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Intention, Creative Variability and Paradox in Recorded Performances of the Piano Music of Maurice Ravel

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ABSTRACT

Intention, Creative Variability and Paradox
in Recorded Performances of the Piano Music of Maurice Ravel

Pamela Korman

Maurice Ravel's oft repeated comment "Je ne souhaite pas que l'on interprète ma musique: il suffit de la jouer" - exemplifies one of the most puzzling contradictions imbedded in the western musical psyche - contradictions emerging from fundamental assumptions relating to the nature of composed music and its transmission. Through its comparative analysis of over eighty years of sound recordings by master performers, the thesis challenges Ravel's dictum, and with it the received wisdom about issues involving the relationship of composer to interpreter, textual authenticity, intention, variability and invariability in performance, communication and meaning in composed music.

No matter how these issues are treated they must contend with the rationally based, historical position of the interpreter (whether passive messenger or inspired commentator) as creatively subordinate to the composer. The aural evidence provided by master pianists calls into question the very concept of the performing artist as "interpreter".

The thesis shows that in the process of "interpreting" the individual artist creates a distinctive complementary structure - defined herein as the

"performing structure" - that in its interaction with the composer's notated text generates a new self-sufficient work of art. The blending of "musical signatures" in effect constitutes a re-shaping of the given material into a unique co-created synthesis.

Taken in the context of the historical, philosophical, cultural and musical antecedents which Ravel inherited, this thesis compares the composer's statements, his recordings of his piano music and those of successive generations of master performers. It concludes that the nature and range of variability in these performances precludes the possibility of any statement of intention, nor any single performance - no matter how "authoritative" - providing a definitive measure of the implicit meaning of a piece of music. It follows that a multiplicity of "meanings" drawn from the comparative analysis of performances by master artists will offer a more reliable index of the intrinsic potential of a particular musical work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my teacher Phil Cohen. If it is able to speak of issues that touch us all it is because he has shown me the connections. If it succeeds in communicating something of the spirit of the music it describes, it is because he has searched tirelessly with me for the words. I thank him for sharing his work, his experience and his time with a generosity that is truly rare, and I look forward with great anticipation to further projects together.

Many thanks to Thierry Prieur, Angela Chan and Constance Gordy for their invaluable assistance and painstaking efforts in the editing of this thesis.

I would also like to thank my husband, François, and my children Alexandre and Gabrielle — each of whom had many times to fend for themselves so that I could do this work.

And finally I thank my mother, for offering me my first piano lessons.

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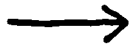
Legend: Symbols Indicating Performer Generated Structuring

Symbol	Explanation	Symbol	Explanation
	Specific voice stress in a multi-part texture		Pause
	Specific weighted voice stress in a multi-part texture		A highlighted silence in a single voice in a multi-part texture
	Equal stress in all voices in a multi-part texture		A highlighted emphasis of tone in one or more voices in a multi-part texture
	Equal voicing throughout in a multi-part texture		Rhythmic anticipation or delay
	Subdued voice(s) relative to surrounding texture		Chord breaking
	Legato phrase unit		Focused shifting of melodic line from one voice to another
	Détaché touch encompassing staccatissimo to non-legato		Syncopated pedal
	Portato		Rapid pedal shifts
	Leggiero		Abrupt pedal release
	Equally defined articulation		Direct pedal
	Diminuendo		Performance indication omitted
	Crescendo		Anticipation of chords by the bass note

INTRODUCTION

"On n'irait bien loin dans l'analyse des oeuvres d'art si l'on s'en tenait à ce que leurs auteurs ont dit ou même cru avoir fait."
(Claude Lévi-Strauss)

This thesis will offer a perspective on the historically dichotomous relationship between notated music and its transmission in performance. It will focus on a comparative performance analysis of recorded performances of the piano music of Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) who, composing, performing, teaching and lecturing during a pivotal period in the history of music — a period of unprecedented intellectual and artistic ferment — exemplifies some of the most puzzling contradictions imbedded in the western musical psyche.

Like many of his contemporaries, Ravel drew intellectual sustenance from the prevailing scientific vision, with its implicit promise of a rationally ordered world uncontaminated by romantic excess. The early twentieth century faith, for example, in the power of the western notational system, played an important role in this regard. Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók among other composers of the period, shared the belief that the existing system was capable of notating, unambiguously, just about everything worth writing, performing or listening to. Ravel's musical texts — with their meticulous performance indications — and his written and spoken statements about the

performance of his music — evidenced in numerous formal public lectures, letters to colleagues and friends, as well as interviews for radio and literary journals, reflect not only the widespread infatuation with the scientific/rational model, but reveal a conscious attempt to define his art in terms of an exercise in higher reasoning.

Central to Ravel's position was the argument that since his musical intentions were precisely spelled out in his scores, they required nothing more than a faithful execution by the performer. In other words, the composer's notation is the final statement of the meaning of the music, thereby leaving little room for variation. Pierre Boulez has noted that "some composers, such as Stravinsky and Ravel, have been very critical about the so-called freedom of the performer". An example of this profound mistrust of the performing artist, who, in effect represented the non-objective and therefore irrational element within the rational scheme, can be found in Stravinsky's ragtime piece for mechanical piano. Here we have one of the first serious attempts to dispose of the live performer altogether.[1] Indeed, with the engineered manipulation of contemporary sound recordings, not to mention sophisticated computer programming capable of creating virtual performances, the live performer has become an endangered species.

In order to gain some perspective on the complex relationship between score, composer and performer this study will examine the implications of the historical movement that took place at the fin de siècle and the profound

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[1] Pierre Boulez, "Score: Imagination and Reality." Art Institute of Chicago (1994).

impact this shift had on musical — both compositional as well as performance — goals and ideas. With the growing trend toward specialization, for example, traditional music making roles took a major philosophical turn — a turn that contributed to the escalating tug of war between writers of music and their interpreters. The question of control — the inevitable consequence of the rational mind set — is at the core of the struggle. It asks who will define the nature of the music and who will determine how it should be executed.

With this in mind, Ravel's musical associations with a number of major interpreters becomes significant. To begin with he taught his entire piano repertoire to Vlado Perlemuter and Robert Casadesus — two of this century's major pianists — both of whom later went on to record the complete solo piano works. Secondly, he availed himself of the newly developing field of recording technology, in order to record several of his own piano pieces — recordings which are among the earliest examples of sound reproduction — and to supervise those of certain of his colleagues. While Sergei Rachmaninoff, for example, personally recorded most of his piano compositions, Ravel's "hands on" direction of major artists' interpretations, not to mention his own recordings, demonstrate his great concern about future generations' perception of his musical intentions.

Can the perpetual struggle over the need for personal artistic expression ever be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone — composers, performers, audiences, critics and scholars? Whether or not a piece of composed music should remain the property of its creator in perpetuity, or should be left to the discretion of individual re-creators, is not the issue here. What is at issue, is

the possible interpretations of a great composer's work, covering nearly a century, by pianists representing a wide spectrum of aesthetic persuasions — from Ravel "specialists" to virtuoso generalists who see Ravel's works as blockbusters in next year's program. Whether the composer's very explicit intentions hold up against time and fashion, or whether the music itself holds up despite widely varied re-creations, we will have learned something about the communication of great music.

Sources

The study therefore, turns to the recorded performances of over eighty years of Ravel interpreters, beginning with the composer himself. There is no doubt that historical, compositional and structural analyses provide a necessary point of departure for any study of a body of work of such scope and depth. Yet without the actual living, breathing, enveloping performing experience — whether live or recorded — one cannot possibly come to terms with the creative variability and the multiplicity of meanings imbedded in Ravel's music. Given the composer's decision — supported by successive generations of major artists — to employ recording technology as a means of perpetuating his musical legacy, it is rather curious that so little scholarly attention has been paid to this massive body of "interpreted" evidence. Indeed apart from occasional passing acknowledgment there is a noticeable absence of reference in the existing literature to this body of sound recorded documentation.

The present study focuses on a comparative analysis of key works

recorded first by the composer and subsequently by students, colleagues, direct successors and recognized artists representing a variety of schools, technical and aesthetic persuasions, personal visions and distinctive musical signatures. The study is therefore the first scholarly investigation incorporating aural evidence of:

a) the relationship of the composer's conception of his own creative process to the living reality of performance, i.e., what Ravel's own recordings of his music as well as those of students, colleagues and subsequent generations of pianists contribute to our understanding of him as composer, teacher, pianist and polemicist.

b) the nature and extent of variability and the common binding threads in performances over eighty years. This study will provide a measure of the durability of Ravel's piano music over time and the vagaries of performers' and audience's tastes.

c) how, in the context of the twentieth century rational world view, continuous technological innovation has affected our collective musical experience.

The primary sources used in this study, in addition to the recordings, biographical and historical references, are Ravel's musical scores, his lecture notes, letters and testimonial writings of students and contemporaries. It is important to keep in mind that when sound recordings are used as "evidence", questions about the recording process itself inevitably

arise. When we consider how closely recordings of Ravel's piano music have paced the evolution of recording technology — from reproducing pianos, acoustical, electrical and long playing discs, to tape and compact disc digitalization etc. — it becomes imperative that we account for vast differences in reproductive fidelity[2]. These various forms of audio recordings represent a long and continuing fascination with a dynamic technology. They also point up how the obsession with technical perfection, fuelled by the increasing dependence on engineered manipulations of performances, has brought composers and performers to a creative cross-roads.

Why Not Objective Analysis?

When studying Ravel's piano music as a *performer's* repertoire the question of *objective* analysis, particularly when it involves a reductive process, becomes crucial. To begin with, a performer's repertoire, by definition, includes the performer — as communicator — in the compositional scheme. When the musical message is being communicated by the performance of a major artist, this implies the acceptance of highly individualized treatment(s). From this perspective Ravel's piano music becomes a natural extension of, or successor to, nineteenth century cosmopolitan romanticism. It follows that a comparative analysis of individual performances would reveal the range and

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[2] I have not included, in my analysis, the few video taped recordings of Ravel's piano music notably Martha Argerich's performance of Gaspard de la Nuit and Glen Gould's solo version of La Valse. While visually interesting they do not contribute to the essentially aural nature of this study.

variety of possible "interpretations" and by implication, the common factors that define the meaningful boundaries of the text. Since these characteristic qualities are experienced in "real time" and serve to "move" the music they are at once tangible and elusive. To Lévi-Strauss,

> "Music is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is a being comparable to the gods, and music itself the supreme mystery of the science of man."[3]

Touch, tone control, pulse, subtly timed synchronization of pedal with finger, the colouring of harmonic rhythm, phrase breathing, rubato — pulling or pushing of the beat — anticipation and delay, articulation, voicing etc.; these, in the hands of a creative pianist blend indissolubly into the vital force we experience as music. It is precisely directly communicated intangibles such as these that the science historian Morris Berman is referring to when he notes that if we hope to make intelligible the

> "unintelligible truths" (Milan Kundera's term) — tied up with "the body, the emotions, inner psychic perception, humor, anger, play, fantasy, sound, creativity, etc..." We must first rethink "our obsession with objectivity and its attendant methodologies."[4]

Berman pursues this latter point to its logical next step by noting that

> "we find a growing number of historians arguing that the epistemological or `scientific' dimensions of the discipline itself are too confining, and that the notion of `objectivity' as it has evolved over the last few centuries actually

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[3] Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Cape, 1970) 18.

[4] Morris Berman, Coming to Our Senses, Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West (New York: Bantam Books, 1990) 116.

works against true understanding."[5]

If Berman is correct, then formal, i.e., structural, harmonic, etc., analysis of a musical text in itself serves at best as a reference for performance analysis, and, at worst as a misleading measure of the significance of any individual performance.

Methodological Rationale[6]

The methodology proceeds then, from the recognition that the complexities involved in a comparative analysis of recorded piano performances are best treated from a multi-dimensional and inter-relational perspective. The study has, therefore adopted a modified ecological model that proceeds from the dynamic interrelationships within a given system, wherein the performer, as well as the composer, the text and the analytical process are intimately connected. From this perspective a composer's written and stated intentions about the performance of his music (not necessarily the same thing) would be examined within the multi-dimensional system within which these intentions exist. This multi-dimensional study would select and relate crucial aspects such as the prevailing philosophical temper of the time — its expectations and paradoxes — the composer's view of himself and his music, his aesthetic criteria, the "evidence" of the written text, the performer's background, training and aesthetic position, the instrument, and recording

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[5] Berman, Coming to Our Senses 111.

[6] Readers who are interested in methodological considerations may consult appendix five.

technology. Finally it is essential that the perspective the analyst brings should come from the direct involvement in the performance of the music being studied. In this regard the present analyst has publically performed all of Ravel's solo and major duo piano works, as well as both concerti.[7]

When we turn to Ravel's personally recorded performances — supposedly his legacy to posterity — certain paradoxes emerge which throw into question his pronouncements about his musical credo.[8] These recall Lévi-Strauss's observation quoted at the opening of this chapter, in which he questions how much "auteurs" can really communicate about the meaning of their own works. In the case of Ravel, the paradoxes reach well beyond issues of talent, technical skill, the creative process, aesthetic orientation, affective communication, historical determination or the temper of the times, to core questions about humanity's perception of itself. On this last point, rather than indulge in post mortem psychological analysis, I will focus for the most part on those aspects which clarify Ravel's historical position.

Victor Zuckerkandl's penetrating comment that follows is particularly appropriate in evaluating Ravel's rationally conceived aesthetic and the paradoxes emerging from his own recordings.

"Words divide, tones unite. The unity of existence that the word constantly

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[7] This method not only has the advantage of being appropriate for the present study, but shows promise for continued investigations into variability in performance, including those dependent upon sophisticated technology.

[8] A paradox — as defined by the psychoneurologist Richard Cytowic — is "something apparently inconsistent with itself or with reason, though in fact true." — Richard E. Cytowic, M.D., The Man Who Tasted Shapes (New York: Warner Books, 1995) 17.

> breaks up, dividing thing from thing, subject from object, is constantly restored in tone...It is certainly no accident that the highest unfolding of the *power of tones in modern instrumental music* and the highest unfolding of the *power of objectifying words in modern science* coincided historically with the *sharpest division ever drawn between subjectivity and objectivity*."[9] (italics mine)

Taking into consideration Ravel's "words", his unyielding position concerning the authority of the composer over the performer, supported by meticulous textual directives, important questions about what makes the "tones" so "power(ful)" need to be addressed.

If, for example the recordings show that a range of variability in performance — or even in the observation of a notated text — is inevitable, what does this imply about the (assumed) definitiveness of the notated work? What, in particular happens when a musical (i.e., aurally conceived idea) is transcribed to a visual (i.e., notated) medium and than re-constituted, as it were, back into an aural experience? And if a piece of composed music, is, as Ravel intimates, a composer's final statement, can it by definition, accurately convey his/her intentions?

Other questions relating to the boundaries of interpretation in the performance of Ravel's piano music arise. Are there certain "personalizing" factors, not normally accessible through formal analysis, that can be identified in the performance of individual artists? If so, how "personal" can an interpretation become without losing the integrity of the text? In what way does the "signature" of a major artist affect the meaningful communication of

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[9] Victor Zuckerkandl, Man the Musician, Sound and Symbol, trans. Norbert Guterman (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973) 75.

the composer's written text? Can we say that the music "speaks" to all ages, or must it be experienced as a museum or period piece? If the former, what are the "interpretive effects" — if any — of the passage of time on players and audiences? Again, will the music "hold up" if the performer adopts a radically opposed aesthetic position to that of the composer? In effect, can we distinguish valid (i.e., musically acceptable) performances of Ravel's piano music over a range of interpretations extending from a near literal rendering to a highly individualized (widely deviating) re-creation of the text?

Of paramount significance is the inherent pianism of Ravel's virtuoso compositions — even those he later transcribed for orchestra. Can these monumental works be conceived of apart from a highly accomplished performance on a modern keyboard? If not, does this mean that, a) the music requires a super virtuoso in the romantic tradition to be rendered meaningfully, or b) a radically new understanding of the role of the interpreter? Finally, what effect have recordings, contests, master classes and related "standardizing" factors had on the aesthetic and stylistic criteria for the performance of Ravel's piano music?

Through a comparative analysis, then, of the performances of major artists over three quarters of a century, this thesis will attempt to illuminate Ravel's historical position as well as his significance in cultural history. As Anthony Storr has noted,

> "because (creative people) leave behind records of thoughts and feelings in their works, they exemplify, in striking fashion, aspects of human striving which are common to us all but which, in the case of ordinary people,

escape notice."[10]

Hence, Maurice Ravel, committed to the compositional and aesthetic imperatives of mainstream western instrumental music with the consequent general acceptance and apparent triumph of the rational world view, contains within himself a profound microcosm of the consequent challenge to the human spirit. An examination of his place in the music of our time, his reflections upon his music, and the ironic consequences of his attempts to guarantee its permanence chronicles the creative dilemma of our time.

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[10] Anthony Storr, Solitude, A Return to Self (New York: The Free Press, 1988) xiv-xv.

CHAPTER ONE

Intention, Text and Authority: The Sanctity of the Text

"Je ne souhaite pas que l'on interprète ma musique: il suffit de la jouer."[11]
(Maurice Ravel)

"A musical composition is after all a form, a mold; the performer infuses life into it."[12]
(Ignace Jan Paderewski)

The composer asks the performer to simply play what is written. The celebrated pianist disagrees — the text in itself is insufficient to communicate the spirit of the music. Here we have the dilemma of textual "interpretation" and the logical point of departure for this study of the role of the pianist involved in recording the piano music of Ravel. How does one reconcile the composer's edict on correctness with one's intuitive response to the latent content of the text? The dilemma is further exacerbated by the shared perception held by a growing number of Ravel's contemporaries that certain violations of the sanctity of the text were a direct consequence of the performance habits of the day. Seen in this context, Ravel's reluctance to

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[11] Alfred Cortot, La Musique Française de Piano (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948) 9.

[12] Adam Zamoyski, Paderewski (London: Collins, 1982) 95.

trust the musical judgement of performers becomes understandable, particularly when one considers the knee-jerk individualism characteristic of many late romantic performers. However, as Paderewski suggests, the creative ideal of the high romantic tradition was of an entirely different order. How well you brought something of yourself to the music was the measure of your worth as an artist. To communicate through one's own voice, to modify, to ornament, to impose one's inspired ideas on the text, these comprised the creative ideal. In effect, a performer is an individual and an individual — even with the best of intentions — will have difficulty abdicating his or her musical responsibility to the will of a composer — however distinguished.

The tendency of the high romantic ideal to come off as a pompous caricature of itself is amusingly illustrated by the otherwise sympathetic critic Harold Schonberg.

> "In line with the ideals of nineteenth-century romanticism, it was the personality that was important, and it followed that the personality was more important than the music....The ego was all-important, and the world was seen almost solipsistically. I am the artist; I am the performer; my inner world is what I shall describe...Music to the romantics was not the not-to-be-tampered with force it is today. It was part of the Mystery, and it had a Meaning or Meanings, an Idea or Ideas, that were bound up with Nature, the Soul, Life."[13]

While it may be true that romanticism was bound up with the "Mystery" and "Meaning" of "Nature", "the Soul" and "Life", it covered — as Jacques Barzun argues — a much broader spectrum of philosophical and artistic attitudes, ranging from the cult of the personality to the complete immersion of the self in

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[13] Harold Schonberg, The Great Pianists from Mozart to the Present (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963) 125-129.

the aesthetic or creative exercise. Schonberg's perspective is clearly coloured by what Barzun calls the hindsight fallacy of the "modern ego", i.e., the compulsion to attach a simplistic label to a complex, multi-faceted historical period, with the inevitable consequence that inherent inconsistencies and paradoxes are down-played or ignored altogether[14]. On the contrary, it would seem that the most celebrated nineteenth century interpreters from Clara Schumann, Hans von Bülow, Mendelssohn and Chopin, to Anton Rubinstein, Franz Liszt, Ignaz Friedman and of course Paderewski — whatever their individual differences may have been — joined the force of personality with exemplary musicianship, thereby revealing the range of possibilities inherent in the music. As Lydia Goehr points out in her essay on the philosophy of "musical museum-culture", with the move toward twentieth century modernism, this "fluid, easily crossed boundary between the performing and composing roles" became increasingly hierarchical and stifling for the performing artist.[15] Born partly out of the seeds of the romantic concept of *Werktreue*, i.e., fidelity to the musical work, the early decades of the twentieth century nurtured a quasi messianic belief in the musical text as an "inviolable" object.[16] In his discussion of the ideal of "authentic" performance-practice,

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[14] Jacques Barzun, Romanticism and the Modern Ego (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944) 20-21.

[15] Lydia Goehr, The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[16] Richard Taruskin, Text and Act (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 11.

Richard Taruskin points out that the phenomenon of

> "the hard and fast distinction between the creative and re-creative roles... can scarcely be documented for any creative figure earlier than the "neoclassical" Stravinsky."[17]

It is, then, no accident that Ravel, in company with Stravinsky, took

> "refuge in order and precision, hostility to subjectivity, to the vagaries of personality, to whatever passes and decays ... (these) were the inevitable reactions of all those who were committed to the preservation of high culture." [18]

and no wonder the romantic performer's immersion in

"the dynamic qualities of music...fluctuations of tempo and intensity...crescendos and diminuendos, accelerandos and ritardandos, not to mention tempo rubato and a highly variegated timbral palette"[19]

are anathema to those who's musical credo demanded an "objective" manner of performance.

The Composer Takes Charge

Indeed, by the late nineteenth century we find in every aspect of intellectual, scientific and artistic life a major shift away from the romantic idealization of the emotions. To a growing number of artists and intellectuals the prevailing scientific/rational vision was welcomed as a timely antidote to a world view that was no longer tenable. It is important to re-iterate that at precisely this time in history the previously congenial relationship between

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[17] Taruskin 14.

[18] Taruskin 104.

[19] Taruskin 9.

composers and performers degenerated into a veritable tug-of-war. Composers, seeing themselves as specialists riding the wave of changing taste and the emerging "ürtext" revolution, were finally in a position to restrain the excesses of self-appointed "interpreters."[20] Taruskin's humorous sketch of the composer/performer relationship says it all.

> "The notion... entailed a hierarchized, strictly enforced split between emancipated creators, beholden (in theory) to no one but the muse, and selfless curators, sworn to submission. The producers of timeless works are the gods, exulting in their liberation from the world of social ("extramusical") obligation and issuing peremptory commands. The recipients of the commands are the Nibelungs, bound scrupulously to carry out the masters' intentions for the sake of their glory, their own lives pledged to a sterile humdrum of preservation and handing-on... There is also a class of Alberichs, of course, Nibelungs (chiefly of the podium, the keyboard, and the larynx) who aspire to godlike power, and who are dependably crushed for their hubris by critics and pedagogues, the priests of the *Werktreue* faith, though their fellow Nibelungs secretly egg them on and they enjoy wide sympathy among the mortals in the outer darkness of the hall."[21]

It follows that Stravinsky, in his Poetics, distinguishes between "executant" and "interpreter".

> "The idea of execution" he asserts "implies the strict putting into effect of an *explicit will* that contains nothing beyond what it *specifically commands*" while "the idea of interpretation implies the *limitations imposed upon the performer* or those which the performer imposes upon himself in his proper function, which is to transmit music to the listener."[22] (italics mine)

Stravinsky concludes that the misunderstandings and errors that exist

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20 With notable exceptions prior to the twentieth century most editions were "interpretations" by celebrated pianists — often obscuring the original with personalized textual changes in tempo, dynamics, phrasing, ornaments, even notes.

21 Taruskin 10-11.

22 Igor Stravinsky, Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons (New York: Vintage Books, 1959) 127.

between the communication of the musical work and the listener's perception of it is to be found in the conflict between these two principles. However no matter how scrupulously notated a piece of his music was, no matter how carefully he insured against every possible ambiguity through meticulous indications of tempo, shading, phrasing, accentuation etc., Stravinsky acknowledged that the music

> "always contains hidden elements that defy definition because verbal dialectic is powerless to define musical dialectic in its totality."[23]

He relied therefore on the "experience and intuition", or the "talent" of the person who performed the music. It is clear though that Stravinsky was acutely sceptical regarding the motivation and integrity of the great majority of interpreters, assuming that they were

> "satisfied with, an immediate and facile success that flatters the vanity of the person who obtains it and perverts the taste of those who applaud it."[24]

This he attributed to the governing principles of romantic interpretation, in part due to the extra-musical considerations inherent in the music of the romantic masters.

> "The worst interpreters" Stravinsky notes, "usually tackle the Romantics. The musically extraneous elements that are strewn throughout their works invite betrayal, whereas a page in which music seeks to express nothing outside of itself better resists attempts at literary deformation."[25]

One can see then how at the turn of the present century composers,

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[23] Stravinsky 129.

[24] Stravinsky 129.

[25] Stravinsky 130.

whatever else their aesthetic ideology may have been, shared a determination to control, order and direct the communication of their music. Simply put, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók, Debussy and their ideological contemporaries demanded respect for the written text. One can assume that Ravel would have supported Stravinsky's assertion that

> "Conductors, singers, pianists, all virtuosos should know or recall that the first condition that must be fulfilled by anyone who aspires to the imposing title of interpreter, is that he be first of all a flawless executant. The secret of perfection lies above all in his consciousness of the *law imposed upon him* by the work he is performing." (italics mine)[26]

Interpreting Intention: "Performers must not be slaves" (Paul Wittgenstein) "Performers are slaves" (Maurice Ravel)

The meticulous performance indications in Ravel's music then, reflect not so much his obsession with detail but rather his wish to have the interpreter grasp the precise character of the music — as he heard it — as a whole. It was the gratuitous distortion of tempo and loss of definition of character which precipitated Ravel's displeasure with liberties taken by performers. He could become quite vociferous when he felt that his music was being compromised by the performer's technical or musical idiosyncrasies, or worse, ego-strutting. The celebrated dispute between Ravel and Arturo Toscanini over the conductor's performance of the Bolero is a case in point. Toscanini's decision to adopt a significantly faster tempo than Ravel had indicated — and adding insult to injury with a final accelerando — caused Ravel to berate the conductor in no uncertain terms about the unacceptability of the

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26 Stravinsky 132-133.

change. In response to Toscanini's "When I play your tempo the piece is ineffective" Ravel answered, "Then don't play it!"[27] Ravel was equally infuriated on hearing the Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein — who had lost his right arm in World War I — perform the Concerto for L-ft Hand with unauthorized amendments. Wittgenstein — who had commissioned the work — brushed off Ravel's objections with a curt "I am an old hand as pianist and what you wrote does not sound right" to which the composer countered, "I am an old hand at orchestration and it does sound right." If it were not for Marguerite Long's intervention, the exchange might easily have escalated into an ugly scene. Wittgenstein's, "Performers must not be slaves" on hearing that Ravel opposed his intention to premiere the work in Paris, was met with the composer's, "Performers are slaves."[28]

Ravel's opposition to tampering with the text was not confined to basic tempo changes or gratuitous "amendments" by pianists who weren't up to its demands. Anything but the most minor deviations were out of the question. This insistence on absolute fidelity to the text was most evident in his opposition to distortions in movement and rhythmic definition — particularly the widely fluctuating rubati so beloved of romantic "interpreters".

Ravel's students, almost without exception attest to his lack of patience with and utter determination to avoid "romanticising" his music. In his book

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[27] James Burnett, Ravel his life and times (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1983) 128.

[28] Roger Nichols, Ravel Remembered (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987) 77.

Ravel d'après Ravel, Vlado Perlemuter discusses in great detail the precision and attention to all interpretive markings which characterized not only Ravel's writing, but his teaching as well. Gaby Casadesus similarly comments on Ravel's attention to the careful and meticulous understanding of his written text.[29] Jacques Février, a friend of Ravel's and the first public interpreter of the Concerto for Left Hand, wrote in 1939,

> "Pas de Rubato, pas d'interprétation, hormis ce qu'il avait écrit: le texte, seulement le texte!"[30]

Testimony of this kind pervades virtually every account of Ravel's teaching of and public discussions about his music — re-enforced by his hands on direction of performances, live and recorded, of major artists.

Given Ravel's obsession with the faithful transmission of his text it is no wonder that he immediately grasped the opportunity presented by the newly growing field of recording technology to provide definitive documentation of his musical intentions. In this regard, the following excerpt on performance practice from the latest version of the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians might well have been written during the early years of this century.

> "The principle that the performer should be allowed some scope to `interpret' the notation subjectively has been challenged successfully for the first time in the twentieth century, with the advent of recordings and electronic means of fixing a composition in its definitive form once and for

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[29] Dean Elder, "Memories of Ravel, Gaby Casadesus talks to Dean Elder," Clavier, 14.7 (1975): 17.

[30] Jacques Février, "Les Éxigences de Ravel," Revue Internationale de Musique, April 1939: 893.

all."[31]

Seen from the perspective of a "composition fix(ed) in its definitive form" it would seem that a recording by the composer himself would dispel any possibility of misinterpretation of his intentions. In the following chapter we will examine those recordings with precisely this point in mind. What indeed happens, when the composer becomes the performer?

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[31] Howard Mayer Brown, "Performing Practice," The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians 1980 ed.

CHAPTER TWO

The Paradox: Composer as Pianist

Ravel on Record

Maurice Ravel has the distinction of being one of the first composers to have virtually everything he wrote for the piano recorded during his lifetime. Recognizing the potential of the newly developing recording technologies during the first decades of the twentieth century, he set about with characteristic deliberation, to see to it that his compositional intentions would be unequivocally committed to posterity. Of these, perhaps the most revealing are the works recorded by Ravel himself — an unprecedented opportunity for a composer, obsessed with authenticity, to make his intentions crystal clear. Yet when we listen to these recordings, we are immediately struck by a fascinating contradiction — a contradiction between a great composer's pronouncements about the performance of his music and his own, personally approved recordings.[32]

Even a casual acquaintance with these recordings will cause one to

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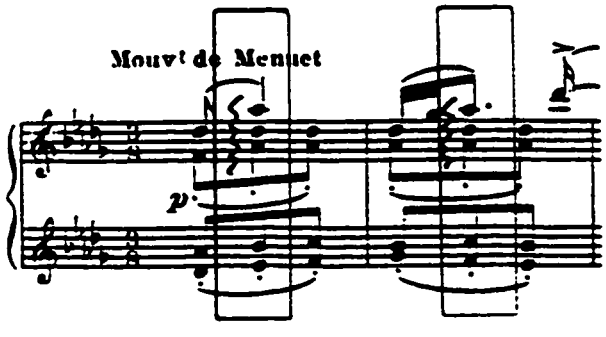
[32] Piano rolls recorded by Ravel include those for:
— Welte-Mignon (1913): the Sonatine: movements 1 and 2, and Valses nobles et sentimentales
— Duo-Art (1922): Pavane pour une infante défunte, Oiseaux tristes (Miroirs), Le Gibet (Gaspard de la Nuit), the Toccata (Le Tombeau de Couperin)
— Duo-Art (1929): La vallée des cloches (Miroirs).
(Arbie Orenstein, Ravel, Man and Musician 247-269)

reflect on the problem of authenticity in the performance of music — indeed when dealing with a text in any performing art — an issue central to this study. Given the complexity of the question I will examine the recorded performances before continuing on to review how the problem has been dealt with by Ravel's contemporaries. This last point is important since the composition of Ravel's major works straddles a period during which competing views of the "meaning" of authenticity battled for dominance.

Il suffit de la jouer!

To begin with, when we listen to Ravel's recorded performance of the Menuet from the Sonatine for example, we are immediately struck not only by the textual liberties in dynamics, phrasing, rhythm, articulation and pedalling — many of which would cause a satiated nineteenth century audience to sit up and wonder — but by the identical stylistic indulgences that he expressly rejected in the performances of contemporary pianists, for example, the gratuitous breaking of chords, the anticipation of chords by the bass note and the consequent distortion of rhythm.(see example 1: beat two, measures 1,2)

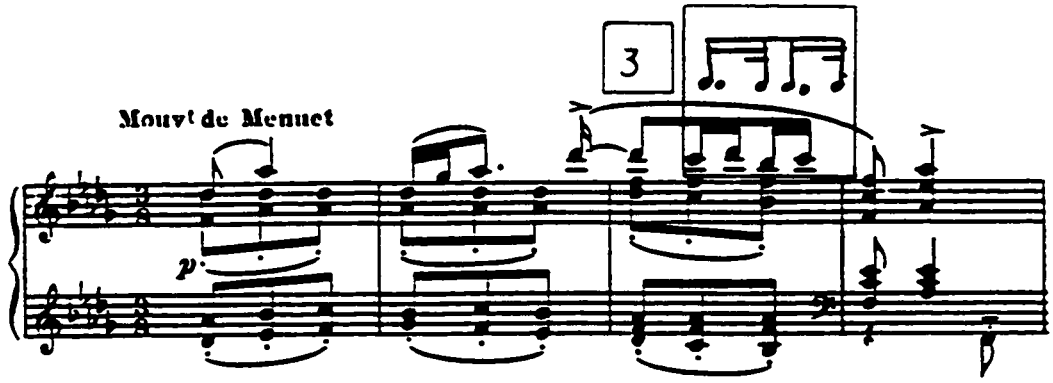
Example 1:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1 and 2: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

Rhythmic distortion occurs repeatedly in the sixteenth note passages. (example 2: measure 3)

Example 2:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measure 3: Performed by Maurice Ravel

One is tempted to ask if Ravel is attempting — in this quasi dotted rhythm — to restore the seventeenth and eighteenth century French keyboard practice of "notes inégales" (as in the music of Couperin and Rameau) in the interests of historical authenticity? It is doubtful however, that the ever meticulous Ravel would leave such an important — and esoteric — interpretive element to the mercies of the historically naive, romantically trained pianist. In short, why not write it out?

Other rhythmic distortions occur when the hands do not play together on the beat (example 3: measure 23) or when a bass note is played slightly before a chord (example 4: measure 39)[33].

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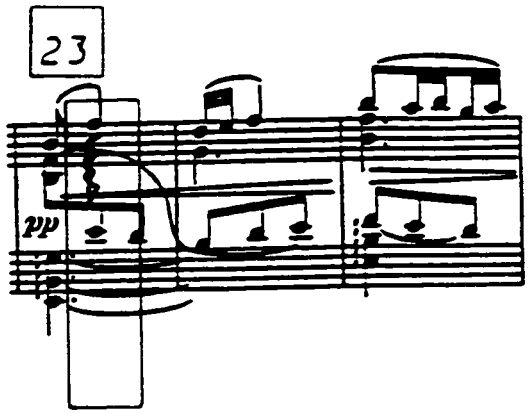
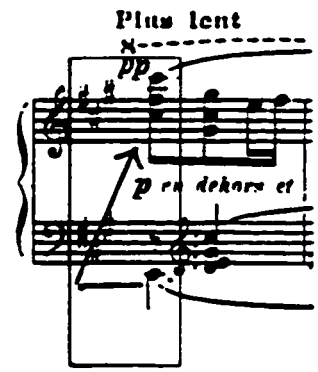
33 Charles Rosen makes the point that the delaying of the melody note until after the bass has been played was an example of what the eighteenth and nineteenth century musicians called *rubato*. It in effect constituted an expressive

Example 3:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measure 23: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

Example 4:



Menuet from the Sontine, measure 39: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

As I have previously noted this predisposition for rhythmic capriciousness and unsynchronized playing was characteristic of the late nineteenth century pianist — something immediately evident in the recordings of Vladimir de Pachmann, Paderewski, d'Albert, Friedheim and most other "individualists" of the time. So why did Ravel, who went to great lengths to free his music from these interpretive whims, continue to indulge himself precisely in those "excesses" that he found pianistically at variance with his aesthetic credo?

Aside from a pervasive rhythmic instability Ravel deviates from his explicit dynamic directions (see example 5: measures 17,18 and example 6: 19,20) by effecting equal stresses on the first and fifth beats of the phrase, thereby clearly altering the dynamic shape.

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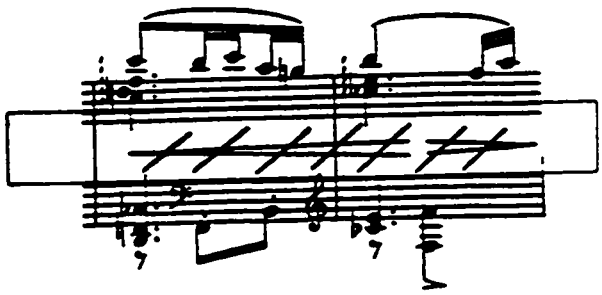
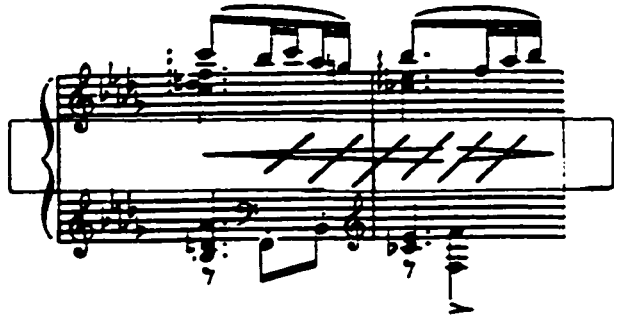
form of ornamentation. — Charles Rosen, The Romantic Generation, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 35.

Example 5:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 17 and 18: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

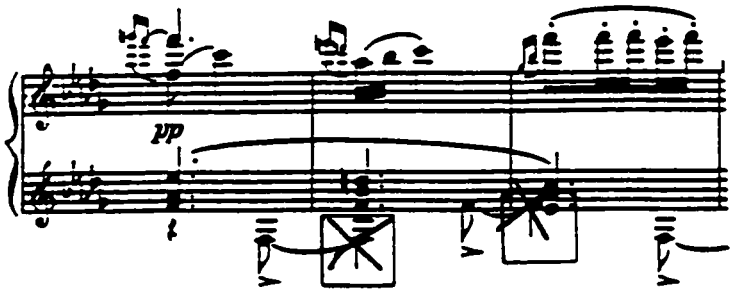
Example 6:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 19 and 20: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

In the Sonatine, as in the vast majority of his works for the piano, Ravel did not notate precise pedalling indications — an issue which I will discuss in greater detail in the coming pages — however it is most often implied by his notation of parts, voices and articulations. It is clear from the notation and the context that he intended for the lowest F in measures 13,14, and 15 (example 7) to be sustained, and yet his pedalling is such that the resonance is cut off each time.

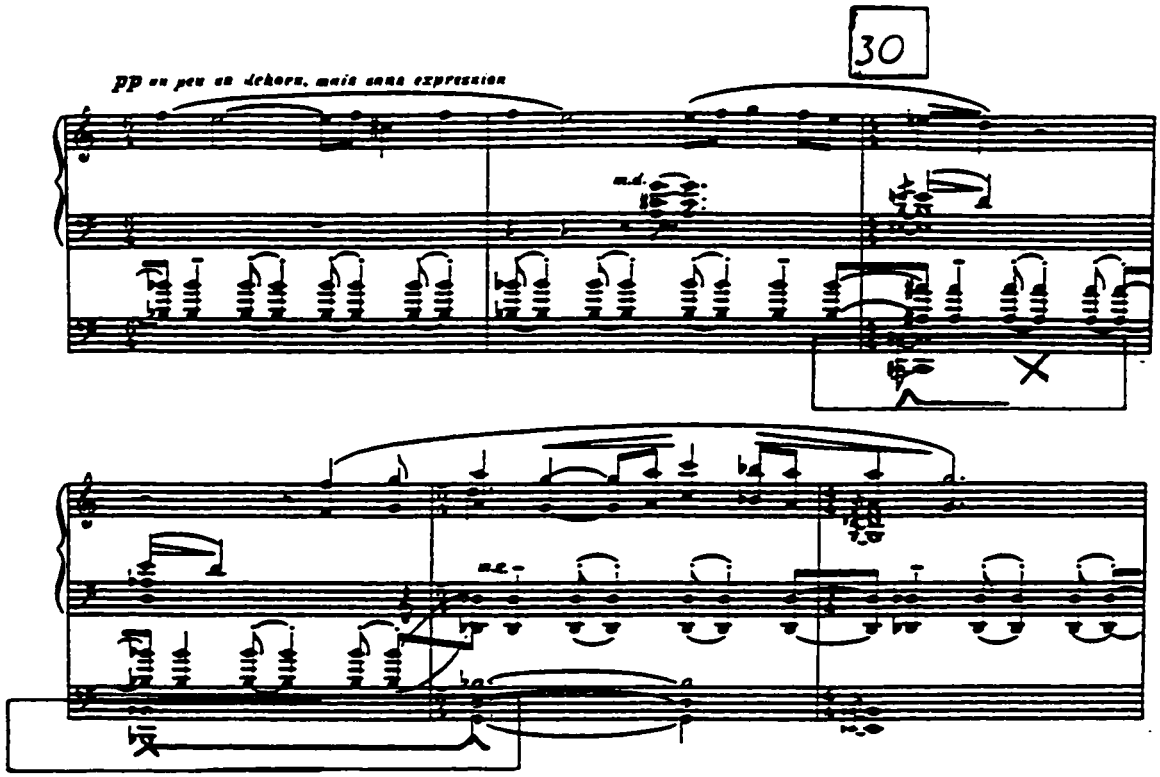
Example 7:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 13-15: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

We find similar pedalling inconsistencies in his recording of Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, major distortions of his musical intentions which cause one to question his actual hearing (example 8: measures 30,31).

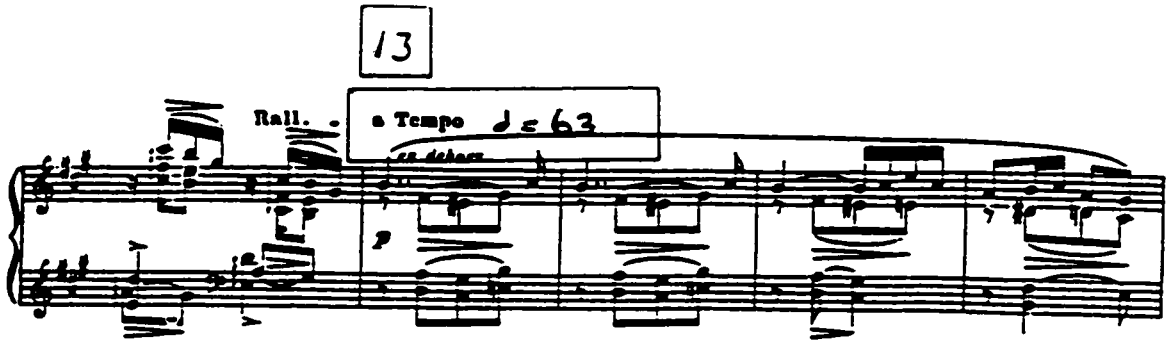
Example 8:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 30 and 31: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

Aside from inconsistencies in pedalling, Ravel ignores his own meticulously notated tempo indications. The first movement of the Sonatine is a case in point. Here his opening tempo of 80 for the quarter note is well beyond the prescribed 63-69, but more to the point is his disregard for the universally understood significance of *a tempo* (example 9: measure 13). Here Ravel's 63 to the quarter note is substantially slower then his original speed.

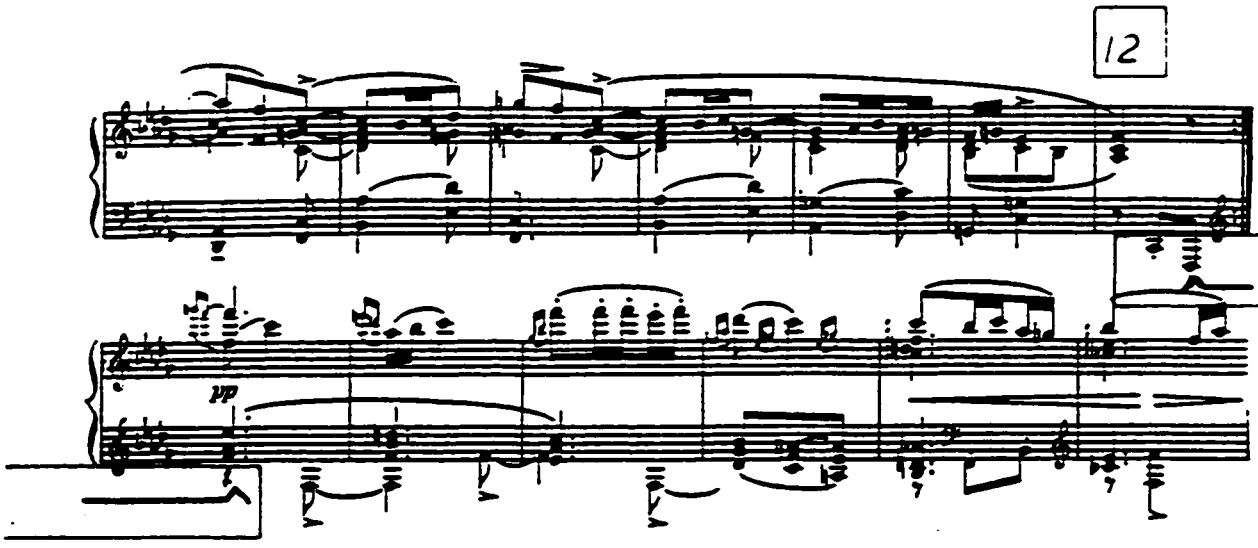
Example 9:



Modéré from the Sonatine, measure 13: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

To return to the second movement of the Sonatine, there can be no doubt that Ravel intended the piece to evoke the style of the minuet. He has specified "Mouvement de Menuet", has included the repeats of sections in the fashion of a minuet, has written short phrase units and the typical stressed second beat — all characteristic of a minuet. Why then does he overlap with pedal the end of the first and beginning of the second sections? (example 10: measures 12-13) In so doing he obscures the clarity of design inherent in the classical form upon which this piece is modelled — a form that he returned to repeatedly throughout his musical life. Why then do we not feel that we are listening to a minuet in Ravel's performance?

