in bars 41 and 43, however, the chord now emphasized is C flat. E flat is still present in two voices in both these bars. The detached quavers in the last four bars of this section are E flat the tonic, and B flat the dominant. This relationship suggests harmonic tonality.

In bars 53 - 62, there are bitonal transitions over a C sharp pedal. This C sharp falls on the beat each time and therefore forms the fundamental note in the fluctuating trills. The opening melody is transposed in bars 57 and 61. This melody also appears in its original form in Part III and Example 57 shows its recurrence. The melody is now transposed an octave higher and has three additional voices against it :

- i) A crotchet melody begins on C with both phrases containing tonic F and the first phrase ending on F.
- ii) In the demisemiquavers, F falls on each beat in the bar.
- iii) The B flat pedal is the subdominant of tonic F, and the relationship between these two notes is based on harmonic tonality.

Example 57 : "La Danse de Fuck", bars 63 - 66 .

In Part IV, D sharp has a tonic function. It occurs on beat one in each bar and forms an augmented sixth with the overall tonic F showing the breakdown of harmonic tonality.

The opening melody of Part V (Example 58) is accompanied by only two voices :

- i) The trill on A flat suggests harmonic tonality with A flat being the third note of F minor tonic triad.
- ii) The bass melody begins on C which is the fifth note of F minor tonic triad again suggesting harmonic tonality. The final six bars emphasize E flat, although there is a strong feeling of F minor. While E flat is sustained as a low pedal, F minor appears as a triad in bars 91 and 93. A flat, the third of F minor tonic triad, is repeated over the bar line and sustained in bars 92 and 94. The final ascending run shows the juxtaposition of two scales (A flat and E), and the prelude finishes on a low detached E flat.

Example 58 : "La Danse de Puck", bars 87 - 96.

(... La danse de Puck)

Summary

The numerous relationships existing between tonics and dominants, suggest harmonic tonality. While most of the prelude uses

harmonic tonality, melodic tonality governs the overall choice of keys. Tonic F used in the rondo theme and tonic E flat used in Part II and again at the end of the prelude are neighbour tones and show that melodic tonality governs the relationship between these two important keys.

L) Minstrels

"Minstrels" is built of five sections. Part I comprises bars 1 - 34 ; Part II, with its direction "Moqueur," comprises bars 35 - 44, and Part III bars 45 - 57. Part IV begins with the drum imitation in bar 58 and continues to bar 77 and Part V consists of bar 78 - 89.

The main tonic is G inspite of the following short passages where the tonic changes: bars 28 - 31 are in E flat major. Bars 45 - 49 are in F sharp major. Bars 51 - 52 are in A flat major and bars 55 - 56 are in A major.

Example 59 shows that the main tonic G is firmly established. This note forms an octave in the bass which falls on beat one in almost every bar. This octave is often preceded by its dominant (D), implying a perfect cadence over the bar line, and therefore using harmonic tonality. In bar 1 the right hand F sharp strengthens the feeling of dominant on beat two, because it is the leading-note of G and the seventh in the dominant chord. An added sixth on tonic G is the essence of bars 9 - 10. There is repetition of material in Part I with some of the ideas being repeated in the other Parts as well.

Example 59 : "Minstrels", bars 1 - 12.

There is a momentary transition to F sharp in bar 18. F sharp is established on beat one in bar 18 in the outer voices and is followed by the dominant which is C sharp major. The preparation for F sharp in bar 18 comes in bars 16 and 17 where F sharp is sustained, accented, played loudly, and repeated. Although bars 28 - 31 are in E flat, A flat the upper neighbour tone to tonic G is stressed showing the melodic relationship existing between A flat and overall tonic G. A flat appears in each chord in the passage.

In bars 45 - 49, F sharp the lower neighbour tone to G is stressed; this again establishes a melodic relationship. This passage is diatonic to the key of F sharp. The triad of F sharp is heard on beat one, with F sharp forming the root of the chord in bars 45, 47 and 49. In bars 47 and 49 F sharp is preceded by its dominant C sharp and a perfect cadence is established over the bar line showing the use of harmonic tonality.