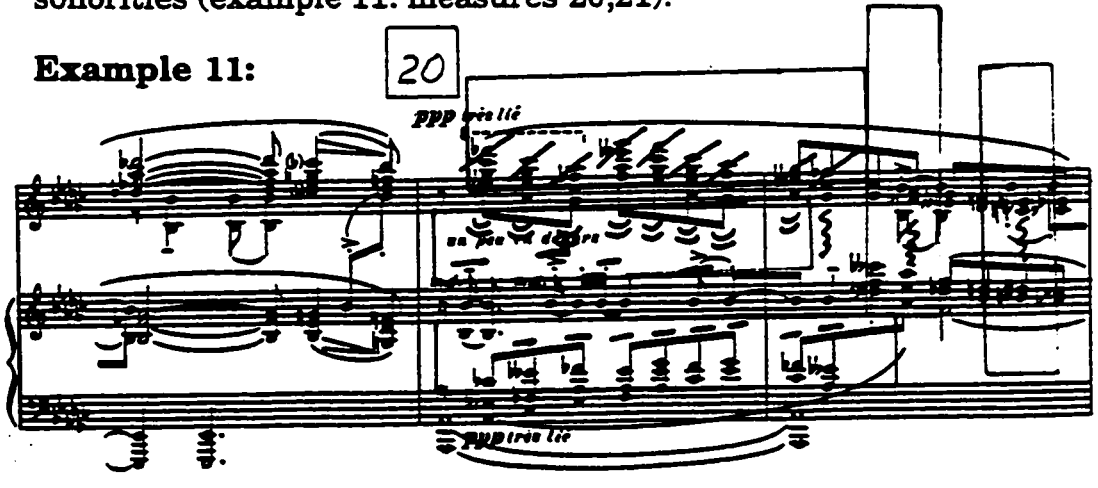
Example 10:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 12-13: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

It is almost impossible to ignore the apparent nonchalance with which Ravel alters, omits, ornaments and rhythmically distorts — liberal by any definition of performance practice — the "meaning" implied in his notation. In Le Gibet, for example, Ravel's pedalling and note omissions not only blur but obscure in a striking manner his complex and subtly coloured harmonic sonorities (example 11: measures 20,21).

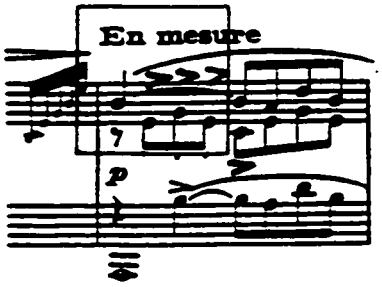
Example 11:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 20 and 21: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

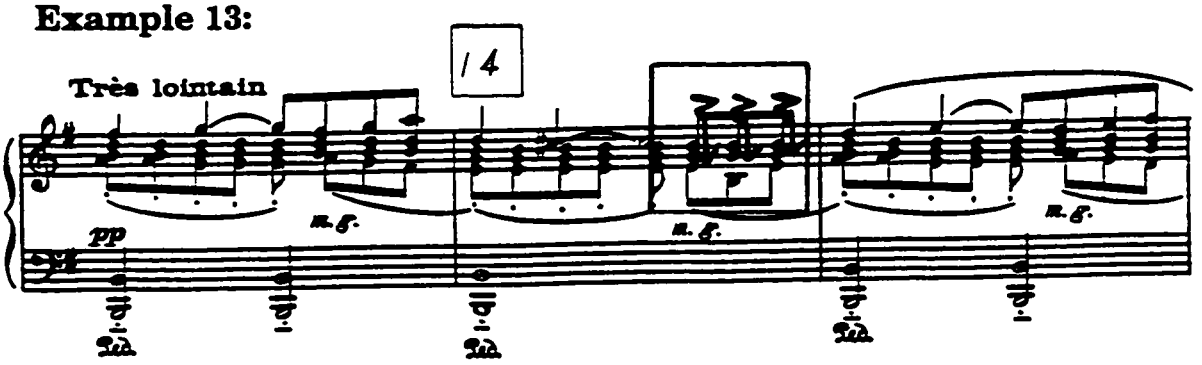
Equally perplexing are several passages in his performance of the Pavane pour une Infante Défunte which could easily be interpreted as a parody of his compositional style. His bombastic articulation of inner voices, whether singly or as full chords, is so obviously out of context that it comes off as a caricature of the dynamics, stress and rhythmic pulsing implied in the music (example 12: measure 8 and example 13: measure 14).

Example 12:



Pavane pour une Infante défunte, measure 8: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

Example 13:



Pavane pour une Infante défunte, measure 14: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

It is impossible to ignore these anomalies in Ravel's performances of his music and we must ask therefore how the composer could have produced such recordings given all that he said and stood for.

The Welte-Mignon Recording System

One may ask whether the disparities between Ravel's written text and his recorded performances are due to the primitive recording technologies of the early part of the century. We know that phonographic recording of the piano at that time was indeed primitive and occasionally deceptive. However, Ravel's early recordings were produced on the Welte-Mignon piano roll reproducing system (or American or British copies of it) — an apparatus that was remarkable for its precision, accuracy and true to life results. This system used the piano itself rather than mechanical recording devices as the instrument of reproduction. The Welte-Mignon reproduced, with amazing precision, the exact key-hammer speed of attack and release. This was achieved through an elaborate and ingenious system of marks imprinted by 88 inked rubber wheels on a moving roll of paper. Each mark varied in density in response to the performer's touch. Once the recording was completed, the artist was then able to hear the play-back by means of the *Vorsetzer*. This electronically driven device consisted of felt covered levers (the length of a man's fingers from the pivot of his wrist to the tips) which, when placed before the piano would activate the keys with the identical dynamic force and articulations of the original performance. The performer's use of the pedals was similarly reproduced. Once the artist *approved* of the results, the ink

markings were punched into perforated paper rolls which could then be played on a home reproducing piano.

Virtually every major composer and pianist of the period recorded for Edwin Welte before his system was supplanted by electric recordings in the late 1920's. The recordings of Ravel's performances which we hear today — the Sonatine, Valses nobles et sentimentales, Pavane pour une Infante defunte, the Toccata (Le Tombeau de Couperin), Oiseaux tristes and La Vallée des cloches (Miroirs), as well as Le Gibet (Gaspard de la Nuit) — are reproductions of the original master rolls on a modern concert grand.

The testimonial consensus of these artists — composers and pianists alike — confirms the excellence of the Welte-Mignon system. As early as 1905, Emil Sauer wrote from Leipzig:

> "The Welte-Mignon apparatus has filled me with amazement and wonder. This is indeed an invention! I fancied myself in Magicians land, deep in a dream of long past times, when on this wonderful apparatus I heard again the performances of my comrades, pupils of the great master Liszt. All their various interpretations are so unmistakably and accurately reproduced, that a few bars alone suffice to recognize the player with absolute certainty. All hail to the present generation of pianists! Our playing is no longer a transient art and when we close our eyes for the last time, we may do so with the certainty that a faithful record of our proficiency will keep us green in the memory of coming generations to which the Welte-Mignon will hand it down."[34]

A year later, the celebrated romantic pianist Vladimir de Pachmann concurred:

> "The Welte-Mignon reproduces the living soul of the Artist, and has not its equal."[35]

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[34] Jacket notes, Great composers/pianists perform their own compositions, record 9, The Welte Legacy of Piano Treasures, Recorded Treasures GCP771, 1972.

[35] ibid.

Commenting on the sensation of hearing a true to life reproduction of his playing, Enrique Granados wrote to Mr. Welte in 1913:

> "I am really unable to praise your apparatus as deserves. In any case I cannot express the very peculiar emotion caused by hearing oneself play."[36]

And Claude Debussy had this to say:

> "It is impossible to attain a greater perfection of reproduction than that of the Welte apparatus. I am happy to assure you in these lines of my astonishment and admiration at what I heard."[37]

It is amply clear therefore that Ravel's recordings were not only accurate reproductions of his performances but received his stamp of approval on their production and release.

Ravel the Pianist: The Received Wisdom

The received wisdom then on Ravel — still accepted without question — is that he was, at best, a mediocre pianist. Unlike Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Saint-Saëns, whose piano playing was equal to their eminence as composers, Ravel's reputation has it that he was unable to perform anything other than the technically simplest of his own compositions. The notable exception may be the recording of the Toccata from Le Tombeau de Couperin, one of Ravel's technically demanding keyboard works.[38]

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[36] ibid.

[37] ibid.

[38] That is, if in fact Ravel is the pianist. According to Gaby Casadesus the pianist on the recording is not Ravel, but her husband, Robert Casadesus. She also claims that the recording of Le Gibet is her husband's as well — Dean Elder, "Memories of Ravel, Gaby Casadesus talks to Dean Elder," Clavier 7 (1975): 17.

Ravel's contemporaries in their attempts to rationalize the apparent inconsistencies in Ravel's piano playing, offered a variety of explanations and excuses. Gordon Bryan, for example, a pianist who collaborated in two Ravel concerts in London, recalls hedging a gramophone company's suggestion to record Ravel playing Jeux d'eau because of the composer's *"limited technical ability"*. (italics mine)[39] The Spanish composer Ernesto Halffter, commenting on a Ravel performance of the Violin Sonata had this to say:

> "from the musical point of view he was fantastic. He made lots of mistakes — that was because he *didn't practise enough*." (italics mine)[40]

And Roger Nichols, half a century later, concurs from a slightly different angle:

> "It was a moot point, sometimes discussed in a friendly way among Ravel's acquaintances, which he was worse at: playing the piano or conducting."[41]

However an intriguing paradox emerges once we dig beyond the reports

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However, apart from her word — fifty years after the fact — there is no evidence that these recordings were not made by Ravel. Furthermore, it is difficult to reconcile these performances, filled with inconsistencies, contradictions, alterations and neglect as they are, with a pianist of Robert Casadesus' stature. To begin with, the performance of the Toccata is considerably under the composer's specified tempo (92 to the quarter note instead of 144), pedalling is problematic and voices are unbalanced. Phrasing seems contingent on technical convenience, not to mention involuntary stress and a less than refined control of tone and dynamic shading. Whoever is responsible for the recording — whether it was Ravel himself, or whether the composer supervised the recording of his colleague — is not the issue. What is most important here is that Ravel *allowed* it to be released, thereby offering to posterity a record of his supposed intentions at great odds with his written text.

39 Nichols, Ravel remembered 91.

40 Gordon Bryan quoted in Norman Demuth, Ravel (London: 1947) 175-6.

41 Nichols 92.

of his contemporaries and the "evidence" of his recorded performances.

Received Wisdom Questioned

On closer examination of Ravel's recorded performances, questions arise about his alleged technical inadequacies, in particular the inability to handle expressive detail, and virtuoso passage work at high speed. Most often cited is his well-below tempo recording of the Toccata from Le Tombeau de Couperin — one third below the indicated tempo. However, how do we account for the opening movement of Valses nobles et sentimentales, executed well above the indicated 176 to the quarter, or his live accompaniment of the third movement of the violin sonata (with Joseph Szigeti) at double tempo[42], or, for that matter the cadenza of Oiseaux tristes? Furthermore, when we listen to Ravel's recording of the latter, we are immediately struck by the mastery of tone control and subtleties of pedalling and voicing one would expect from a superior artist. There is little here of the highly generalized, rhythmically unstable and idiosyncratic phrasing of, say, the Pavane or the Menuet from the Sonatine. Rather than a lack of technical or pianistic ability, what seems to be emerging is the distortion and neglect of his own meticulously notated performance indications and the imposition of nineteenth century romantic affectations — precisely those aspects which he deplored in the performances of other pianists.

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[42] "Ravel", Adrienne Clarkson's Summer Festival, dir. Larry Weinstein, prod. Niv Fichman, Julia Sereny, Larry Weinstein, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1988.

A Question of Choice: "Vous devriez être le premier de la classe et vous êtes le dernier." (Charles de Bériot)

Ravel began his piano studies at the age of seven under Henry Ghys with the full support and encouragement of both his parents — a support that continued throughout his musical education. He often said of his father, that Pierre-Joseph "was more knowledgeable in music than most amateurs"[43]. There is no evidence then, of the all too common conflict between young artists and parents with opposing expectations. He subsequently continued his piano studies with Émile Descombes, a student of Chopin and professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Under Déscombes, in the company of fellow students Alfred Cortot and Reynaldo Hahn, Ravel performed a movement from the Third piano concerto by Ignaz Moschelès at the Salle Érard. This marked his first public performance. That same year (1889) he successfully auditioned for entrance to the Paris Conservatoire, playing the movement from Moschelès' concerto as well as a movement from a Chopin concerto[44]. The jury's consensus upon graduating from Joseph Anthiôme's preparatory class in November 1891 — performing works by Chopin and Mendelssohn — was that he was "plutôt doué"[45]. Accepted into Charles de Bériot's superior piano class, Ravel found himself in the company of fellow student Ricardo Viñes who would later emerge

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[43] James, Ravel his life and times, 13.

[44] Alfred Cortot, La Musique Française de Piano (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948) 33.

[45] Marnat, Ravel 34.

as one of the most noted pianists of the early twentieth century and the first major interpreter of Ravel's piano works.

Some idea of the quality and technical level of the music assigned by Bériot to Ravel can be gauged from the following list: Mendelssohn's Capriccio in B minor, the Grieg Concerto, two Saint-Saens' Concertos, Chopin Études, and the Ballade in F minor, Schumann's Fantaisie, Weber's Scherzo, and Georges Mathias' Allegro Symphonique. At this point in Ravel's musical development it was assumed by the conservatoire and its faculty, that the young artist was destined for a career as a concert pianist[46]. Juried comments about his capability ranged from "chaleur" and "sentiment", to a "sens de la construction"[47].

At nineteen years of age Ravel underwent the kind of personal crisis which seems to affect many seriously devoted young musicians. We get some idea of the conflict he experienced from Jeanne Bamberger's study of gifted musicians. Bamberger describes the phenomenon as the recognition that one has reached a career cross-roads — analogous to a mid-life crisis — that can only be resolved by making an irrevocable choice, no matter how painful[48]. Perhaps precipitated by his dismissal from the conservatoire after three consecutive failures to obtain the required prize in both harmony and piano,

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[46] Marnat, Ravel 35.

[47] ibid.

[48] Jeanne Bamberger, "Cognitive issues in the development of musically gifted children," Conceptions of Giftedness, ed. Robert J. Sternberg, Janet E. Davidson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 388.

Ravel's choice was to shift from a career as pianist to that of composer. Bériot was furious.

> "Vous êtes un criminel: vous devriez être le premier de la classe et vous êtes le dernier."[49]

Apart from Bériot's inability to empathize with his student's dilemma, it is clear that he was appalled at a gift gone to waste. For the next ten years, Ravel struggled between two conflicting goals — to pursue his path as a composer, while attempting to achieve establishment recognition for his endeavors.

On leaving the conservatoire in 1895, Ravel continued his piano studies, privately, with the Spanish pianist Santiago Riera. Under Riera, he explored the new Spanish piano music and succeeded in assimilating it into his developing compositonal style. In 1898 Ravel returned to the Conservatoire to study composition under Gabriel Fauré while working on counterpoint and orchestration privately with André Gédalge. It is important to note that concurrent with his studies, Ravel's published piano and vocal compositions, including Menuet Antique, Sites Auriculaires, Shéhérazade, Chanson du rouet and Si morne, were gaining wide public recognition. His performances of his own music as well as that of others is an indication of his continued interest in the piano as a vehicle for personal expression[50]. Most significant were Ricardo Viñes' performances of Ravel's piano music at the prestigious concerts of the

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[49] Marnat, Ravel 35.

[50] In 1897 for example, Ravel performed the difficult Saint-Saëns' Rhapsodie auvergnate.

Société Nationale de Musique. In 1900 — in the first of five annual attempts — Ravel entered the Prix de Rome competition. During the five repeated failures to negotiate the competition's obstacle course, he composed Jeux d'eau, the Sonatine and the String Quartet.

It was the failure of the first movement of the latter to secure him the mandatory prize in composition that precipitated his second expulsion from the conservatoire. Sharp conflict and mounting tension between Ravel and the Prix's highly conservative jury — presided over by the Director of the conservatoire, Théodore Dubois — ultimately resulted in the "affaire Ravel" — a public outcry against the prejudicial treatment the young composer had received. The irony of a "jury solemnly declaring that the composer of Jeux d'eau, the String Quartet and Shéhérazade lacked the technical proficiency to be a finalist in the competition" was inescapable[51]. Despite the resignation of Dubois, several members of the conservatoire faculty and the devastating exposé of the curriculum, Ravel finally washed his hands of academic association.

It was clear then, even at this early date, that Ravel was well on his way to establishing himself as a major figure in western music. With the growing recognition of his compositional gifts his pianistic energies became focused exclusively on the performance of his own works. His excellence as a pianist is supported by Elaine Brody's claim that Ravel was superior as a pianist to Debussy, who had also abandoned the concert stage for

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[51] Arbie Orenstein, Ravel Man and Musician (New York: Dover, 1991) 42.

composition[52]. This is rather interesting when we consider that Marguerite Long, echoing the general consensus, describes Debussy as "an incomparable pianist" who

> "while floating over the keys with a curiously penetrating gentleness....could achieve an extraordinary power of expression".

She goes on to describe Debussy's mastery of the nuances of tone control, dynamics and subtleties of pedalling[53]. Whether, as Brody insists, Ravel was indeed superior to Debussy as a pianist, or as received wisdom would have it, a lackluster performer, the fact remains that he was not only capable of executing his music, but capable of executing it with the requisite finesse.

Joseph Szigeti's rather ambiguous observation below, about Ravel's playing, points up the fundamental contradiction explored in this thesis[54].

> "Ravel was somewhat nonchalant about his piano-playing: unconcerned might better describe his attitude. It was the confidence of the creative artist that determined his stand with respect to our task. It was as if he said: 'What of it, whether we play it a little better, or in a less polished and brilliant fashion?' *The work is set down, in its definitive form, and that is all that really counts.*"(italics mine)[55]

The point that Szigeti omits is that in his writings, teachings and public

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52 Elaine Brody, "Viñes in Paris: New Light on Twentieth-Century Performance Practice", A Musical Offering Essays in honor of Martin Bernstein (New York: Pendragon Press, 1977) 51.

53 Marguerite Long, At the piano with Debussy (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1972) 19.

54 Ravel performed his Sonata for Violin and Piano with Joseph Szigeti in the 1920's.

55 Orenstein 96.

statements, Ravel takes the "definitive form" of the work for granted. His real concern is that it be performed *precisely* as he wrote it. Szigeti's rationalization is therefore more in line with certain pre-twentieth century attitudes that, while affirming the inviolability of the text, acknowledge that man-the-performer is a less than perfect copying machine. We are obliged, as a consequence, to keep in mind that Ravel's playing of his own music is indeed at odds with the intransigence he displays about the precision, accuracy, and attention to detail that he demanded of every other pianist[56].

Intention and Creative Variability: The Paradox of Composer in Performance

An examination of the evidence — Ravel's devotion to the piano, the years of concentrated study, the repertoire which he performed at the Conservatoire and the technical and musical excellence of selected examples from his own recordings — casts doubt on the argument that he was just not up to playing his own music. Even the least adept professional musician—pianist will pay lip service to notated detail, however limited his or her ability to communicate the detail may be. The striking fact that emerges from Ravel's recorded performances is not that he cannot play what he wrote,

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56 We find a similar interesting contradiction in the recorded performances by Ravel's contemporaries Bartók and Stravinsky, both of whom advocated a literal reproduction of the text as well as a percussive touch at odds with the ideal vocally inspired romantic tone. In Bartók's performances we are surprised to hear, even in fortissimos, a rich singing tone. Stravinsky's recorded performances of his own music are noteworthy in that when he recorded the same work more than once, each performance varied significantly in tempo (Taruskin 53). Note as well Bartók's over-edited editions of Mozart's sonatas — replete with romantic "improvements".

but that he *ignores*, and sometimes *radically alters*, i.e., *creatively varies*, his meticulously notated performance indications. In effect he *avoids precisely those aspects of his writing that would confirm his musical credo.* Expressive detail, nuance, inflection, punctuation, articulation, balance, these represent the very soul of Ravel's particular musical genius. His compositions are harmoniously blended masterpieces balancing passion with order. In his playing on the other hand, this delicate equilibrium seems often on the brink of disruption. What he perceived as unrestrained individual expression in the playing of the late nineteenth century "romantics" was to him the denial of the supremacy of predetermined order. And yet this is precisely what he indulges in his own playing.

Ravel's language — betraying his dualistic heritage — speaks of the dominance of reason over the vagaries of impulse and emotion. Here we have a composer attempting through his own recorded performances, to communicate for posterity, these musical intentions — without question the most meaningful aspect of his life — yet what he achieves, is in effect antithetical to his very goal. The irony is inescapable.

In the following chapters I will examine the community of values which contributed to the formation of Ravel's aesthetic credo. I will look at his relationship to the prevailing European aesthetic climate of the period, his ties with the French musical tradition, and the influences which helped form his own musical perspective. In the process I will examine the developments in early twentieth century piano technique as well as the parallel evolution of the modern piano and their significance in the composition and performance of

Ravel's great virtuoso masterpieces. In order to clarify the pianistic tradition which Ravel inherited I will refer to a number of his early interpreters and examine the aesthetic criteria that — as "French" pianists — they all shared. In the following chapter I will preface the discussion with a review of the debate surrounding the aesthetic values embraced by these artists.

CHAPTER THREE

"To hear a whole programme of Ravel's works, is like watching some midget pygmy doing clever but very small things within a limited scope. Moreover, the almost reptilian cold-bloodedness, which one suspects of having been consciously cultivated is almost repulsive when heard in bulk..."[57]

Ravel's Aesthetic Criteria

This unsigned diatribe, purporting to be a critical review of an all Ravel concert, tells us much about the nature and tone of debate over aesthetic issues during the first decades of the present century. Apart from the crude images — "midget pygmy", "almost repulsive" — the *review* is clearly about more than being held hostage by Maurice Ravel, however reptilian or cold-blooded the composer may "almost" be. It is about gratuitous stereotyping, labelling and shutting out of aesthetic experience. And like much that passes for critical evaluation, the clue to the real meaning of this *review* lies in what the writer has left unsaid. By describing Ravel as a clever, small scale manipulator of tedious sound effects, he is really perpetuating the myth of the calculating, shallow and expressively limited French aesthete. As a consequence, the writer remains deaf to the inherently French "sensibilité" —

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57 The London Times, 1924.

the elegance, humour, tender playfulness, sensual colourings and precision of emotional focus that are the glory of Ravel's art. This point is crucial to any discussion of Ravel interpretation, and, by extension, its "universality" and the interpreters role in communicating its meaning. I would like therefore to examine the criteria by which the French artist has traditionally created, and how these criteria have been interpreted by those aesthetically outside the tradition.

I have noted above that the label most often applied to the French artist is emotional distance — that is, a certain coldness of affect. While rarely phrased in reptilian terms, the pejorative implication surfaces even among reputable scholars. Martin Cooper, for example, writing on French music and musicians, distinguishes between "music of the second rank" and "works of the first magnitude".[58] The latter, he implies (while quoting W.J. Turner) must reveal "the composer's soul", must strive for "the sublime", must convey a "moral" statement or a philosophical ideal.[59] Beethoven's works, for example, exemplify the qualities of "first magnitude" music. The French composer, according to Cooper, instinctively shies away from any overt display of his emotions. "Intelligence and the senses" are his creative tools. Emotional content, when it exists, is a "by-product"[60].

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58 Martin Cooper, French Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 7.

59 Cooper 1.

60 ibid.

Putting aside for a moment the latent power of a "by-product" supported by a happy merger of intelligence and sensibilité, let us look more closely at Cooper's rationale. By identifying "works of the first magnitude" with high level abstractions such as "soul", "sublime", "moral", and "philosophical" Cooper (or Turner) is measuring a composer's worth by criteria drawn from the late nineteenth century German romantic ideal — an ideal that permeated European thought, almost unchallenged, until the latter half of the century. While the twentieth century has spawned a proliferation of competing aesthetic positions — from multi-cultural hybrids to highly individual and technologically inspired abstractions — the German romantic ideal has persisted as the concert-goer's benchmark of the best that western music has to offer. (Even a cursory glance at a representative program will confirm this as will a representative newspaper review of a concert.) What is less easy to understand is how a respected scholar like Martin Cooper can justify ranking the value of music on the basis of abstract non-musical aptitudes that are impossible to verify.

Cosmopolitanism and a Re-vitalized French Consciousness: Catalysts and References

The French artist's response to the suffocating omnipresence of the late nineteenth century German romantic ideal was a re-vitalized French consciousness, present in virtually every artistic and intellectual activity.

Motivated in part by the country's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871), a new generation of French musicians, notably Debussy, Chabrier and Satie, began to look inward for artistic guidance. Ravel, for one, coming into his own at the turn of the century, was at sufficient psychic distance from Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner, to draw upon the German giants if he so wished without compromising the essential "frenchness" of his music. Contrary to Cooper, this "frenchness" did not automatically relegate emotion to by-product limbo. Ravel is unequivocal about this point — "sensitiveness and emotion constitute the real content of a work of art."[61] The numerous instances when Ravel calls for "molto expressivo" in one form or another are as good a measure as any of the importance he attached to the "real content of a work of art"[62].

While it is true that French composers have traditionally occupied themselves with matters of the intellect and the senses, what this reveals about the French aesthetic cannot be reduced to a question of emotion or a lack of it, but must be viewed in the context of the artist's conception of his or her role in the *making* of a work of art. As I will attempt to show in my discussion of the apparent contradictions between Ravel's pronouncements on the performance of his works and the recorded performances of his students — as well as his own — this conception of his role as a composer may have

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61 Maurice Ravel, "Contemporary Music," The Rice Institute Pamphlet (April 1928), 141.

62 With characteristic precision, when he wants the opposite, "sans expression", Ravel says so — to chilling effect — as in for example, Le Gibet (measure 28).

contributed to the discrepancy. Ravel, in the tradition of the French artist, saw himself, first of all, as a craftsman. Unlike Wagner or Beethoven, he did not see his work as a direct expression of his creative genius. Indeed, the concept of artist-as-genius, as *super-mensch* endowed with magical powers, and blessed by the muse, was antithetical to Ravel's personality, let alone his cultural bias[63]. To Ravel, the muse, if she existed, was to be approached indirectly, preferably with an exquisitely crafted offering in hand. This pre-occupation with craft as an intellectual imperative was unquestionably a factor in Ravel's definition of his work as neo-classical and his summary rejection of impressionist and neo-impressionist labels.

There can be no question that Ravel not only perceived composition as an intellectual challenge, but took immense pleasure in the exercise. His friend, Léon-Paul Fargue once noted that Ravel

> "....had qualities of an artisan. And he liked nothing better than to be compared to one....His passion was to offer the public works which were `finished', polished to the ultimate degree."[64]

Roland Manuel recalls how the composer spoke of this process of refining, shaping, "polishing" and "finishing" a work as striving towards the ideal of

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63 Prior to the nineteenth century most artists depended on the patronage of the church or aristocracy. In this sense they were perceived as fully integrated, valuable members of society. The isolated, misunderstood genius, at odds with the social order, emerged in the nineteenth century, largely due to the bourgeois revolution and the consequent erosion of traditional support.

64 E. Vuillermoz, Colette, Delage, Fargue, Jourdan-Morhange, Klingsor, Roland-Manuel, *et al.*, Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers (France: Éditions de Tambourinaire, 1939) 160.

"technical perfection, since I am certain of never being able to attain it."[65]

The quest for absolute clarity, balance and good taste is therefore pursued in the full — and presumably happy — realization that it will forever remain elusive. There is nothing, of course, in this scenario that rules out emotional commitment — only that it be expressed with precision. As I have noted earlier, one does not have to be a French national to be cued in to the French aesthetic consciousness. Ravel makes this point in his Houston lecture on contemporary music. Speaking of the influences which helped form his own musical perspective, he mentions a heterogeneous group of European and American musicians and writers, including Mozart, Liszt, Satie, Chabrier, Fauré, Mallarmé and Edgar Allan Poe. Citing Poe's The Philosophy of a Composition Ravel notes that the writer's insistence on intellect and emotion, craftsmanship and inspiration was absolutely consistent with his own aesthetic rationale.

Ravel speaks of this heterogenous group, and Poe in particular, as "influences", yet given the composer's unmistakable musical signature they should more correctly be called references or catalysts. His pianistic writing may be Lisztian, and his harmony reminiscent of Satie, but one does not *hear* Liszt or Satie or Mozart or anyone else in a piano composition by Ravel. While this may appear self-evident it is also crucial to our understanding of the nature of the cosmopolitanism that informs all of Ravel's art — an "intrinsically motivated" and profoundly creative process in which influences

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[65] Alexis Roland-Manuel, "Lettres de Maurice Ravel et documents inédits," Revue de musicologie, July 1956: 53.

are absorbed and transformed into a new synthesis — in effect become metaphors for his compositions — with only a hint of eclectic grafting[66].

It is interesting to note that when the "influence" is apparent, as it is for example in the Pavane pour une Infante défunte (see Chabrier's Idylle from Pièces pittoresques) Ravel rejects the work. In a 1912 critical review written for Le Bulletin de la Société internationale de musique, Ravel unabashedly dismisses the composition.

> "Je n'éprouve aucune gêne à en parler: elle est assez ancienne pour que le recul la fasse abandonner du compositeur au critique...Je n'en vois plus les qualités, de si loin. Mais, hélas! j'en perçois fort bien les défauts: L'influence de Chabrier, trop flagrante, et la forme, assez pauvre. *L'interprétation remarquable de cette oeuvre incomplète et sans audace a contribué beaucoup, je pense, à son succès.*"(italics mine)[67]

The latter point is curious given the composer's "il suffit de la jouer" directive to performers. Perhaps Ravel was better able to accord the performer creative licence when there was sufficient distance between himself and the work in question.

Other important catalysts for Ravel apart from literature and his immediate musical predecessors — very much in the French tradition — were extra-musical associations, the exotic, nature and various forms of dance, particularly those of the French court. According to André Suarés,

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66 The psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi whose research has focused on systematic, long-term study of the creative process, argues that contrary to prevailing psychological theories, artists do not create as a consequence of external stimuli, but rather because "the quality of the experience while involved in these activities is intrinsically rewarding." (The Evolving Self, A Psychology For the Third Millennium. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1993. xii-xiii).

67 Marnat 97.

> "The dance influences all Ravel's music, just as it does that of the Spaniards and the clavecinists."[68]

Not only did Ravel find inspiration in early dance forms such as the minuet, pavane, forlane and the rigaudon, but in an astonishing trans-cultural variety of waltz, czardas, habanera, bolero, fox-trot and "blues" rhythms. Programmatic and descriptive titles are the rule, and are musically confirmed with uncanny accuracy. Take for example Jeux d'eau, Oiseaux tristes, Noctuelles, La vallée des cloches or any other of Ravel's musical portraits — titles clearly reminiscent of those used by Chambonnières, Couperin, D'Anglebert or Rameau.

"Bon-goût"

To develop what I have said about the expression of emotion in French music, it is instructive to refer to Diderot's Paradoxe sur le Comédien in which he describes how an actor remains serene precisely in order to effectively move an audience. He must possess

> "a cool head, a profound judgement, an exquisite taste, a matter for hard work, for long experience, for an uncommon tenacity of memory."[69]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the notion of preserving one's self-control while feeling deeply, permeated all French art.

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68 A. Suarés, "Pour Ravel," La Revue Musicale, Special number devoted to Maurice Ravel,(April 1925), quoted in Roland-Manuel, Maurice Ravel (New York: Dover Publications, 1972, republication of Dennis Dobson, 1947), 123.

69 Orenstein, Ravel Man and Musician 128.

This is the pre-requisite to the "good taste" that is the ultimate criterion of the French aesthetic. François Couperin in the preface to L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin makes precisely this point on numerous occasions. In discussing the cultivation of good keyboard style for example, that is, the touch, the ornaments, articulation, rhythm, etc., he sums up with the following advice for the claveciniste:

> "Finally, let the style of playing be directed by the 'bon-goût' of today, which is incomparably purer than the old."[70]

This elevation of good-taste to purity of expression as an aesthetic imperative suffuses the music of the clavecinistes as it does the paintings of Watteau and Poussin, the plays of Corneille, Racine and Molière, the philosophy of Descartes and the gardens of Le Nôtre. Indeed, in one form or another, it defines, and is the binding characteristic, of French art, music, philosophy and science from the Grand Siècle to the present day. The composer, the writer, the musical performer, the actor all share a common aesthetic heritage.

The doctrine of *bon-goût* permeates the French aesthetic consciousness and is an integral part of Ravel's art. In this regard the question that I will presently address is how *bon-goût* is achieved in the performance of his transcendentally demanding piano music by performers from diverse aesthetic backgrounds.

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[70] François Couperin. L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin. (Weisbaden: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1961).

The Players

The first generation of Ravel interpreters includes some of the most illustrious names in the history of the piano, indeed the list reads like a Who's Who of the great and famous. Ricardo Viñes, Marguerite Long, Robert Casadesus, Alfred Cortot, Vlado Perlemuter, Jacques Février and Marcelle Meyer led the first wave of Ravel interpreters — most of whom had studied his works with the composer and were deeply committed to the performance of his music.

Ricardo Viñes, Ravel's friend and fellow-student at the conservatoire, was, by all accounts, the most sensitively attuned of the first generation interpreters to the composer's music[71]. For reasons that remain unclear, there is no evidence that Viñes ever recorded any of Ravel's compositions.[72] He did however, record pieces by Scarlatti, Albeniz, Borodin, Debussy and others — performances distinguished by impeccable tone control and lightness of execution that are, as we shall see, intrinsic to the French keyboard tradition and the performance of Ravel's piano music.

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[71] Indeed a very special relationship existed between Ravel and Ricardo Viñes, a Catalan pianist who was the foremost champion of the new French, Spanish and Russian piano music of the early twentieth century. In an article appearing in A Musical Offering, Essays in Honour of Martin Bernstein (New York: Pendragon Press, 1977), Elaine Brody suggests that both Debussy and Ravel composed their piano works with the extraordinary technique of Ricardo Viñes in mind. A further testament to the high regard which Ravel had for Viñes is the dedications of three pieces to the great pianist (the Habanera, Menuet antique, and Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs).

[72] Roger Nichols suggests that the split between Viñes and Ravel was precipitated by an irreconcilable disagreement over the interpretation of Le Gibet (Gaspard de la Nuit). — Editorial Method and Sources, Preface. "Ravel's Piano Music — A New Edition". Gaspard de la Nuit by Maurice Ravel. London: 1991. 3-5.

Like Viñes, pianists of the calibre of Robert Casadesus, Vlado Perlemuter and Marguerite Long studied Ravel's music with the composer. With the exception of Viñes, they also recorded under his guidance and remained identified with him throughout their performing lives. While there is only one recording of Ravel's music by Marguerite Long (the Concerto in G major, with Freitas Branco conducting, 1932) Casadesus and later Perlemuter, recorded the complete works for piano following the composer's death.

These "inner circle" Ravel interpreters therefore, shared a common musical environment. Each was thoroughly steeped in the aesthetic values that defined the golden age of French pianism, and, of equal significance, each was a virtuoso pianist of the first rank, capable of executing anything in the piano repertoire with masterful technique and stylistic fidelity. Marguerite Long, the "Grande Dame" of French pianism is a case in point. A student of Louis Diemer at the Paris Conservatoire, Long is generally considered the supreme standard bearer of the French keyboard tradition during the first decades of the twentieth century. Her playing exemplified the taste, elegance, clarity, precision, delicacy, nuance and subtlety of touch that distinguished the highest ideals of the French aesthetic. While the physiological mechanics of Long's technical discipline — the "quiet" hand, the separation of fingers, wrist, forearm and upper arm into independently acting units — were not confined to French pianists — her aesthetic lineage descends directly from the clavecinists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and consequently mirrored the clavecinists' ideal of control over descent of the key with minimum exertion and

the most delicate and sensitive movement of the fingers[73].

It is important here to note that despite wide individual differences in interpretation and application, the technical rationale subscribed to by the majority of nineteenth century pianists was essentially an extension of harpsichord and clavichord thinking[74]. The major difference between the

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[73] Couperin 10-12.

[74] As long as early piano music was performed on a relatively light action instrument, the reliance on independent finger technique was adequate for most purposes. However with the introduction of a heavier keyboard action and the enormous expansion of expressive and acrobatic pianism throughout the nineteenth century, the physical demands made on the pianist could no longer be met by a technique which artificially isolated the fingers from the rest of the body. Not only did the technique become untenable, but in many cases, increasingly became associated with serious neuro-muscular problems.

In his monograph Armleiden der Klavierspieler (Arm Ailments of the Pianist — 1885) Ludwig Deppe argues that the cause of most performance related disabilities can be traced to the erroneous assumption that tone production begins and ends with isolated finger action. On the contrary, Deppe points out, tone control involves a coordinated movement of all the muscles and joints of the arm. Moreover, the acting muscles are directed by the ear's perception of "beautiful" tone, without which the mechanical action — any mechanical action — becomes meaningless. In describing the coordinated action of the whole arm, Deppe speaks of a "free-fall". The ambiguity of the term, and its association with weight and relaxation led to a flurry of theoretical "scientific" tomes, method-texts and inspirational "how to" books. Most prominent of the early theorists were Tobias Matthay, (The Act of Touch in all its Diversity, an analysis and synthesis of pianoforte tone-production — 1926) and Rudolf Maria Breithaupt (Die Naturliche Klaviertechnik — 1905) who between them established the ground rules for the revolutionary anatomic-physiological approach to piano playing (popularly known as weight and relaxation) and a controversy that continues to the present day. For the most part the nineteenth century pianist's uncritical enthusiasm for the weight and relaxation approach bordered on a quasi messianic euphoria. Thousands became caught up in what appeared to be a long lost answer to the "mysteries" of higher piano technic. The results however were not always what they were supposed to be. Comments of the time ranged from "the audience waits while the pianist relaxes" to "it's done wonders for the poor pianist but done next to nothing for the pianist with a good technic". In effect the bottom was brought up while the top was brought down, resulting in widespread sloppy, heavy and out of control piano playing. Towards the end of his life Matthay responded to the growing criticism with an attempt to clarify and defend his conception of relaxation and weight touch. "Relaxation does not lead to flabbiness...it does not imply the omission of

physical demands of the piano and its predecessors, lay in the need, on the piano, to develop the strength, flexibility and endurance demanded by its much heavier keyboard and its repertoire that included a greatly expanded palette of dynamic possibilities. Hence, the enormous volume of exercises and études — from Clementi at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to Godowsky in the twentieth — covering every possible technical contingency. There were, of course, differences in aesthetic criteria between "schools" of piano playing in the nineteenth century — differences that increasingly reflected regional and national preferences[75].

The French "school" of piano playing turned out numerous distinguished

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exertion needed in all playing....It has been quite wrongly assumed that by weight touch is meant that tone is produced by the lapse of weight without the intervention of finger and hand exertion." (Piano Fallacies of Today 17)

The cause of weight and relaxation was not helped by the controlled studies conducted by Otto Ortmann (The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique, 1925), James Ching (Foundations of Piano Technique, 1934), Thomas Fielden (The Science of Piano Playing, 1943) and others, all of which seriously questioned the underlying premise of the movement. While the combatants in the great theory and method war were, for the most part, pedagogical theorists, the occasional major pianist entered the fray. Of these the most influential was unquestionably the great Swiss-French pianist Alfred Cortot (1877-1962). Cortot's Rationale Principles of Pianoforte technique and his "work" editions of Chopin, Liszt and Schumann among others, would appear to descend directly from the school of finger independence. However Cortot's actual teaching and pronouncements on performance were diametrically opposed to a mechanistic reductive approach to piano playing. (Bernard Gavoty, Alfred Cortot, 260-284)

75 While labelling a performing style as characteristically German or Russian or French or Italian is intellectually risky, it is true that prior to the mid-twentieth century, certain qualities of interpretation, expressive shaping and "tone" were identified with national characteristics — whether the performer was a bonafide citizen of the country or not. Today with the homogenization of schools and national archetypes consequent on recordings, contests, travelling master classes and festivals, regionalism as a stylistic factor is no longer tenable except perhaps in art song and opera.

virtuoso pianists, namely Camille Saint-Saëns, Francis Planté and Alkan. Harold Schonberg comments that

> "To this day the French style has remained one of suppleness, of elegance and logic, of finger technique in the classic style (from hand and wrist rather than from arm and shoulder) resulting in the clear but percussive tone in fortissimo passages which so many French pianists display."[76]

Marguerite Long describes French pianism as,

> " an innate kinship of technique and style made up of clarity, ease, moderation, elegance, and tact....If (French playing) concentrates above all on grace rather than force, preserving especially its equilibrium and sense of proportion, it does not bow to any other in its power, profundity, and inner emotion."[77]

Contrary to the percussiveness of tone described by Schonberg, the French pianist's depth of commitment to purity of tone can best be gauged by a comment on teaching the piano by Vlado Perlemuter.

> "Je n'impose rien à mes élèves, je les laisse libres, mais il y a une chose que je ne peux pas accepter: *c'est une sonorité "trop raide"*. La souplesse est, pour moi, une des choses les plus importantes pour bien jouer du piano. Je réprouve aussi les gestes inutile qui n'apportent rien à l'expression musicale."(italics mine)[78]

It is instructive here to note that Perlemuter includes economy of gesture, i.e., the visible means of tone production in the pedagogical scheme. Given Perlemuter's influence, it is also certain that the concept of "sonorité", so

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[76] Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists from Mozart to the Present (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963) 267.

[77] Richard Dyer, "L'Art de Toucher", Piano and Keyboard September/October 1993: 61.

[78] Jean Roy, "Rencontres avec Vlado Perlemuter," Ravel d'après Ravel by Hélène Jourdan-Morhange et Vlado Perlemuter, (Aix-en-Provence: Editions Alinéa, 1989), 117.

central to French pedagogical thought, is still very much alive, and a key factor in the performance of the music of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel and other French keyboard masters[79].

In the preface to her performance edition of Ravel's Sonatine, Gaby Casadesus makes the point that her textual additions were transcribed directly from notes left by her husband, Robert Casadesus. It is important here to emphasize that, like Marguerite Long, Robert Casadesus not only studied Ravel's works with the composer, but was also a piano student of Louis Diémer. As a consequence, we can expect both these pianists to share certain qualities identified with the French pianistic tradition and exemplified in the music of one of its greatest composers. We would also expect the Casadesus edition to be a faithful representation of the composer's — not to mention the pianist's — intentions. Yet, as we shall see in his recording of the Sonatine, Casadesus' performance does not always reflect his own explicit pedalling indications.

When we examine Ravel's piano music more than a half-century after his death, we are struck by how on the one hand freshly "modern" and individual he sounds — distinctive, unique, forever straddling the cutting edge of his art — and yet how rooted he is in French sensibilité and European cosmopolitan tradition. Even a cursory glance at Ravel's compositions for the piano demonstrates this seamless blending of the traditional and the

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79 Vlado Perlemuter taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1951-1971. In addition he gave master classes in Salzburg, Tokyo, Montreal, Melbourne and was a regular guest teacher at Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and the Yehudi Menuhin Music School in England.

experimental. In the following chapter I will examine some of the factors that have contributed to this synthesis of past and present — factors that place Ravel's piano music firmly at the apex of three hundred years of keyboard writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Piano: Ravel's Natural Voice

The piano holds the place of honour in Ravel's art. All of the trends in his compositional style first appeared in his piano works, many — such as selections from Le Tombeau de Couperin and Miroirs — were subsequently orchestrated with a brilliance of colour and dimension which identify him as one of the great orchestrators of all time. The following survey of Ravel's major piano compositions points up the importance of the piano in the formation of his compositional style as a whole: the Habanera (1895) with its Spanish-derived harmonies and rhythms, the Menuet antique of the same year with its suggestion of ancient dance rhythms and archaic pastiche, Jeux d'eau (1901) and Miroirs (1905) with their Lisztian pianistic virtuosity and impressionist techniques carried to unprecedented heights in Gaspard de la Nuit (1908), the Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911) and Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914-1918) with their spare, more linear texture and harmonic innovations and the piano concerti (1929-1931) with their post-world war 1 jazz sonorities.

From his earliest works we find Ravel exhibiting his remarkable capacity for interpreting the idioms and styles of various historical periods and cultures — capturing for example, the national spirit of another culture with absolute authenticity, without compromising his characteristically French

personality. Manuel de Falla for example, attributes the "hispanisme subtilement authentique" of Ravel's Spanish music to the composer's identification with his mother's native Spain and to the Ravel family's close association with Spanish ex-patriates in Paris[80]. However given that Ravel himself never crossed the border into his mother's homeland, "the truth of the imagination" (Keat's phrase) is more likely the driving force behind these stunningly evocative Spanish scenes[81]. We find evidence of Ravel's fascination with the music of other cultures not only in the Spanish inspired piano music, but in songs and instrumental pieces such as Deux Mélodies Hébraiques, the Chansons Madécasses, the gypsy inspired Tzigane for violin and orchestra and the suggestion of Javanese gamelan in Jeux d'eau and Vallée des cloches. Indeed, throughout Ravel's life, the evolution of his style was nurtured by national, popular, exotic and traditional genres drawn from the diverse cultural milieus that stirred his musical imagination. Not only did he absorb and expand upon these idioms, but — particularly in his jazz-"inspired" works — foreshadowed the harmonic language of the genre. Much of the music of composers such as George Gershwin and Duke Ellington as well as the improvisations of Bill Evans and countless other jazz and lounge pianists world-wide, owe their harmonic lineage to chordal structures, voicings and sequences that appear in works as early as the Rapsodie espagnole (1907-8) and the Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911).

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[80] Manuel de Falla, "Notes sur Ravel," La Revue Musicale 189 (1939): 81-86.

[81] Storr, Music and the Mind 99.

When one considers Ravel's compositional output as a whole, it becomes increasingly evident that he was both an original and retrospectively creative composer. His up-dating of classical forms remained a lifelong occupation. This is evident from the Menuet antique, replete with naive, romantic turns of phrase, through the tightly constructed Sonatine and Tombeau de Couperin to the concerti in the final decade of his life. In Jeux d'eau for example (composed while he was still a student at the Conservatoire) we find Ravel blending Lisztian pianism with suggestions of the gamelan-like exoticism within a loose sonata form. The result is a milestone work that in many ways surpasses anything that Liszt or Debussy had previously written.

Among Ravel's piano works can be found some of the most pianistically demanding compositions in the entire repertoire. Most remarkable is the fact that at no time in the thirty odd years between Jeux d'eau and the Concerto for the Left Hand, i.e., from his first major piano work to his final masterpiece, did he not have a roster of great pianists eager to perform — even premiere — his compositions.

Some indication of the level of interest surrounding the introduction of new works by Ravel can be gauged from the circumstances leading up to the first public performance of his virtuoso tour-de-force, Gaspard de la Nuit[82]. Ricardo Viñes began working on Ondine on the 28th of October, 1908. Two days later he played all three pieces for Manuel de Falla, and on the 8th of November, he played them again for Albert Roussel. A short two months

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82 The concert took place at the Salle Erard on 9 January, 1909.

later, Viñes premiered the work at a concert of the Société Nationale[83]. It is interesting to note that the early collaboration between Ravel and Viñes is generally considered to be of significance in the formation of the former's masterful writing for the piano[84]. More to the point however is the fact that despite the formidable (some might say forbidding) virtuosity of works such as Jeux d'eau, Miroirs, Gaspard de la Nuit and the concerti, the music feels "natural" under the hand — more so than Beethoven and Chopin or for that matter, Liszt. It is important here to ask what it is that makes these transcendentally difficult works feel so "natural" to the pianist.

Composers, Pianists and Instrument Builders: The Modern Piano Evolves

One clue may be found in the relationship between the evolution of piano technique and that of keyboard technology. This is not the place to recount the long, and, for the most part, productive exchange between instrument builders, composers and pianists that began shortly after Bartolommeo Cristofori's invention of the piano over the first decade of the eighteenth century, and continues to the present day. It is sufficient to point out that the modern piano, complete with cast-iron frame, cross-stringing and Erard derived repetition action, became the universal standard with the public exhibition of the New York Steinway in 1859. For all intents and purposes the 1859

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83 Maurice Ravel, preface, Editorial Method and Sources. Ravel's Piano Music — A New Edition Gaspard de la Nuit. by Roger Nichols (London: Edition Peters, 1991) 3-5.

84 Brody 51.

Steinway could absorb and make light of just about any punishment a virtuoso pianist might inflict upon it. The key word here is virtuoso — that is, a supremely endowed artist capable of making the best of whatever resources are available. Yet, when Gaspard de la Nuit first appeared in 1908, by all accounts it was only the greatest, most daring virtuoso who would contemplate tackling this monumentally difficult work. In this regard it is interesting that efforts continue to be made by piano manufacturers, as well as performance pedagogues, theorists and analysts to upgrade both the instrument and the pianist, essentially, so as to help each respond to the demands of works at the level of Gaspard de la Nuit with greater sensitivity and less effort. The most notable technological development was Steinway's introduction of accelerated action in the late 1920's. Today, the competent, well-trained pianist can at the very least, "play the virtuoso". Gaspard de la Nuit and other bravura war horses out of the Golden age of pianism, while still inaccessible to the keyboard multitude, have, with the developments in performance analysis and keyboard technology, become a distinct possibility for a growing number of dedicated pianists.

Differences between the European and American actions aside, the modern piano provided Ravel and his contemporaries with an instrument capable of producing a seemingly inexhaustible range of orchestral, pianistic and "singing" colours, with a power, velocity and tessitura previously unknown. This was the instrument anticipated in the pyrotechnical compositions of Liszt

— and acknowledged by him as such[85]. Ravel, on the other hand, did not have to dream about the ideal piano. He inherited it and honored his inheritance by setting out to explore its musical potential to the fullest. Like Debussy, Albeniz, Bartók, Scriabin and Rachmaninoff, Ravel was a first generation beneficiary of the modern piano[86].

Historical Roots of Ravel's Keyboard Style

In order to gain a perspective on the significance of the modern piano in Ravel's writing, it might be useful here to briefly trace the evolution of the keyboard tradition that he inherited. To begin with, the clarity and elegance we associate with Ravel's compositional style owes much to eighteenth century keyboard writing, in particular that of Scarlatti and the French clavecinists. Ralph Kirkpatrick points out that the earlier keyboard techniques — largely determined by the rules of contrapuntal composition — underwent a radical transformation with

"Scarlatti's extended and frequent leaps, chord batteries, glissandi, octave

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85 Most of Liszt's virtuosic works were completed before 1860. It is noteworthy however that Liszt was not only one of the first pianists to explore the virtuosic possibilities of the Erard repetition (perfected in 1822), but continued to incorporate, and indeed pace, technological developments as they occurred throughout his lifetime.

86 It is interesting how, purists notwithstanding, it is possible to accommodate virtually anything written for the harpsichord or pre-Steinway instrument — from John Bull to Chopin — on the modern piano. Imagine, on the other hand, trying to play Ravel, Rachmaninoff or Scriabin on a harpsichord, or even a fortepiano.

passage-work, hand-crossings" and related acrobatics[87].

In effect, Scarlatti literally exhausted the virtuosic possibilities of the keyboard available to him — a keyboard with a five octave range and a limited dynamic palette.

While the French clavecinists employed analogous techniques, particularly the crossing of hands and the interlocking of fingers, their main contribution to Ravel's keyboard style emerged from the stylized dances of the seventeenth and eighteenth century court. Here, the pantheon of agréments (ornaments), articulations and related expressive devices, constituted a vitalizing force, perceived by practitioners and audiences alike as the very soul of French music. Supported by descriptive titles and literary references, they, in effect, translate the characteristic French predilection for *belles lettres* and subtly articulated conversation. Ravel's keyboard writing then, must be seen as a fresh synthesis of a venerable tradition — one that traces its roots to Scarlatti and the eighteenth century clavecinists. It is, however, Scarlatti's spiritual descendant, Franz Liszt, to whom we must again turn in order to complete the evolutionary picture of Ravel's keyboard style.

In this regard I have previously noted that while Ravel's piano writing may be Lisztian in its technical layout, there is no mistaking it for the earlier master's music. Like Liszt, Ravel's virtuoso pianism is glissando inspired. As a consequence, rapid passage work — whether single or multiple note, scale or broken chord, with crossed or alternating hands, at every dynamic level across

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[87] Ralph Kirkpatrick, Domenico Scarlatti (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953) 190.

the seven and a half octave range of the piano — involves instantaneous shifts of the arm with fingers "thinking" in lateral groupings. There is, however, no room in Ravel's canon for the Lisztian high wire act — those interminable, and visibly precarious leaps over the length of the keyboard at full volume, that we find in, say, the Tarantella. Heart stopping these acrobatics may be, but to what musical end?

The Solo Pianist and the Romantic Idealization of the Hero

In order to clarify the extent to which Ravel parts company with Liszt and Liszt's spiritual contemporaries and followers, it would be helpful here to expand upon my previous discussion of an important aspect of the romantic ethos. To begin with, the solo virtuoso embodies the romantic idealization of the hero. As *übermensch*, he is destined to struggle against seemingly impossible odds, and to emerge from the crucible victorious and emancipated in spirit. The solo virtuoso pianist as hero not only faces the struggle between himself and the music, but between himself and the audience, and ultimately, himself and his self. In the quest for emancipation mistakes are inevitable — almost welcome. As Goethe put it "man must strive and in striving must err."[88] Risk — emotional and physical — is therefore par for the course. In the process, composers and performers were expected to push themselves to the limit and their audience was expected to be moved accordingly. It is here that the concepts of übermensch and artistic truth unite — whether in the

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[88] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Faust, Prologue in Heaven.

performance of a Liszt Transcendental Étude or a poetic fantasy piece by Schumann. Whatever else, the hero as pianist must enter into the music, his heart displayed on his sleeve, and his signature imprinted in every note. He may, like Anton Rubenstein or Ignaz Paderewski, emphasize the struggle in every agonized gesture and missed beat, or like Liszt, revel in the delight of overcoming it. The music however — and the melodrama — always remain his own.

Listening to a full blown romantic performer in action, one might get the impression that the raison d'être of his art is to prove that too much of a good thing is marvellous. Indeed, the ability to sustain a high level of emotional tension over long — even interminable — periods of musical time is the hallmark of the true romantic interpreter. With rare exceptions, nineteenth century composers realized that the implicit meaning of their works could not be communicated by detached performers, no matter how technically competent or attentive to structural detail they may be. The risk that a self-indulgent, shallow individualist might trivialize the musical message or inflate it into a parody was understood by composers — and audiences — as an unavoidable part of the game[89].

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89 This is not at all meant to suggest that romantic piano works were so loosely constructed that just about anything could be made of them. On the contrary, the entente between great composers and virtuoso interpreters has produced some of the most profound musical experiences in the history of the art.

Re-interpreting the Interpreter[90]

It is precisely here in the role of the interpreter that Ravel disengaged himself from nineteenth century practice. There was no place in his music for stage heroics, struggle, unsolicited display, second guessing or any of the other manifestations of the romantic cult of personality. Simply put, the job of the pianist was to reproduce the composer's intentions as faithfully as was humanly possible — no more, no less. To Ravel, even the slightest whiff of melodramatic parody on the part of the player, was more then anathema — it flirted with sacrilege. A musical peak for example, may be sustained only as long and as loud as required to serve the whole, and the whole is *written out* for all to *see*.

Ravel, then, prescribes very specific structural and aesthetic boundaries as directives for the performer. In effect, he is saying, I am the creator of the piece, and you are its conveyor. Please respect the boundaries of my work as I have conceived it.

This type of interpretive challenge differs dramatically from that encountered in the music of Liszt, Rachmaninoff or Scriabin for example, wherein the performer is expected to contribute whole-heartedly to the musical experience. Perhaps this is why committed romantics like Horowitz, de Pachmann, Paderewski and like-minded romantic contemporaries of Ravel, preferred to avoid the critical consequences of performing his music.

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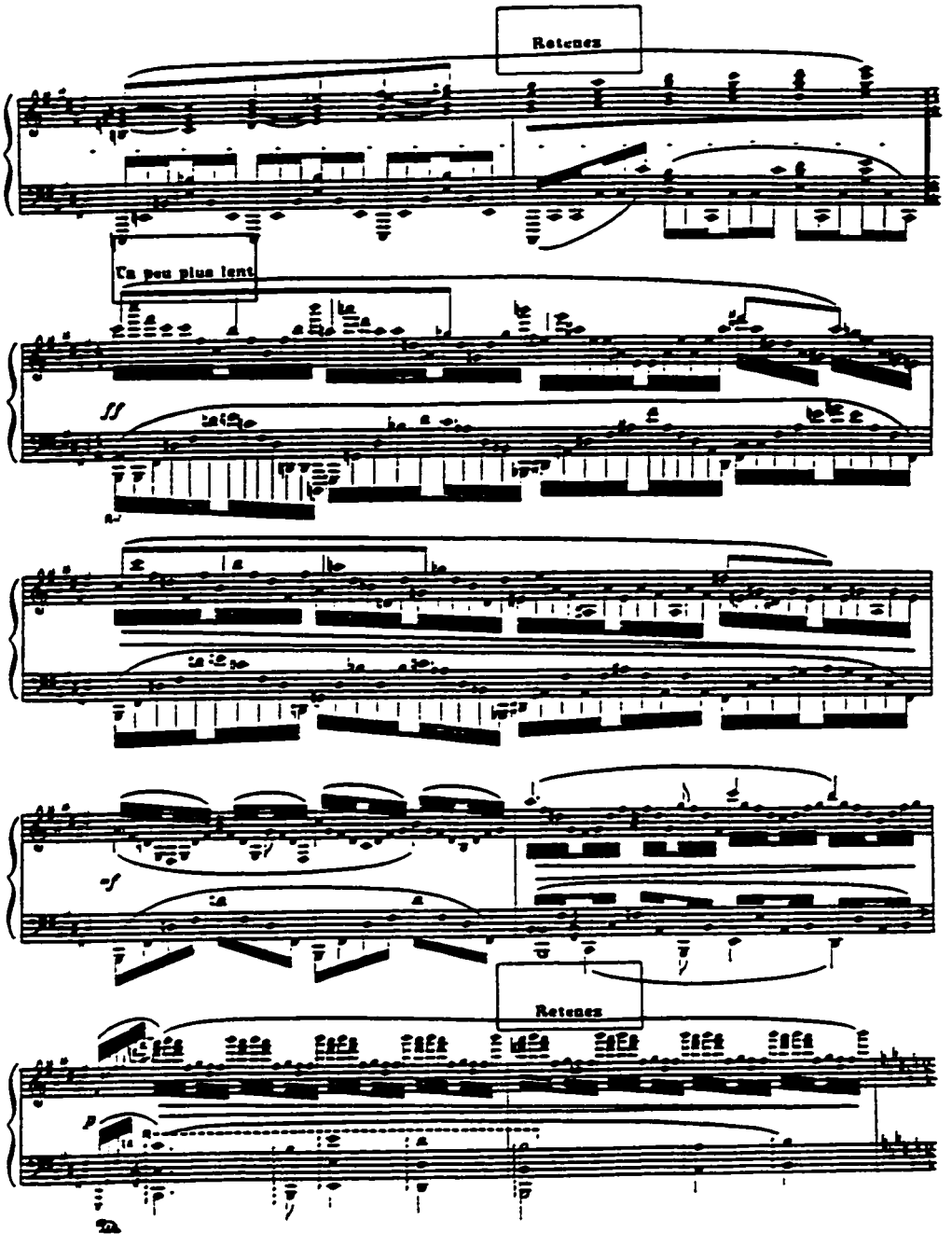
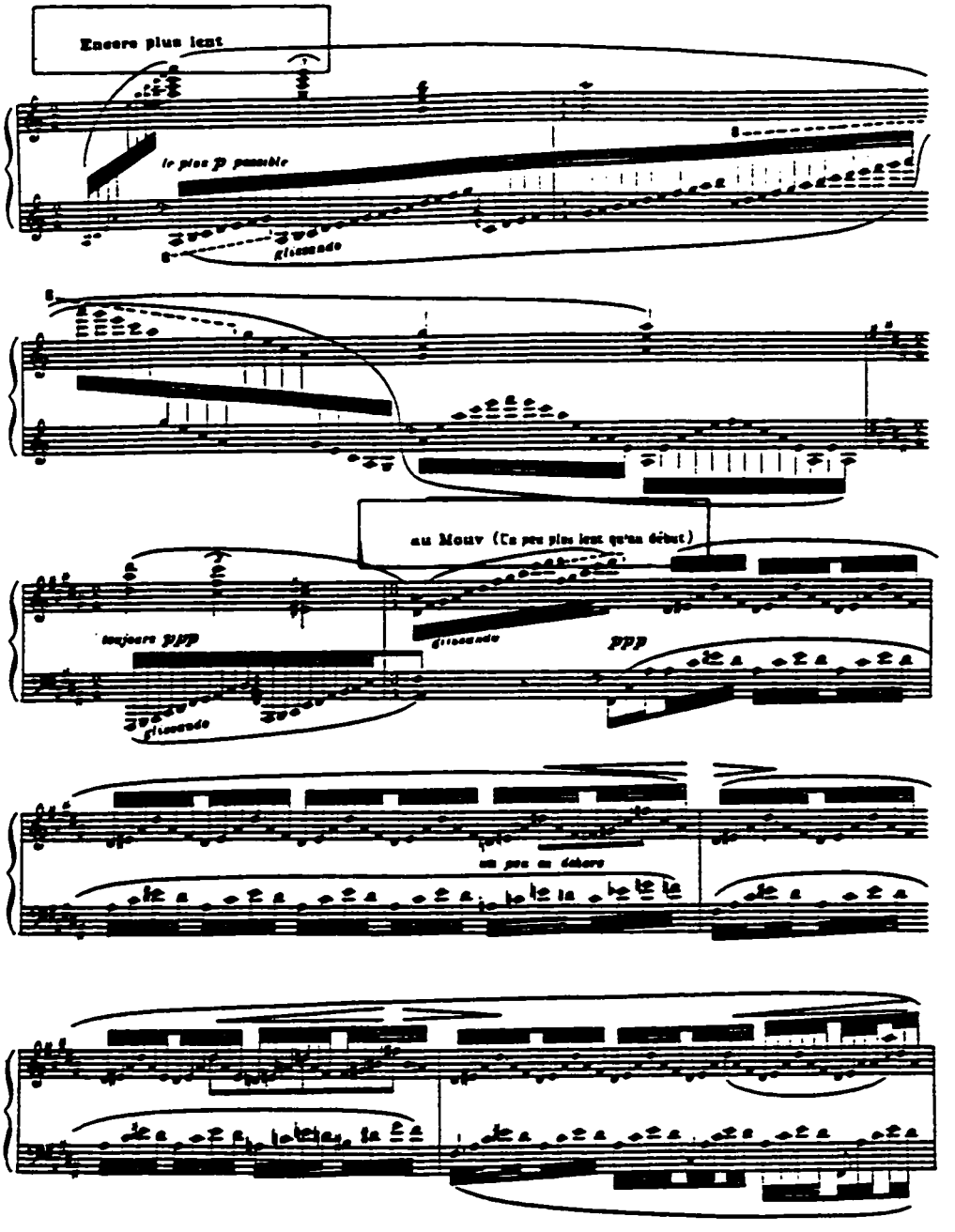
90 This title is drawn from a lecture given by Philip Cohen entitled "Interpreting the Musical Performer," International Symposium on Music Pedagogy, Cannes, France, 26-29 Jan. 1986.

Seen against the backdrop of the romantic ethos and its implications in piano performance, Ravel's precision and meticulous attention to detail becomes readily understandable. Knowing full well the tendency of many romantic performers to personalize the music, Ravel reasoned that the best course of action would be to spell out his intentions as clearly and precisely as possible. Dynamics, phrasing, articulation, tempi were easy enough to indicate. The free use of rubato, however, beloved of many "poets of the piano" was quite another matter. This type of playing, which we can hear on early recordings by Francis Planté, Vladimir de Pachmann, and Paderewski among others, was deemed by the new breed of specialist composers as rhythmically unstable, eccentric, and completely at odds with the inviolable text. Even when rubato is called for, Ravel leaves nothing to chance. His first line of defense against unlicensed indulgence was to set up traffic signals to control the flow of the musical line, i.e., when to slow down, when to speed up and when to stop. In the declamatory-recitative-cadenza (example 14) marking the final twenty nine measures of Ondine, for example, he guides the pianist through a precise Ravelian rubato: "Un peu plus lent", "Retenez", "Encore plus lent", "Au Mouvement (un peu plus lent qu'au début)", "Très lent", "Rapide et brillant", "Retenez peu a peu", "au Mouvement du début", "Sans ralentir".

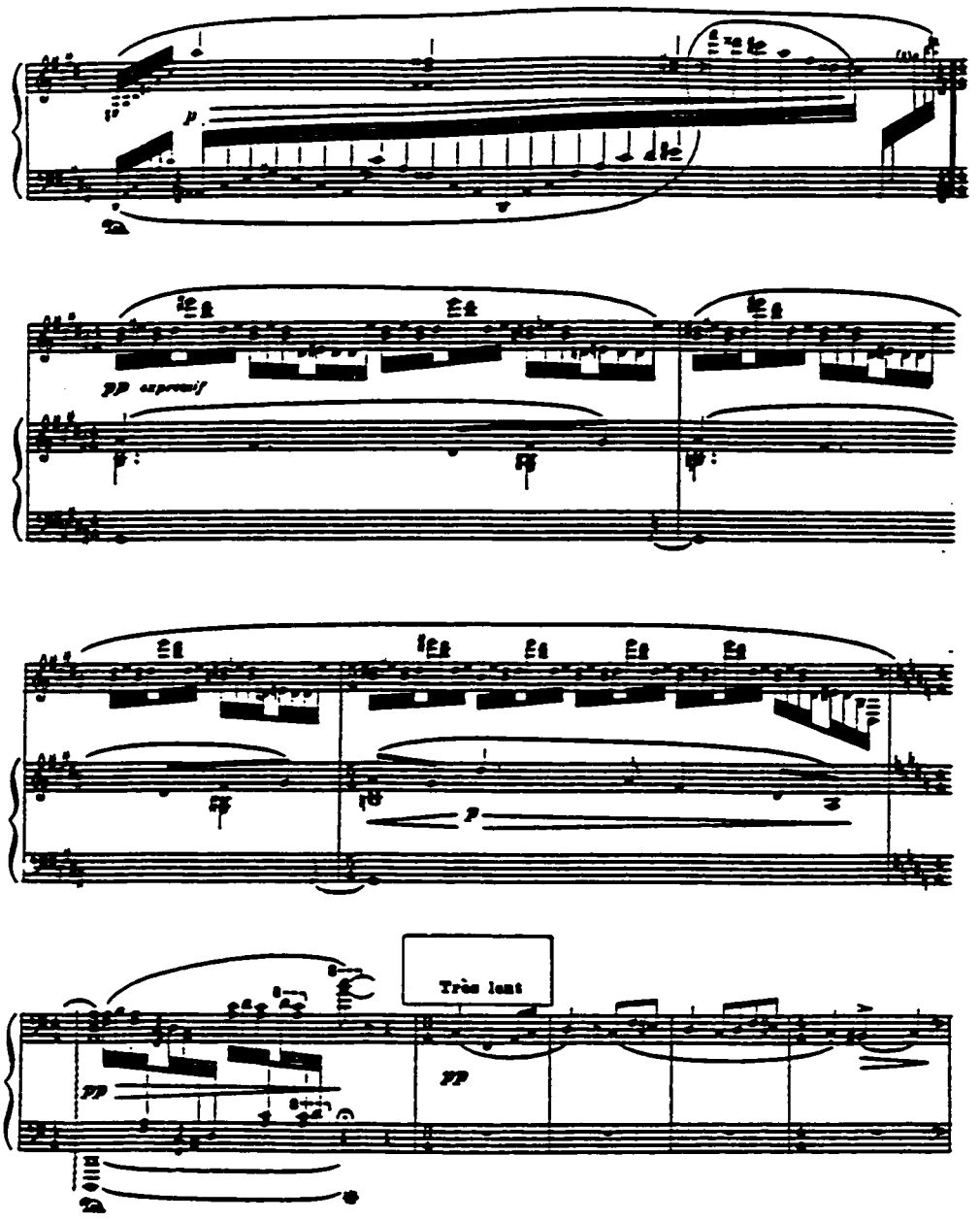
Example 14:



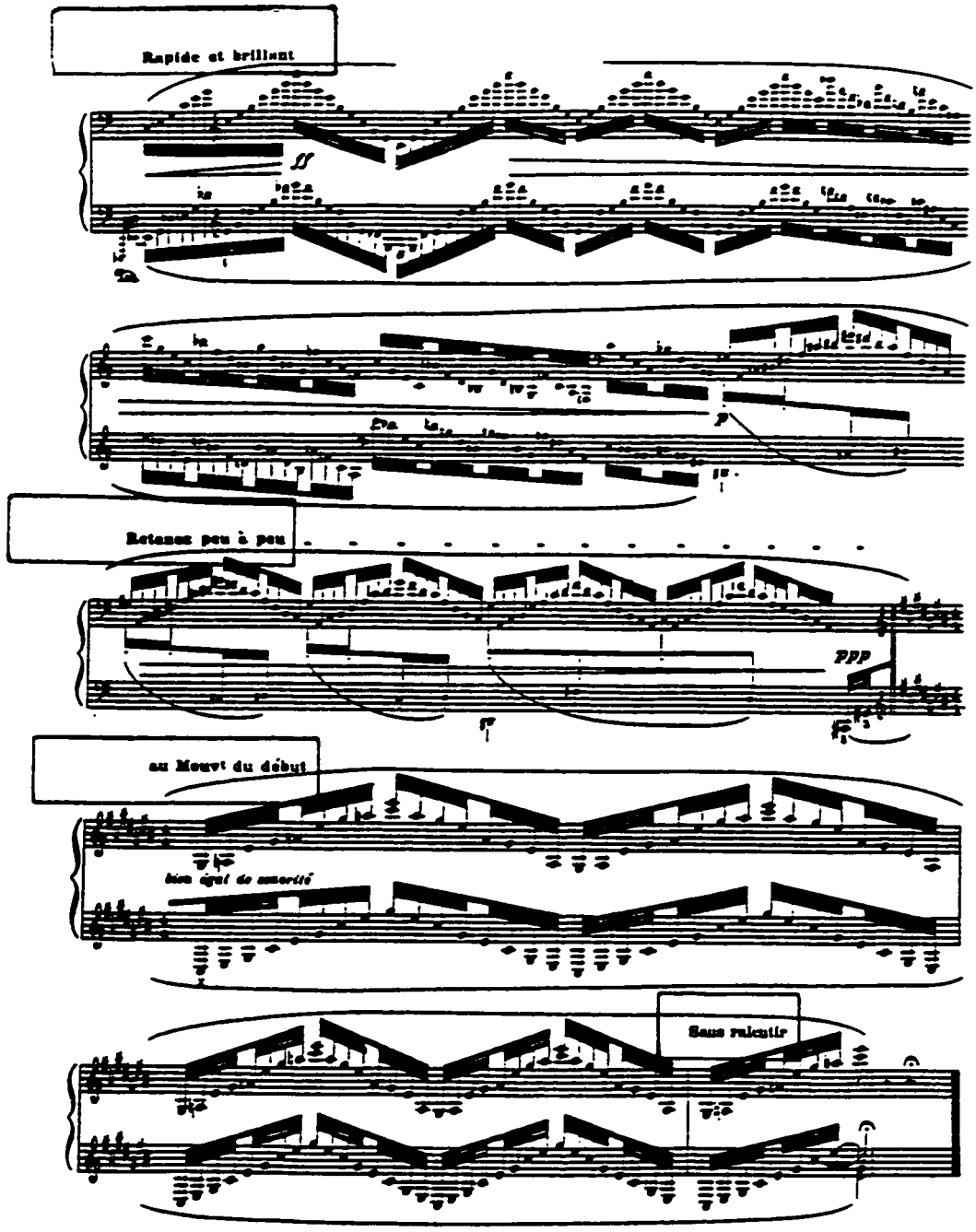
Ondine from Gaspard de la Nuit. Ravel's performance directions are strategically placed to guide the pianist through the rubato.



Ondine, continued.



Ondine, continued.



Ondine, continued.

Later, we will examine the extent to which Ravel's attempts to control the performing situation successfully circumscribed or otherwise shaped the interpretive sensibility of generations of pianists.

The Paradox of the Pedal

To many a nineteenth century pianist, the damper pedal represented the resonating soul of the music, and indeed much of romantic piano music is unplayable without pedalling in one form or another[91]. However, given the ongoing changes that were taking place in the development of the piano, the acoustical environment, and most important, in performance thinking, it is doubtful whether pedalling indications, no matter how precise, could be relied upon to produce a desired effect in all instances. To define, let alone notate "correct" pedalling was therefore a futile exercise[92]. This presents a very interesting paradox for a composer like Ravel, whose music demands an enormous variety and range of sonorities, only possible through the use of the damper pedal. The paradox becomes clear when a composer, who asserts "il suffit de la jouer" rarely supplies the performer with *any pedal indications*, let

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91 Charles Rosen points out that there are few better ways to understand the revolution in piano style accomplished in the nineteenth century than by examining the way composers required the sustaining pedal to be used. (Charles Rosen, The Romantic Generation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 13.

92 Ravel does however, frequently call for the una corda.

alone those that would allow the player to unambiguously "la jouer"[93].

This brings us to the question of pedal abuse. Paul Loyonêt, the eminent French pianist and friend of Ravel, recalled the composer's frustration with performers who over-pedalled his music. According to Loyonêt, Ravel preferred no pedal at all to its indiscriminate use — an obvious reference to the reflex tendency of many pianists to envelop virtually everything they play in a thick layer of resonating sound[94]. In a passage of "blind" alternating octaves, played presto (found typically in a concerto by Liszt or Tchaikovsky), despite a heavy pedalling, the effect can be exciting, and even musically necessary. Ravel's piano music on the other hand, with its rapid harmonic rhythm, its rich upper partials, complex articulations and subtle shifts in texture, requires very precise pedalling judgments on the part of the player. Take for example, the rapidly alternating chord passages in the Toccata (Le Tombeau de Couperin, example 15) or Scarbo (Gaspard de la Nuit, example 16). In both pieces, the pianist must decide whether to a) define each harmonic change, b) generate a wash of sound, or c) combine the two by employing a variety of pedal and touch

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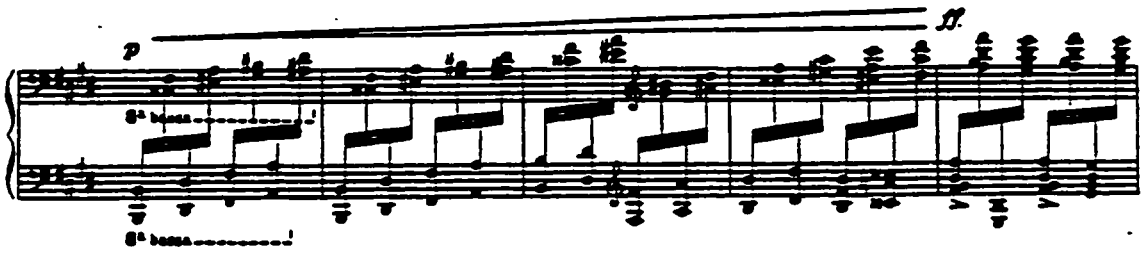
93 Debussy, according to Marguerite Long, brings an interesting perspective to the problem of notating the pedal. "Like Chopin, Debussy was preoccupied with the role of the pedal and wrote to his publisher...The truth is that an abuse of the pedal is one way of covering up a lack of technique and so one has to make a lot of noise to prevent the music one is mutilating being heard! In theory there should be some means of indicating the `breathing space' graphically: it is not impossible." — Marguerite Long, At the Piano with Debussy, trans. Olive Senior-Ellis (London; J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972) 45. — While Debussy speculates on the theoretical possibilities of notating the pedal, like Ravel, Rachmaninoff and others, he avoids the challenge of doing so.

94 Personal conversation with Phil Cohen, McGill University Faculty of Music, May 1964.

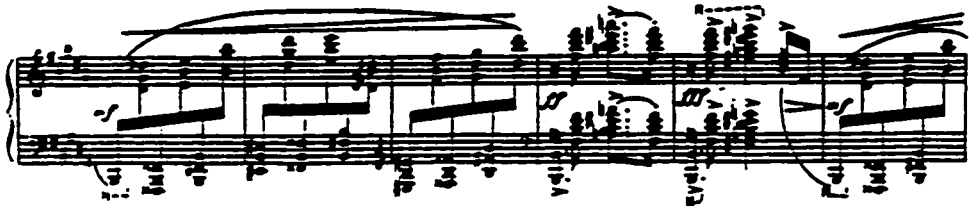
sonorities: gradual release, half pedal, quarter pedal, flutter pedal, etc.

Example 15:



Toccata from the Tombeau de Couperin.

Example 16: Scarbo



Scarbo from Gaspard de la Nuit.

As I have mentioned, to the nineteenth century performer the pedal represented the "soul" of the music — to some apparently, more pedal meant more soul. The question of "soul", its musical characteristics and proper execution, has occupied musicians in one form or another over the years. Its

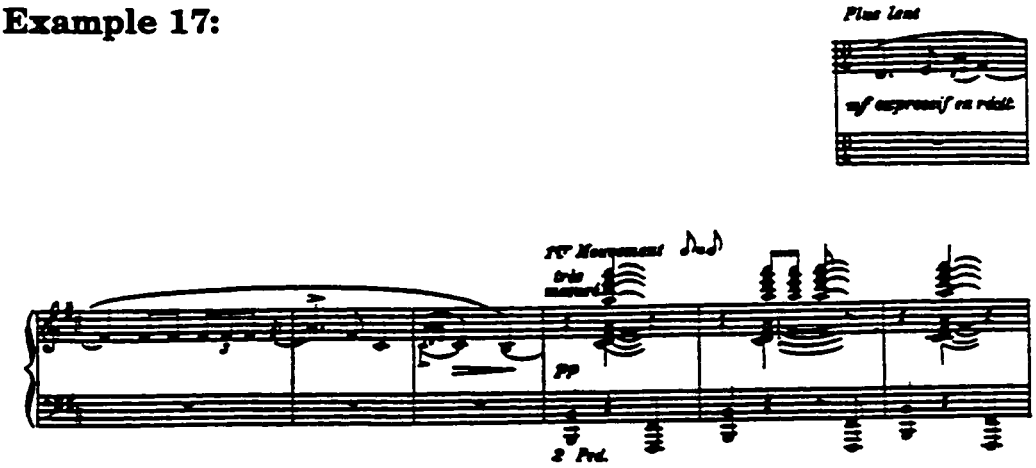
significance remains constant but its locus tends to change with the spirit of the times, the instruments and the acoustical environment. To the rationally oriented eighteenth century French composer, the soul resided in the ornamentation. Couperin and Rameau, evidently concerned about the soul's message being misrepresented, provide elaborately detailed explanatory tables, listing every conceivable agrément, and its execution. Descriptive titles to pieces (Les Soupirs, La Boiteuse, La Gazouillement, etc.) complete the picture by giving the performer a graphic clue as to what the soul as ornament is intended to convey. Yet, despite the prescriptive nature, or rules, the ultimate measure of the performer's "soul" was the unquantifiable presence of "bon goût" — the taste and sensitivity of execution.

Seen in this light, Ravel's concern about the overuse of the pedal places him squarely in the tradition of bon goût. Yet his apparent willingness to allow a performer to play his music without any pedal presents us with an interesting contradiction. The contradiction is all the more puzzling given his mistrust in the ability of performers to divine a composer's intentions, without help, and the consequent pains he went to in order to provide that help. Perhaps the answer may be found in his decision to communicate his intentions "live" to major pianists some of whom subsequently recorded his music for posterity. This would suggest that Ravel instinctively knew that the elusive soul of music can only be apprehended and passed on through an open-ended exchange between artists.

Finally, given the complex integration of harmony, line, rhythmic layers, dynamics and agogics explicit in Ravel's music, it would be counter productive

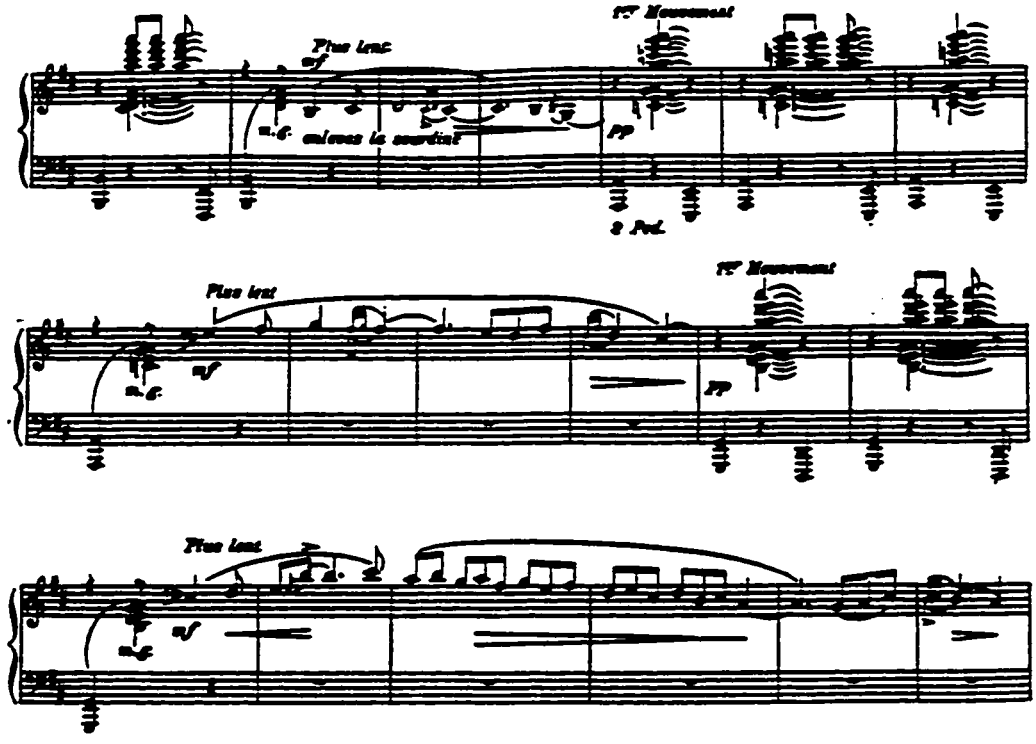
to further load the score with detailed, and tenuous at best pedal indications[95]. Above all, pedalling in much of Ravel's music for the piano relates to the harmonic breathing of the piece as a whole, a fact that demands a high order of intuitively directed skill. Typically, confronted with a booming piano in an echoing hall, one may focus on a light "slap touch" supported by rapid surface pedalling. The same passage, played on a different instrument, to a different audience, at a different time of day, in, for example, a dry acoustical environment, may demand deeper pedalling and a radically different touch quality. The recitative section of Alborada del gracioso is a case in point. Chords, alternating with melodic fragments, emerge out of a resonating mist. (Example 17: beginning at measure 71)

Example 17:



Alborada del gracioso from Miroirs.

95 full pedal, half pedal, quarter pedal, half damping, vibrato, bellows, etc.



Alborada, continued.

The slightest change in pedal or touch can alter the meaning of the passage dramatically. Ultimately, the ability to make creatively inspired sense-judgements live, as they happen, in "real time" defines the role of the musical "interpreter". Performance creativity begins where notation leaves off. Despite Ravel's radical cure for the mis-use of the pedal, i.e., better none than too much, the pedal, sensitively employed, is unquestionably at the core of the effective communication of his music. In the profoundest sense, the pedal, like its predecessors in soul, offers the artist the freedom to play and experiment with sonorities. By definition anything that involves experiment on the part of the interpreter, invites misunderstanding and potential abuse.

By virtue, then, of its intrinsic wholeness, pedalled resonance, at once the most present and intangible of musical experiences, makes the search for consistency fruitless. As such, it establishes a very special rapport between executant and music, one that strips performance from its denotative accretions and returns it to its aural roots. Ultimately, it is the force of his musical gift that renders Ravel's otherwise prodigious intellectual powers helpless. Pedalling, he finally realizes, is best left to fate.

Joseph Banowetz attempts, with some success, to deal with the whole question of composers' inability to notate pedalling and the consequent difficulties which performers encounter in their efforts to understand and translate a given composer's notation — or lack of notation — of pedalling.

> "Performers seeking to arrive at pedaling solely through the printed page encounter insurmountable problems in the music of Debussy and Ravel. Their scores are almost devoid of pedaling indications, and the few that exist are often sketchy and vague."[96]

Banowetz, therefore, turns not to the text, but to the performances of Walter Gieseking — an acknowledged master — for guidance. That Banowetz defers to a great performer may be a step in the right direction, but it is a step that risks substituting one authority for another. As I will show in this thesis, had he conducted a comparative study drawn from a broader spectrum of artists, his conclusions, almost certainly, would have been more enlightening. By extracting various excerpts from Gieseking's recorded performances of the piano music of Debussy and Ravel, (the great majority drawn from the former),

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[96] Joseph Banowetz, The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) viii.

Banowetz attempts to translate, and notate the composer's pedalling intentions — in as much as intentions can be divined rationally — as experienced through the performance of one artist.[97] In effect Banowetz recognizes the master performer's ability to communicate or "know" the latent content of the music he is playing.

It is here in the translation of Ravel's symbolic representations to "real time" musical language that I begin my examination of over three quarters of a century of recorded performances. My hypothesis, that the "performing values" imbedded in Ravel's notation, or in the case of pedalling — absence of notation — suggest a depth and much wider range of possibilities than the composer suspected — including orientations contrary to his pronouncements on the subject — and that these are eminently capable of incorporating changing aesthetic tastes while still retaining the music's structural integrity. By this token Ravel's music reveals those qualities of universality that we call classic and I will demonstrate that it also reveals a music in which universality

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[97] Taruskin makes two important points on the subject of a performer's responsibility vis-à-vis a composer's intentions. To begin with he maintains that intentions can not be known, because, a) composers do not always express them, and b), even when they do, they may do so disingenuously. Furthermore, with the passage of time or a change in taste, a composer's sense of a particular work often evolves. He refers to Stravinsky's five recordings of the Rite of Spring, and from them, asks us to try and divine the composer's intentions. Getting to the crux of the matter, Taruskin asserts that the "appeal to intentions is an evasion of the performer's obligation to understand what he is performing." (Text and Act, 97-98). In the chapter that follows, we will see how certain major artists fulfill their responsibility to the music in precisely the way Taruskin speaks of "understanding", i.e., the music is brought alive from a perspective that is at once unique and a revelation.

paradoxically is rooted in an uncompromising commitment to regional values[98]. The implicit "frenchness" of Ravel's music speaks to a much wider audience than might be implied from his pronouncements, writings and teachings.

Today, nearly a century since the composition of Jeux d'eau, scholars, critics, major artists and their audiences are in almost universal agreement on the classic stature of Ravel's music. David Schiff's recent article in the New York Times is a case in point. His use of the term "greatness" could easily be exchanged for "classic".

> "Think of the sheer number of hours that performers have devoted to Ravel's music. For an entire oeuvre to remain vital after fifty to ninety years of performance is strong evidence of those qualities of greatness. Not only has the music survived the wear and tear of constant exposure, but it has passed gracefully from the provocatively advanced to the comfortably familiar without losing its edge."[99]

The degree of perceptible agreement between certain details in a major performer's "interpretation" and the score — as well as the degree of agreement between major performers separated by time, schools of performance and aesthetic bias — may provide us with valuable clues as to the factors that pre-dispose to universality in musical communication. By details I mean those expressive (and structural) indicators — such as the handling of stress, articulation, tempo, character, shape, attack, texture, dynamic patterning, rhythmic organization and cadential tension — and those

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98 In his 1928 Houston (Texas) lecture, Ravel points out that art is the product not only of a composer's individual consciousness, but of his national consciousness as well.

99 David Schiff, "In an Ugly Century, a Place For the `Merely' Beautiful," The New York Times 22 November 1992: H25.

biological adjustments in timing of agogics and silence, multi-part synchronization, tone control, etc. — what in effect *cannot* be notated — that breathe life into a musical performance. It is this bio-aesthetic[100] interaction that, while indissoluble, is precisely what we experience in a musical performance. It is what moves us as music must and has the potential to tell us more about the composition than the composer ever dreamt. Ravel's music is a prime example of the whole of a masterpiece being more than the sum of its parts — and of every part — being a microcosm of the whole. And since the whole in a "performer's music" includes the audible performance in "real time" any analytic study must seriously consider the "living proof" in its deliberations.

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100 For example, Professor Cohen describes the bio-aesthetics of timing as follows: "Timing is a function of a sensed aesthetic idea, which is experienced biologically and communicated in real time." The aesthetic idea organizes and directs the biological response. — Philip Cohen, Performance Creativity: Towards the Development of a Bio-Aesthetic Theory of Complex Musical Performance. Canadian Universities Music Society — Learned Societies Congress, Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario. May, 1996.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Living Record — Three Generations of Recorded Performances

Maurice Ravel was one of the first of a long line of contemporary composers to realize the potential of the newly developing fields of recording technology that emerged during the first decades of the present century. He not only grasped the historical significance of reproduction techniques, but was quick to avail himself of improvements in disc and reproducing piano technologies as they occurred. When we consider a) the remarkable fidelity of the Welte-Mignon and Duo-Art reproducing instruments that Ravel recorded exclusively upon, and b) the acoustical and electrical recordings he supervised throughout a period of rapid technological advance during the second decade of the twentieth century, Ravel's eagerness to embrace the best that technology had to offer becomes immediately understandable.

Ravel, then, is the first composer in history to have not only documented his statements on the performance of his music, but to have recorded key works himself and supervised those of colleagues and students in an effort to convey his musical intentions as unambiguously as possible to posterity. These recordings represent a uniquely twentieth century form of documentation, in effect a living record of a composer's music as understood by

performers spanning over three quarters of a century. For the most part I have confined myself to those works first recorded by the composer and subsequently interpreted by students, colleagues and individual artists representing a range of schools, technical and aesthetic persuasions, personal visions and distinctive musical signatures.

I have divided the recorded documentation roughly into three "generations" of performances with sub-divisions.

First generation:

The composer himself and his contemporaries. Considered in their day specialists in the performance of French music, these form the closest available representation of Ravel's generation of pianists.

a) Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Recordings made by the composer on reproducing pianos between 1913 and 1929.

b) Robert Casadesus (1899-1972)

Colleague/student who recorded under the supervision of the composer.

c) Vlado Perlemuter (1904-)

Colleague/student who studied the repertoire with the composer and recorded after his death.

d) Arthur Rubinstein (1886-1982)

Colleague who did not formally study with the composer but programmed selected works during his lifetime, and recorded following his death.

e) Walter Gieseking (1895-1956)

Has become associated with the French tradition despite his German training. He is perhaps the most notable artist of his generation identified with the music of Debussy and Ravel.

Second generation:

Performers who were born during the composer's lifetime but had no direct contact with him. Each proceeds from a distinct keyboard tradition — or at the very least, demonstrates a highly individual treatment of the keyboard literature.

a) Sviatoslav Richter (1914-)

Generally acknowledged as one of this century's greatest pianists. The perspective he brings is in some ways antithetical to the canons of French pianism.

b) Samson François (1924-1970)

One of the most provocatively individual pianists of the twentieth century.

c) Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (1920-1995)

By all accounts one of the supreme technical virtuosi of this century and the most important Italian pianist since Ferruccio Busoni.

Third generation:

Contemporary pianists representing a variety of traditions but sharing certain late twentieth century attitudes to keyboard performance. All were brought up during the age of mature recording technology. (LP, tape, disc)

a) Martha Argerich (1941-)

b) Ivo Pogorelich (1958-)

c) Alicia de Larrocha (1923-)

d) Louis Lortie (1959-)

e) Pascal Rogé (1951-)

It is clear from the overlap of the birth and death dates of these artists that a categorical division by chronology is impossible. Vlado Perlemuter for example, who we consider first "generation", is still alive at this writing. Rather than being viewed chronologically then, the divisions should be understood in terms of the association or relative distance of each pianist from the composer's ideological framework.