A flat is the tonic in bars 51 - 52. This note is established in the outer voices on a portion of beat one while the dominant of A

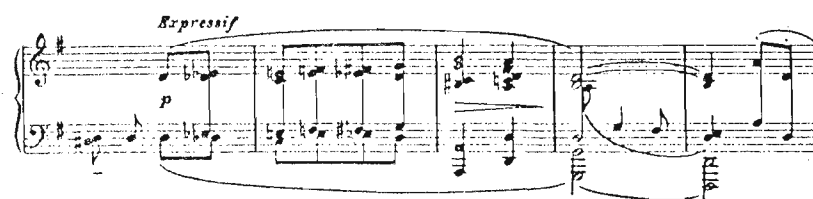
flat (E flat), falls on beat one again in both outer voices at bar 52. These two notes (A flat and E flat) are upper neighbour tones to G and D, the overall tonic and dominant of the prelude. Tonality within bars 51 - 52 is harmonic as a result of the movement from tonic to dominant, however, the overall relationship of these bars to the main tonic and dominant of the prelude is melodic.

Bars 55 and 56 resemble bars 51 and 52, but have been transposed a semitone higher with the tonic being A and the dominant being E. Tonality within the passage is still harmonic while the overall relationship established with the main tonic and dominant is melodic.

Dominant D of the original tonic G, is emphasized in bars 58 — 63. D is repeated in a triplet figure. The triplet is followed by a clashing second (D - C sharp), which falls on the beat. The clashing second emphasizes melodic tonality while dominant D tends to establish an harmonic relationship with overall tonic G.

Example 60 shows tonic G again stressed. After a brief chromatic passage, a perfect cadence between bars 65 - 66 establishes tonic G on beat one in bar 66 using harmonic tonality. The accented passing note (A), heard against the tonic chord G helps to stress G. A forms an upper neighbour tone to G and the relationship established is melodic.

Example 60 : "Minstrels", bars 63 - 67.



The material from bar 78 to the end has been heard previously. The final plagal cadence emphasizes tonic G. The G chord falls on beat one in the final bar, where it is accented, played loudly, detached, and has G as its highest and lowest note.

Summary

"Minstrels" is mainly diatonic featuring traditional harmonic progressions. Numerous sections have their own tonics which are frequently combined with their dominants using harmonic tonality. While tonality within the prelude tends to be mainly harmonic, the overall relationship of the various tonics to the main tonic G is melodic with the sectional tonics often forming neighbour tones to tonic G.

CHAPTER IV

THE TITLES : Their Inspiration and Relation
to Their Respective Tonics.

A) Danseuses de Delphes (Dancers of Delphi)

It is generally agreed that this prelude was inspired by the sculptured form of three Bacchantes found on a pillar that is part of the Louvre collection. Delphi, a city of ancient Greece, is the site of the ruined Temple of Apollo, the God of Oracles, Poetry, and Arts. The Bacchantes are in dance posture, and one imagines that they perform a religious ritual. The stately gestures of their arms and the noble movements of their bodies are dignified and beautiful.¹ The character of the dance is achieved musically in the following ways : the tempo indication is "Lent et grave," with a beat of steady crotchets firmly established in the opening bars; the tonic chord on beat one and the dominant on the third beat give the dance a lilt as in the first two bars; and the heavy chordal texture shows the serious nature of the dance.

The simple ternary form and diatonic nature of the dance with its traditional harmonic progressions and cadences, is well suited to the rather dignified solemn dance. A sense of floating is achieved momentarily in the successions of parallel chords, but these do not emphasize the tonic B flat or the dominant F. Overall progression and the final need for "arrival" show the true nature of the dance.

¹ Guido M. Gatti, "The Piano Works of Claude Debussy", Musical Quarterly, vol. 7 (1921), p. 444.

B) Voiles (Sails, Veils)

The French word "voiles" means both "sails" and "veils." Disagreement has therefore arisen as to the correct translation. According to the musicologist Robert Schmitz, Debussy gave this composition both connotations.¹ There is no need to decide between the two translations although the majority of French authorities seem to be agreed that "sails" is more appropriate in this case. Alfred Cortot visualized boats lying anchored in a luminous port, with their sails flapping gently in the breeze.² The recurring B flat pedal is possibly symbolic of the ocean thus supporting the idea of "sails". The whole-tone scale used in the opening motive could paint a "vague" picture of a boat which gradually begins to move with the melody beginning at bar 7. The term "vague" is appropriate when dealing with the whole-tone scale, because unlike the diatonic scale no particular tonic is established, and therefore there is more freedom. The idea of "veils" could be equally appropriate with the recurring B flat pedal being symbolic of the holder of the veils. These are wavered gently at first, then with more vigour in the middle section (beginning at bar 42), and again gently at bar 48. The texture when compared to that of the first prelude is transparent with three distinct levels and therefore better suited to the subject matter.