There is no question that each of these pianists is an artist of the first rank. Each not only has a superior technical command of the instrument but, most significantly, a creative mastery of the less tangible performing qualities that immediately distinguish the master from the journeyman player. The analyses will therefore focus on the creative variability brought to Ravel's musical conception by artists of undisputed reputation, in the understanding that it is only through the masterful treatment of the essentials of musical speech that the full range of possibilities inherent in a major composer's oeuvre can be realized. On this point Bruno Walter is unequivocal.

"talent and greatness are necessary to understand talent and greatness"[101].

From the perspective of this thesis the performances of these

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[101] Carol Montparker, "On the Nature of Talent," Clavier. 34 (1995): 25.

supremely gifted artists are, in effect, the definitive scholarly commentaries on the "meaning(s)" implicit in Ravel's music.

The recordings made by Ravel and his colleagues as well as those by successive generations of Ravel "interpreters", represent a major shift from the medium of print to the medium of sound — from music as represented on paper to music as aural phenomenon — to be studied, reflected upon and evaluated in repose. A rough comparison could be made with the thousands of so-called "race records" produced during the 1920's and 30's. These performances by blues, jazz and gospel musicians served as the primary source of education in their traditional and evolving music for a generation of African Americans[102].

The implications of this shift from visual to aural documentation as potential scholarly reference cannot be overestimated. Intellectual contributions have traditionally been recorded for posterity in stone and on paper — a practice that tends to assign credibility to what one reads and to reserve judgement on what one hears. This remains so whether one is reading a scientific report or a musical text. So precise for example, are Ravel's notational indications, that one is tempted to accept at face value the composer's argument that "il suffit de la jouer" — i.e., it is all there for the eye to see. But the question remains, does the eye see what the ear hears or what the fingers sense? The emergence of sound recordings has provided us with the opportunity to re-learn what aural/oral cultures have always known: the

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[102] see for example, Junkanoo Band, Junkanoo Band--Key West, Folkways Records FL 4492, 1964.

reality of the immediate performing experience contains more than what the eye can possibly see or the pen can possibly represent.

This becomes clear when we turn to the essentials of musical speech as they are experienced when music is performed on the piano: touch, tone control, the timed relationship and synchronization of pedal with fingers, the colouring of harmonic rhythm, phrase pulsing and pulling or pushing of the beat (internal rubato), anticipation and delay, articulation in voicing, timing in attacks and rests, relationship of parts and balance of voices. Taken collectively, these constitute a living sub-text that in the process of analysis I will refer to as the *performing structure*.

The Performing Structure

The "performing structure" embedded in the score is, in effect, a secondary text embodying those characteristic qualities that not only identify the performer, but will presumably reveal the range of possibilities inherent in the composer's musical conception. It can be further characterized as a fluid entity that may vary widely in detail from performance to performance but will remain distinctive and unmistakable. In the broader, inclusive sense, the performing structure is heard as a distinctive emotive tone — a musical parallel to one's fingerprint or voice quality. At the level of detail this emotive tone manifests itself in the expressive handling of agogics, the dynamic inter-relationships and inflected modifications — particularly the timing, shape and degree of stress in articulation — imposed by the performer upon the composer's given, fixed structure. Nuance, shading, inflection, colour and the

various degrees of rhetorical emphasis all spring from the timed blending of agogic and dynamic factors. These form an active super structure, plastically expanding, contracting, re-shaping and re-defining the notated intentions embedded in the score. The existence of a personalized performing structure asks for a re-thinking of questions of compositional intention, "interpretation", inherent meaning, etc. In particular, it calls into question the assumption of absolute, textual fidelity still propagated in some quarters[103]. The analysis itself will identify and compare how the performing structure, in part and as a whole, is treated by each artist. The examples chosen for analysis will begin with motivic and phrase units as well as entire movements, and will culminate in a detailed multi movement study of Valses nobles et sentimentales. The comparative performance analysis of the latter will form the core argument of this thesis.

Recorded Performance: A New Direction in Musical Communication

A memorable live performance is, by definition, a shared experience between performer and audience. In a setting where expectation and identification with the stage persona are integral to the performance, every participant becomes a co-interpreter with the artist. Here we have a situation that pre-disposes "suspension of disbelief" as a collective experience. A

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103 Taruskin utilizes the term "text-fetishism" to describe the rigidly conceived view that attributes ultimate authority to written texts (the "Ürtext" movement for example) - a view held by many musicologists and "modernist musicians" particularly, early music specialists. He makes the point that on the contrary, it is by way of "oral traditions", i.e., "any tradition that is founded on listening and emulating" that musical repertoires are kept alive. — Taruskin, Text and Act 179-185.

recorded performance, is by contrast, more akin to a self-contained cut and paste operation, in which the artist, in collaboration with an engineer, director, producer and perhaps a coach, dispenses with feed-back from the audience altogether. The implications of this new direction in musical communication will be explored in detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

It is important to emphasize that since the analysis focuses on the performing structure, all recordings have of necessity been selected with maximum fidelity in mind. In the case of Ravel's own performances, this presents very few problems, given the superior recording quality of the Welte Mignon system.[104] The remainder are recorded on LP or laser disc (including remastered copies). These include recordings by members of Ravel's immediate circle (students and colleagues coached by the composer before 1930). The primitive acoustical recordings of the first quarter of this century are totally unsuitable for the performance analyses of Ravel's piano music since they lack the technological sophistication to reproduce the subtleties of Ravel's pianistic language, i.e., those qualities intrinsic to the performing structure that forms the basis of this study.

It is important to note that while technology has unquestionably improved reproductive fidelity, its artistic benefits remain an open question. A totally engineered laser disc recording for example may or may not coincide with the artist's intentions. Since the determining criteria for the release of

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[104] This remains true notwithstanding the controversy whether Ravel or Casadesus is the performer on the Welte-Mignon recording of the Toccata from Le Tombeau de Couperin.

these recordings is *engineered perfection* one may ask whether, and in what way, aesthetic criteria have been affected. Seen from this perspective, the shift of priorities implies more than correct sound levels or the elimination of extraneous noises. We may ask whether we are speaking of a vital, new creative synthesis or the final triumph of engineering over art?[105]

This question is not trivial since a recording leaves a fixed impression of a musical work — a conception of the music which becomes as rigid as the written text. Due to the stringent economic and marketing concerns of recording companies, less and less do we find an artist making multiple recordings of the same piece of music, as for example, Sviatoslav Richter did with Chopin's G minor Ballade, or Vladimir Horowitz with some of Chopin's Mazurkas, or as Simon Barere did routinely, with his recordings of Liszt. In most instances, one impeccably crafted digital recording must now suffice as the artist's definitive statement. Whether a definitive statement is possible in a performing discipline remains an open question — a question central to the issue of creative variability. One may therefore ask what the impact of limited variability will be on the "living record" of a composer's oeuvre. As this thesis will demonstrate, an examination of recorded performances of Ravel's piano music throws into relief analytic problems relating to textual interpretation that have hitherto received little attention.

In attempting to compare, evaluate and understand performances by

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105 Glenn Gould for example, envisioned music in the 21st century as a new hybrid art form married to technology. — John Kalbfleisch, "Symposium shows that Gould still has influence on music," The Montreal Gazette 20 January 1996: E10.

individual artists of Ravel's piano music, this thesis proceeds from the premise that the analyst's subjective response to the performances is integral to the analytical paradigm. It is true that, given the current marriage between technology and methodology, it is indeed possible to measure many aspects of a performance in a purely objective manner and still fail to reveal the uniqueness of a particular interpretation. It is however equally clear that to avoid one's subjective response to the music is to risk missing the artist's message altogether. A comprehensive analysis of a musical performance must therefore, by this definition, accept the analyst's experience as a valid analytical tool for understanding.[106]

Creative Variability in Performance

In comparing the performances of major artists I am less concerned with traditional questions of performance practice and styles than with questions that arise out of the performing experience itself. As a result, while the score is an ever present reference, it will be examined primarily in terms of its treatment by artists generally acknowledged as major interpreters. In this sense the measure of its authority will be its ability to prevail over time and the ravages of fashion — a measure that cannot be obtained until recorded performances by the finest artists of our century have been heard and compared.

My primary emphasis, as a consequence, will be on each artist's unique

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106 Michael Novak, The Experience of Nothingness (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1978) 36.

musical voice, i.e., the audible signature through which he or she communicates a musical message. (Whatever else a recorded performance may be, whether analogue or digital, by Vlado Perlemuter, Ivo Pogorelich or anyone else, it represents a particular point of view about musical communication)[107].

It follows that by incorporating the performer's role into the given structure of the music, we are more likely to gain a deeper insight into its potential. The comparison and analysis of the factors characterizing individual performances as experienced through the artist's aesthetic sense gives us a body of data with which to investigate the boundaries as well as the range of variability in the performance of Ravel's piano music. All of the artist-pianists compared in this study — those coached by the composer as well as colleagues and descendants — seem to be acutely aware of the given structure of the

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107 We get some idea of the fruits of a successful merger of philosophical and musical ideals, when we consider Nimbus records - the company with which Vlado Perlemuter recorded Ravel's complete works for the piano in 1977. Adrian Farmer's (Nimbus's artistic director) fundamental artistic principles blended harmoniously with the type of artistic expression characteristic of Perlemuter's work. Farmer's philosophy was to offer artists the best possible working conditions and to interfere with them as little as possible. "L'interprétation, dit-il, est l'élément essentiel de la musique qui s'écoule sans interruption du début à la fin. Le montage est la rupture du temps, il substitue à la continuité une perfection superficielle qui ne peut pas remplacer une tentative sincère de communication. Nous choisissons donc de limiter le montage... aucun musicien ne peut s'exprimer dans une salle de concert sans résonance, ni dans un studio sans acoustique. Nous préférons une acoustique naturelle, celle qui donne de la couleur au son. La simplicité est la clé de la technologie et notre objectif est d'enregistrer l'interprétation et son cadre acoustique avec le minimum de manipulation électronique." — Jean Roy, Rencontres avec Vlado Perlemuter 131 — Hence the overall sense of spontaneity, naturalness and warmth which permeate these recordings and, of course, the inevitable few mistakes which - while noticeable - are neither obtrusive nor disruptive to the musical flow. In effect the listener filters out the mistakes much in the same way that the extraneous noise and mistakes in a live performance are embraced as humanly essential.

pieces they are performing. As with creative performers generally — whether actors, dancers or musicians — they strive to communicate beyond what can be analysed in purely structural terms. A genuine performer cues in to the poetry and drama imbedded in the text, that is, the crescendos, the diminuendos, the way in which stress is handled, the nuances of colour and relative duration of tone, inflection and rhythmic pulsing, and ultimately, the crucial synchronized timing of the whole. By its very nature this performing structure is intrinsically fluid and variable. Whatever else a piece of music is, it is not a report best communicated through a literal reading. By this token, Ravel's advice to pianists to refrain from interpreting his music becomes wishful thinking. The major artists reviewed here, without exception, will demonstrate the extent to which his compositions invite the active participation of the performer. Performance creativity, then, is exemplified principally in this active participation at the highest level. The analyses will show how representative major artists interpreting the music of a major composer organize spatial and temporal relationships, i.e., line, shape, emotional tone, generative movement, flow and related aesthetic considerations. In the most deeply moving musical performances one is affected — much in the same way as watching a highly skilled tight rope walker — by the performer's ability to turn an inherently unstable environment to creative advantage. In a musical situation the performer's ability to make precise judgements in real time, to maintain, as it were, a homeokinetic balance despite the intangibles of an environment that involves the keyboard, the physiology of the hand, technical and stylistic challenges, the

translation of the text, etc. The judgements involved constitute a special form of cognition that binds the performer's expressive intentions to his or her precision of execution. Variability, therefore, becomes a sine qua non of complex human performance.

Performance variability can be seen even in the act of setting one's musical ideas down on paper. The moment one attempts to notate an idea — whether heard internally or picked out on the piano — one is transferring that idea from one medium of perception to another. This, in effect, constitutes a complex performance. The text, being a visual representation of the aural image, constitutes an interpretation. A pianist, re-constituting the notated interpretation back into the medium of sound, becomes a performing co-creator of the work[108].

To summarize the latter point I would like to re-state that a) the translation of a musical idea onto paper is itself an interpretation, and b) the master performer, in re-constituting the work, becomes a co-creator of the work.[109] Performance creativity (variability), then, is demonstrated at every level of the musical experience, from the conception of a piece of music, through its notation, to its first public performance and to all successive performances. Each level is an act of interpretation, each is a creative act.

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[108] Glenn Gould saw the performer as a co-creator, on equal terms with the composer. This apparent heresy led some of his critics to call his interpretations "gross distortions, even outright betrayals of the composer's intent." — Kalbfleish 10.

[109] I must emphasize that I am not speaking about the journeyman pianist, or "little Bobby" at his annual student recital, but rather of a major artist performing at the highest possible level.

The sharing of creative authority, as it were, between all participants in the creative act, brings an entirely different perspective to the traditional view that the written text is inviolable — an article of faith strenuously propagated by Maurice Ravel.

CHAPTER SIX

Comparative Performance Analyses

> *"But fortune shows us indeed even more clearly the part that she has in these works ...by the graces and beauties that are found in them not only without the intention but even without the consciousness of the workman. An apt reader often discovers, in the writing of someone else, perfections other than those that the author had put in and perceived himself, and lends to the work richer meanings and appearances."* [110]
>
> (Michel Eyquem de Montaignes)

While Montaignes is speaking about the interpretation of literary works, his comment applies equally well to the co-creative relationship between performers and the music they play. In this regard, it is also important to keep in mind, that prior to the turn of the present century, co-creation, in one form or another, was taken for granted in the experience of music. Leonard Meyer's historical view is instructive.

"Performance and deviation"

> "The musical relationships embodied in a score or handed down in an oral tradition do not fix with rigid and inflexible precision what the performer's actualization of the score or aural tradition is to be. They are indications, more or less specific, of what the composer intended and what tradition has established. The performer is not a musical automaton or a kind of musico-mechanical medium through which a score or tradition is realized in sound. The performer is a creator who brings to life, through his own sensitivity of feeling and imagination, the relationships presented in the musical score or handed down in the aural tradition which he has learned... The amount of freedom allowed to the performer in his creative realization of a score or oral tradition varies from culture to culture and within different epochs of the same culture. In some periods of Western music composers have

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[110] Rosen 93-94.

> indicated in great detail exactly how they wish their music to be played, and the performer is not supposed to add to or to embellish with new patterns the notes that the composer has set down. *This "detailing" of the score reached its most extreme stage at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet even here, as we shall see, the performer does play a creative role."* (italics mine)[111]

From the perspective of this thesis, Meyer's last point is indeed an understatement. While he speaks about the performer's role in the actualization of a composer's work as an actively creative one, words such as "deviation" and "allowed" are heavily loaded with hierarchial and authoritarian overtones. They downplay the crucial merging of the individual artists' "performing structure" with the composer's "detailing". The directly experienced performing structure blending with the notated text reveals how a composer's musical idea is in constant flux — continuously being re-vitalized and re-generated, "lend(ing) the work richer meanings and appearances."

Vlado Perlemuter's comment about his work with Ravel is enlightening here.

> "Malgré les années passées, je n'évoque pas sans une certaine émotion Ravel à son bureau, près du piano, partition en mains, me faisant travailler ces Valses (Valses nobles et sentimentales). Je n'avais jamais vu tant d'acuité dans son regard, il y avait chez lui un tel désir d'être compris, de ne rien laisser passer non seulement dans son texte, mais dans l'interprétation de ce texte. Par le désir de perfection de la lettre, on rejoignait involontairement l'esprit."[112]

While Perlemuter's comment would appear to support Ravel's directive to pianists to forgo "interpretation" and approach the score literally, when he

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111 Leonard B. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1956) 199.

112 Perlemuter, Ravel d'après Ravel 43.

speaks of divining the spirit of the music "involontairement" by "le désir de perfection de la lettre" a certain paradox emerges. If "la lettre" is achieved essentially through "le désir de perfection" then Perlemuter is acknowledging that the notation — and by implication Ravel's directives — are in themselves insufficient to communicate the latent content of the music. By inference this places the responsibility squarely in the hands of the individual performer whose "désir de perfection de la lettre" is creatively inspired. It follows that each creatively inspired individual will craft the composer's notated speech with his/her own musical voice.

In the analyses that follow, the full significance of this co-creative process will be made evident. They will show the specific musical means with which an artist, no matter how closely he or she adheres to the notated text ("la lettre"), will introduce continuous alterations that are not only inevitable but creatively necessary.

Menuet from the Sonatine: Recorded Performances by Maurice Ravel, Martha Argerich, Walter Gieseking, Robert Casadesus, Vlado Perlemuter

As we have seen, this remains true in Ravel's performances of his own compositions. In my earlier discussion of his recorded performance of the Menuet from the Sonatine, I drew attention to the inconsistencies between the written text and the performance itself. Apart from the breaking of chords, the anticipation of beats, the gratuitous ritards, salon rubatos, dotting of rhythms, pedalling which obscures line, sudden stresses, absence of voicing and utter indulgence in the most typical of nineteenth century distortions, the very

character of the minuet itself is ignored.

Only when we compare Ravel's performance of the Menuet with those of artists such as Martha Argerich, Walter Gieseking, Robert Casadesus or Vlado Perlemuter, do we come to realize the latent potential for variability within the composition. To begin with, we find significant variability in the conception of the dance itself.[113] For example, Gieseking with his stately tempo (88 to the eighth note), hears a minuet of dignified, courtly elegance. Here, highly refined control of tone, discreet pedalling, wide contrasts between inner and upper melodic parts, and stress achieved through voicing, are all encompassed by the plasticity of an expanding/contracting breath rhythm. Martha Argerich's markedly quicker tempo (124 to the eighth note) with its light, playful pulse, evokes the dance as inspired by the late eighteenth century scherzo-minuet.

Casadesus, proceeding from approximately the same tempo as Argerich, (120 to the eighth note) subdues expressive detail in favour of a more generalized treatment. Through the use of pedal overlaps and monochromatic colouring, and by downplaying the underlying pulse, syncopations, cross rhythms and punctuation, he succeeds in establishing a quasi-impressionistic ambiance. Most significant is the apparent contradiction between his intended

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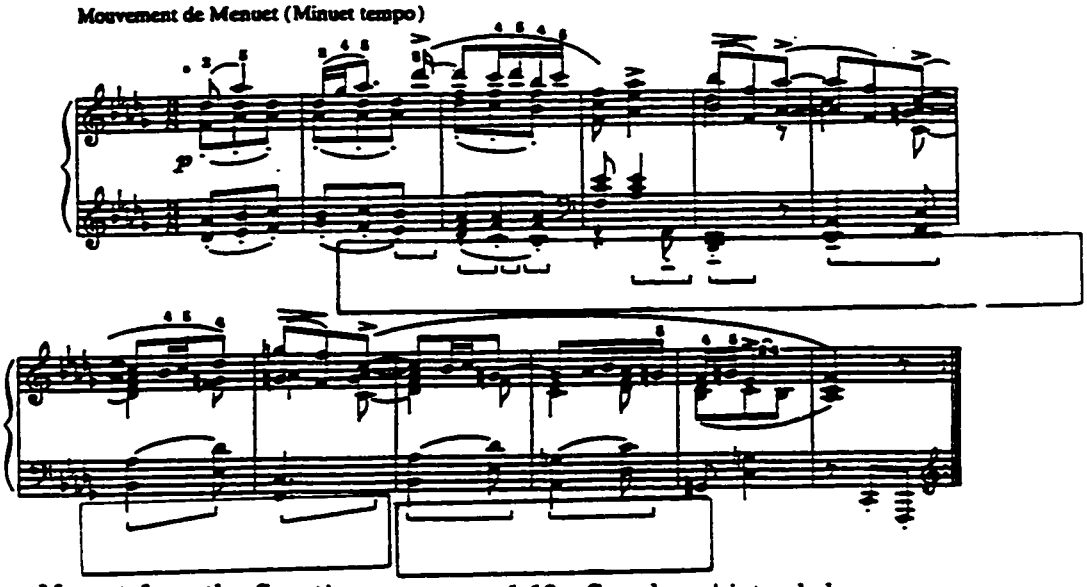
113 By all accounts the stylized minuet was originally performed in a slow tempo, beginning on the downbeat in a three quarter time over a two measure unit. Over the course of the eighteenth century stylization became increasingly varied: in particular, the utilization of the anacrusis as well as considerably quicker tempos. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the minuet had evolved into the faster moving scherzo — basically a character piece that conveyed anything from humour to whimsy to the grotesque.

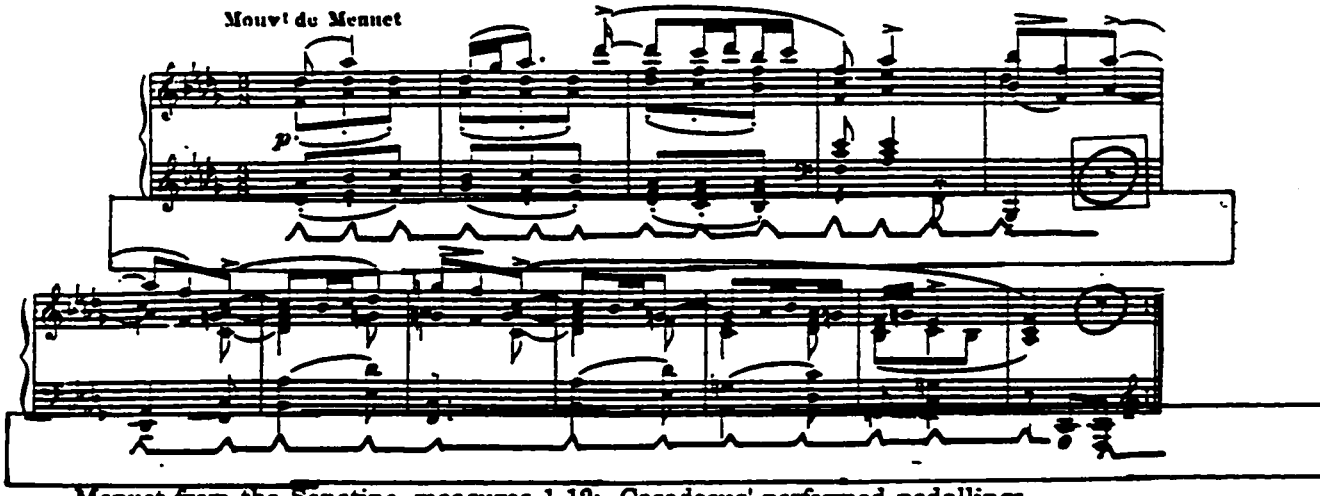
pedallings — as indicated by Gaby Casadesus[114] — and those which he employs on the recording. See examples 18 and 19: measures 1-12.

Example 18:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Casadesus' intended pedallings.

Example 19:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Casadesus' performed pedallings.

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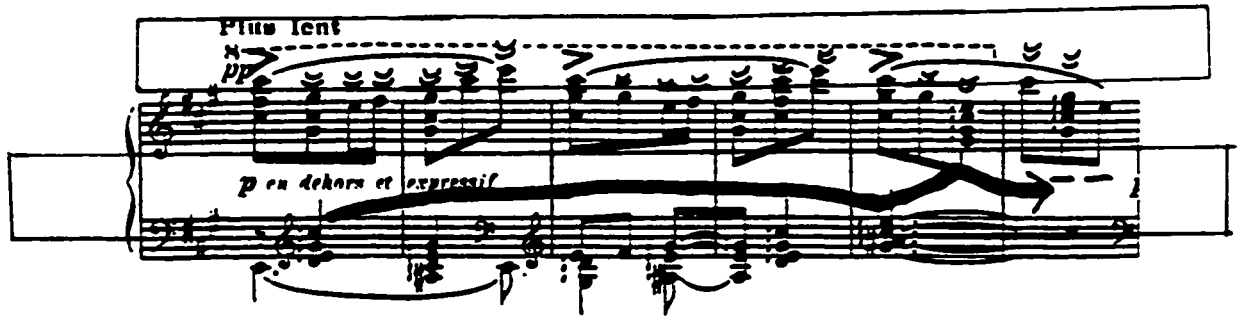
114 — in her edition of the Sonatine.

The disparity between Casadesus' "intended" and performed pedallings is in fact no contradiction at all. Rather, what it demonstrates, is the creative process which makes each and every performance a unique experience. No matter how logical or planned a performance conception may be, it is still subject to variability in the act of performing. This exemplifies the distinction that Nietzsche makes between the mind's "intelligence" and that of the body, when he writes of

> "Your body('s) great intelligence, which does not *say `I' but performs `I'*."(Italics mine)[115]

Unlike either Casadesus' impressionistic treatment or the dances of Gieseking and Argerich, Vlado Perlemuter hears the Menuet as a song in moderate tempo (104 to the eighth note). By shaping each melodic line as a voice in dialogue, accompanied by harmoniously blended supporting parts, he succeeds in not only conveying a minuet pulse, but brings an encompassing warmth to it, unique to his musical signature. Note in particular Perlemuter's handling of the inner melodic line at measures 39-41. (example 20)

Example 20:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 39-41: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

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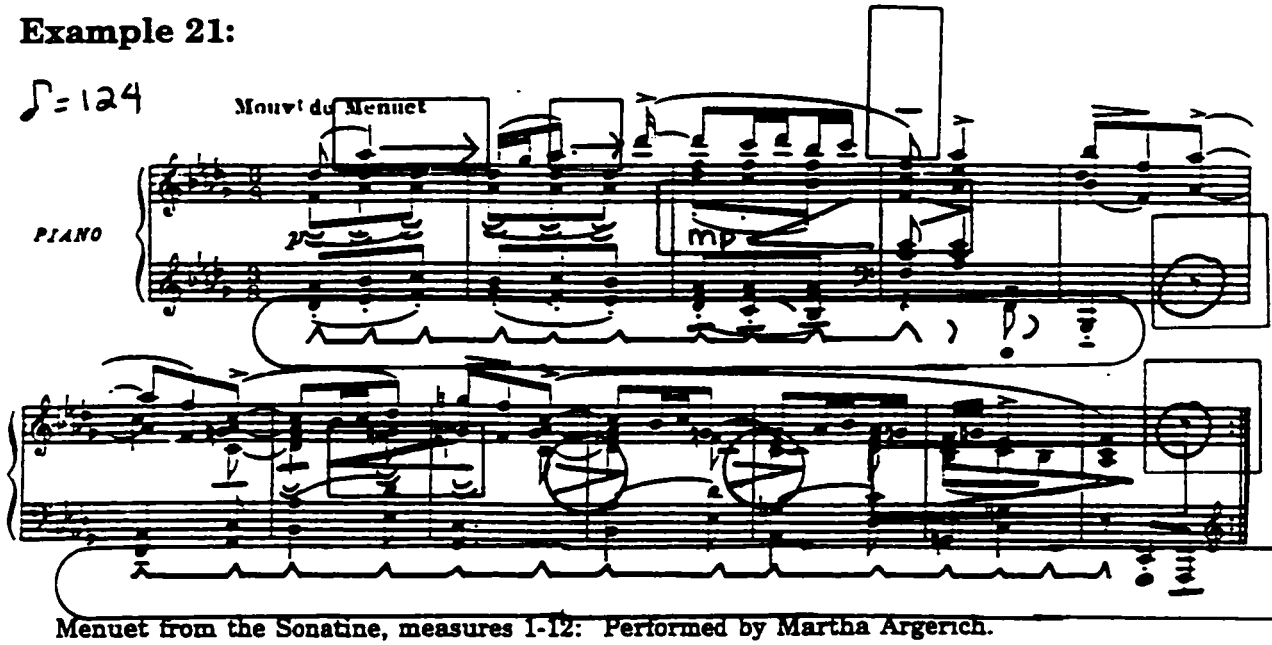
115 Storr, Music and the Mind 163.

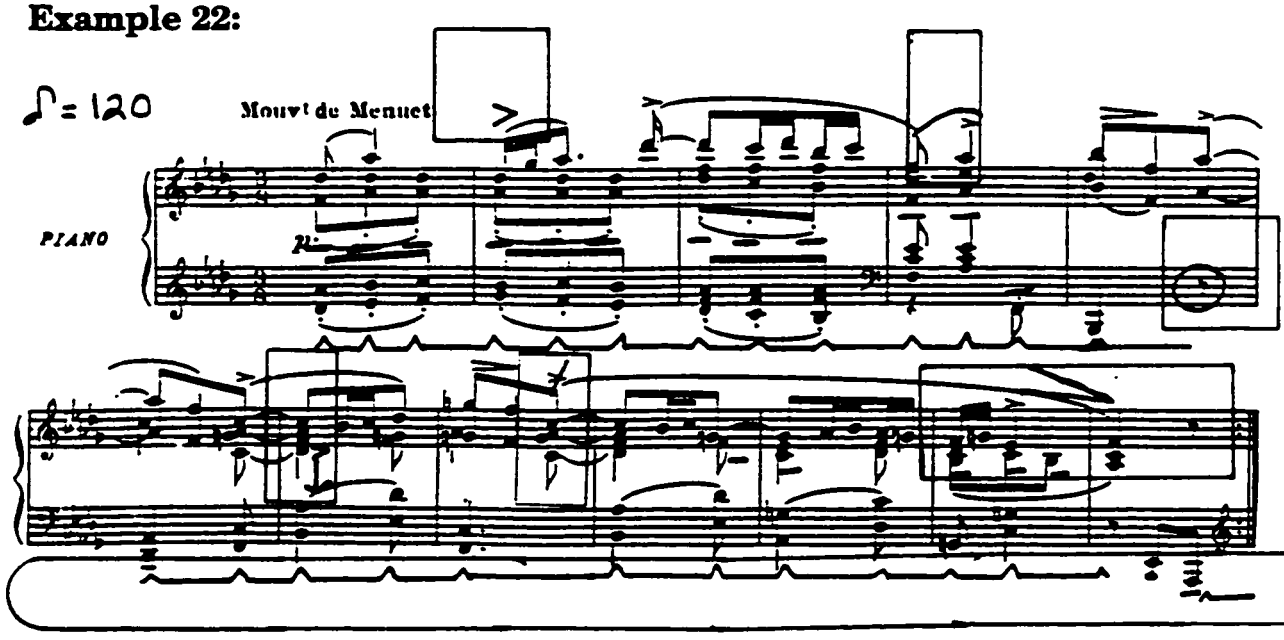
As we can see in the examples that follow (21-24: measures 1-12), rather than a literal reading of the text, it is an artist's individualized treatment of tempo, stress, voice relationships, pedalling, articulation and punctuation — and even the "framing" of rests — which effectively brings the minuet to life.

Example 21:



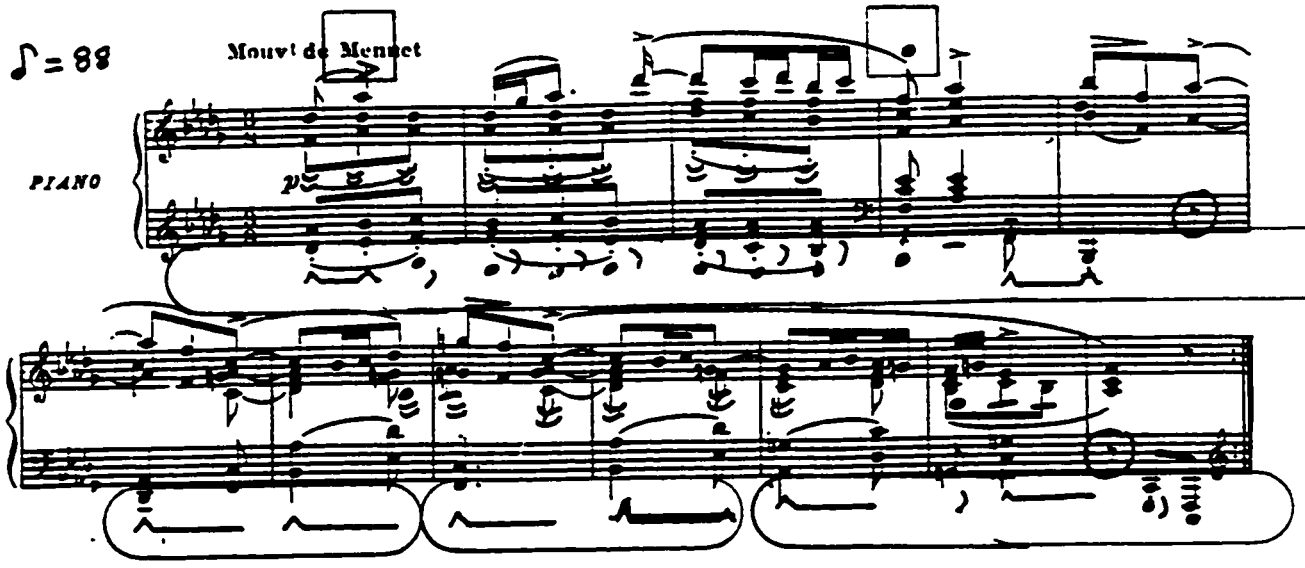
Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Performed by Martha Argerich.

Example 22:



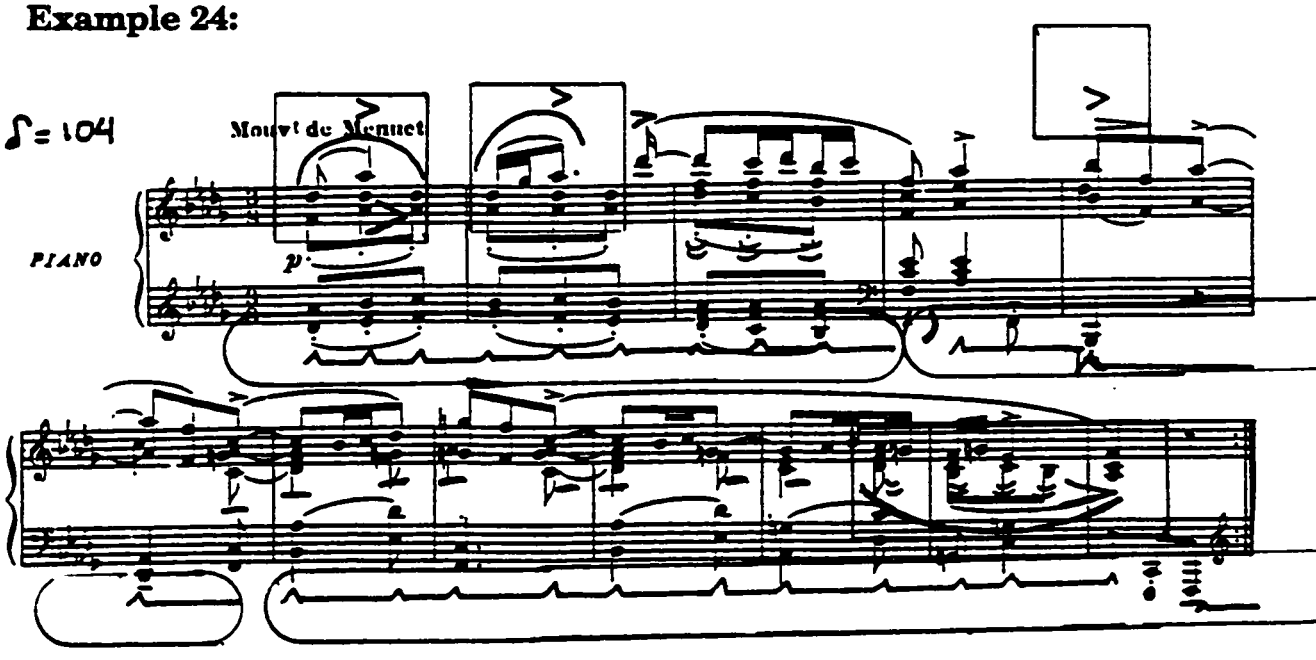
Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Performed by Robert Casadesus.

Example 23:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Performed by Walter Gieseking.

Example 24:



Menuet from the Sonatine, measures 1-12: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

Here we have seen how artists from widely diverse backgrounds and orientations interpret the composer's crucial "detail" in the score, and how each

brings his or her own individual voice to Ravel's music. To further illustrate the point let us now turn to Oiseaux tristes and La Vallée des cloches, and compare the composer's performances to those by Louis Lortie, Pascal Rogé, Walter Gieseking, Sviatoslav Richter and Samson François.

Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs: Recorded Performances by
Maurice Ravel, Louis Lortie, Pascal Rogé, Walter Gieseking

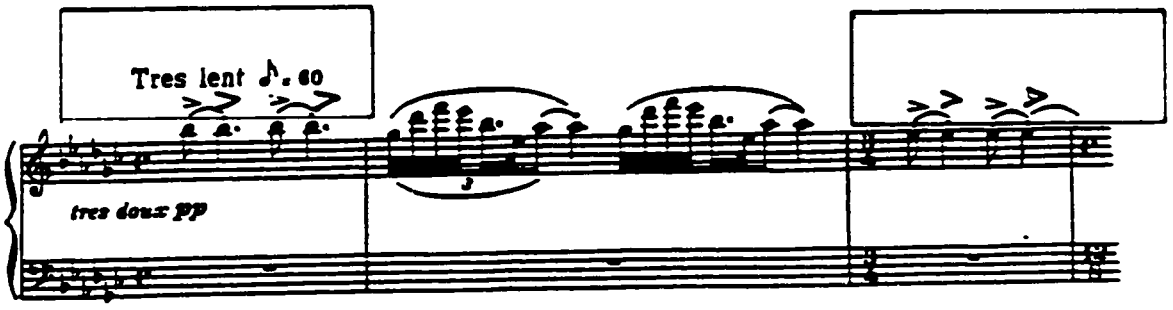
As I noted earlier, Ravel's performance of Oiseaux tristes differs dramatically from his other recorded performances. While there are traces of the rhythmic capriciousness, the breaking of chords and other typical nineteenth century "mannerisms", the actualization of expressive detail in this performance — i.e., tone, dynamics, articulation, phrasing and pedalling — is remarkably precise. His handling of the coda, for example, demonstrates a clarity of definition — in voicing, pedalling and timed decay of sound — that calls into question the received wisdom that he was an inadequate pianist.

Ravel's performance of the "bird call" figure, on the other hand, demonstrates once again his departure from the written indications in his own text. His meticulously notated articulations in the first three measures (example 25) — evoking the song of a nightingale — are clearly intended to set the expressive tone of the entire piece. Despite his indication of an accent on the first B flat followed by a slurred staccato on the second, Ravel performs both with equal stress in measure one, while in measure three he stresses the second more than the first. (see example 26)

Example 25:

Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, opening figure: Ravel's notated articulations.

Example 26:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, opening figure: Ravel's performed articulations.

In effect, his notation suggests the *balancement* or *bebung,*[116] *while his performance communicates mechanical repetition.* The fact that the effect is technically impossible on the piano has not prevented composers such as Chopin (A flat major and G minor Ballades, examples 27 and 28), Beethoven (opus 110 Adagio ma non troppo, example 29) and Alkan (Minuet from the Symphony for Piano Alone) as well as Ravel (Oiseaux tristes and Le Gibet) from attempting to simulate it.

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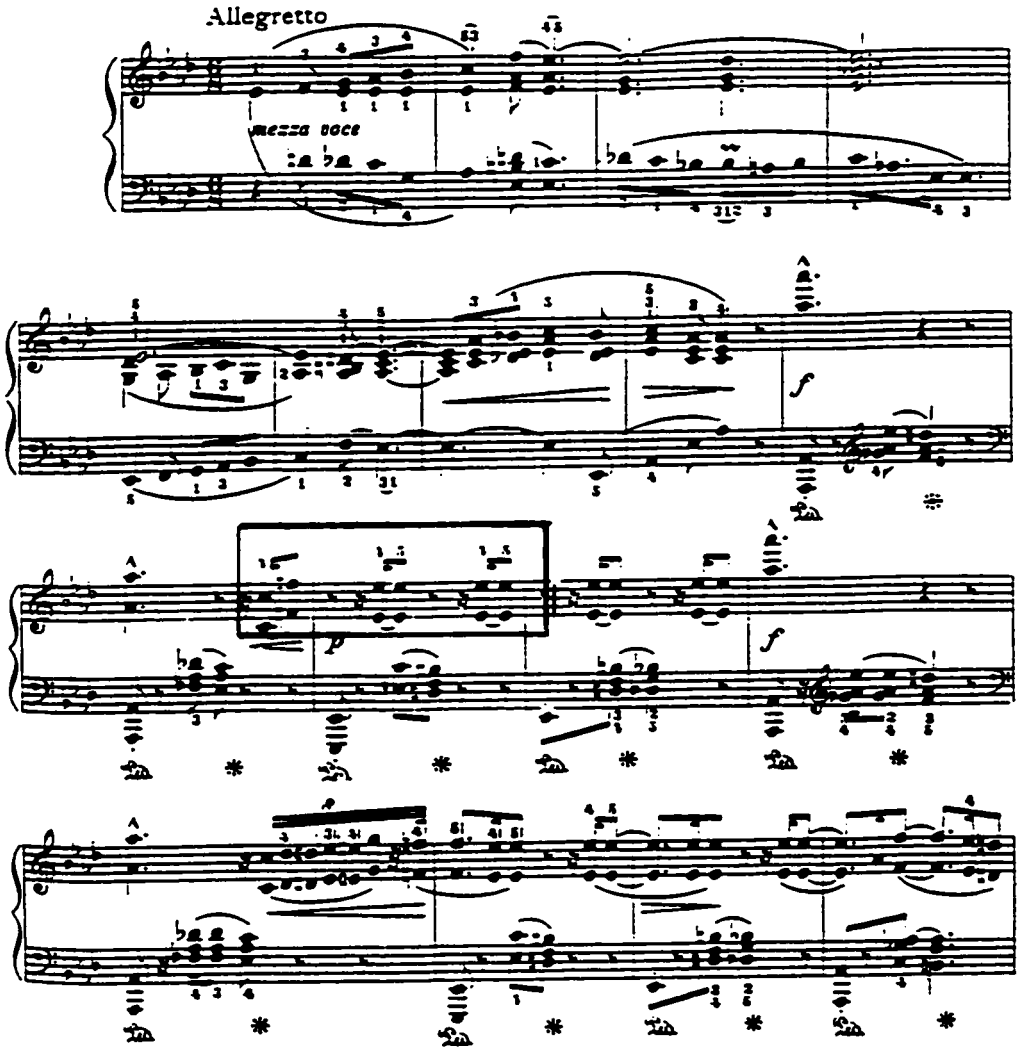
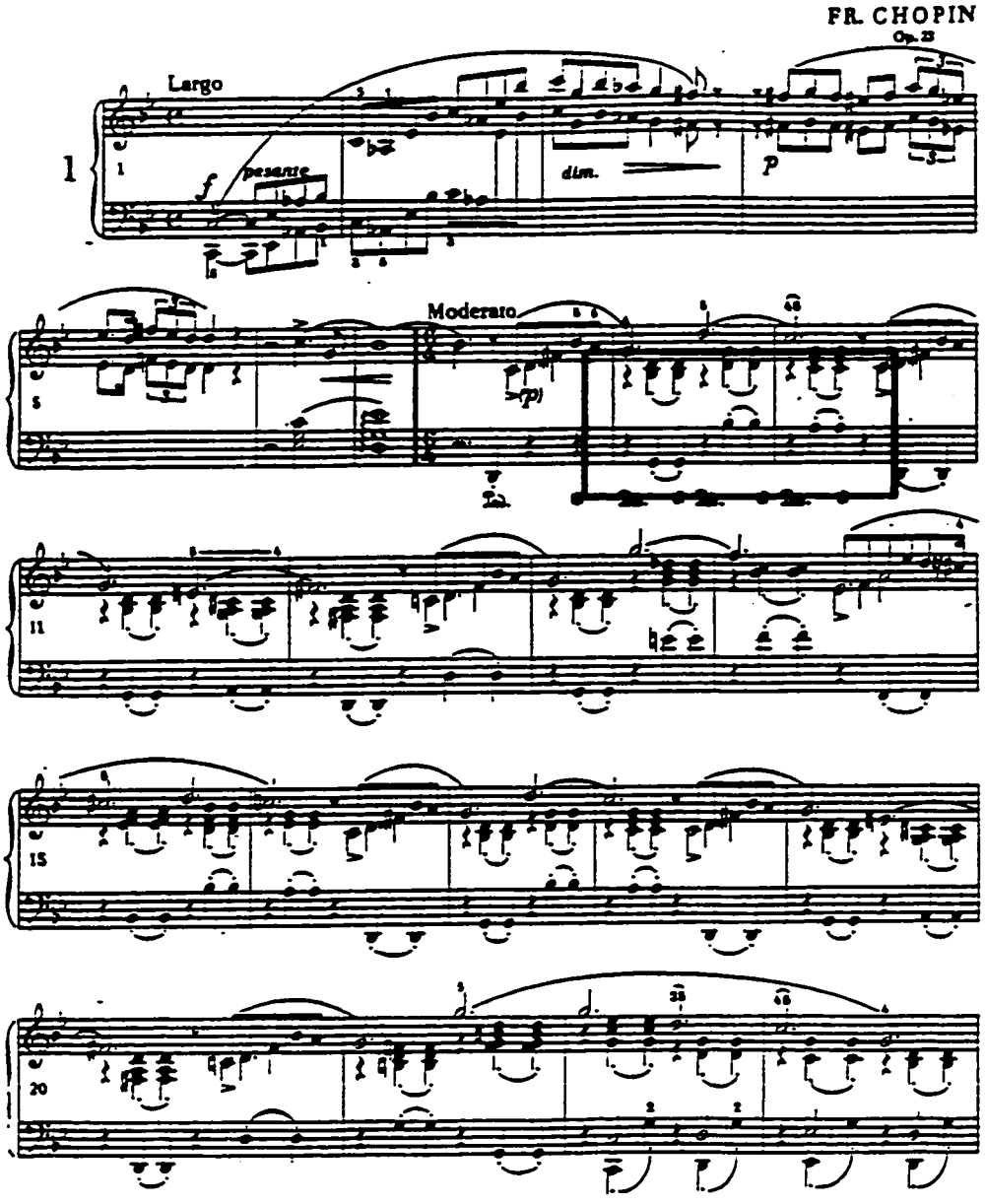
116 "A vibrato effect peculiar to the clavichord, whose action allows for a repeated pressure of the finger without releasing the key, a motion causing the tangent momentarily to increase the tension of the string and thus producing slight variations in pitch. — Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music, 1978 ed.