"Voiles" relies on the predominance of the whole-tone scale along with the pentatonic scale. These scales with their lack of tonic

¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Claude Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 133

² Alfred Cortot, The Piano Music of Claude Debussy, trans. Violet Edgell (London: Chester, 1922), p. 17.

are more symbolic of freedom than is the diatonic scale. While tonic B flat may suggest the fixed ocean, or the holder of the veils, freedom of movement is necessary for both. This freedom is provided through the use of non-diatonic scales.

C) Le Vent dans la plaine (The Wind in the Plain)

This prelude suggests a whirling, playful breeze with only an occasional gust. The wind disappears in the final bars which should be played in the quietest possible way still allowing the sound to vibrate - "laissez vibrer". The opening directions suggest the speed and nature of the breeze. It must be "animated" and played "as lightly as possible". The semiquaver ostinato figure at the beginning appears to "whirl" and the brief explosive forte passages beginning at bar 28 suggest "occasional gusts". There are only two places where the breeze comes close to disappearing and both sections have descending seventh chords in quavers as opposed to "whirling" single semiquavers. The seventh chords are played pianissimo getting still softer as well as slower.

This prelude is similar to "Danseuses de Delphes" in that both compositions are in ternary form. Part I and Part III emphasize tonic B flat in both preludes. However, the presence of the pentatonic and whole-tone scales in "Le vent dans la plaine", plus use of the Phrygian mode, are better suited to the "whirling" nature of the wind, with its unpredictable swirling gusts. Use of the diatonic scale featuring traditional harmonies and cadences would tend to restrict tonality and make the texture too heavy.

D) Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir (Sounds and Perfumes Swirl in the Evening Air)

The title of this composition is a quotation taken from the poem "Harmonie du soir" (Evening Harmony), by the Symbolist poet Charles Baudelaire. Nadia Boulanger finds "melancholy and solitude" in the music equivalent to the languor and mystery of a summer night".¹

Oscar Thompson feels that there is an acute awareness of all the senses as one enters into the fantasy of the music.² The sounds and perfumes are possibly symbolized in the opening waft-like motive which recurs throughout. The meandering chords in bars 3 - 5, the wandering ostinato figure beginning at bar 16 and the parallel root position chords in bars 34 - 36, suggest brooding melancholy. This darker texture is achieved through lack of harmonic direction between the chords which exist as pure sound. A swirling effect is created through the thinning and thickening of texture as seen in the first bar, and also by the movement from the tonic chord on A, to the escaped chord on B flat, and back to the tonic in this same bar.

The rich sounds and "smells" in this prelude are complimented with lush harmonies. Although one is transported into a world of mystery which shows a fascinating awareness of all the senses, this is only temporary. An earthy quality is achieved through the constant recurrence of A major which is the overall unifying tonic.

¹ Nadia Boulanger, Lecture/Masterclass on "Modern Music: Debussy" (London, Royal College of Music, October, 1971).

² Oscar Thompson, Debussy, Man and Artist (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1967), p. 265.

Example 61 achieves the feeling of a tarantella through the speed and lightness of the passage, as well as the false accentuation on C sharp and A sharp which creates a sense of two in the bar which is a feature of the tarantella. Example 62 uses the style of a popular Italian street song and Debussy takes liberties in his tempo directions.

"Les collines d'Anacapri" is basically diatonic and features traditional harmonic progressions. The tonic key of B major is almost blinding in its presentation. The title paints a picture of an Italian landscape, and the open-hearted song-like nature of the music is well suited to a colourful picture of Italy and her exuberant people.

F) Des pas sur la neige (Footsteps in the Snow)

The visual image evoked by the title is augmented by Debussy's directions which describe the opening rhythm. He says it must have "the sonorous value of the essence of a sorrowful and frozen landscape".¹ A sense of melancholy, isolation and despair prevail. The opening ostinato figure with its hesitant rhythm, together with the slow tempo, subdued dynamics and ending which fades into nothing, all seem to verify the stillness that surrounds the desolate scene.

This prelude with its sense of melancholy, isolation and despair, is well suited to the modal-minor style of writing. The tiny mysterious opening figure that recurs, is built on the first three notes of D minor and symbolizes the footsteps and the path they must tread.

¹ Debussy's inscription at the beginning of the prelude.

G) Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest (What the West Wind Saw)

In France, the west wind is a powerful destructive element, since it gathers tremendous force while moving across the Atlantic Ocean. It wreaks havoc upon all in its path, sinking ships, battering cliffs, and demolishing houses.¹ In contrast with "Le Vent dans la plaine," this prelude suggests a "storm". It has a nightmarish quality resembling "Der Erlkönig" or the "Faust Drama", and exhibits an almost passionate fascination for evil. Debussy achieves the tremendous power and force of the wind in various ways. His opening direction "Animé et tumultueux", shows the nature of the music. There is a considerable range of dynamics with both extremes of the piano being used. Undercurrents are created through the many upward surging passages which often have a crescendo as in bar 5. Short note values occur frequently and these help to create a sense of urgency and animation. Finally, low tremolos and large chords suggest the driving force and power behind the wind.

In common with "Le vent dans la plaine", this prelude is in ternary form. It also uses the whole-tone and pentatonic scales which are more flexible than the diatonic scale. While F sharp is emphasized in Part I and Part III, Part II has numerous tonal centers, and its changing quality helps to characterize the turbulent nature of the west wind.

¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 147.

H) La fille aux cheveux de lin (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair)

The source of inspiration for the prelude was a poem of the same name by Leconte de Lisle found in his collection Poèmes Antiques : Chansons Ecossaises : ¹ A young Scots girl sings a simple open-hearted song in the morning sunshine. The nature of the prelude is song-like with the opening melody being "clean" and "pure". The music like the poem is rather conventional when compared to other music and verse written about the same time. Martin Cooper suggests that the prelude might have been written at an earlier time than the other preludes in Book I. ² Whenever it was written, the evident simplicity and conventional style of writing achieve a masterful musical result which comes only with maturity.

This prelude reflects the pure innocence of a young Scots girl. The song-like nature overrides any earthy quality which might be suggested through the use of familiar diatonic chords and cadences. The style of writing with its simple form and key structure is well suited to the unsophisticated imagery of the title. G flat is the main tonic in Part I and Part III while Part II stresses E flat. The opening melody uses the pentatonic scale and has a dream-like quality which might suggest brief reflective moments of fantasy in the Scots girl's mind.

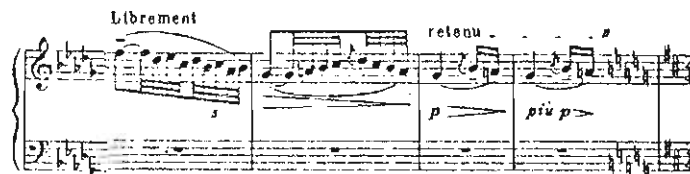
¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Claude Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 149.

² Martin Cooper, French Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 139.

I) La sérénade interrompue (The Interrupted Serenade)

The title of the prelude implies a sequence of events that might easily suggest a story. A number of factors combine and confirm the character of the music as being distinctly Spanish with the music following closely, the idea behind the title. Serenading on guitars is part of Spanish tradition. This instrument is suggested in the opening direction [*quasi guitarra*] together with other guitar-like effects such as "rasqueado" (strumming) in bar 32. Bars 1 - 18 are an introduction and suggest that the serenader is tuning his guitar and warming up. His song begins at bar 19 and he is interrupted three times in the prelude, at bars 46, 80 and 87. A rhythm that is typically Spanish is apparent in Example 63 and the augmented second which is typical of " Moorish" melody is seen in Example 64.

Example 63 : "La sérénade interrompue," bars 76 - 79.



Example 64 : "La sérénade interrompue," bars 54 - 60



"La sérénade interrompue" relies on the tonal contrasts between sections for its effectiveness. The tonic established in the "interruption" at bar 80 is D, and this contrasts strongly with

the two main notes stressed in the "serenading" sections (F and B flat). An important feature of the serenade is the "Moorish" melody which was seen in Example 64 and the strumming guitar effects seen in bar 25. Both of these stress F and use melodic tonality.


J) La Cathédrale engloutie (The Submerged Cathedral)

According to numerous musicologists, the prelude is based on a medieval legend told by the fishermen of Brittany. The cathedral of the city of Ys was engulfed during the fourth or fifth century because of the impiety of the inhabitants.¹ At sunrise when the sea is transparent and the air is clear, the cathedral rises from the depths of the ocean and is seen as an example to the potentially impious. Strongly believed in, this legend has long been the center of religious, poetic, and scientific observation. As the cathedral rises, the tolling of bells and the chanting of priests are heard. The style of writing, with its chords using parallel fourths and fifths, and frequent use of modes, suggests the Middle Ages where organum and the use of Church modes were common. The many sustained low bass pedal points could be symbolic of depth, and the cathedral submerged in these depths.