Example 27:



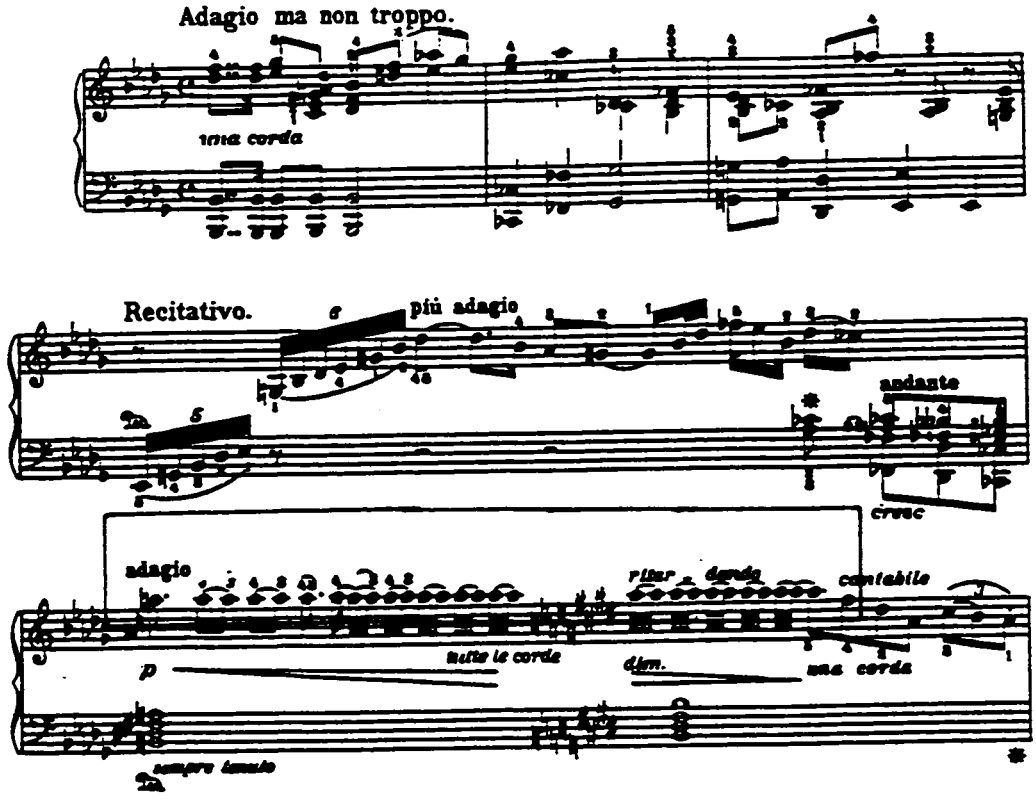
Fr. Chopin, Ballade in A flat: Notation suggests the bebung.

Example 28:



Fr. Chopin, Ballade in G minor: Notation suggests the bebung.

Example 29:



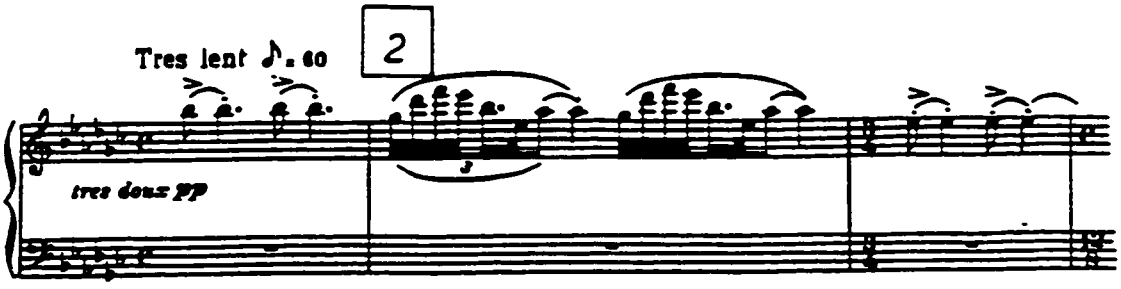
L. van Beethoven, Opus 110: Notation suggests the bebung.

Lortie, Rogé and Gieseking, each in their own way, cue in to the vibratory effect of the figure. For example, Lortie's tempo (48 to the eighth note) allows him to dwell on the slow, timed release of each tone. The others, with their faster tempi, (66 and 60 respectively) erase any trace of attack from the second note, creating the illusion of a swelling of sound on a single resonating tone.

In measure two, (see example 30) where the composer's instructions are

relatively general (a simple slur), we find considerable variability in the handling of articulation and tone colouring.

Example 30:

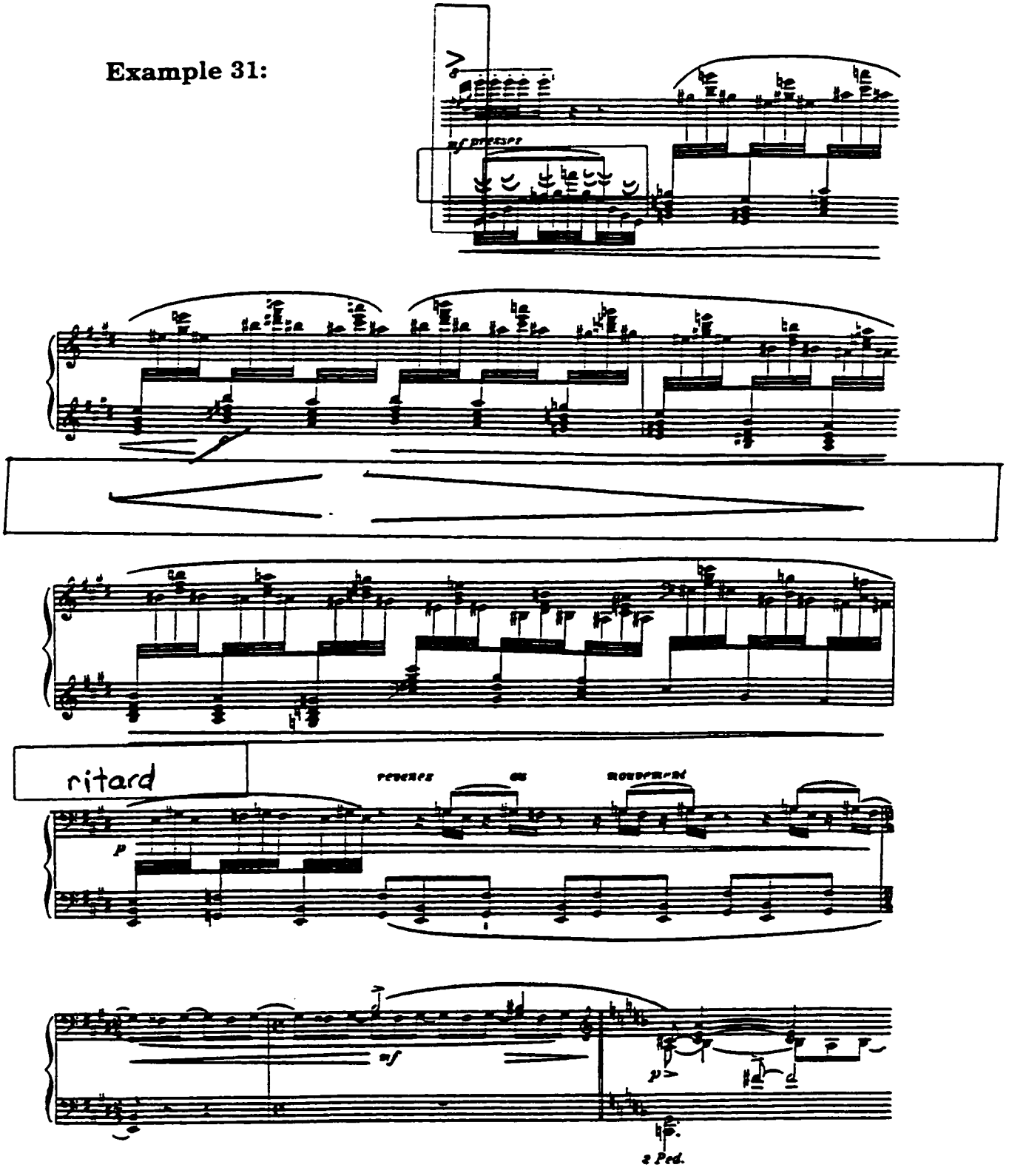


Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 2.

Where Lortie's attack is direct, precise and digitally articulated, producing a clarity and brightness of tone, Rogé's is one of pressure touch, where he slowly depresses and releases the key, in order to achieve a warm tone, free of percussion.

Gieseking's characteristic clarity of touch, refined pedalling and breath rhythm immediately identify his musical signature. Of even greater significance is how he overcomes the artificial divisions created by the mechanics of musical notation — how bar lines, vertically organized chordal structures, terraced dynamics and sharply separated phrase groupings dissolve into undulating waves of sound. See for example, measures 17-21, where he blends a precision of attack on the downbeat (measure 17, where the first of the two upper grace notes is attacked precisely with the first note of the lower line) with a combined lightness of articulation and voicing of parts. (example 31) To this melange of finely crafted detail he incorporates a timed expansion and dissolution of the harmonic resonance of the chordal sequence.

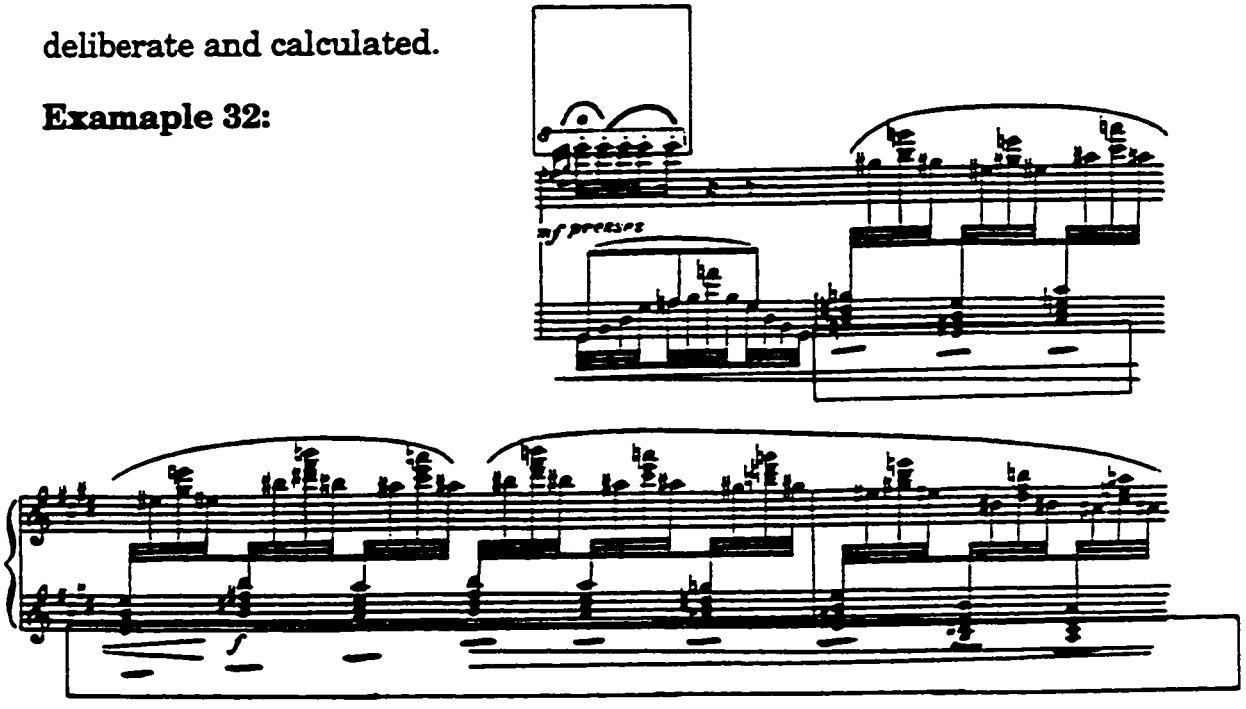
Example 31:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measures 17-21: Performed by Walter Gieseking.

If we compare the same passage performed by Louis Lortie and Pascal Rogé we get not only two very different interpretations of the structure, but two microcosms of each pianist's approach to the piano. Lortie, (example 32) coming off the ornament to a group of thirty second notes on the downbeat (measure 17), sharply defines the main thirty second note of the group, dwells upon it briefly, allowing it to decay slightly before completing the remaining four notes with a vibrating rubato. The vibrating flurry of clashing seconds in the descending chordal configuration that follows on the second beat initiates the notated crescendo-diminuendo with a burst of power, defining the strict metrical rhythm by emphasizing the harmonic line in the lower chordal sequence. Here breath rhythm is less evident and structural definition seems deliberate and calculated.

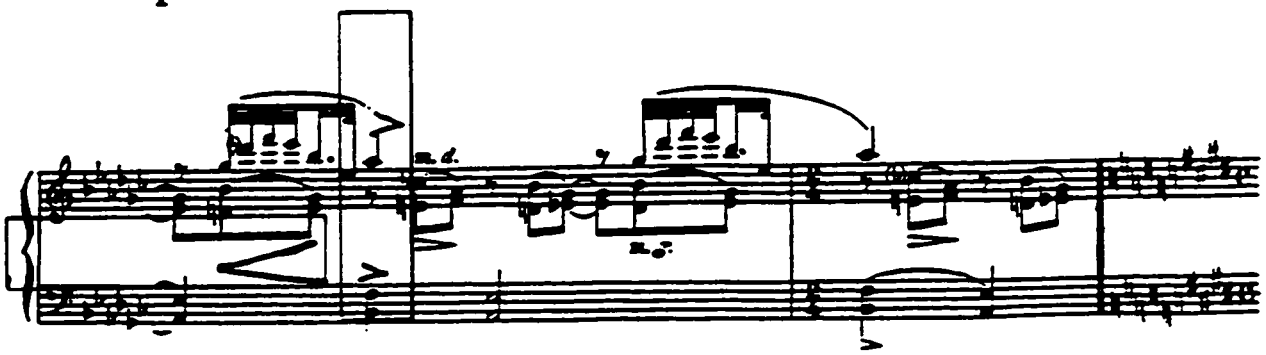
Examaple 32:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 17: Performed by Louis Lortie.

Lortie's calculated crafting of detail relates to the definition of structural outlines as notated. This remains so in the choice of initial tempo (48 to the eighth note where Ravel indicates 60), added stress (example 33: measure 8),

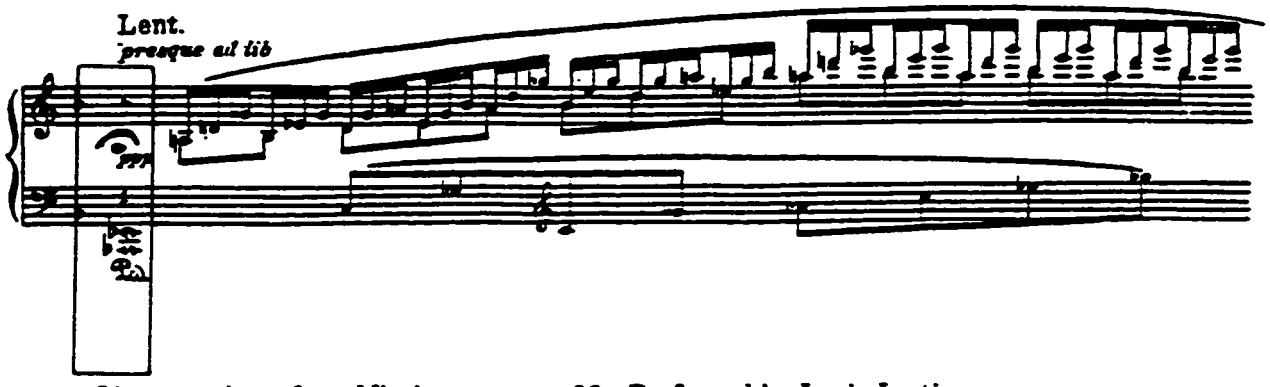
Example 33:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 8: Performed by Louis Lortie.

rhythmic delay in establishing the cadenza (example 34: measure 26)

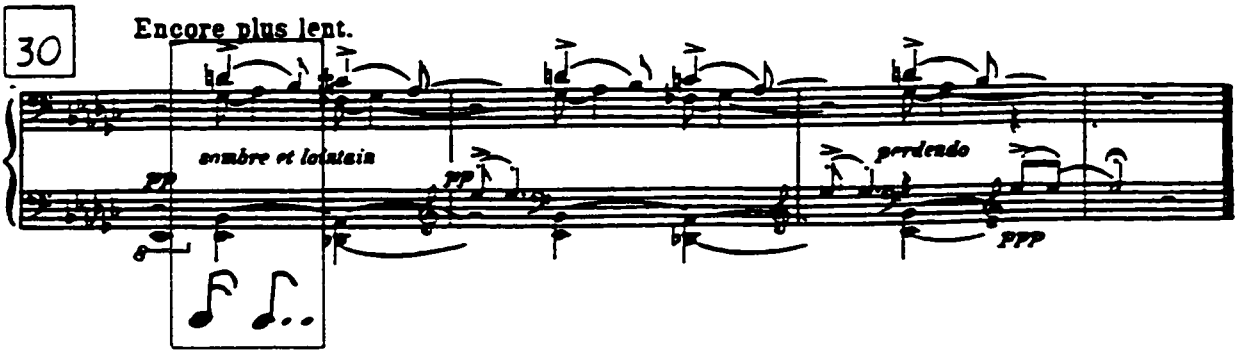
Example 34:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 26: Performed by Louis Lortie.

or rhythmic alteration (example 35: measure 30,31)

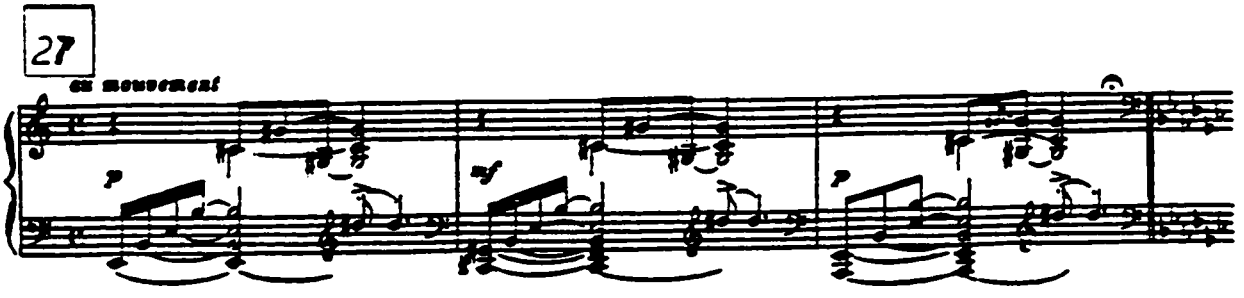
Example 35:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measures 30 and 31: Performed by Louis Lortie.

Like Gieseking, Pascal Rogé modifies the text largely through employing a palette of highly nuanced tone colours. On occasion he will stretch rhythmic values to the extent of altering Ravel's given notation and tempo indication. See example 36: measure 27 (au mouvement).

Example 36:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 27: Performed by Pascal Rogé.

Here Rogé begins by prolonging the downbeat, and continues to pull the beat back, note by note, throughout the three bar phrase, tracing a wide, gently declamatory melodic arc. (circa 42 to the eighth note)

Rogé's ritard in graduated rhythmic augmentation illustrates the virtual impossibility of representing a musical experience with graphic precision. In attempting to recapture it through notational devices, the best we can hope to achieve is an unwieldy tangle of symbols — something this researcher learned the hard way. (This remains true, no matter how sophisticated our system of symbols may be). Indeed, it would appear that general indicators of the direction of movement, stress and related intangibles of musical speech, tell more about the experience than any attempt at literal reproduction.

Rogé demonstrates how an individual artist may draw meaning from a given structure by treating it as a metaphoric point of departure for imaginative variation. In the process he challenges the limits of analytic language to convey the essential features of a deeply moving performance. Marcel Proust reflecting on music's inimitable potential to communicate beyond words has this to say,

> "I wondered whether music might not be the unique example of what might have been — if the invention of language, the formation of words, the analysis of ideas had not intervened — the means of communication between souls." [117]

Here Proust is clearly referring to those intangible musical qualities that defy description, yet are integral to the musical experience. They are intimately related to the particular details of an artist's performing structure and yet their effect cannot be pinned down by recourse to traditional analytic vocabulary.

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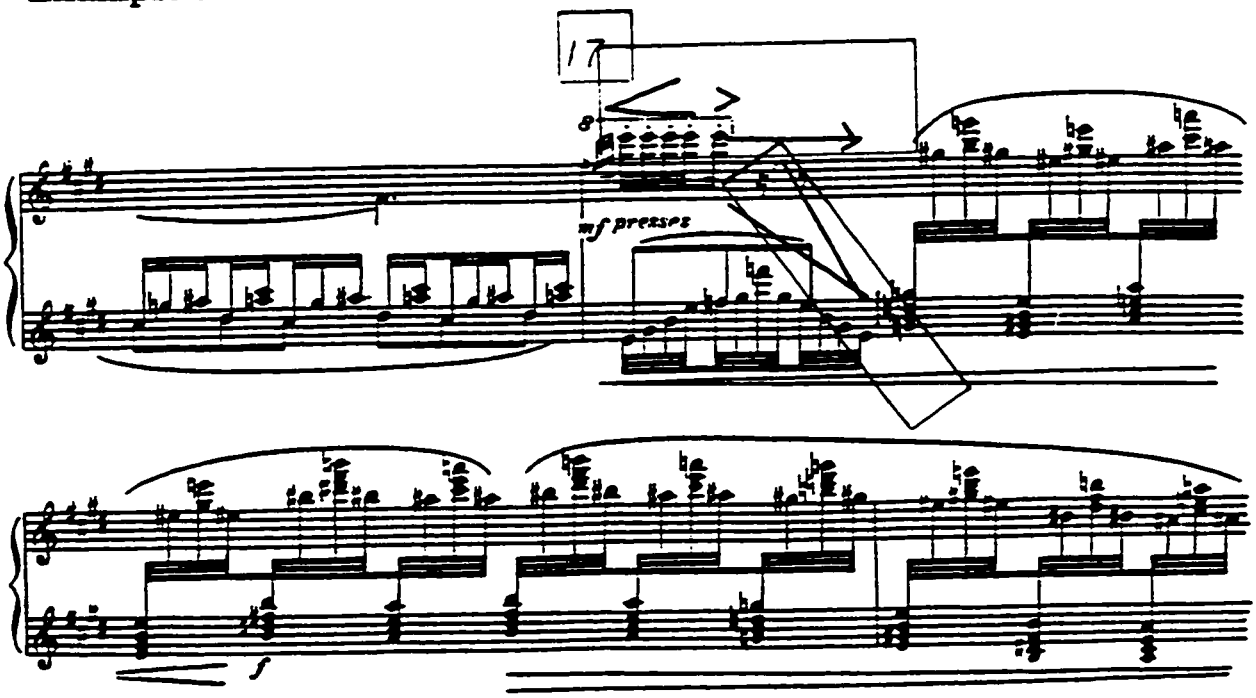
117 Marcel Proust, Remembrance of Things Past, Volume III, The Captive, trans., C.K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981) 260.

This latter point becomes clear when we further examine Rogé's performance of the first beat of measure 17. (see example 37)

Example 37:



Oiseaux tristes from Miroirs, measure 17: Performed by Pascal Rogé.

Like Gieseking and Lortie, Rogé makes distinctively individual alterations to the written text. Unlike Lortie's sustained pause on the main note (e) or Gieseking's initial attack on the preceding ornament, Rogé allows the passage to emerge out of the previous phrase without any perceptible stress on the downbeat. Rather, he thrusts the line forward towards the final sixteenth (e) of the repeated note soprano motif, culminating in a penetrating cry. In

immediate response to the impulsive burst of the soprano voice, the alto\tenor parts dissolve into a subito decrescendo marked by precisely articulated individual tones and vibrato pedalling.

In the comparative analyses that follow, the question of creative variability and its implications within a given text will be further developed.

La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs: Recorded Performances by Samson François, Sviatoslav Richter, Maurice Ravel

In his recorded performance of La vallée des cloches, Samson François points up the extent to which Ravel's musical structures will adapt themselves to imaginative variation under the hands of a creative artist. François, arguably one of the most provocatively original interpreters of this century, clearly treats the written text as no more than a guideline. As we shall see, this is evident in virtually every aspect of his playing — from his handling of tempo, stress, articulation and dynamics to the minutiae of rubato and pedalling. Indeed from the opening statement, François' unique vision becomes immediately apparent.

After paying tribute to Ravel's metronomic indication in the first measure (50 for the quarter note), François proceeds to alter the expected regularity of the pulse by shortening the value of the first beat of measure two from a quarter note rest to an eighth note rest[118]. He then enters prematurely on the subsequent octave "bell tone". (see example 38)

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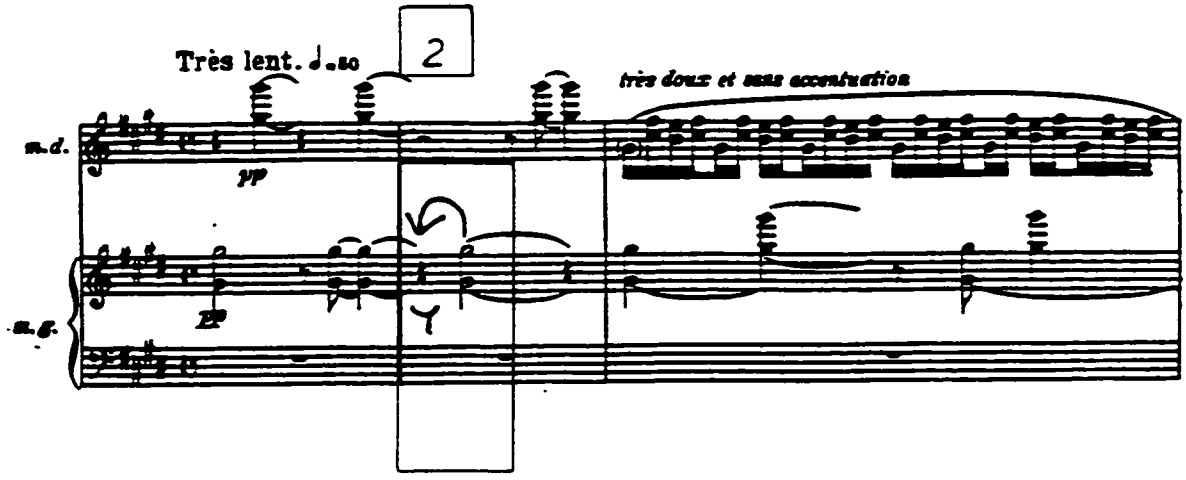
118 In this regard, Boulez cites Arnold Schoenberg, who asserted that metronome markings are only valid for one bar and no more. — Boulez, "Score: Imagination and Reality", p.24. Debussy, in a letter to his publisher Durand concurs, "You want my opinion about the metronomic indications? They are true for just one measure." — Text and Act 214.

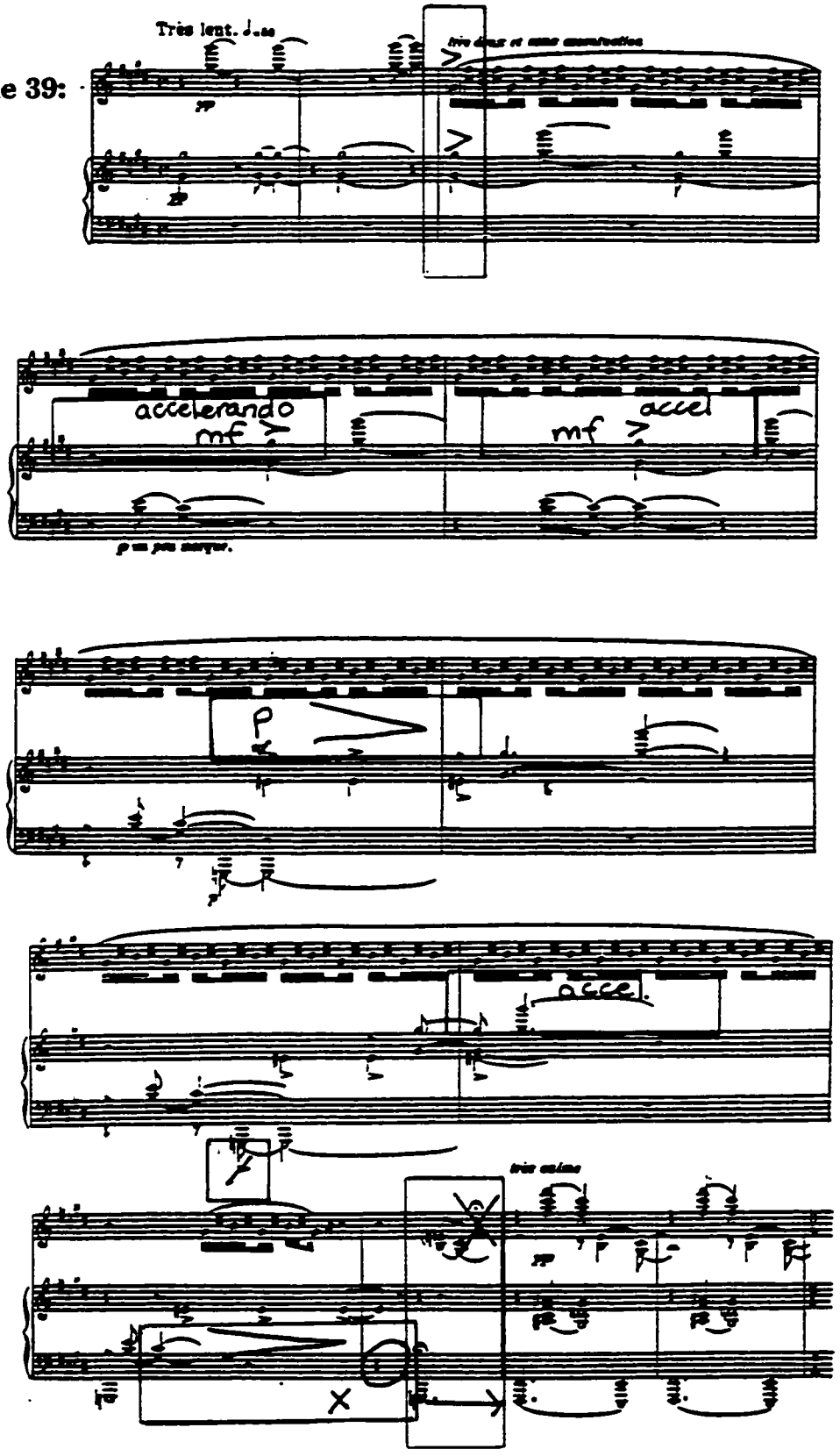
Example 38:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measure 2: Performed by Samson françois.

His anticipation of the downbeat of measure three is reinforced with a percussively stressed accent, while the articulation of the sixteenth note configuration in the upper voices (measures 3-10) is sharply defined, and propelled by sudden accelerandos and ritards — clear departures from the composer's indicated *très doux et sans accentuation*. Rather, the clashing and overlapping of sounds by which François evokes the experience of bells resonating and echoing in a mountain valley is achieved through his unexpected shifting and alteration of virtually every dynamic indication. Typically a *piano* (p) becomes a percussive *mezzo forte* (mf) (measure 4,5), three accented *mezzo fortes* resonate in the shape of a decrescendo that begins quietly (measures 6-7), or an accented pedal tone is only barely perceived. (measure 8). (see example 39)

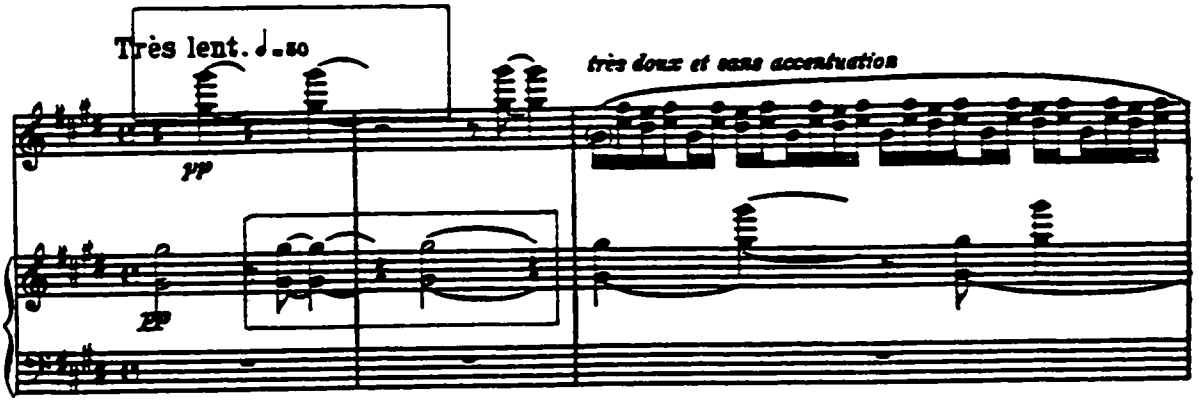
Example 39:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 1-11: Performed by Samson François.

Here, the artist's aural imagination is clearly inspired by the composer's subject rather then its notated treatment. François' handling of pedalled resonance demonstrates the same qualities of individuality that we hear in his overall sense of pulse, articulation and dynamics. He is clearly unfazed by Ravel's occasionally enigmatic pedal directions. In La vallée des cloches, we see how slurs carrying across rests and bar lines (example 40: measures 1-3) function as an open-ended suggestion of pedalled resonance.

Example 40:

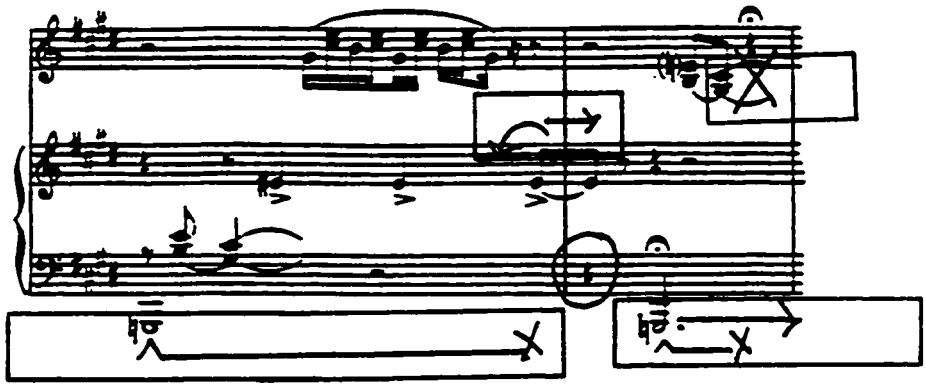


La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 1-13: Ravel's notation suggests pedalled resonance.

Taking off from the suggestion, Samson François is equally apt to treat the event in a quasi-literal manner or to deviate entirely from normal interpretive expectation. Example 41 (measure 10 and 11) will illustrate this. In measure 10 (final beat, alto voice), to focus attention on the tied e sharp, François releases the pedal prior to his anticipated entrance, thereby exposing the quarter rest on the downbeat (measure 11, bass voice) and a consequent subito emptiness of sonority — an almost literal reading of the notation. In

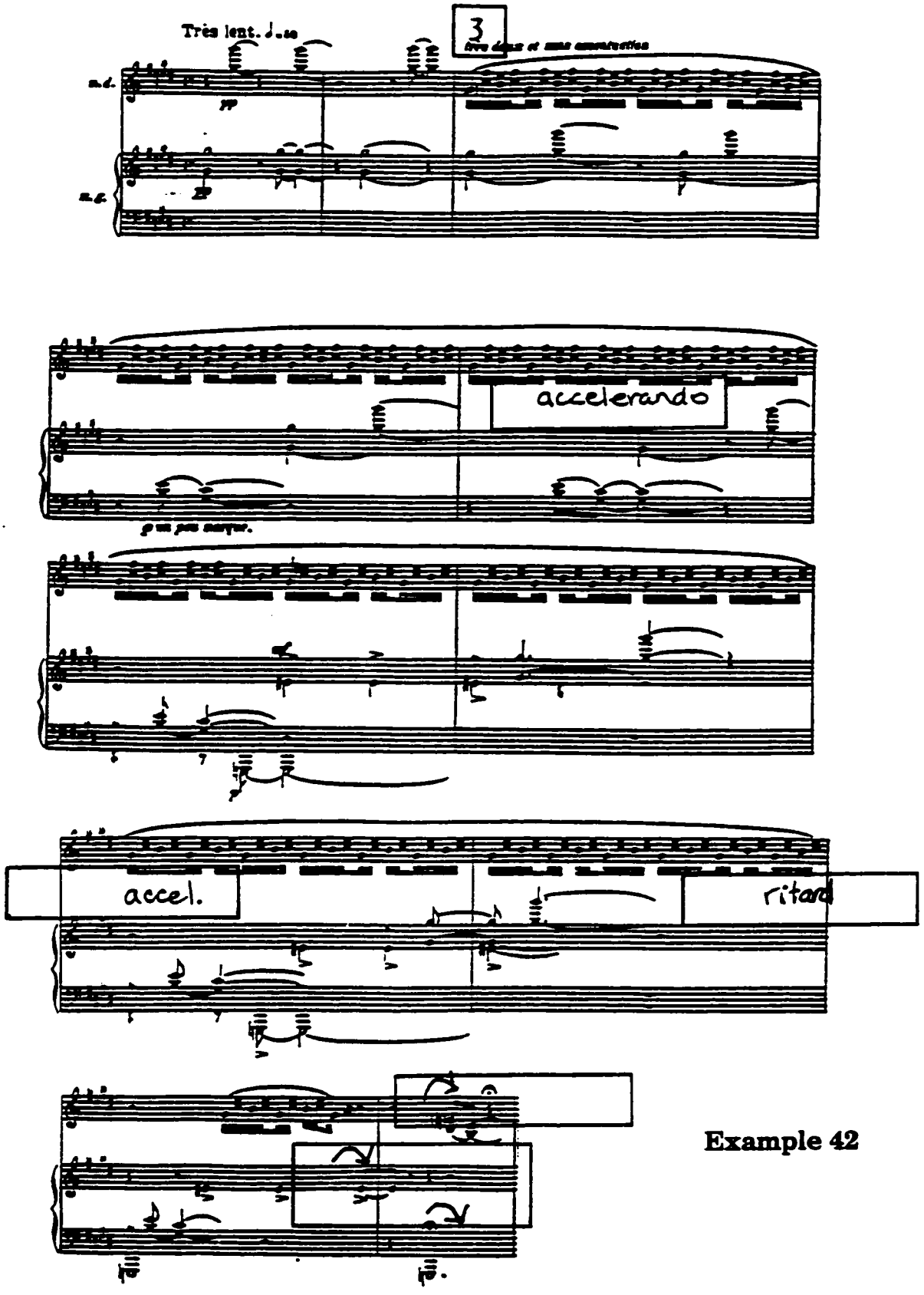
measure 11 where the composer indicates a slur from the third beat into a sustained rest on the fourth beat, François releases the pedal in a manner that cuts off the implied harmonic resonance of the upper voices (indicated in the open slurs), to expose the single low bass tone (g).

Example 41:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 10 and 11:
Performed by Samson François.

By contrast, Sviatoslav Richter, proceeding from the opposite end of the interpretive spectrum, would appear to be following Ravel's text to the letter. When we compare for example his treatment of the opening measures (1-11) with that of Samson François, the contrast is striking. Here, while there is some elasticity in tempo in measure 5, 8 and 9, Richter's overall pulse remains unstressed and impressionistic, in keeping with the spirit of Ravel's notation. In particular, his handling of the layering of voices (octaves, fourths, and the low bass tones) accurately reflect Ravel's dynamic indications. (example 42: measures 3-11)



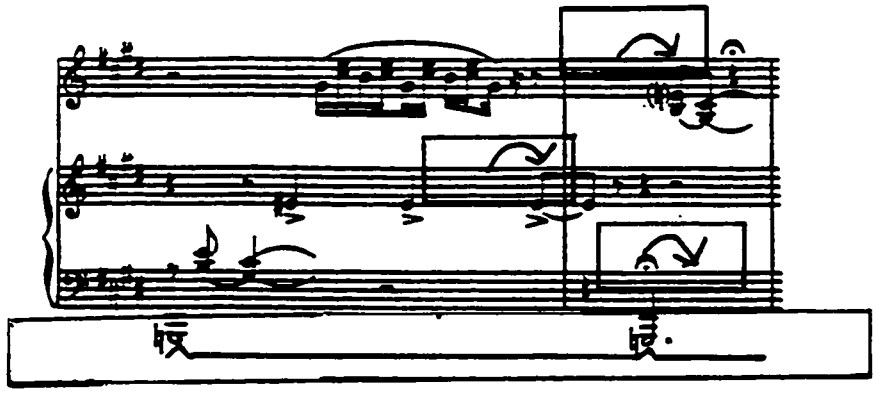
Example 42

La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 3-11: Performed by Sviatoslav Richter.

However, it is in the way in which Richter blends and intermingles the whole of the tonal texture, how attack and release coalesce in multiple levels to reveal those irreducible qualities of touch/voice/signature that distinguish the aural imagination of one artist from another — and by inference defy graphic representation.

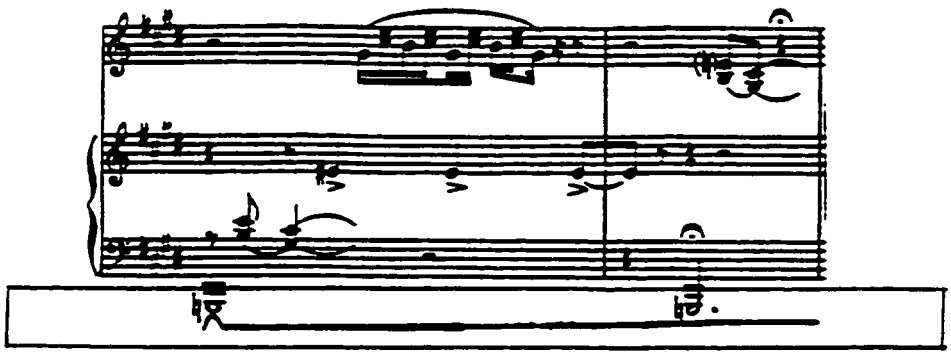
While pinning down the qualitative totality that distinguishes one artist from another may present insurmountable problems, certain specific — perhaps determining aspects — can be identified and compared. If we compare the pedallings of François, Richter and Ravel (in, for example, measures 10-11), not only can we identify and represent individual differences, but in the process reveal the inherent potential in the music for variability.

Example 43:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 10 and 11: Performed by Sviatoslav Richter.

Example 44:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measures 10 and 11:
Performed by Maurice Ravel.

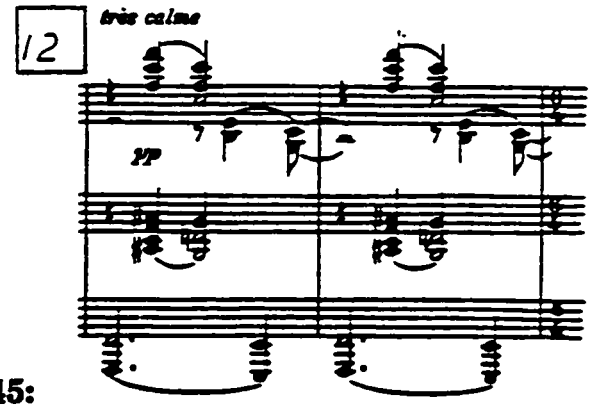
Where François releases the pedal (see example 41), Richter (example 43) sustains it throughout the measure, thereby allowing the harmonies to naturally dissolve through the ensuing rests, while simultaneously bringing out, through specific articulations and rhythmic delay, certain key tones (slight delay and colouring of the last eighth note in measure 10, prolonged rest on first beat of measure 11, slight anticipation of soprano/alto eighth note fourths on the third beat of measure 11).

Ravel on the other hand (example 44), treats the voices with virtually no melodic or rhythmic inflection but rather allows them to float and dissolve over a two bar sustained pedal. The effect is at odds with either of his later interpreters as well as his own score.

From another perspective, when we compare how the same three performers handle tempo, we not only find the expected individuality of treatment, but a revealing consensus as to where — if not what — alterations

should occur. While François, Richter and Ravel all begin the piece at precisely the same metronomic marking (50 to the quarter note), they each depart from it at the identical structural points. For example at measure 12 Ravel and Richter both adopt a slower tempo (40 and 42 to the quarter respectively) while François accelerates to 58 to the quarter note. (example 45)

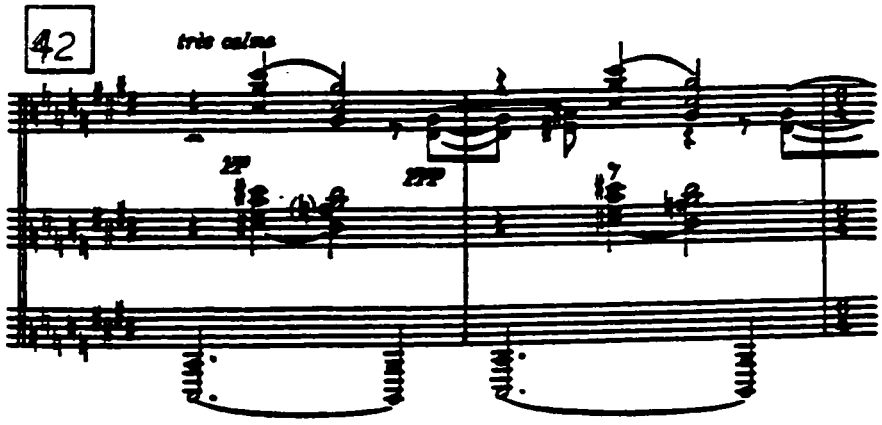
Example 45:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measure 12.

With the return of the theme at measure 42, (example 46) both Richter and Ravel resume their original tempo, while François takes off at a considerably faster one (70 to the quarter note), pushing and pulling the beat with a pronounced rubato.

Example 46:



La Vallée des cloches from Miroirs, measure 42.

François and Richter clearly represent two extremes in the treatment of a given text. The former, by cuing in to the source of the composer's inspiration rather than his (notated) explanation of it, is free to co-create as his imagination dictates. The latter remains remarkably attentive to the notated details of the text, yet through his distinctive handling of tempo, balance of tonal layers and voices, dynamic colouring, articulations and pedalled resonances, he stamps his particular aesthetic sense and musical signature as indelibly as that of Samson François. And since both are eminently successful, they bring a range of possibilities to Ravel's music — possibilities not revealed in the composer's own performance of the work.

Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit: Recorded Performances by Maurice Ravel, Vlado Perlemuter, Ivo Pogorelich, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Alicia de Larrocha

Earlier in chapter two I noted the question raised by Gaby Casadesus' claim that the 1922 recording of the Toccata from Le Tombeau de Couperin and Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit were performed by Robert Casadesus and not, as previously believed, by the composer. The following letter from Ravel to the critic M.D. Calvcoressi does little to clarify the authorship of the recording in question, but does throw some light on Ravel's determination to have Le Gibet recorded in keeping with *his* specific notated intentions.

> "I am particularly keen to have Gaspard de la nuit on record and Viñes has never seen fit to play these pieces, Le Gibet, in particular, in the way the composer intended. And I mean seen fit: I don't know whether you have been present at any of those discussions when he assured me that if he observed the *nuances and speeds* (italics mine) I wanted, Le Gibet would

bore the audience to death. He has remained intransigent over this."[119]

As we know, Ricardo Viñes was Ravel's first major interpreter and an extraordinary pianist. The conflict between Viñes (the performing artist) and Ravel (the composer) illustrates two opposing perceptions about the communication of a musical work. Viñes' perspective is that of the stage performer, who's interest is to communicate with an audience as effectively as possible. Ravel, on the other hand, hears his music as self-contained, autonomous, existing on its own terms, i.e., independent of the performer and the audience. His reluctance to consider alternative approaches clearly involves more than a dispute over aesthetic minutiae, but suggests a potentially self-defeating mind set that will be explored in greater detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

Perlemuter confirms Ravel's unyielding position about Le Gibet's tempo[120]. It is interesting to note, however, that the composer's tempo indication is no more precise than *Très lent, sans presser ni ralentir jusqu'à la fin.* (Paradoxically, it would seem that "très lent" leaves too much room for individual interpretation.) The paradox becomes even more striking when one compares the performance tempi of the composer (84 to the eighth note) with Ivo Pogorelich (80 to the eighth note), Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (76 to the eighth note), Alicia de Larrocha (72 to the eighth note) and Vlado Perlemuter (63 to the eighth note), Ravel therefore, is the *fastest of the lot*, while his

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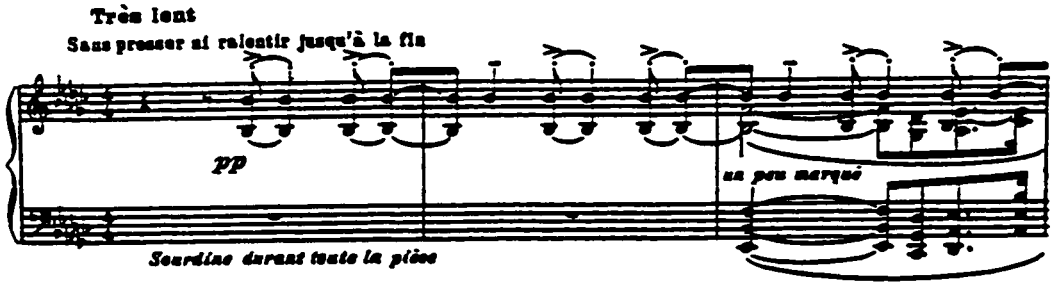
[119] Nichols, in Ravel, Ravel's Piano Music — A New Edition: Gaspard de la Nuit 5.

[120] Perlemuter, Ravel d'après Ravel 36.

student, Perlemuter, at the other and of the tempo spectrum, is the slowest[121]. So much for setting an example.

On a scale of relative "fidelity", then, to the composer's directives (both notated and stated) Perlemuter earns top marks, with Michelangeli a close second, followed by de Larrocha, with the composer and Pogorelich battling for last place. What becomes increasingly evident, however, is that even when an artist *appears* to be reproducing a composer's intentions, he or she is redefining the text in significant ways. Take for example the opening figure — an ostinato described by the composer as, "this bell (that) does not dominate, it is, it tolls unwearingly"[122]. Ravel notates the bell motif as a three unit phrase with precise articulations on each tone. (example 47) The accent pattern repeats over twelve and a quarter measures without variation in stress.

Example 47:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, opening figure.

Ravel's own performance is indeed distinguished by the "unwearingly"

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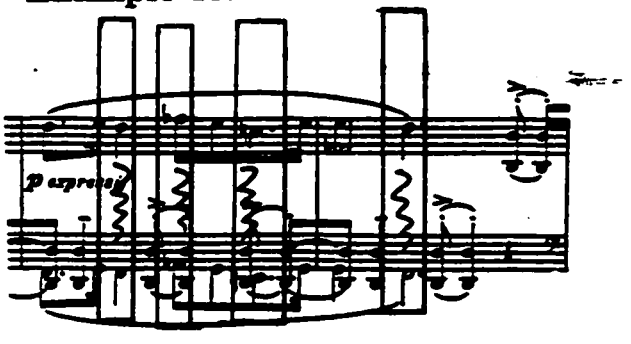
121 Taruskin makes the important point "that human psychology is such that an imagined tempo is apt to be very different from the tempo the imaginer himself will produce in actual performance." — Text and Act 215.

122 Nichols, in Ravel 5.

persistent presence of the motif. He maintains the pace of the tolling bell with a somewhat percussive touch\articulation that remains relatively consistent throughout, despite the occasional lapse into an over-stressing of the repeated tone (quarter note). The Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha also maintains a persistent, unwearing articulation of the motif. However, unlike Ravel's percussive gong effect, her touch quality resonates more in the manner of a vibrating *bebung*. Even more to the point, despite the fact that both Ravel and de Larrocha follow quite literally the notated articulation of the ostinato figure, they are clearly distinguished from each other by the way they balance, blend and colour the melodic voices that enter in measure three. Ravel enters on the downbeat of measure three with a marked stress. While the extreme upper voice is somewhat prominent by virtue of its acoustical position, each of the tones forming the chord below it are equally voiced. At measure six we begin to get the slight desynchronization of the hands so characteristic of romantic performance practice still vestigial in Ravel's playing. Note example 48, beats three and four of measure six, and beat two of measure seven.

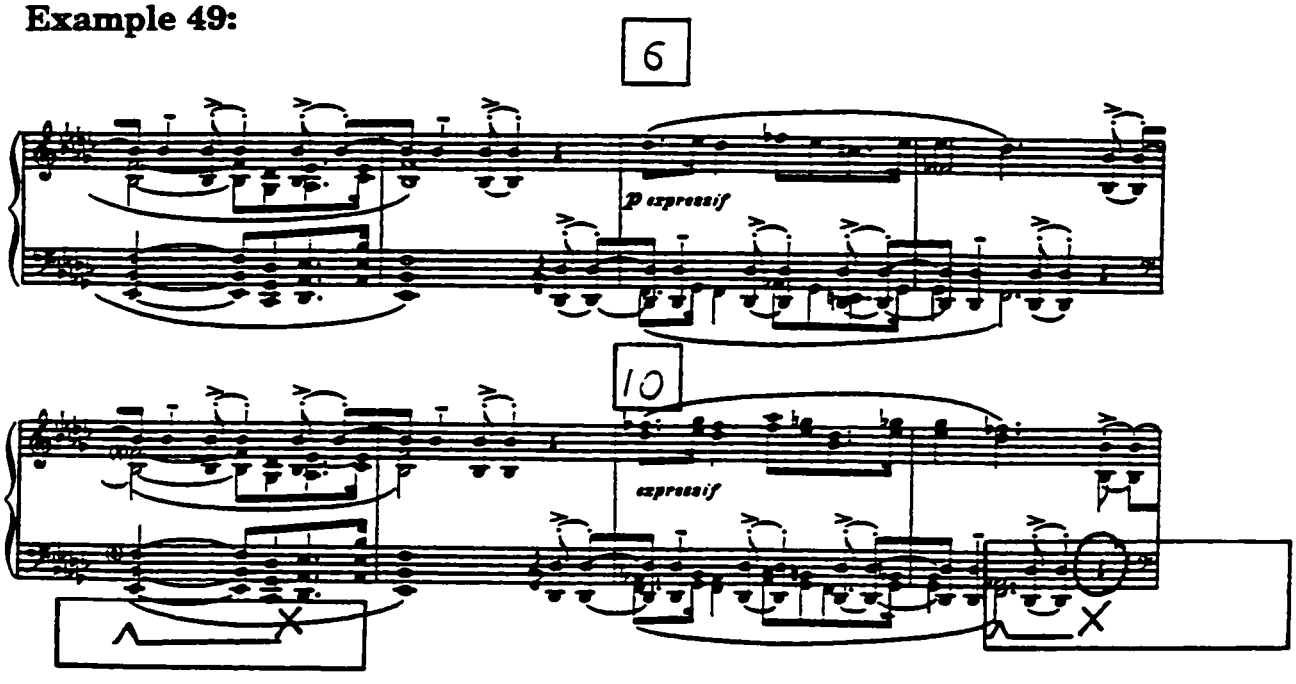
Example 48:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 6 and 7: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

(It is not necessary to point out every instance where Ravel lapses into this nineteenth century stylistic anachronism. Suffice it to say that it pervades Le Gibet as it does virtually all of his other recorded performances). It raises the question whether he was aware that in consistently breaking chords he was altering the temporal relationship of synchronously conceived parts, thereby communicating a musical experience very much at odds with his notated intentions. This remains true even if the practice is understood as an expressive device. Take for example the *expressif* at measure 6 and 10.

Example 49:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 6 and 10: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

Ravel's use of the pedal poses similar questions. The prevalence of pedal breaks within a legato line (e.g., measure 8) and the abrupt cessation of harmonic resonance (measure 11) point up the schism separating his

compositional from his performing personas (see example 49)[123]. A tempo that strains the upper limits of Très Lent, combined with the stressed persistence of his bell motif and the irregular breaking of chords and pedalled resonance, form a synergistic whole that communicates a sense of unrest — a disturbing comment on both Ravel's score and Aloyius Bertrand's poem.

Where the prevailing tone of Ravel's performance is one of unrest, de Larrocha's is one of sustained balance. How she achieves this sense of balance becomes clear when we examine the way she handles tempo, stress, voicing and pedalling. After establishing a walking pace (72 to the eighth note) with the introductory bebung, (example 49) she enters into the main chordal theme at measure three without any perceivable stress. While the chord is unvoiced, its upper (alto) voice is allowed to vibrate gently by virtue of de Larrocha's precisely timed pedal overlaps. This is reinforced in the following measure by a more pronounced finger pressure on the downbeat (f). The last sixteenth beat of the measure (e flat over c flat) remains suspended briefly in time before resolving into the downbeat in measure five (f over b flat) somewhat in the manner of a classic sigh motif. Throughout, the bebung ostinato serves simultaneously as an unrelenting presence and a means of "warming" the harmonic texture. This closes the initial phrase and sets the tone for the entire movement.

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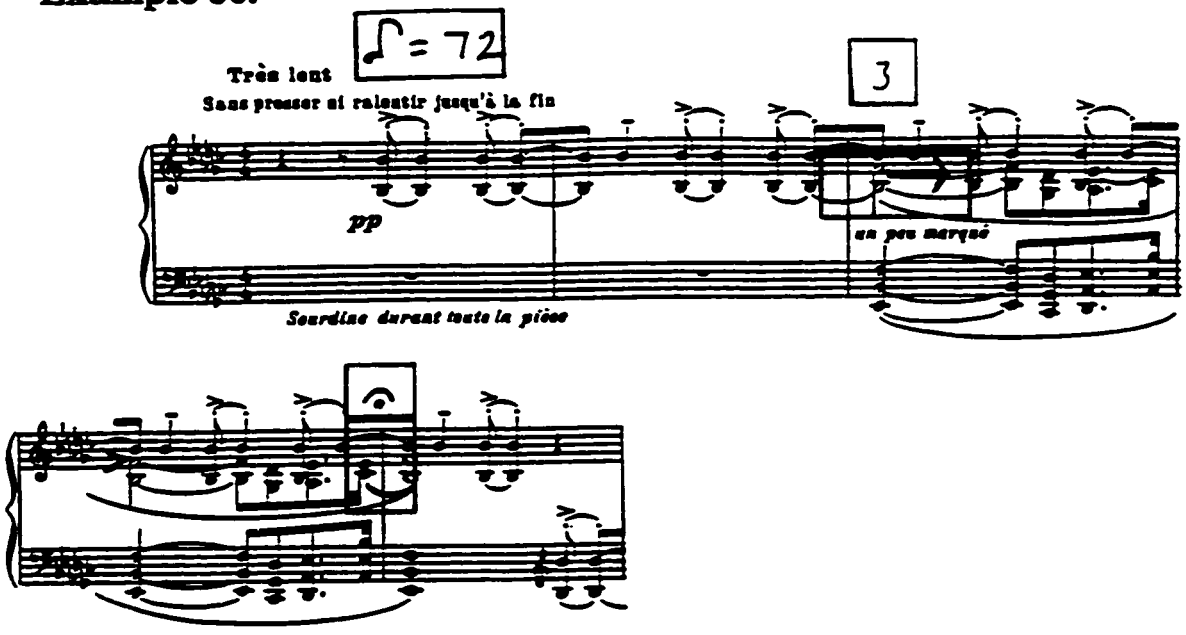
123 Note comments in chapter four on the question of pedalling in the piano music of Ravel.

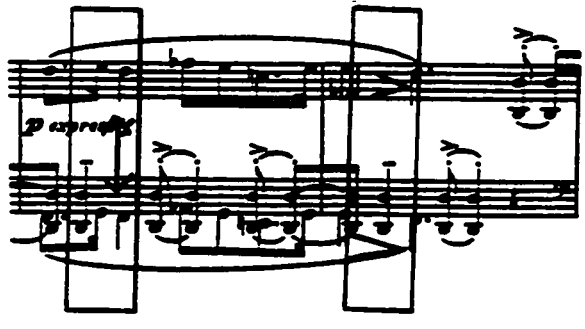
Example 50:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 3-5: Performed by Alicia de Larrocha.

Typically, at measure six, (example 51) de Larrocha blends touch, tone and dynamics of parallel melodic lines at the octave straddling her bebung to realize an *expressif* at once penetrating and quiet. The outer voices are heard as a single sonority while her bebung, also at the octave, continues both as a harmonic support and a voice in its own right. No single part dominates.

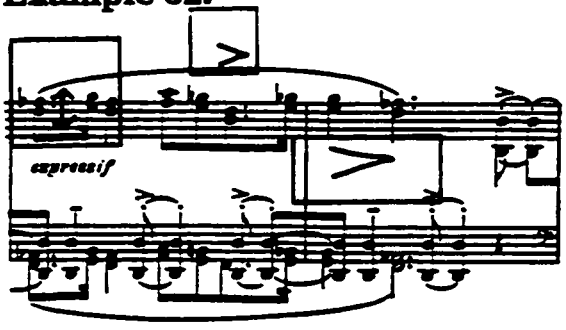
Example 51:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 6: Performed by Alicia de Larrocha.

At measure ten, (example 52) de Larrocha, moves to an expressive stress on the fourth beat (dotted eighth) by shifting the emphasis to the two upper voices in parallel thirds. This sets up a broad sigh that closes the first musical statement (measure 11). By precisely timing the shift from rapid surface to full pedalling, de Larrocha creates an ambiance where harmonic resonance — building and receding in waves — envelops her clearly articulated bebung line.

Example 52:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 10: Performed by Alicia de Larrocha.

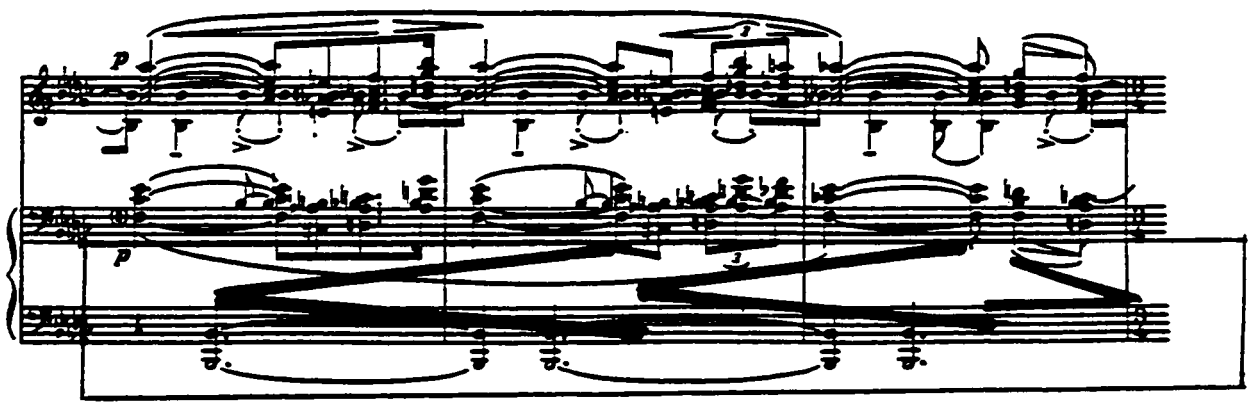
On a superficial *reading* Michelangeli and de Larrocha share a similar approach to Ravel's text. Their tempi are virtually identical — Michelangeli (76 to the eighth), de Larrocha (72 to the eighth). In each, the pulse remains unwavering throughout, never violating the composer's fundamental structural organization. When, however, one listens to either of the performances as a whole, the contrast in the *listening experience* is striking. Michelangeli's clash of percussive entrances and sudden offbeat stresses intruding upon otherwise passively moving lines communicates a sense of diametrically opposed affects, while de Larrocha's implacable, forward moving

lines, sighs and pedalled resonances are experienced as sustained emotive tension.

Since the distinction between the performances of these two artists, *experienced as a whole*, is central to the method of comparative analysis employed in this thesis, it asks to be examined in greater depth.

To begin with, the "sustained emotive tension" one experiences in de Larrocha's performance can be traced to the character of her articulations — an equally measured timing of attack, sustain and release, consistent and unrelenting from tone to tone throughout the movement. The articulations are in a push-pull relationship with compound phrase lines, shaped in dynamically expansive breaths. Note, for example, her dynamically expansive "breathing" in measures 12-14 (example 53)

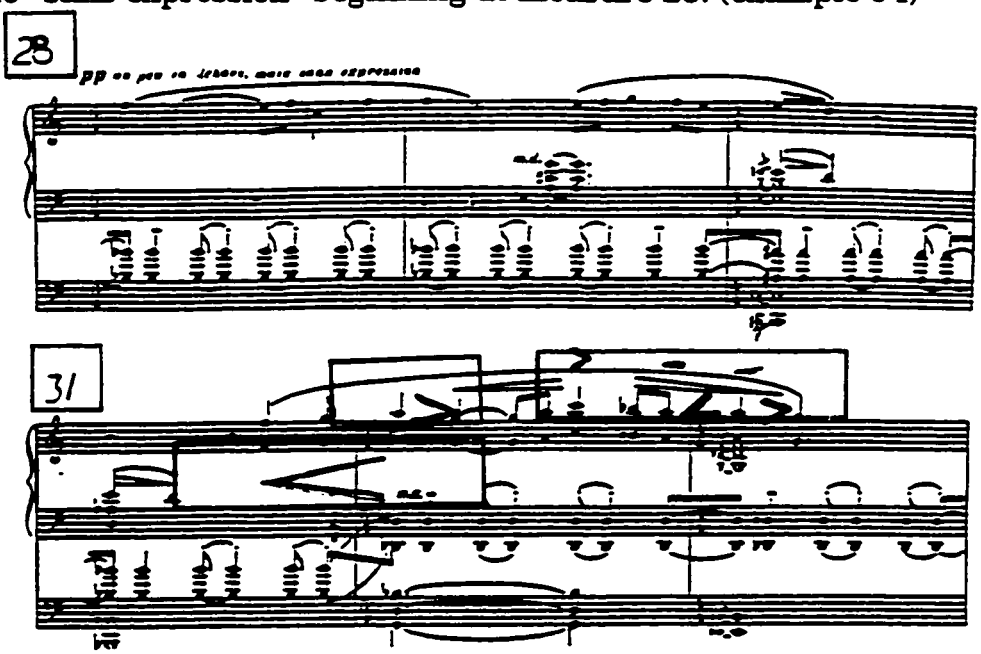
Example 53:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 12-14: Performed by Alicia de Larrocha.

and the cante jondo-like[124] crescendo-diminuendo (measures 31-33) interrupting the "sans expression" beginning at measure 28. (example 54)

Example 54:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 31-33: Performed by Alicia de Larrocha.

In Michelangeli's performance tension is handled from an entirely different musical perspective. Here, the intrusion and juxtaposition of sudden percussive entrances and spasmodic accent patterns upon an established pattern of flowing lines communicates a profound sense of disturbance. Note, how in the opening (measures 1-9), evenness of tempo, gently swinging dotted rhythms, the blending of voices through subtle shifts from harmonic to melodic pedalling, and a discreetly focused soprano line establish a contemplative mood. Only the anachronistic breaking of chords at the *expressif* (example 55: measure 6), reminiscent of Ravel's mannered performance, hints at what is to follow.

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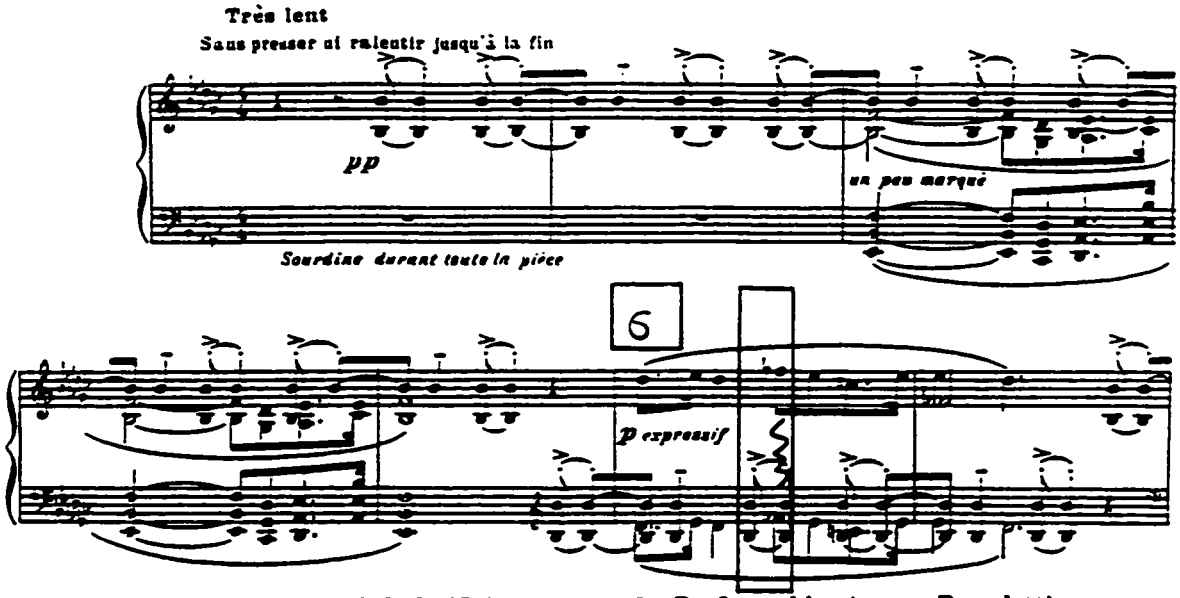
124 "Literally, "deep song." A highly emotional and tragic song of Andalusia. — Linton E. Powell, A History of Spanish Piano Music (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980) 184.

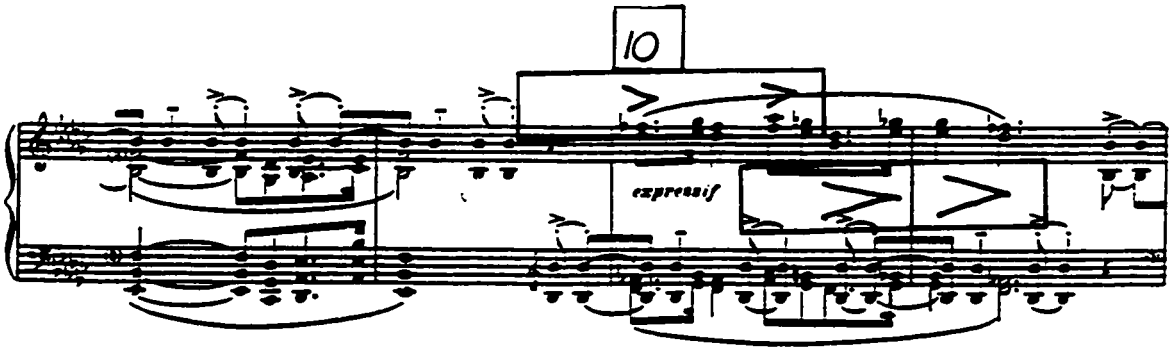
Example 55:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 6: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

At measure 10 (example 56) a heavily stressed downbeat in the soprano, followed by a sharp accent (perhaps intended as a cry) on the third beat, followed by subito "sigh", effectively splits the cadential phrase in two, thereby dispelling any expectation of unrelieved serenity.

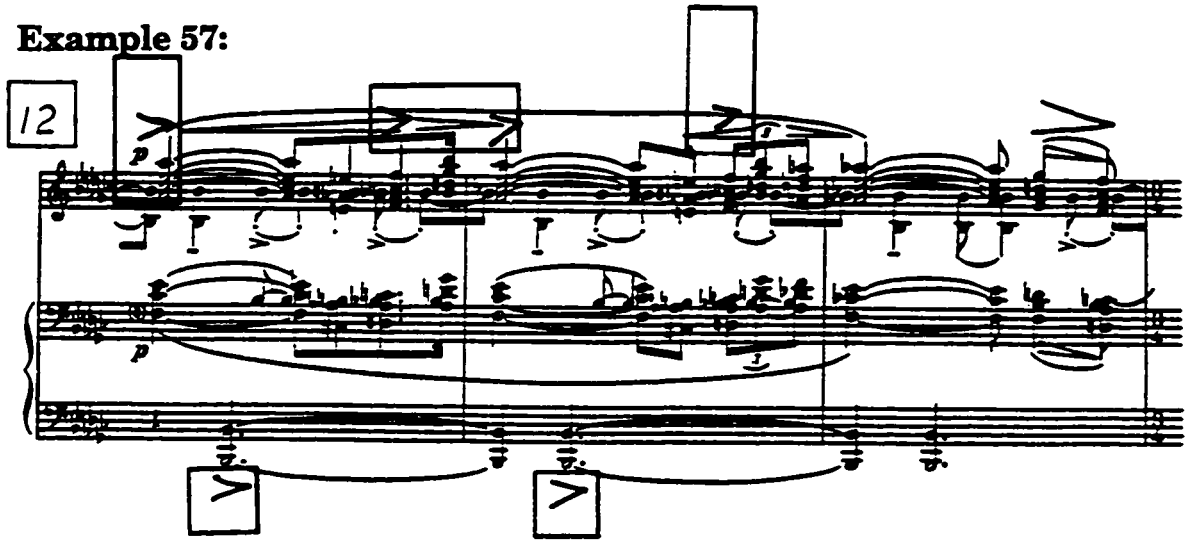
Example 56:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 10: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

In the following statement (example 57: measures 12-14), the mood of disquietude becomes unequivocal. Michelangeli substitutes the composer's piano (soprano) and unstressed octave pedal tone (bass), with strongly marked attacks (first, second and fourth beats of measures 12 and 13). Ravel's slight crescendo-diminuendo in full chords (measures 12) becomes a full blown marcato, culminating on the fourth beat of measure 13. The obligatory "sigh" follows.

Example 57:



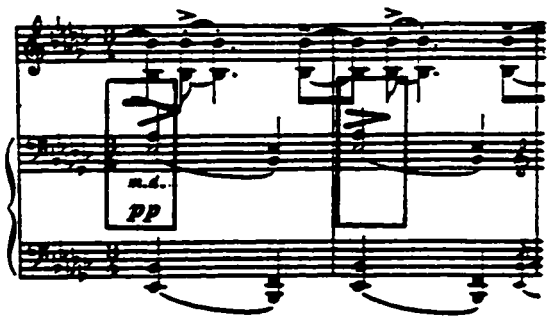
Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 12-14: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

Once established, Michelangeli sustains the atmosphere of disquietude through the employment of subito stresses and chord breaking[125]. Note the

125 It can of course be argued, that the technique of chord breaking not only highlights the separation of voices, but simulates a vocal quality on a keyboard instrument. However, apart from occasional wide spread chords, the flow of Ravel's textures are disturbed, rather than enhanced by chordal breaking — the sans expression shown above is a prime example. It is for these and related reasons, that most pianists since the turn of the present century, including Ravel's students, Vlado

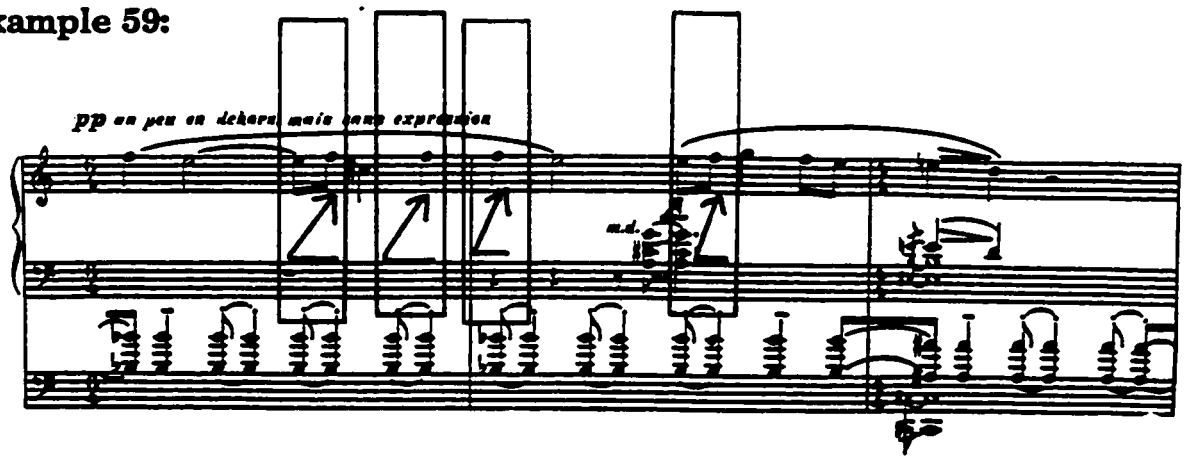
following: Measures 15,16

Example 58:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 15 and 16: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

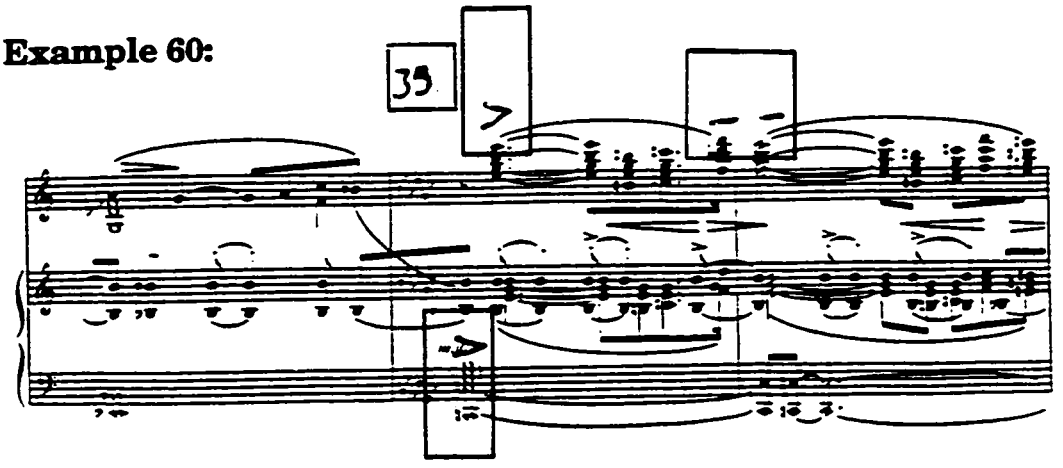
Example 59:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 28-30: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

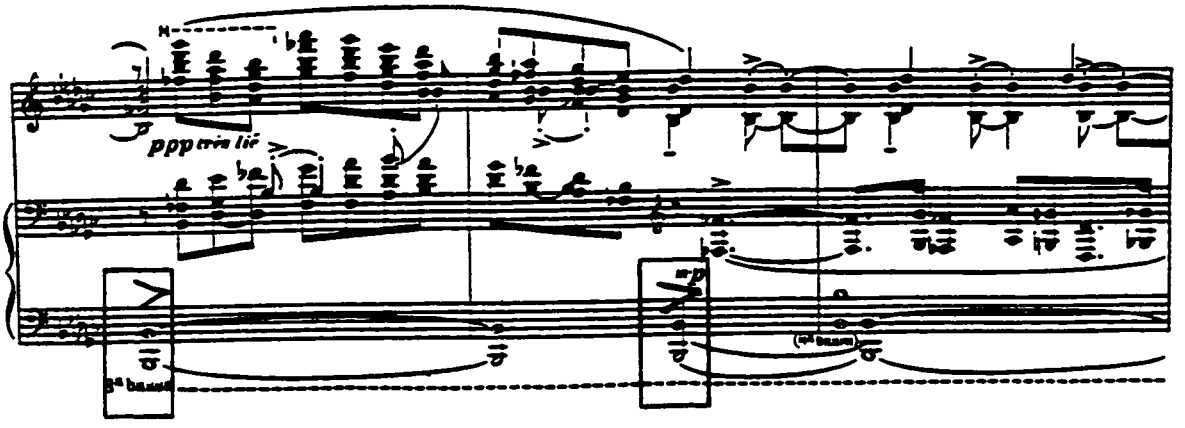
Perlemuter and Robert Casadesus, do not employ this mannerism.

Example 60:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 35 and 36: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

Example 61:



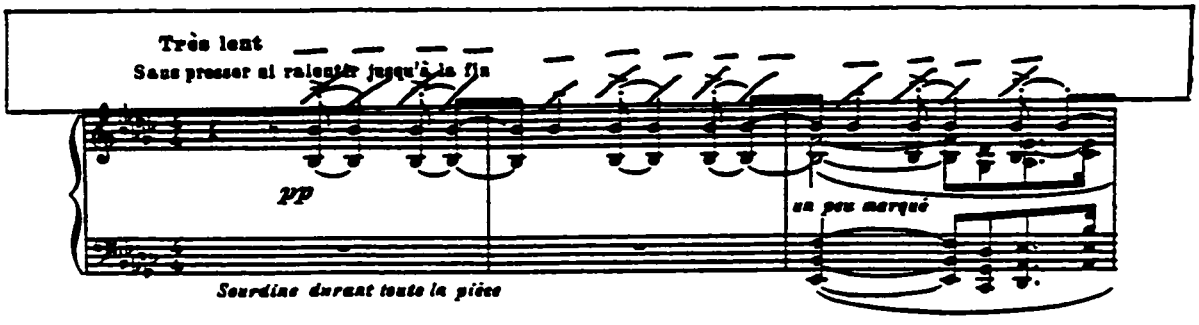
Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 40 and 41: Performed by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

We can see that while Michelangeli respects the general outlines of the compositional structure, his performance — by virtue of the timing and affective quality of the tone he employs in patterning his stresses and voicing — constitutes a uniquely individual statement.

Pogorelich also approaches the text as an inspirational trigger for his

own highly dramatic, individualized vision — albeit from a very different perspective than Michelangeli. By adopting an unabashed co-creative relationship to the composer (somewhat reminiscent of Samson François), Pogorelich proceeds to demonstrate how an artist possessed of consummate skill, imagination and conviction, may transcend all notational barriers to reveal dimensions of a work unheard in the performance of any other pianist. In introducing his vision of Le Gibet, (example 62) Pogorelich — in direct opposition to the composer's explicit directions — articulates the opening figure without the least hint of stress.

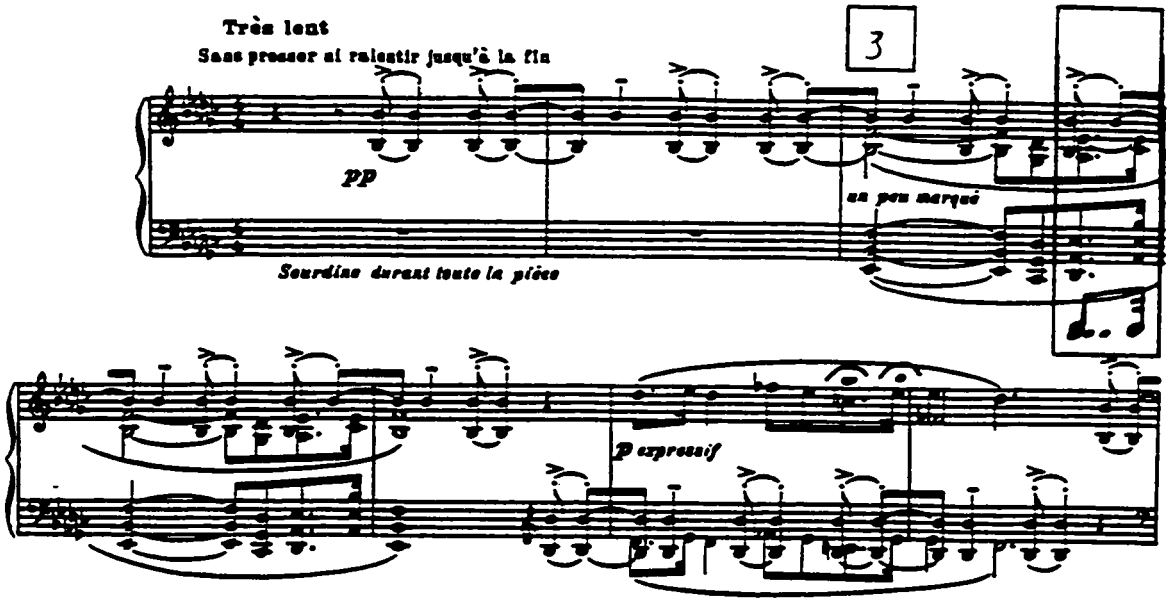
Example 62:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, opening figure: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

Rather than a mere flourish of "artistic licence" the gesture establishes an unequivocal tone for the entire movement — a tone in which the performer shares creative authority at every step with the composer. Take, for example, his deliberate rhythmic alterations, beginning with the double dotting of the fourth beats of measures three, four and eight, and the augmentation of the same beat in measure six.

Example 63:



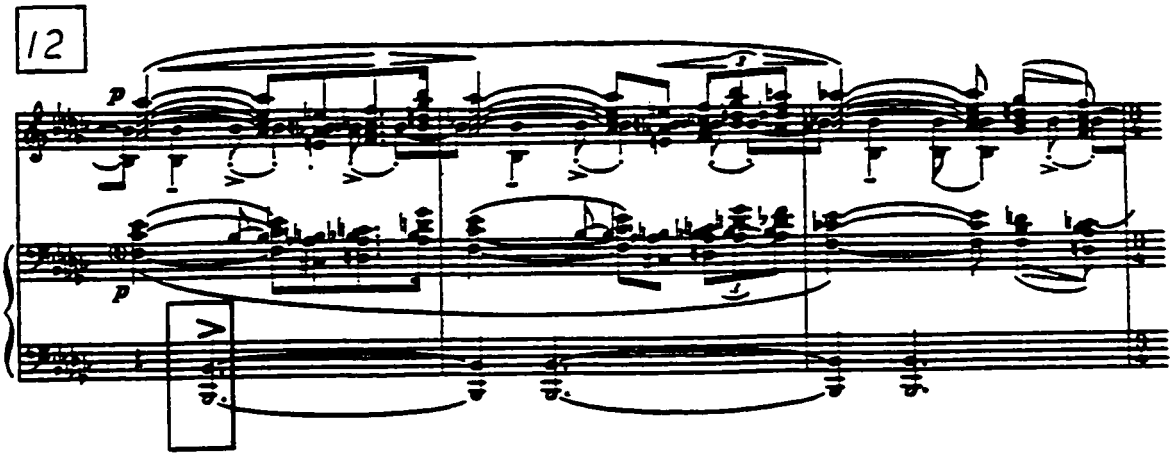
Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 3-6: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

This pattern of beat displacements persists throughout the piece, effectively serving to relegate the bebung to a secondary accompanying role. Equally striking is Pogorelich's restructuring of Ravel's voicing and dynamic patterning. By sudden shifts of focus and highly dramatized contrasts, he places himself in direct opposition to the composer's notated intentions, as well as his pronouncements on the only possible interpretation of the work. Pogorelich, like Viñes is apparently convinced that he "would bore (his) audience to death if he observed the *nuances and speeds* (Ravel) wanted."(italics mine) In any event, whatever his reasons, he proceeds to dismantle and re-structure the composer's masterpiece.

Typically, a pedal tone in an otherwise quiet context is transformed from its normally understood supporting role to the primary focus of the passage.

See, examples 64: measure 12, where the pedal tone literally penetrates the surrounding *piano* (p)

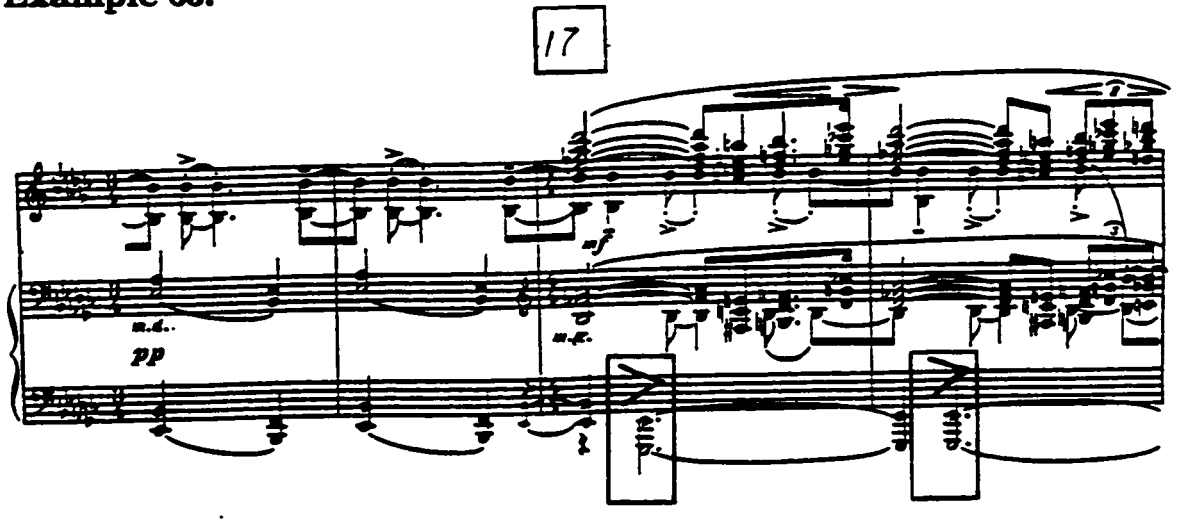
Example 64:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 12: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

and example 65, the dominating *forte* (f) pedal tones at measure 17 and 18,

Example 65:

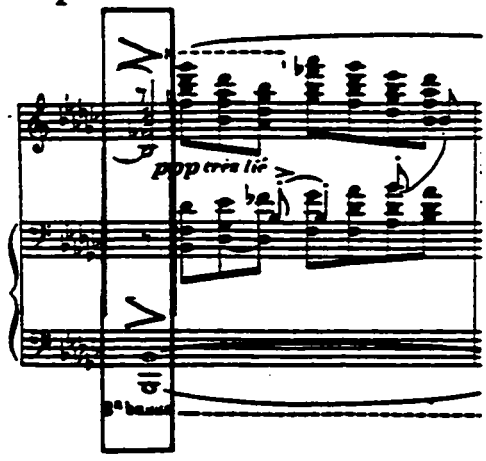


Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 17 and 18: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

and most dramatically example 66, the subito *fortissimo* (ff) pedal on the downbeat of measure 40. In the latter, while the *fortissimo* pedal surrounds a

piano-pianissimo (ppp) chordal passage in eighth notes and contrary motion, it does so without obscuring the integrity of the musical lines.