The style of writing is well suited to the medieval legend. The use of modes and the writing of parallel chords and organum, help to create an archaic-type sound. The various tonics with C being the final one give required depth.

¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 155.

K) La Danse de Puck (The Dance of Puck)

Puck, the impish mischief-maker of William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Nights' Dream", is Debussy's source of inspiration here. This dance creates a mood far removed from that of the solemn dancers of Delphi. The character of the dance is achieved musically in the following ways : the tempo indication ( = 138) has the direction "Capricieux et léger"; the dotted rhythm, fast moving runs and arpeggios are possibly indicative of Puck's nimbleness. Alternation of the tonic and the dominant from bar to bar in the opening theme gives the dance a lilt almost tending towards a coquettish swagger.

"La Danse de Puck" is different to "Danseuses de Delphes", although both preludes are dances. The former is no longer in ternary form beginning and ending in the same key. The recurring rondo theme heard at the beginning emphasizes tonic F. One expects the prelude to end on F with the return of this theme at bar 87 emphasizing F, instead, E flat (the main tonic in Part II), replaces F. It is as if Puck the mischief-maker, fools us by making F seem the tonic until the very end where he suddenly replaces it with E flat.

L) Minstrels (Minstrels)

This is not the medieval scene of troubadours serenading under castle windows but America in the 1820's. Here Negro heritage was expressed by household servants on plantations who put on minstrel shows. A typical show contained songs, dances, and acrobatics, interspersed with jokes. A variety of acts with rapidly changing moods was characteristic. Exciting rhythms were a feature, and the jazz elements which these shows revealed were soon to be followed by ragtime, trots, blues, the Charleston, and Black Bottom, all sources of rhythmic

fascination for European composers.¹ These minstrel groups started appearing in Europe around 1900 at fairs and on the broadwalks of seaside resorts. Characteristic instruments that added rhythmic complexities were bones, tambourines, scratchy banjos and drums. The varied nature of the music with its rapidly changing moods is ideally suited to a minstrel show. The two-note clusters in bars 9 - 10 suggest a tap dance. The low figure G - E - G - E in bar 35 could be the beginnings of a comic story. Drums are imitated at bar 58, and a more serious side to the show is suggested in the expressive chromatic ascent beginning at bar 63. This passage might be a hint of a love duet where "he" promises her the world! Humour is evident as indicated by the annotation at the beginning of the prelude - ("Nerveux et avec humour") and the final disappearing ending with its two short staccato notes, shows the light hearted nature of these shows.

"Minstrels" captures the contrasting variety of moods generated by traditional American minstrel shows. These changing moods are achieved mainly through variations in texture and rhythm. Sounds such as the banjo imitation beginning at bar 58 and the suggested tap dance beginning at bar 9 are two of many contrasting sections well suited to the inspiration behind the title. The simple diatonic style of writing featuring traditional harmonic progressions and centering around tonic G, provide a foundation upon which to build traditional American minstrel sounds.

¹ Elie Robert Schmitz, The Piano Works of Claude Debussy (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1950), p. 160.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Analyses of Debussy's use of specific scales, modes, chords, and parallel successions of chords in his preludes show how he was able to establish a new concept of tonality and blend two different tonal worlds.

Accepting that there are two types of tonality, as has been elucidated in Chapter I, detailed analyses of each prelude enable one to draw the following conclusions :

1. Melodic and harmonic tonality are equally important in establishing the main tonics of the preludes.
2. Certain preludes use mainly harmonic tonality, while others use mainly melodic tonality, and some of the preludes combine both types.

Table I shows that three of the preludes use mainly harmonic tonality (i.e. nos. I, V and VIII); two of the preludes use mainly melodic tonality (i.e. nos. II and VI), and the remaining seven preludes use a mixture of both types (i.e. nos. III, IV, VII, IX, X, XI and XII).

3. A close interrelationship exists between each prelude's title, its respective tonics, and the compositional choice of materials.
4. Tonics can be emphasized in a wide range of ways to assist in the establishment of tonality. These ways are listed briefly and supported by examples taken from Debussy's Preludes in Book I :-

- a) A tonic may be stressed through the use of form as seen in "Danseuses de Delphes" which is in ternary form and has the

Table I : The Overall Distribution of Tonality in Debussy's Preludes (Book I).