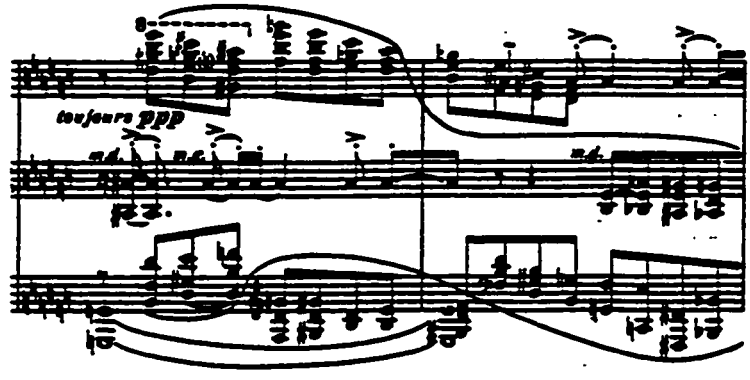
Example 66:



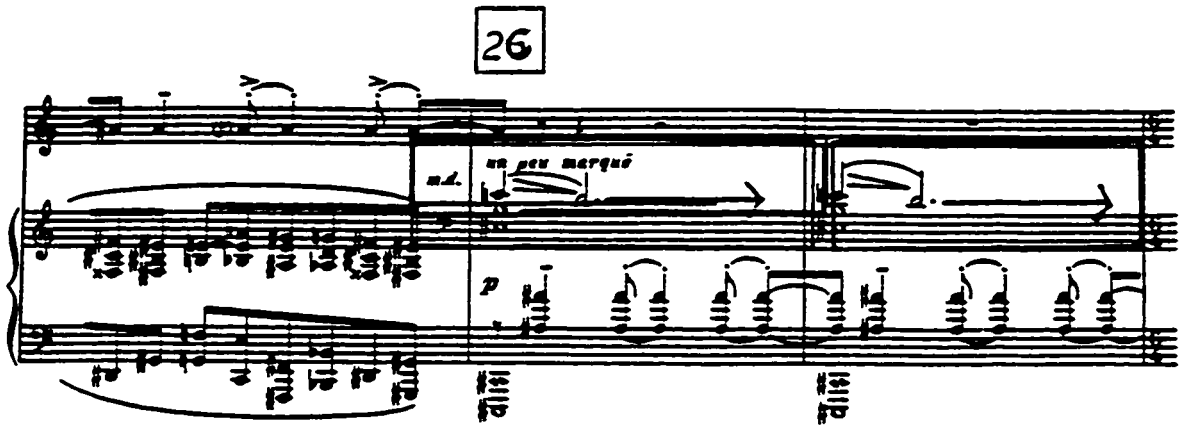
Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 40: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

Even when Pogorelich acknowledges Ravel's performance indications, he redefines them as a personal statement. *Un peu marqué* (example 67: measures 26,27) becomes a *strongly marked* upper voice, in subito contrast to the complete absence of voicing in the preceding passage (measures 23-25).

Example 67:



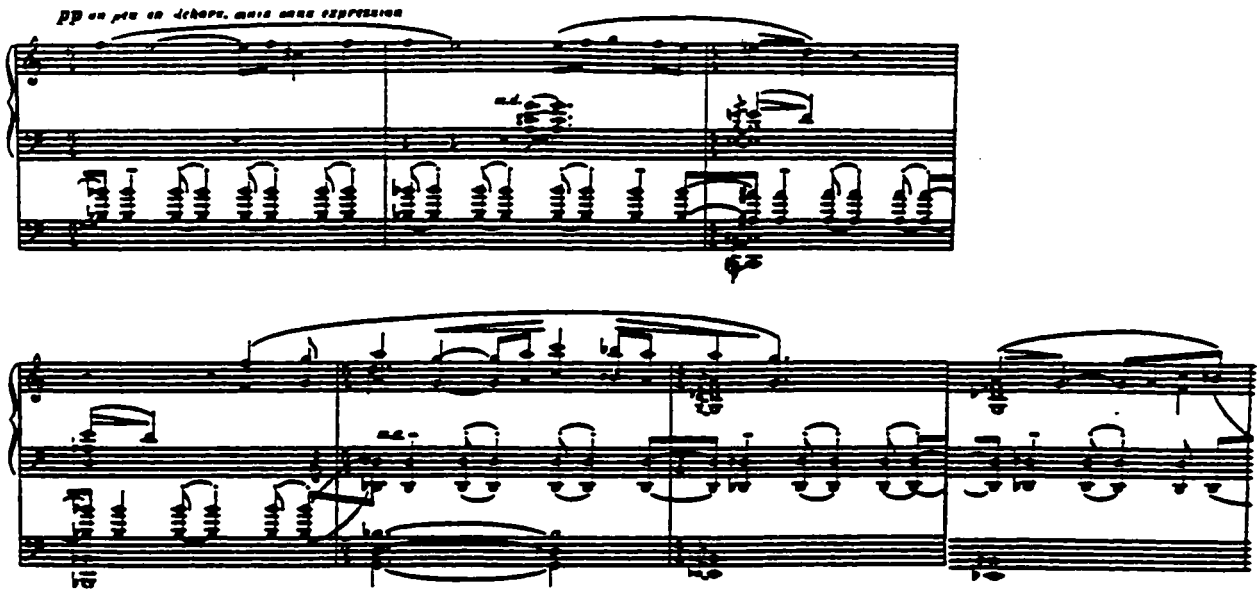
Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 23 and 24: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.



Le Gibet, continued, measure 26.

In contrast to Ravel's own performance, as well as those of de Larrocha, Michelangeli and every other major performer, the *Sans expression* (example 68: measure 28-34) under Pogorelich's hands becomes a voiceless tone, equally flat and lifeless throughout, without the slightest hint of warmth, even at the doubling of the octave and the crescendo-diminuendo (measures 31-33).

Example 68:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measures 28-34: Performed by Ivo Pogorelich.

One cannot avoid wondering whether Pogorelich has contrived an essay on the fascination of "boredom", superseding the concerns of both Viñes and Ravel, by showing how a master performer is able to hold the attention of his listeners through the sheer power of his musical voice. In the process he adds to the poignancy of Bertrand's poem as well as Ravel's score.

Taken with Pogorelich's recording of Le Gibet, Vlado Perlemuter's performance, recorded nearly sixty years after his studies with Ravel and forty two years after the death of the composer, is a confirmation of Bruno Walter's assertion that "talent and greatness are necessary to understand talent and greatness". Most tellingly, these performances demonstrate how two great artists, preceding from opposite ends of the musical spectrum, can each conjure up a seemingly definitive statement about the music's *real* meaning. The effect upon the listener familiar with the music is one of revelation.

In the opinion of the Ravel scholar, Roger Nichols,

> "Perlemuter knows better than anyone the *laws* (italics mine) of performing Ravel's music."[126]

Indeed, Perlemuter's performance is as faithful to Ravel's text and his stated wishes as is conceivably possible. The slow tempo (63 to the eighth note) remains constant throughout, while the dynamic and phrase indications are scrupulously observed and contrary to Viñes and Pogorelich, rather than "boring the audience to death" he succeeds in transfixing (at least this) listener's attention. In view of Perlemuter's faithfulness to the composer's

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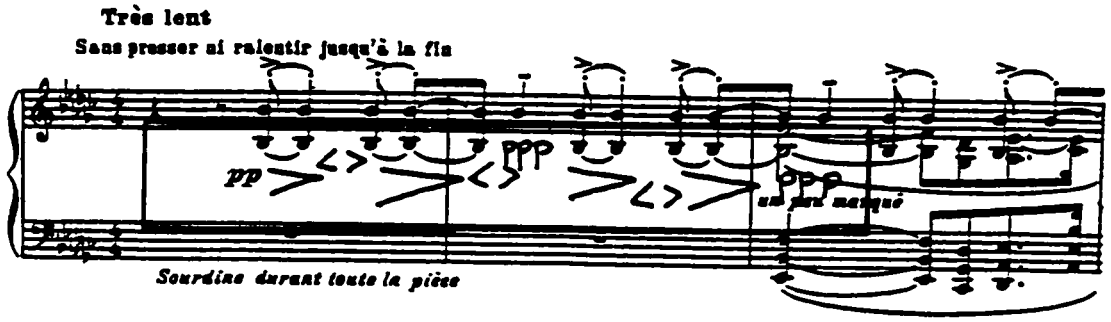
126 Roger Nichols, jacket notes, Vlado Perlemuter: Maurice Ravel, Piano Works Volume One, Nimbus Records, NIM 5005.

notated and stated directives, one could easily be misled into believing that it is in the unmitigated adherence to these "laws" (i.e., the meticulous attention to the text) that the power of the performance is due. However, on deeper examination, it becomes clear that while Perlemuter is a "law-abiding" performer in terms of his scrupulous attention to notated detail, he is also transcending (transgressing) the apparent "laws" relating to the specific physical limitations of the instrument itself. If we listen to his performance of the bebung for example, we hear how Perlemuter creates an acoustical sleight of hand — an actual crescendo-diminuendo — precisely when he is *not* playing (example 69: measures 1-2).

Example 69:



Le Gibet from Gaspard de la Nuit, measure 1 and 2: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

Through his meticulously organized blending of non-percussive touch (accented b flat), partial release (unaccented b flat), quiet length (tenuto b flat), and pedalling designed to pick up the acoustical wave in the space *between* the tones, Perlemuter creates a pulsating internal dynamic that persists hypnotically throughout the movement. The lamenting melodic line emerges out of this undulating acoustical wave as Perlemuter's primary focus. The

experience is profoundly synergistic — an exquisitely timed interplay of melodic line and harmonic resonance that predisposes the listener to hear a living, singing voice emanating from a mechanical instrument. By defying the piano's horizontally struck key action, Perlemuter again demonstrates how a master artist can inspire the suspension of disbelief.

Suspension of disbelief, revelation, the sense of hearing the music for the first time — these themes emerge as a recurring common denominator in the performances examined thus far. Ravel, Argerich, Gieseking, Casadesus, Perlemuter, Lortie, Rogé, Richter, François, de Larrocha, Michelangeli and Pogorelich have clearly demonstrated how, in varying degrees, and from original, often opposing musical perspectives, each artist reveals dimensions of Ravel's work unheard in the performance of any other artist. Each performance convincingly illustrates the active co-creative relationship between the high level performing artist and the composer's notated text. At every level, from Perlemuter's faithfulness to the composer's written directives, to Pogorelich's unabashed re-structuring of the composer's notation, each artist crafts Ravel's notated "speech" with his or her own musical voice, bringing continuous alterations that are both inevitable and creatively necessary.

In the hands of the performers studied here, the composer's notated text is treated as a metaphoric point of departure for imaginative variation. It has become increasingly clear that each artist cues into the composer's source of inspiration — the menuet (Sonatine), a scene drawn from nature (La Vallée des cloches) or a poem (Le Gibet) — allowing his or her aural imagination and

aesthetic sense to dictate precisely how the performing structure embedded in the text will be organized, thereby demonstrating their shared creative authority with the composer.[127]

The tremendous range of variability represented by these performances reveals the indestructibility of Ravel's complex and skilfully composed musical structures, i.e., their ability to adapt themselves to creative change. Rather than challenging Ravel's vision of his own work, this capacity to incorporate change and to adapt to widely diverse perspectives, is, on the contrary, a testament to its universality.

In the chapter that follows, I will be focusing on a comparative study of performances by Ravel contemporaries of Valses nobles et sentimentales — a large scale, pivotal work that affords the opportunity to pursue in greater depth the role of the active co-creator.

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127 Of course, Ravel, very much in the French tradition, has a predilection for evocatively descriptive titles, occasionally reinforced by a poem (Gaspard de la Nuit) or quotation (Jeux d'eau) *et al.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Valses nobles et sentimentales: Recorded Performances by Arthur Rubinstein, Walter Gieseking, Maurice Ravel, Vlado Perlemuter, Robert Casadesus

Roland Manuel, commenting on the significance of Valses nobles et sentimentales points out that,

> "It is quite easy to find pages which, on a first hearing, are more brilliant and easy to grasp; but one cannot discover a work in which the material is more condensed, or where the form is more penetrating, elliptical and closely woven."[128]

It is fortuitous that Ravel recorded the complete set, thereby giving us the opportunity to compare his performance, not only with those of other artists, but with his pronouncements on the performance of his music. The waltzes have the added advantage of pianistic accessibility, i.e., there is considerably less of the digital pyrotechnics, of say Scarbo, that generally passes for high-order virtuosity. Therefore, with an even playing field at our disposal, questions about Ravel's expertise on the piano become less of an issue.

The comparative analyses that follow will examine recorded performances by Arthur Rubinstein and Walter Gieseking, as well as Ravel

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[128] Manuel, Maurice Ravel 60-61.

himself and his two most distinguished students, Vlado Perlemuter and Robert Casadesus. Since all were contemporaries, in their day considered specialists in the performance of French music, they form the closest available representation of Ravel's generation of pianists. Key aspects of the performing structure, in particular tempo, dynamic patterning, and agogics will be examined in terms of a synergistic, relational whole[129]. These comprise the fundamental rhetorical components of the performing structure — the means by which the performing artist communicates the experience as a unified whole.

Perhaps the most consistent feature revealed in the analyses that follow is the wealth of textual variability that artists bring to the score while *appearing* to follow it to the letter. It would seem that even those pianists who share Ravel's obsession with notational fidelity — free of ambiguity or omission — consistently re-structure and otherwise modify the score to suit their particular aesthetic pre-disposition. A notated crescendo, for example, signals the pianist to "play louder". However we find that "playing louder" involves each pianist in a complex interrelationship of performed elements. The way in which any one performer handles stress, pedalling, nuances of colour and relative lengths of tone, inflection and rhythmic pulsing — and ultimately, the crucial synchronized timing of the whole — will constitute a particular quality of crescendo unlike that of any other pianist. Compare, for example, two

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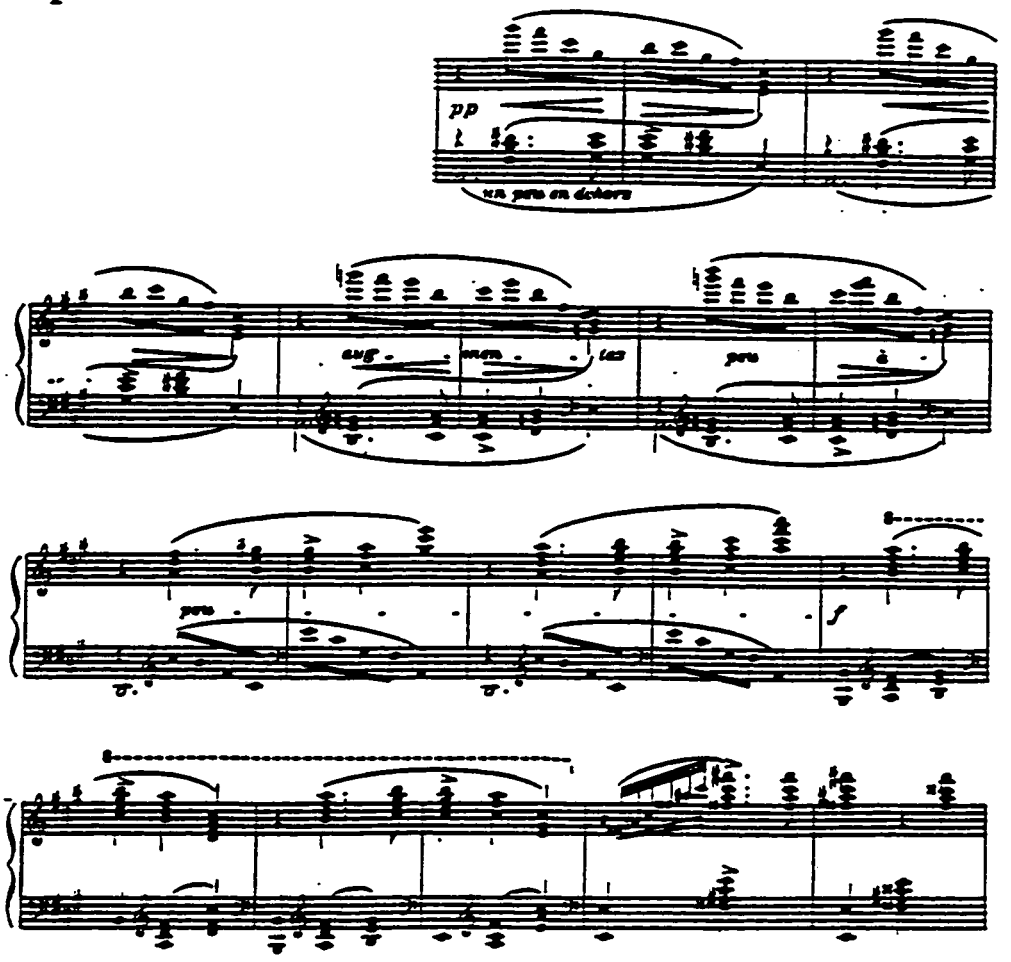
[129] While agogics is more specifically understood as differences in length of note values, here it is meant to include variation in articulation, relative degrees of legato-staccato, intensity (stressed/unstressed), anticipation/delay, syncopation and pedalling.

performances of an extended crescendo passage.

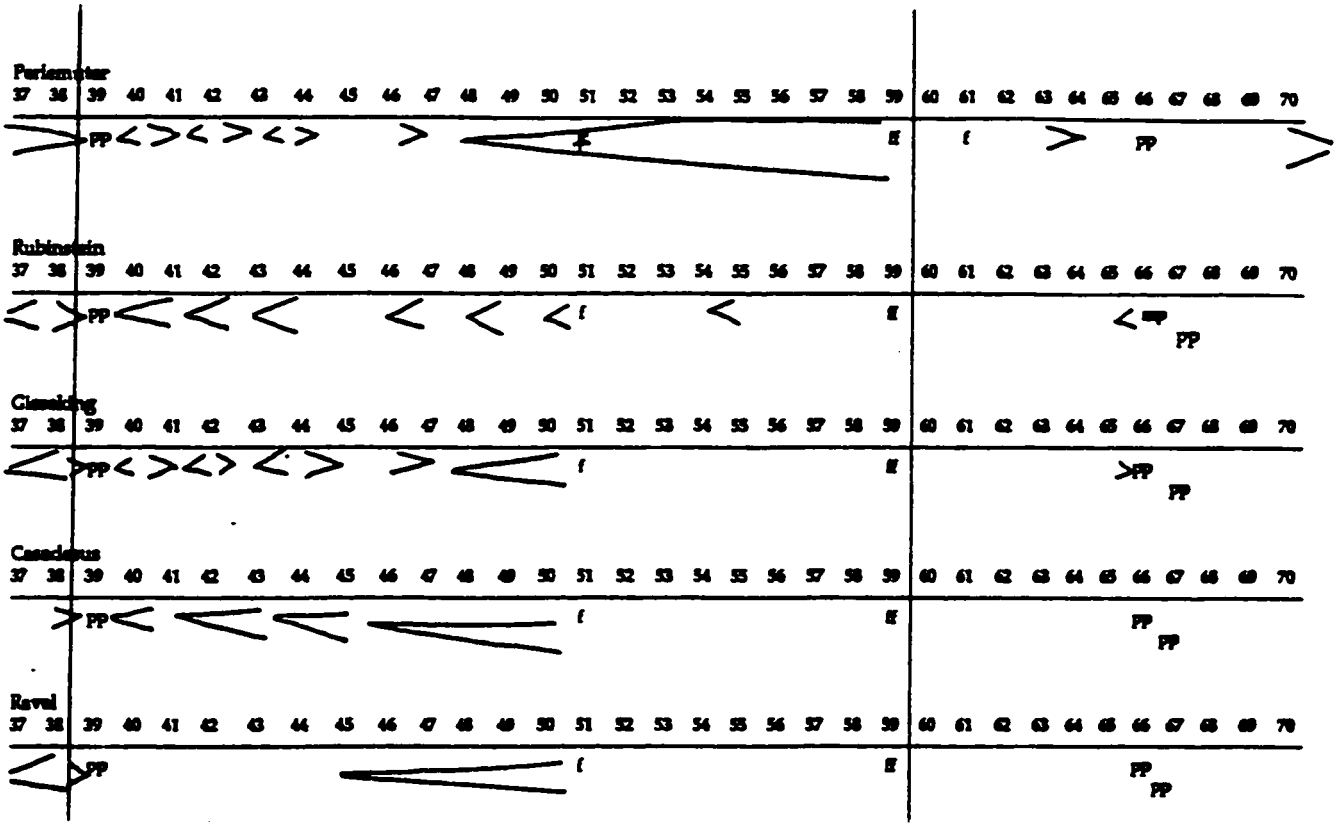
Example 70:



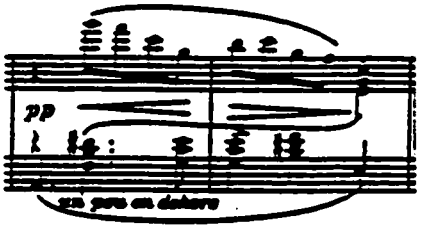
Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-59.

When we observe the Comparative Dynamic Patterning Chart below, and compare it to the score, we find that Perlemuter and Gieseking appear not only to be adhering to the notated dynamic patterning but to be performing near identical crescendi.

Comparative Dynamic Patterning Chart



However the overall experience is very different. The difference begins with the quality of their individual articulation and voicing of the chordal melody in the initial two measure phrase group, (example 71: *un peu en dehors* measure 39-40).

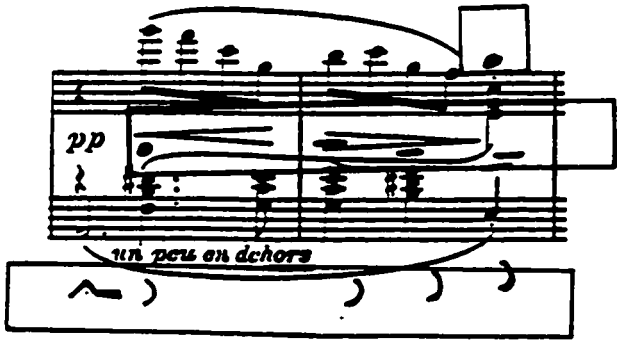


Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-40.

Example 71

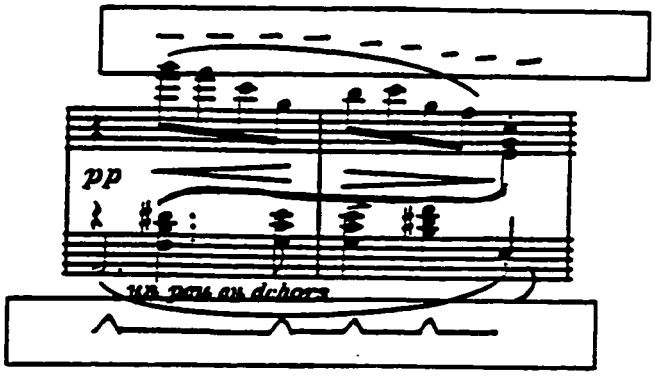
Perlemuter's incisive and varied articulations (example 72: measure 39, second beat — staccato, measure 40, first beat — accented staccato, second beat — placed legato, third beat — light staccato), with their relative weight and length of attack and release, differ radically from Gieseking's sustained legato. (example 73) When we add to this how differently each focuses tone and articulation in the upper voice, (running eighth notes) pedal definition and the handling of the timed release of the final beat of the phrase, the difference in the experience of the two performances begins to make sense[130].

Example 72:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-40: Performed by Walter Gieseking.

Example 73



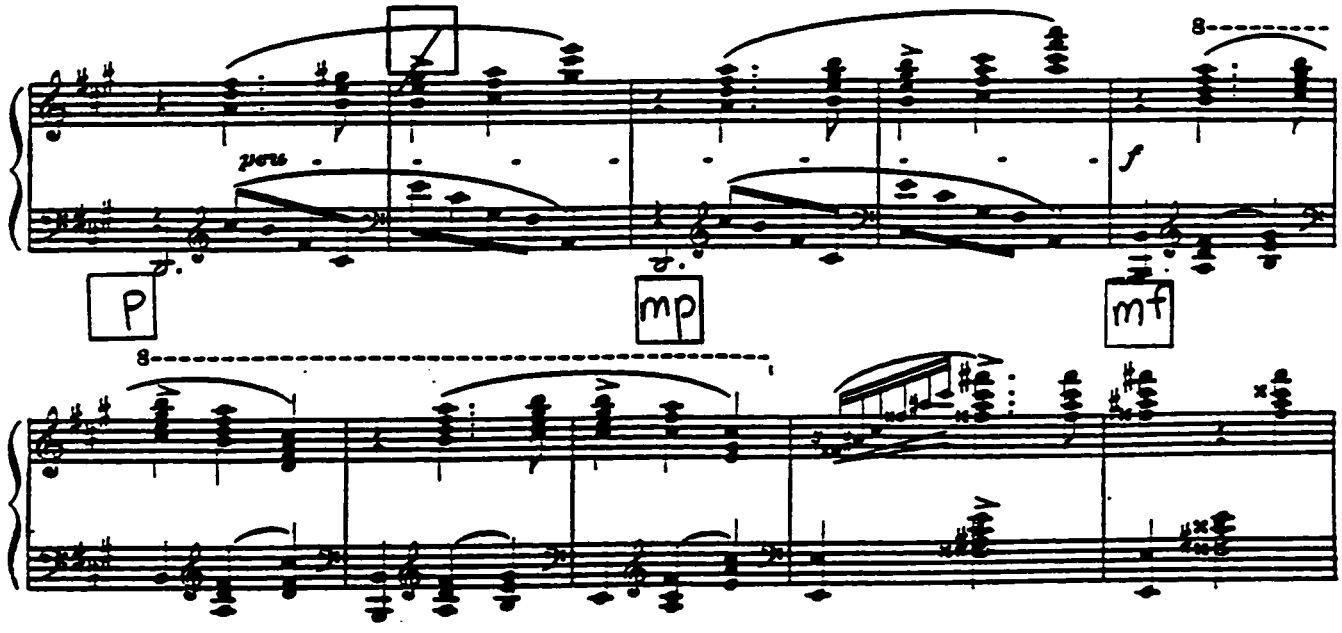
Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-40: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

Similarly, while it may appear on a superficial reading that both artists are following Ravel's *augmentez peu à peu* identically and as written (measures

130 For a more detailed comparative performance analysis of Valses nobles et sentimentales covering tempo, dynamic patterning and the handling of agogics and stress, see appendices 1,2 and 3.

43-51 — see example 70) on closer examination we find each crafting the given structure in a uniquely personal manner. Perlemuter, for example at measure 39-40 (example 72), articulates the chordal melodic motif (tenor voices) with a variety of staccato and legato touches, at measure 47 (alto and soprano voices) he transforms it into an expressive legato, dispensing with Ravel's notated accent (downbeat of measure 48) in favour of a longer, more sustained phrase line. With each increasingly resonant pedal tone, (example 74: measure 47 — low d, measure 49 — low d, measure 51 — b octave) and an unwavering tempo, Perlemuter builds a supporting harmonic underpinning.

Example 74:

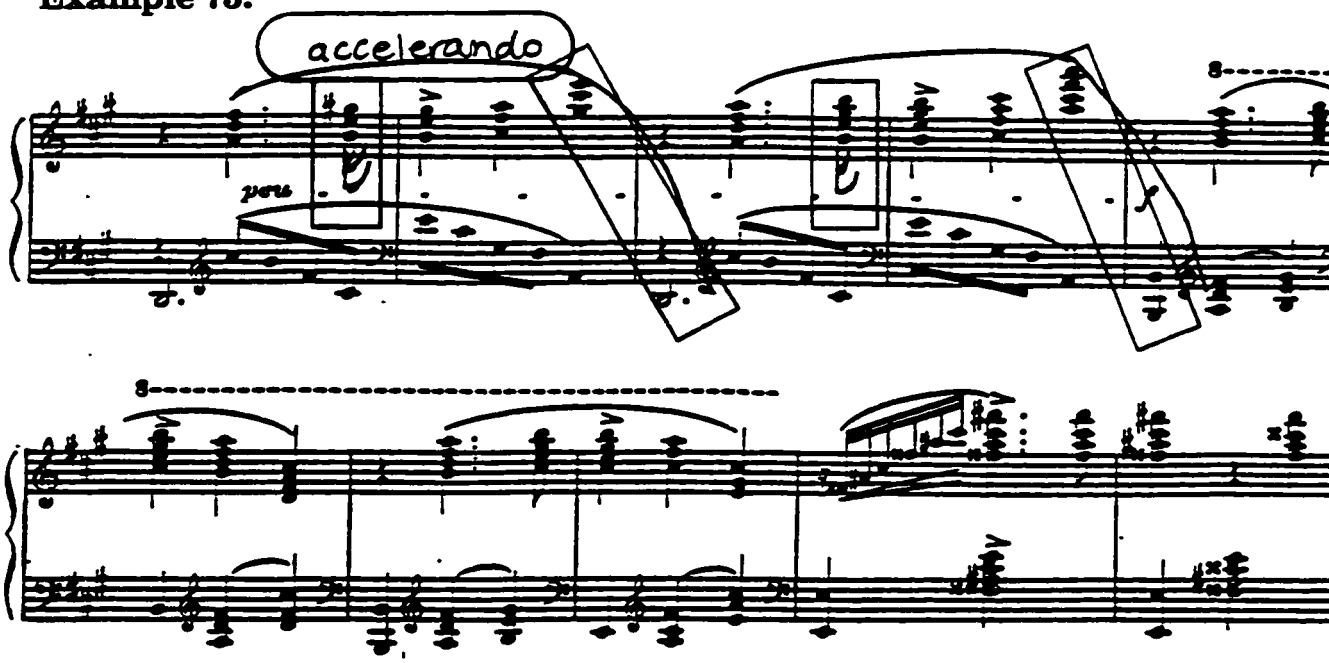


Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 47-51: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

Gieseking on the other hand, (see example 75) begins to accelerate at measure 47, shortening and lightening the eighth note (measure 47, last beat) as it propels the phrase across the bar line. Woven into the pulsating texture,

we hear an impressionistic running counterline (alto eighth notes) and a pedal tone that completes the two measure phrase unit. (By contrast, Perlemuter's pedal tones initiate each phrase group.)

Example 75:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 47-51: Performed by Walter Gieseking.

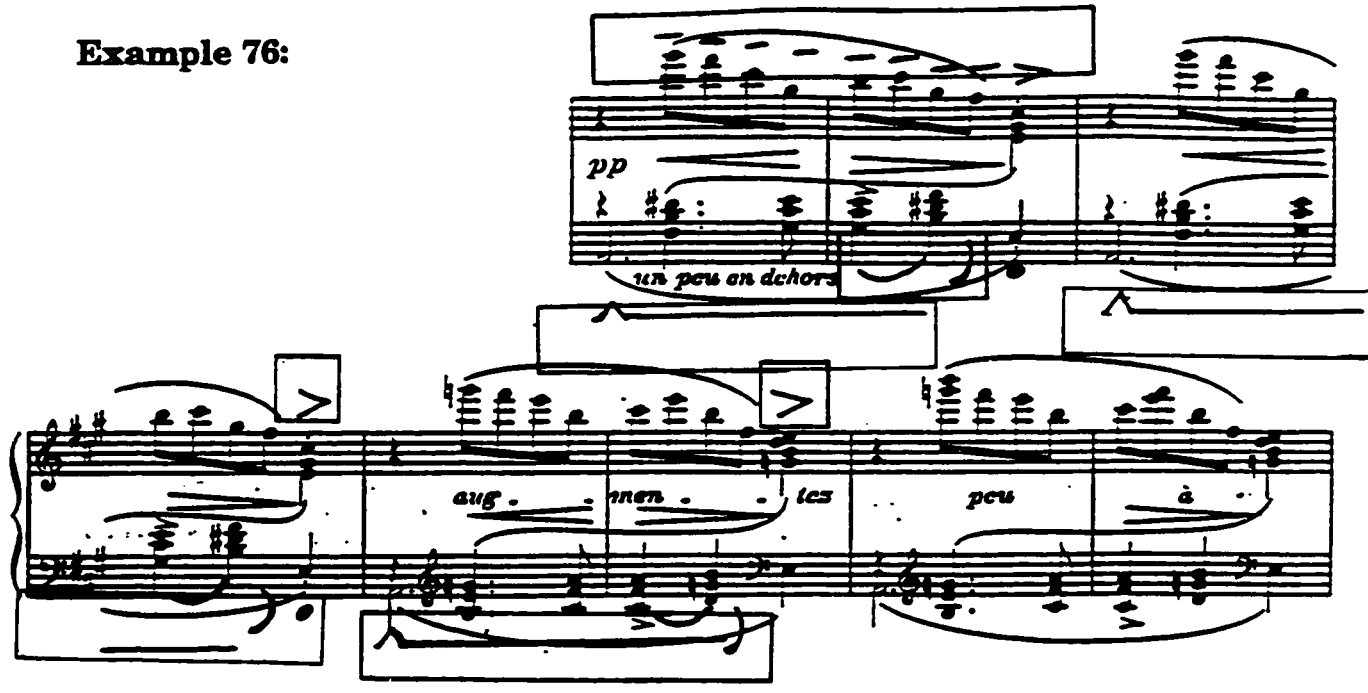
As we have seen in earlier comparative examples, the composer's own performances tend to depart most widely — and significantly — from his notated performance indications than any of the other artists examined. The same remains true in the present example. Here Ravel simply ignores the crescendos and diminuendos (measures 39-40, 41-42, 43-44 — see example 70).

Again, when we compare Ravel's choice of tempo (88 to the dotted half note), considerably faster than Gieseking's (69 to the dotted half note) and more than double that of Perlemuter's (40 to the dotted half note), one must

conclude that the composer's "interpretation" is very much at variance with his notated intentions — indeed, the characteristic Ravelian precision of articulation and dynamic shaping have been sacrificed in favour of a generalized wash of sound.

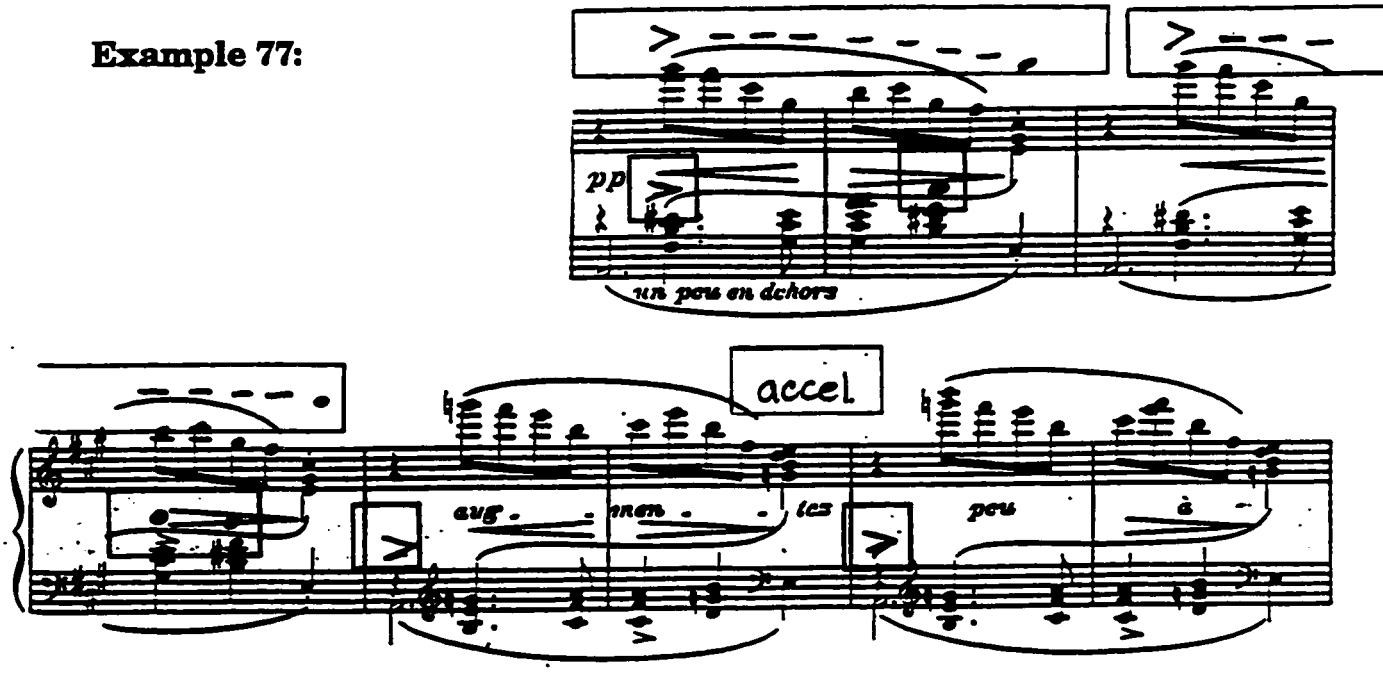
A cursory reading of the Comparative Dynamic Patterning Chart above, (measures 39-45) would suggest that the performances of Casadesus and Rubinstein are identical. However, analysis shows that, like those distinguishing Perlemuter from Gieseking, they differ in substantial ways. To begin with, each articulates the progression of the tenor chordal line in a distinctive manner. Rubinstein, (see example 76) voicing the upper part, slurs together beats one and two of measure 40,42 and 44 while Casadesus, (see example 77) playing the chords without voicing, employs an equally dry staccato touch on beats one, two and three of measure 40 and 42 and slurs together all three beats in measure 44. Rubinstein's pedalling (examaple 76) is similarly consistent over the three phrases, highlighting resonant pedal tones and stressed last beats. Casadesus, (example 77) by contrast, uses no pedal in measures 40 and 42 and a significantly heavier treatment in measures 43-44. Add to this his subito accelerando at the end of measure 44 and the reasons for the unique character of each performance become immediately apparent, far outweighing the more generalized similarities.

Example 76:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-44: Performed by Arthur Rubinstein.

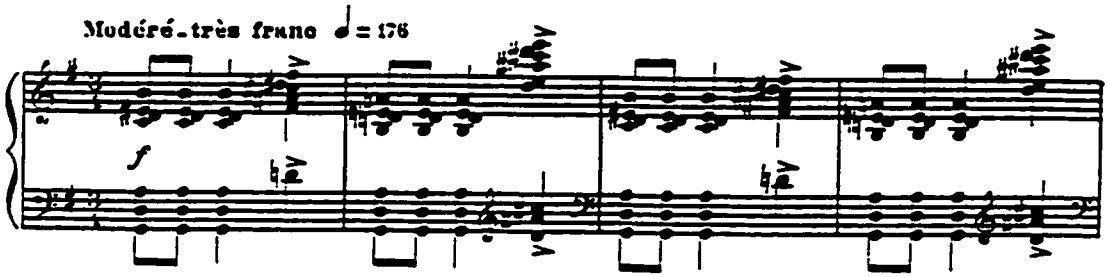
Example 77:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. VII, measures 39-44: Performed by Robert Casadesus.

It is clear, then, that whether or not an artist appears to be adhering to the specific given indications — precise dynamics, crescendi-diminuendi, articulations and stress patternings, (Perlemuter and Gieseking certainly do, Rubinstein, Casadesus and Ravel do not) each stamps his own unmistakeable voice on Ravel's text. Comparative performance analysis shows that "interpretation" of a musical notation is inevitable regardless of the pains the composer may have gone to in order to ensure his intentions are understood. Indeed the performer is *obliged* to ask questions about a composer's performance indications. This remains equally true when the indications are sparse. Take for example the introductory four measures of the first waltz.

Example 78:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I.

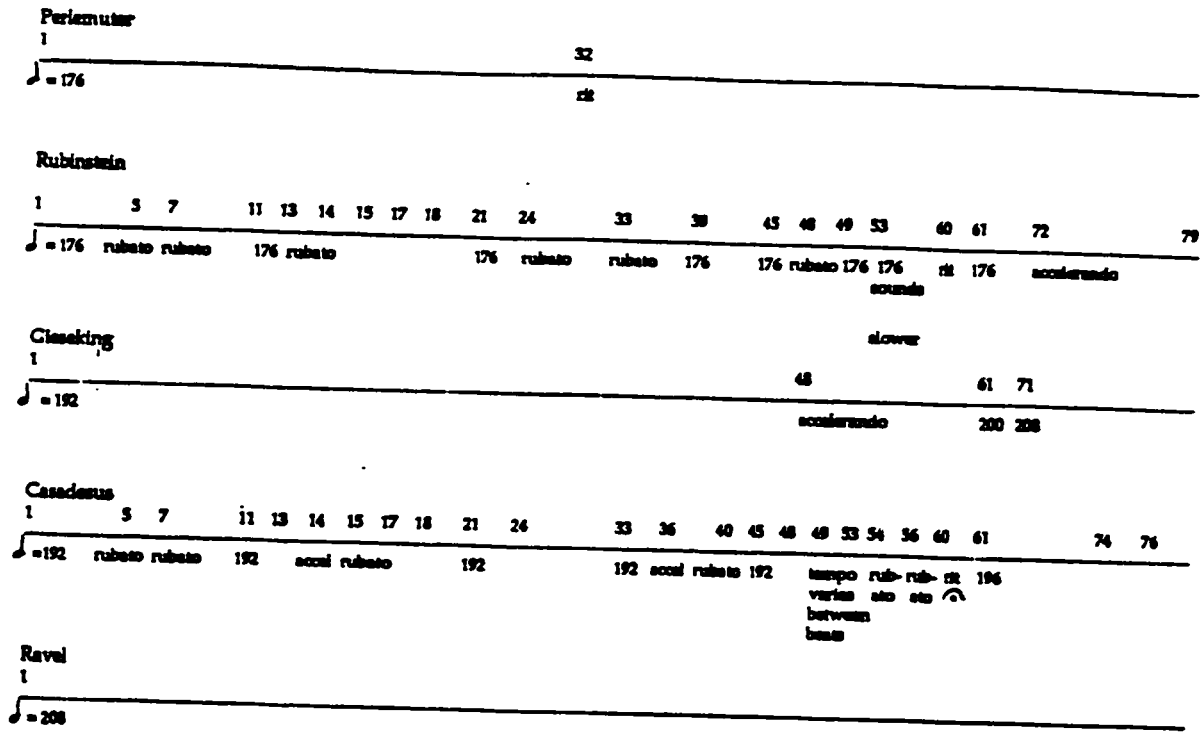
Here Ravel leaves certain crucial decisions up to the pianist — thereby setting up a serious interpretative challenge. On examining the score, we are greeted by an ambiguous visual image beginning with the instruction to play "Très franc" in a generalized *forte*, relieved only by a stress on the third beat of each

measure. The ambiguity is compounded by repeated complex chordal structures (chords of the ninth with augmented sixths, augmented fifths/split roots) — with their Bartokian/Stravinskian harmonic flavour as well as a complete absence of both phrasing and pedalling indications. Taken with "très franc" the number of possible interpretations that come to mind are legion.

Does "très franc" mean that the performer must allow the harsh dissonances to speak for themselves — loudly, brusquely, without voicing or textural balance? Is the highly dissonant third beat to be taken percussively and with equal stress in each measure? Does one leave the pedal out completely and perform each of the four measures with identical colouring and phrase design? It is clear that the pianist is called upon to make major interpretive decisions, that when experienced as an integrated whole, will give the performed piece of music its defining character.

Most significantly, even when there is consensus among artists in their handling of one element of the performing structure (take as examples tempo or pedal patterning or touch quality), the overall effect of a particular performance will still be totally unique. Casadesus and Gieseking for example, share a common tempo (192 to the quarter note) as do Perlemuter and Rubinstein (176 to the quarter note).

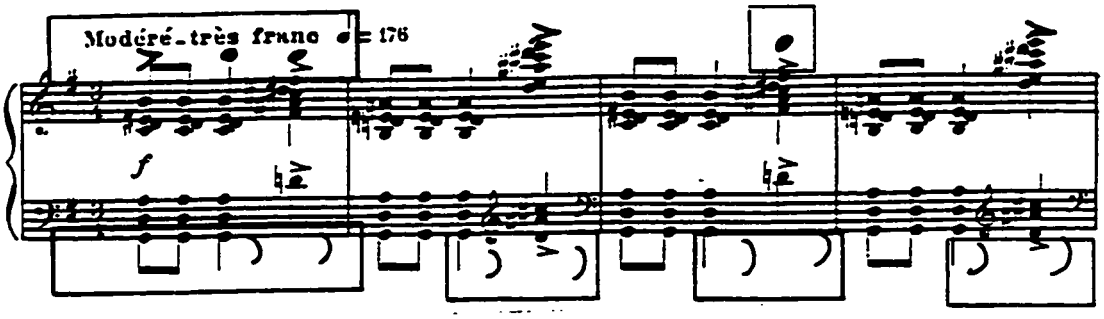
Comparative Tempo Chart



Gieseking and Rubinstein employ dry pedallings and Ravel, Perlemuter and Casadesus all pedal in one measure units. Gieseking and Rubinstein employ an essentially staccato touch, while Perlemuter, Casadesus and Ravel confine themselves to legato. Whatever common factors they may share, it is the indissoluble blending of tone quality, attack, release, voicing, rhythmic pulsing and stress patterning that identifies each performance as a unique experience. Notice how Gieseking (example 79) slightly stresses the downbeats of each measure (1-4), releasing each third beat with a light staccato touch, how Casadesus, (example 80) Rubinstein (example 81) and Perlemuter (example 82) all move towards the second and third beats, albeit with vastly different

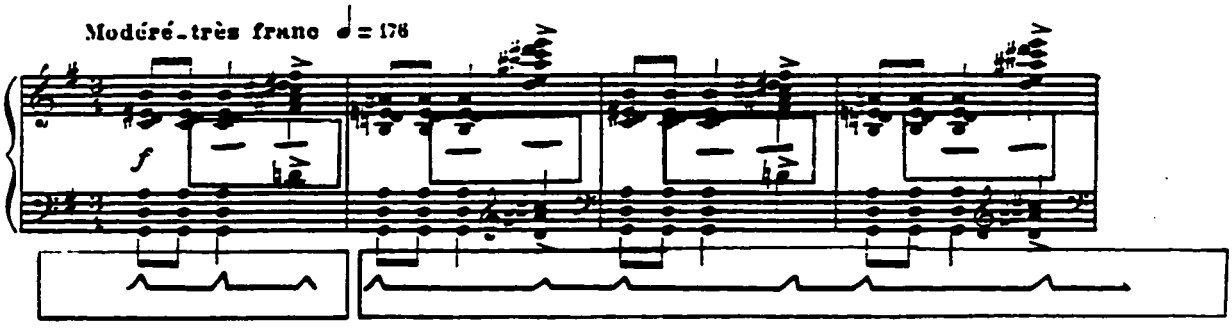
articulations, while Ravel (example 83) emphasizes the last beat of each measure.