	HARMONIC TONALITY	HARMONIC AND MELODIC TONALITY	MELODIC TONALITY
A	"Danses de Delphes", Prelude No. I.		
B			"Voiles", Prelude No. II.
C		"Le Vent dans la plaine", Prelude No. III.	
D		"Les Sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir", Prelude No. IV.	
E	"Les collines d'Anacapri", Prelude No. V.		
F			"Des pas sur la neige", Prelude No. VI.
G		"Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", Prelude No. VII.	
H	"La fille aux cheveux de lin", Prelude No. VIII		
I		"La sérénade interrompue", Prelude No. IX.	
J		"La Cathédrale engloutie", Prelude No. X.	
K		"La Danse de Puck", Prelude No. XI	
L		"Minstrels", Prelude No. XII.	

- tonic emphasized in Part I and Part III. On the other hand "La Danse de Puck" which is in rondo form emphasizes the tonic in each recurring rondo theme.
- b) Tonic emphasis may be closely linked with the title which suggests a sequence of events ("La sérénade interrompue").
 - c) A recurring motive giving overall unity to a prelude may emphasize the tonic ("Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir").
 - d) The tonic may be emphasized in harmonic progressions such as IV - V - I or I - V - I as in Example 26.
 - e) Modal passages revolve around the tonic. If a passage combines two modes (eg., The Ionian mode and Mixolydian mode as in Example 13) both with the same tonic, this note is given additional emphasis.
 - f) The tonic and dominant of a specific key may be given regular rhythmic alternation by falling on beat one in successive bars (Example 11), or a specific rhythmic pattern may be set up within the bar as in bar 58 of "Minstrels".
 - g) The tonic may function as a pedal point in any voice. It may be a single note, or it may comprise an open fifth with its tonic doubled as in the final bar of "La Cathédrale engloutie". A pedal is frequently found in the bass and it may form an ostinato pattern throughout the composition ("Voiles").
 - h) If a tonic is approached by its upper or lower neighbour tones it is given emphasis. In certain instances the tonic and dominant are combined and both approached in this way, as in bar 25 of "La sérénade interrompue".
 - i) The tonic may be repeated as a single note (see the opening bar of "Le Vent dans la plaine"), or it may feature prominently in a

chord which is repeated by being the root of that chord as in bars 1 and 2 of "Danseuses de Delphes". Here B flat occurs on beat one in both bars.

- j) The tonic is often the highest or lowest note in a phrase or a whole prelude. In bars 47 - 51 of "La Cathédrale engloutie" G sharp is both the highest and lowest note in the phrase, while in "Voiles", tonic B flat is the lowest note throughout.
- k) The loudest or softest note or chord in a phrase, or a whole prelude, may be the tonic or a chord built thereon. The loudest note may be given additional emphasis through accentuation such as an accent marking or sforzando, or by being detached in contrast to a previous passage which required a legato touch. The final added sixth chord built on the tonic F sharp in "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", is very loud and emphasized. In contrast, the final bars in "Le Vent dans la plaine" are very soft and emphasized.
- l) The tonic may form a pivot around which the other notes in the passage center (Example 28).
- m) A single tonic, or tonic chord, may be sustained longer than the other notes in the passage (Example 50).
- n) The tonic may be heard simultaneously in two, three and sometimes even four octaves. Bar 17 in "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", shows tonic F sharp sustained in four octaves simultaneously.
- o) A phrase often begins and ends on the tonic, or a chord built thereon. In bars 7 - 9 of "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest", the phrase begins and ends on the tonic chord of F sharp.
- p) The tonic falls on strong beats of the bar frequently. A tremelo between the tonic and any other note may occur, with the tonic

falling on the beat each time (bars 10 - 14 of "Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest"). In a passage containing trills the tonic generally falls on the strong beats. An arpeggiated passage may be built on the tonic and dominant, with the tonic falling on the main beats as in Example 55. In an ostinato passage as seen at the beginning of "Le Vent dans la plaine", the tonic B flat falls on the beat each time.

- q) The lowest or highest note in an arpeggiated figure may be the tonic. The tonic G flat which appears in the second to last bar of "La fille aux cheveux de lin", is arpeggiated and the highest note in the prelude.
- r) The tonic may be stressed through pitch alteration (eg., G flat - E flat - G flat as in Example 50).
- s) A leading-note approach to the tonic when modulating between two keys may help to stress the tonic. In Example 34 the passage begins on G (the leading-note of the already established key of A flat) and ends on G sharp (the leading-note of the key to follow, which is A).
- t) There is additional emphasis of the tonic if this note is approached from its leading-note which has been enharmonically changed as seen in bars 31 - 32 of "Les pas sur la neige".

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