Example 79:



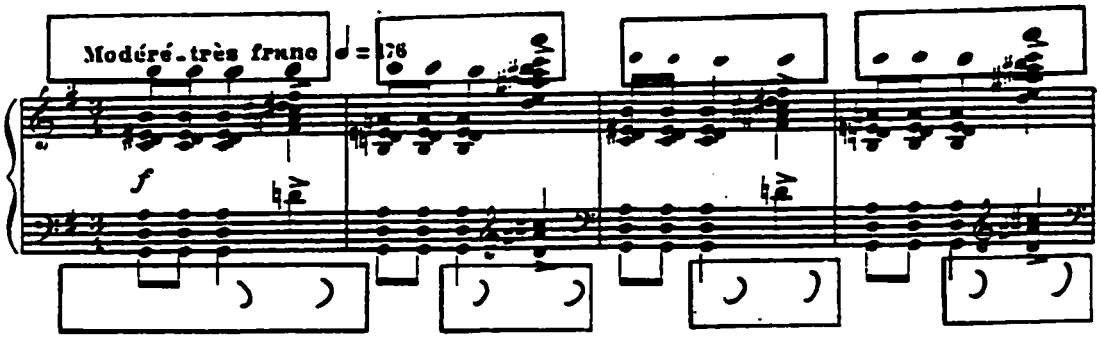
Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I: Performed by Walter Gieseking.

Example 80:



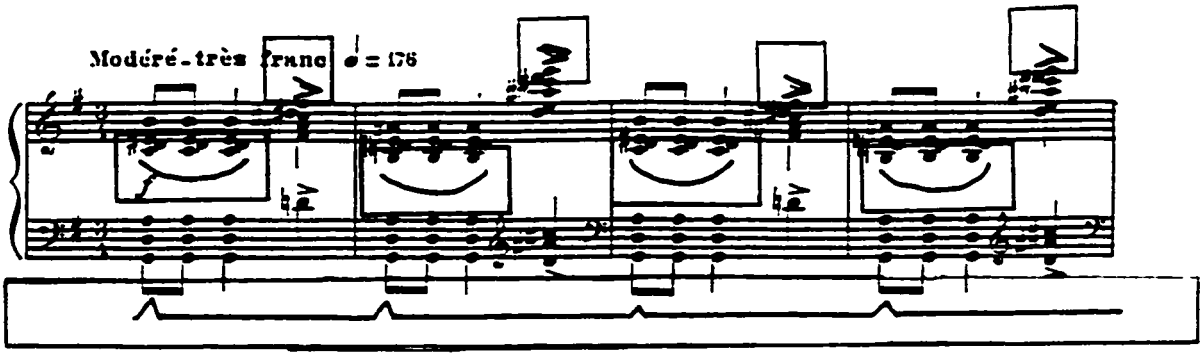
Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I: Performed by Robert Casadesus.

Example 81:



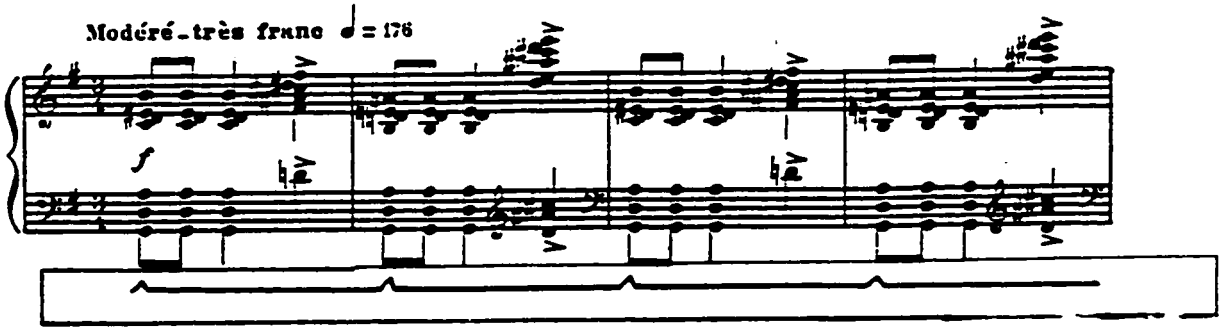
Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I: Performed by Arthur Rubenstein.

Example 82:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I: Performed by Vlado Perlemuter.

Example 83:



Valses nobles et sentimentales, no. I: Performed by Maurice Ravel.

The examples above clearly demonstrate that a musical notation, no matter how detailed, is at best a shorthand for a composer's intentions — i.e., *the intentions held by the composer during the process of composition*[131]. That

131 Peter Kivy takes issue with Monroe Beardsley's conclusion that "intention... does not play any role in decisions about how scores... are to be performed." He argues that, on the contrary, composer's intentions play a substantial role in musical interpretation and that "most performers, as well as musical scholars, do operate on the principle of determining and being governed by the intentions of composers, although they labor under the expected quantity of self-deception about which intentions are the composer's and which are their own." —

the work contains within itself the potential for virtually limitless realizations, including co-creative re-structurings of aspects of the notation that are in diametrical opposition to the composer's original "intentions", are evidenced by these examples not the least that of the composer himself. From this perspective, Ravel's "il suffit de la jouer" might apply more aptly to the restricted number of interpretive options offered by the works of a lesser composer. Indeed when we examine Ravel's "authentic" performance of Valses nobles et sentimentales, we find that he, more than any of the others reviewed here, departs most radically from the notated text. Ravel the composer attempts to communicate — within the limitations of musical notation — the subtlest emotive nuances in the music, yet Ravel the pianist seems to be more concerned with general structural outlines, downplaying to the extreme, those notated aspects capable of effectively bringing his intentions to life. The irony here is inescapable: the greater the composer the less we need concern ourselves about authenticity. By this token, a masterful conception under the hands of master performers will generate a wide spectrum of unique musical experiences that go well beyond the original conception. The degree of variability possible can be gauged from the celebrated performers studied here, who consciously or otherwise seem to be more concerned with taking off from the given structure to communicate, in a very personal way, how the music affects them — *at a particular moment in time* — and how, presumably, they would hope to see it affect others. This brings us full circle to Bruno Walter's

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Peter Kivy, The Fine Art of Repetition, Essays in the Philosophy of Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 95.

observation that "talent and greatness are necessary to understand talent and greatness."

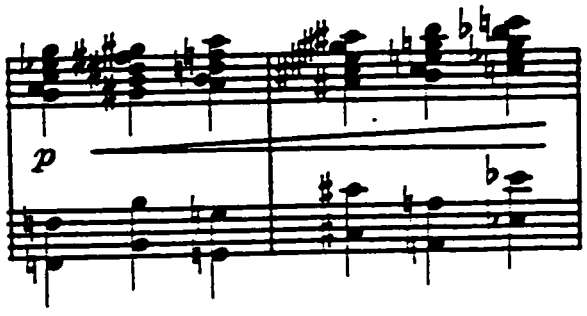
Selected Examples Compared

The tables that follow are designed to highlight the range of variability between performances of a given work. Each example, representing a key musical phrase performed by five artists, is selected from one of the eight movements of Valses nobles et sentimentales. Each serves to illustrate certain features characteristic of a particular artist's performing structure as it relates to that of the composer. Measurable deviations from the score are highlighted through the use of standard notational symbols. Specially coined symbols are employed to identify deviations not apprehensible through the use of standard notation. (see Legend: Symbols Indicating Performer Generated Structuring on page xi). *Qualities* of tone and touch, i.e., the non-reductive *character* of an artist's timing, attack, release, pulse, nuance, etc., are not included. Rather, given the crucial binding role of these elusive qualities of musical "voice", they are discussed throughout the thesis in terms of their aesthetic contribution to the musical experience.

The tables, therefore, illustrate those characteristics of each individual's performing structure that are definable in symbolic terms. More specifically, they focus on tempo, dynamic patterning, agogic modifications and their relationships rather than the larger compositional organization. Similarly, they demonstrate that the greatest variability is in the agogics, rather than in the overall tempo or dynamic patterning. However it is the irreducible quality

of the artist's treatment that infuses these variables with communicable meaning; the agogic detail may be variable, but the identifying "voice" remains constant. Therefore while the selected examples represent performances recorded at a specific time in a specific setting, they nevertheless illustrate the unique creative voice that an artist brings to the music — a voice that distinguishes that artist from all others.

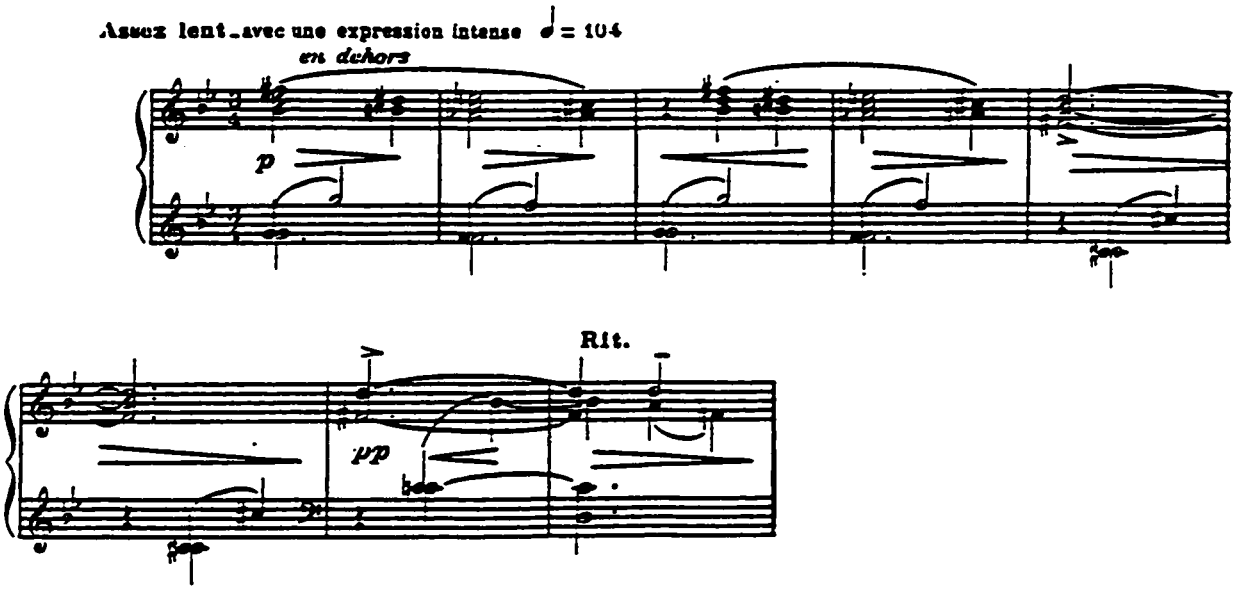
Example 84: Waltz 1 — Measures 49-50



Waltz 1 (measures 49-50)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)					
			Measure 49			Measure 50		
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩ =176	p < f	•	•	•			
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ =176	p < f	— •	— •	— •	— •	— •	— •
Gieseking	3/4 ♩ =192 accel.	p < f	— •	— •	— •	— •	— •	— •
Casadesus	3/4 ♩ =192 accel - rit	mf < f	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ravel	3/4 ♩ =208	mf < f						

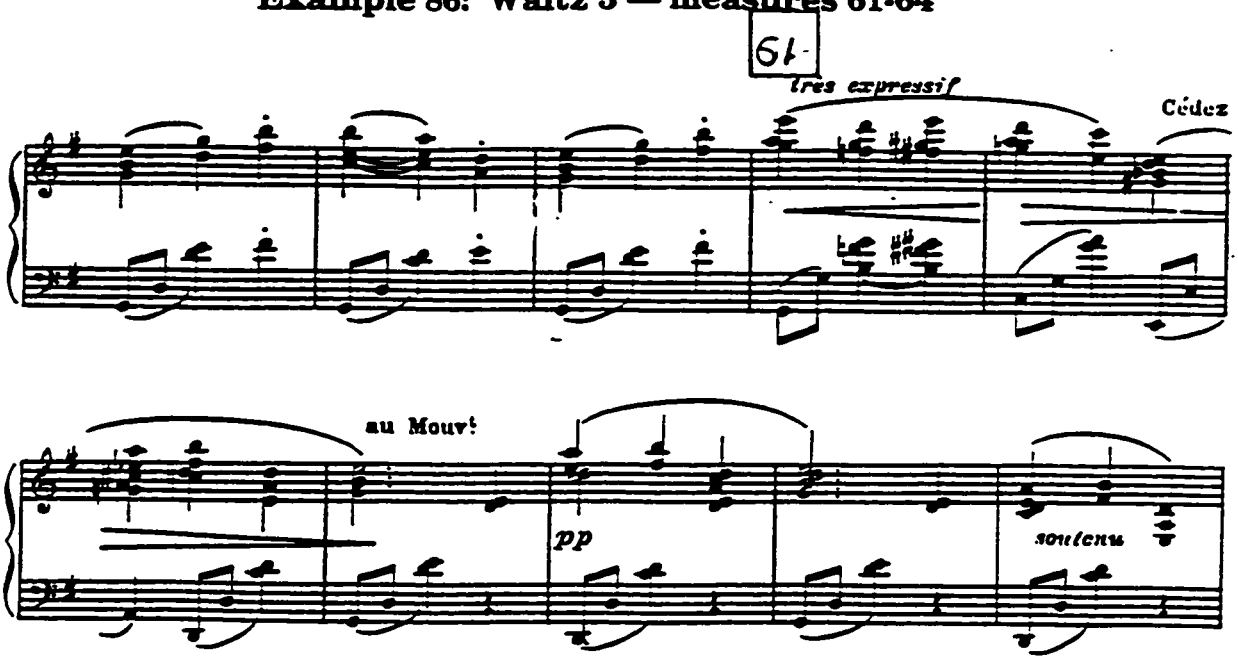
Example 85: Waltz 2 — measures 1-8



Waltz 2 (measures 1-8)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)
			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩ =104	p > > < > > p < >	
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ =108 rubato rit	p > pp < >	
Gieseking	3/4 ♩ =126 rit	p < pp <	
Casadesus	3/4 ♩ =120 rit	p > < > pp >	
Ravel	3/4 ♩ =108	p > < > > pp <	

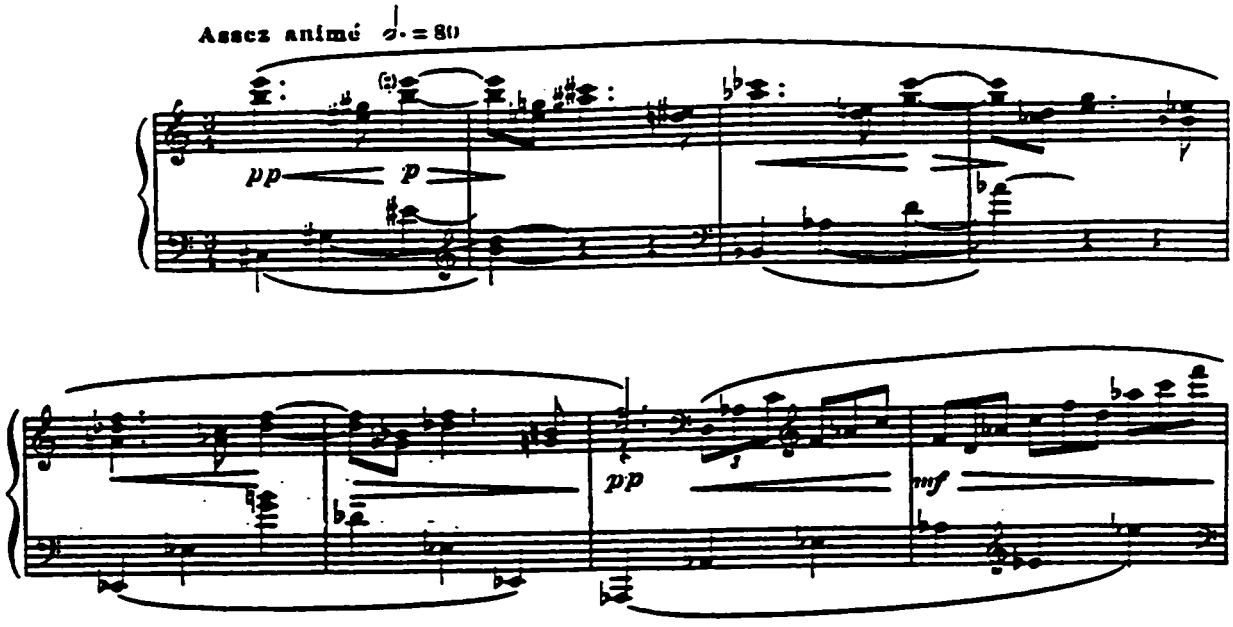
Example 86: Waltz 3 — measures 61-64



Waltz 3 (measures 61-64)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)			
			61	62	63	64
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩ = 138	mp	f			
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ = 96 cedez 120	mp				
Gieseking	3/4 ♩ = 144	p				
Casadesus	3/4 ♩ = 200	mf mp				
Ravel	3/4 ♩ = 200	pp	f			

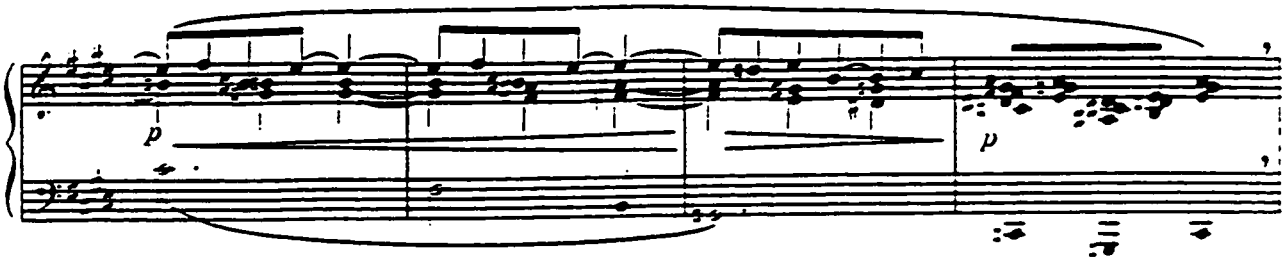
Example 87: Waltz 4 — measures 1-8



Waltz 4 (measures 1-8)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)
			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩. = 80	pp mf	
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩. = 69 rit	p mf pp	
Gieseking	3/4 ♩. = 88	pp pp pp	
Casadesus	3/4 ♩. = 80	pp pp	
Ravel	3/4 ♩. = 92	p mf	

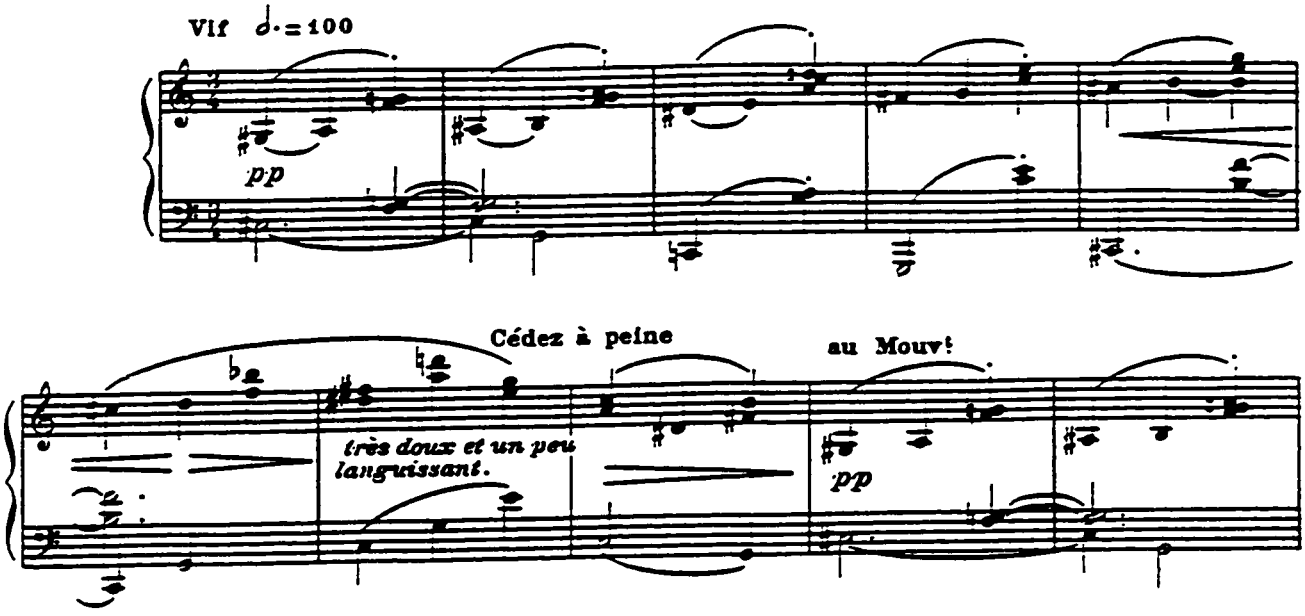
Example 88: Waltz 5 — measures 9-12



Waltz 5 (measures 9 - 12)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)											
			9			10			11			12		
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩ = 92 pulling beat	p < > p		> –	–		–	>		–	>		•	•
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ = 96 accel.	p < > < mp	>							>				
Gieseking	3/4 ♩ = 92 accel. a tempo, rit	p < > p		–	–		>						–	–
Casadesus	3/4 ♩. = 84 rit	p < > p >	–	–	–		–	–		–	–	–	–	
Ravel	3/4 ♩. = 108	p												

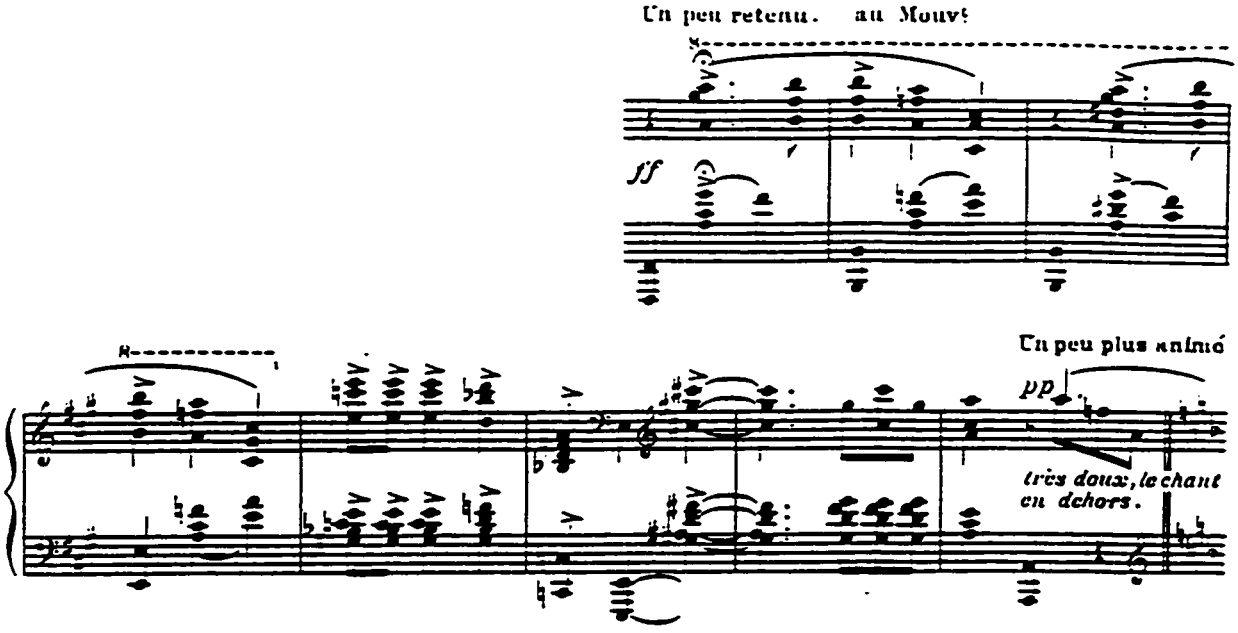
Example 89: Waltz 6 — measures 1-8



Waltz 6 (measures 1-8)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩. = 100 accel cedez	pp < > >	
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩. =92 wide cedez	pp >	
Gieseking	3/4 ♩. =92 cedez	pp < > >	
Casadesus	3/4 ♩. =100 cedez	pp	
Ravel	3/4 ♩. =112	pp < >	accel.

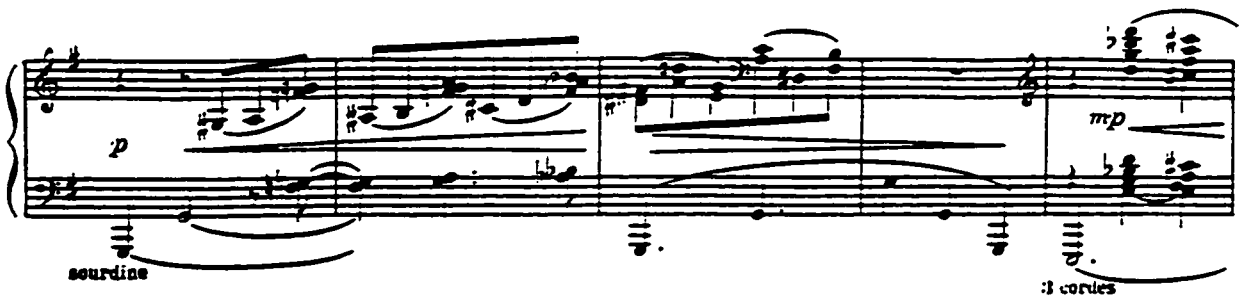
Example 90: Waltz 7 — measures 59-66



Waltz 7 (measures 59 - 66)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)
			59 60 61 62 63 64 65 6
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩=60 ♁.=69	ff f >	
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ =69 ♁.=63	ff	
Gieseking	3/4 ♩=112 ♁.=80	ff	
Casadesus	3/4 ♩=116 ♁.=72	ff	
Ravel	3/4 ♩=104 ♁.=86	ff	

Example 91: Waltz 8 — measures 25-29



Waltz 8 (measures 25 - 29)

Performer	Tempo	Dynamic Patterning	Agogics and Stress (Measures divided by beat)				
			25	26	27	28	29
Perlemuter	3/4 ♩ = 72 rit	P					
Rubinstein	3/4 ♩ = 76	P mp					
Gieseking	3/4 ♩ = 100	P					
Casadesus	3/4 ♩ = 84	P					
Ravel	3/4 ♩ = 72 accel.	P					

CONCLUSION

Intention, Creative Variability and Paradox Revisited

"I write because I don't know what I think until I read what I say"

(Flannery O'Conner)[132]

Intention

In recapitulating the basic argument of this thesis, it would be useful to again examine the implications of Ravel's advice to pianists on the performance of his music. "Je ne souhaite pas que l'on interprète ma musique: il suffit de la jouer." Given the context in which the oft repeated advice was offered, it must be seriously accepted as a statement of the composer's musical credo — as much an admonition on correct procedure as a guide for the perplexed. Simply put, the historical, philosophical, cultural and musical antecedents that Ravel inherited *obliged* him to discourage any attempt to "interprète ma musique". As I noted in the opening chapter, Ravel, like many of his contemporaries, drew intellectual sustenance from the prevailing scientific vision with its implicit promise of a rationally ordered world. A rationally ordered world was a civilized world, and given Ravel's perception of his music as rationally conceived, balanced and capable of speaking for itself, it was sufficient "de la jouer" for it to be understood and appreciated by any civilized being.

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[132] cited in Cytowic, The Man Who Tasted Shapes 213.

It is important to emphasize that Ravel was not alone in his infatuation with the scientific/rational model. Throughout the twentieth century musicians of almost every conceivable ideological persuasion have attempted to define their art in terms of an exercise in higher reasoning. From the methodological constructs of Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Hindemith in the first few decades, to Schillinger's mathematical system of composition and the stochastic experiments of Xenakis, we get an unprecedented effort to explain music as a rationally conceived, precisely defined art[133]. As I noted in the preface, Victor Zuckerkandl, in summing up the conflict between theory and practice that a rationally conceived aesthetic imposes upon music, comments that

> "It is certainly no accident that the highest unfolding of the power of tones in modern instrumental music and the highest unfolding of the power of objectifying words in modern science coincided historically with the sharpest division ever drawn between subjectivity and objectivity."[134]

The thesis has shown how Maurice Ravel, composing, performing, teaching and lecturing in the first flush of this pivotal period in the history of music, exemplifies some of the most puzzling contradictions embedded in the western musical psyche. These contradictions, I have argued, reach well beyond issues of talent, technical skill, the creative process, aesthetic

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[133] The scholastics, blending neo-pythagorean and neo-platonic thinking laid the ground work for western music as an ordered, notated and therefore analyzable art. While the influence of the scholastics has been far reaching, their work represents a collective, largely anonymous effort to provide an appropriate musical vehicle for the church liturgy.

[134] Victor Zuckerkandl, Man the Musician, Sound and Symbol, trans. Norbert Guterman (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973) 75.

orientation, affective communication, historical determination or the temper of the times to core questions about humanity's perception of itself. As Zuckerkandl has noted, it is "no accident" that our century has drawn the "sharpest division between subjectivity and objectivity." In the process it has set up force fields of opposition between our experience of ourselves and the demand to justify and explain our experience in objective terms.

When this mode of thinking is applied to the composition, performance and experience of music, the inevitable question of authority will arise. When Ravel, who, following the growing trend towards specialization, opted for composer *over* performer, the issue of authority became paramount. In accepting the role of composer as ultimate authority, he immediately identified himself with a core group of influential twentieth century masters that includes Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Bartók. No longer was it possible, like Sweelinck or Bach, to justify one's art as service to God, or, like Beethoven and Wagner, to defer to one's gift of genius, or like Debussy, to don the mantle of national icon. The analytical mind set demands that higher cause, like anything else, must first validate itself through the rigours of rational discourse.

Intention and Creative Variability

Rational discourse begins with evidence. In western music, the evidence is documented in a notational system that, over its fifteen hundred years of evolution, has consistently aimed at attaining an increasingly precise means of recording a composer's musical intentions. The faith in the efficacy of the

notational system to accurately preserve "the power of the tones" reached its zenith in the early twentieth century. Ravel's is the last generation of musicians united in the belief that just about everything worth writing, performing and listening to was capable of being notated unambiguously within the existing system. Franseschini, commenting on the phenomenon has this to say:

> "The notion that the musical score represents a `complete' realization of a composer's ideas is a relatively recent one. It is found only in European cultural ideology... It began, roughly, in the Renaissance... and reached its apex in the post-Wagnerian world."[135]

The generations that followed have been considerably less secure in their loyalty to the venerable system. Cage, Xenakis, Crumb, among others, have challenged the "tyranny of the score" by devising alternative constructions — sometimes elaborate and colourful — with varying degrees of success. Maurice Hinson's comment on the complex relationship between pianist and score is instructive:

> "The performance of a musical work places the pianist and the score in successively overlapping and cumulative roles. Progressing from symbol to experience, the score becomes ever more passive as the pianist becomes more active. The score is only an approximation of the composer's intentions."[136]

The contradiction then, between Ravel's "words" about the performance of his music and the "power of (the) tones" themselves begins to make sense when examined in the historical context of "the highest unfolding of the power of

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[135] Berman, Coming to our Senses 410.

[136] Maurice Ravel, preface, Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, by Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., n.d) 3.

tones in modern instrumental music and the highest unfolding of the power of objectifying words in modern science." Simply put, Ravel was caught in a bind. As immediate heir to the Lisztian pianistic canon, he had little choice but to entrust his works to virtuoso technicians, groomed for the most part in the romantic tradition of subjective individualism. Seen from this perspective, was it reasonable to expect super-heroes and borderline charlatans to obey the letter, let alone divine the spirit of his rationally conceived music?[137]

The practical issue then for Ravel, was how to go about exorcising the demon of subjective licence lurking in the shadows of his pianistic heritage. From this perspective he had little choice but to establish the ground rules for a more enlightened relationship between composer and executant. Whether Ravel was successful in exorcising his own romantic demons may be gauged from the curious explanation he offered for bothering to compose Scarbo. Tailor made for the super-hero pianist, Scarbo is generally acknowledged as one of the most demonically challenging and masterfully composed war horses in the repertoire. Ravel has this to say about his masterpiece:

> "J'ai voulu faire une caricature du romantisme..."Je m'y suis peut-être laissé prendre."[138]

The caricature backfires and the composer becomes the butt of his own joke. Here again, his reasoning illustrates the contradictions one encounters whenever one attempts a reality check on Ravel's pronouncements about his

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[137] During Ravel's lifetime, the process of deconstructing the cult of hero worship received its first major boost in the aftermath of the horrors of World War 1.

[138] Perlemuter, Ravel d'après Ravel 38.

music.

All other things equal, is it then *reasonable* for a composer to expect a supremely gifted performing artist to suppress the impulse to shape something unique — an impulse that is as compelling to him or her as it is to the composer? And can one expect such an artist to settle for a literal reading when she or he has taken up the challenge presented by a monumental work like Scarbo? Finally, would the composer be happy with a bloodless, albeit accurate, rendering of his masterpiece?

Whatever route one settles for, one must ultimately deal with the question of control. Control is central to the rational mind set. It asks who will define the nature of the music and who will determine how it should be executed? By selecting prominent artists as his "voice" and by virtue of his "hands on" direction of their recordings, Ravel places the stamp of his authority on the best available performances, thereby ensuring — hopefully — that future generations will correctly perceive his intentions. However friendly his interaction with these artist "students" may have been, his decision to oversee their recordings was a clear signal that he intended his musical will — as composer — not theirs — as executants — to prevail.

While it is a far cry from Ravel's collegial directives to the virtual reality of Glenn Gould's studio manipulations, the line of descent is clear. What could not have been anticipated in the heady days of pioneer experimentation were the consequences of a long term fascination with, and ultimate dependence of composers, as well as performers, upon a dynamic technology. More than any other single factor, engineered recordings have contributed to the obsession

with technical perfection, that, paced by splicing tools, digitalization and a host of forever evolving accessories, has literally brought musicians to a creative crossroads.[139] Most significantly, the *live* performer has become an endangered species. The implications of this last point in any discussion of the preservation of Ravel's legacy will be explored in more detail below.

Creative Variability and Paradox

The comparative performance analyses have shown how Ravel's "performing structures" adapt themselves to the "musical signatures" of master performers in ways that reveal the enormous breadth of possibilities inherent in the composer's musical conception. This seemingly infinite capacity to retain a multiplicity of meanings, as we have noted throughout, contributes to the longevity of the music — its capacity to incorporate change without altering the essential integrity of its spirit. Rather than accept infinite potential as an invitation to anarchy, the major artists reviewed in this thesis have, *through the exercise of creative variability*, consistently confirmed the resilience of Ravel's compositional/performing structure. By the same token, it is precisely this ability to creatively vary a given text that defines the primary measure of the performer as artist. With rare exceptions, individual differences in tempo, tone control, colour, degree and character of legato, singing line, attack, phrase shaping, punctuation and articulation defined the composer's structural imperatives with a precision impossible to achieve

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139 I include here composers past and present.

through a literal reading. Even when Ravel's student Casadesus occasionally plays his teacher's music with a "foreign accent" i.e., when he momentarily lapses into an unsympathetic quality of tone or pedestrian phrasing — the music still manages to hold up.

Perhaps the most telling indication of the capacity of Ravel's music to sustain creative variability can be found in the *absence* of specific notated cues. On the issue of pedalling, for example, the comparative analyses have shown how each pianist, through his or her *original* and highly sophisticated use of the pedals, brought a unique vision to the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic relationships imbedded in Ravel's conceptional framework. Pedalling was never arbitrary and rarely drew attention to itself — in effect, was a creatively inspired insight into the *latent* content of the musical structure.

When, on the other hand, we turn to Ravel's recorded performances — presumably his personal legacy to posterity — and compare them with his interpreters', the contrast is striking. Most intriguing is the composer's apparent indifference to his own explicit, highly detailed, masterfully crafted expressive indications. All the romantic crimes of textual distortion are there for posterity to mull over: chords are broken, tempos are altered, rhythms are arbitrary, dynamics and articulations are exaggerated, reversed or simply ignored, pedalling is erratic, etc. And yet the playing is always musical, and often impressive. Taken with "il suffit de la jouer", it not only reinforces the paradox but exposes the shaky ground upon which Ravel's polemical efforts to objectify the creative process rest.

Maurice Ravel, then, *hears* his piano music from three different

perspectives: composer/teacher, pianist and polemicist. The implications of this three way split are instructive. Here we have a great musician, gifted with an aural imagination so acute that it is capable of guiding his composing hands through an astonishing range of human emotions. Yet when the same hands attempt to bring the music alive at the piano they seem oblivious to its exquisitely wrought emotive content. This is so uncharacteristic of his otherwise impeccable persona that it seems irrelevant whether Ravel freezes, or is out of practice, or gets a sudden inspiration, or is not really a pianist, or simply doesn't care. One way or another, *Ravel's hands and ears do not respond to what he has written*. More precisely, they seem to have blocked out the creative memory of those lasting qualities that distinguish his music from that of all other composers. The point here is that the same individual who has otherwise gone to great pains to ensure that posterity receives the clearest possible message about his musical intentions, and who has demonstrated his ability to communicate *other people's* intentions accurately at the keyboard, seems unable to do so for his own music. It is for this reason that once the polemicist enters into the paradigm the plot becomes thick with rationalizations at odds with both the compositional and performing experience.[140] As I noted in an earlier reference, Nietzsche, touches on

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140 In his discussion of Ravel's aphasia (the neurological disease that at the age of fifty eight, tragically left the composer unable to perform or write the music that he composed in his head) Dr. Richard Cytowic draws upon recent split brain research. The results of splitting the brain reveal "a wonderful paradox" — one which sheds some light on the creative duality we find within Ravel. They demonstrate that the " 'person' who speaks is not the person who perceives or solves problems." It also shows that "language is only *one* ability. Not everything we are capable of knowing and doing is accessible to or expressible in language. *This means that some of our*

precisely this point in his comment on the ego's need to justify itself by suppressing the "great intelligence" of the body, "which does not say `I' but performs `I'"[141].

This thesis has shown how the striking incongruity that separates Ravel's playing from his writing and his stated intentions reflects the paradoxical temper of his times. In particular, it reveals aspects of the creative duality between that part of him that "says I" and that part that "performs I" which cannot easily be dismissed in terms of the authority of composer over performer. Whatever the psychological mechanisms underlying the creative schismogenesis (to borrow science historian Morris Berman's term) within Ravel, it must be subsumed by considerations emerging from the split in the bigger picture. This split, as Zuckerkandl has shown, is most strongly evident in twentieth century instrumental music. It is here where Ravel, committed on the one hand to the compositional and aesthetic imperatives of mainstream western instrumental music, and on the other to the general acceptance and apparent triumph of the rational world view, contains within himself a profound microcosm of the consequent challenge to the human spirit. An examination of Ravel's place in the music of our time, his reflections upon his music, and the ironic consequences of his attempts to guarantee its permanence chronicles the creative dilemma of the twentieth

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personal knowledge is off limits even to our own inner thoughts! Perhaps this is why humans are so often at odds with themselves, because there is more going on in our minds than we can ever consciously know." — Cytowic, 17.

141 Chapter six — on the disparity between Casadesus' intended and performed pedalling in the Menuet from the Sonatine.

century.

The unarguable fact is, that for over eighty years the living and recorded performances of Ravel's music have defied the vagaries of time and taste. They point up how a profoundly original voice rooted in the shared, perhaps biological, values of music as song, dance, breathing and the magical qualities of tone will continue to speak to all ages and cultures. Ravel's particular signature manifests itself in a unique integration of these values with traditional western tonality, melody, rhythm and emotive tone. So musically convincing is this integration that even period conventions emerge as high art. While this ability is not, strictly speaking, a prophetic vision of the music of the future, its power to keep enthralling musicians and audiences alike confirms those eternal values that replenish the human spirit.

The thesis suggests that it is through its ability to sustain a broad range of successive interpretations — no matter how definitive its original version may appear — that a creative work attains a measure of permanence — and perhaps the status of icon. Such are the many faces of the Mona Lisa, the seemingly inexhaustible re-incarnations of Hamlet and the universal attraction of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In music the responsibility for interpretation — and re-interpretation — rests in the hands of a succession of performing artists. The thesis has shown how a performing artist's genius is revealed in the qualities he/she expresses that are not immediately apparent from a reading of the text. Most striking is the fact that dimensions of the work are brought to life that might be as surprising to the composer as they are a revelation to the listener. Again — keeping the presumptuous nature of

yardsticks of greatness in mind — this ability to survive and be revitalized by a multiplicity of interpretations is a measure of the fertility of a body of work — and by extension a *compliment to the composer's vision*[142].

Coda: The Rationalized Performer

Ravel saw recording technology as the ideal vehicle for the faithful documentation of his musical intentions, and by inference, his rationally conceived aesthetic. What he could not have anticipated were the ironic consequences of a technological development that gave both him and his master interpreters precisely the immortality they desired. For Ravel, the confirmation of his stature as a composer came, not so much from unyielding fidelity to his text-bound stance, but from a seemingly infinite variety of highly creative individual visions. In this regard, technology, rather than acting as a restraint on creative initiative has freed the performer to stamp his or her particular signature on a given musical text. The paradox, then, is that the composer's music — if not his intentions — is immortalized in a multiplicity of guises while the live solo/hero performer gives way to the co-creating team

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142 That original minds tend to be wary about entrusting the fate of their works to interpreters of imagination is understandable. Sigmund Freud, for example gathered disciples of genius around him, presented each with a sacred ring and swore them to allegiance. Those who subsequently strayed from the party line were condemned by the master as traitors. Yet, in an ultimate tribute to the master's supreme genius, every one of the outcasts remained loyal to the analytical model. Freud's inability to accept a fresh perspective as a *compliment* rather than a *betrayal* may be a comment on the frailty of the human ego. At a more profound level, it may also be telling us something about the inability of even the most penetrating of human intellects to divine the depth and richness of potential in their own profoundly conceived works.

player.

On this last point, the fate of the live performer raises issues that are of momentous consequence, not only to Ravel interpretation, but to the entire question of musical communication. As I have intimated throughout, the recordings studied in this thesis not only document the existence of a co-creative relationship between composer and performers, but convincingly belie what Beardsly and Wimsatt term the "intentional fallacy."[143] This remains true despite the profound alteration in the traditional role of the performer. It follows that technology has spawned a new breed of co-creator, a craftsperson devoted to shaping every sound to a level of perfection inconceivable in the risky "real time" environment of the concert stage. In consultation with his/her "team" (engineer, director, producer), the new virtuoso distills everything impulsive out of the finished "product" that might detract from the "concept." The artist's signature is unsmudged by wrong notes, or anomalies of rhythm, phrase, articulation, balance, etc.

In this sense, technology has clearly substituted the inspired spontaneity of the romantic virtuoso with the calculated vision of the cool, deliberate craftsperson. By the latter half of the twentieth century, every "interpreter" with access to the requisite tools had the option of stamping his or her engineered "concept" indelibly on the music. Whether the end "product" is seen as the "definitive" interpretation, a joint composition, a radically new vision or a misguided departure, it nevertheless is an explicit statement of a

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143 W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," Sewanee Review (1946) 468-88.

team effort — in effect of consensus authority. Viewed in the context of a composer of Ravel's stature embracing technology for the purpose of ensuring his *particular artistic legacy*, the irony here is of momentous consequence. What he could not have anticipated was that by eliminating all that might be deemed arbitrary, the technologically armed team not only challenges the idea of the muse driven virtuoso but the nature of the musical experience itself.

There can be no question that technological manipulation has liberated Ravel's music from the threat of impulsive trivialization at the hands of ego driven finger freaks. There can also be no question that technological manipulation provides the listener with a cleaner product, freed from extraneous environmental or human intrusion — potentially a representation of the literal text with a fidelity hitherto unavailable. The consequence for all participants in the musical experience has been an unprecedented expectation of sanitized perfection — in effect, virtual performances that are note perfect and noise free. Carried to its logical conclusion the triumph of the rationally ordered process over inspired communication becomes a parody of Ravel's quest for aesthetic fidelity.

The advent of recordings has, therefore, not only changed the nature of musical performance, but has succeeded in altering our collective musical experience. This is a monumental departure from the historical experience of music which in every culture has functioned essentially as a directly shared, collective and unifying phenomenon — listening together for the pure shared joy of an experience, so remarkably complete and adaptable, that extraneous noise and occasional mistakes are embraced as *humanly* essential to the

ambience. It is precisely this experience which virtual performance has put on the endangered list[144]. This remains true despite the argument that the measure of the durability of a piece of music is its ability to maintain its musical credibility independent of the altered role — or even existence — of the active performer.

The contradictions within Ravel as man and musician reflect the larger paradox of the musical experience. As Levi Strauss has pointed out the transformative power of music begins with its "contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable" — the "supreme mystery of the science of man."[145] The elusive nature of the mystery gives it the power to be all things to all people, while remaining true to is own raison d'être. Every composer, every performer, every audience, every culture and every historical period binds to music and is bound by its regenerative powers, its capacity to dissolve the indissoluble, to blend and unite, to refresh and harmonize the spirit, to offer solace from the "dreariness of every day life" — even if only for a brief

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[144] Technology has not only given us the option of dispensing with the audience experience but of eliminating the performer entirely. While it is an open question whether a computer program capable of simulating a Vladimir Horowitz or a Martha Argerich is possible, there can be little doubt that people working on it are getting very close. Together these options offer the most serious challenge to music's historic function as a communal, unifying peak experience, unique and memorable when under the spell of an outstanding artist. The consequences of levelling this experience for both performer and listener have yet to be considered.

[145] Op.cit. Claude Lévi-Strauss.

moment in time[146]. The performing artists studied in this thesis have shown that no matter how grandiose or rationally conceived one's theory may be, or how authoritatively it is argued, the inevitable symbiosis between a master performer and a master composer will remain.

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[146] "One of the strongest motives that lead men to art and science is escape from everyday life with its powerful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's own ever-shifting desires. A finely tempered nature longs to escape from personal life into the world of objective perception and thought." (Albert Einstein)

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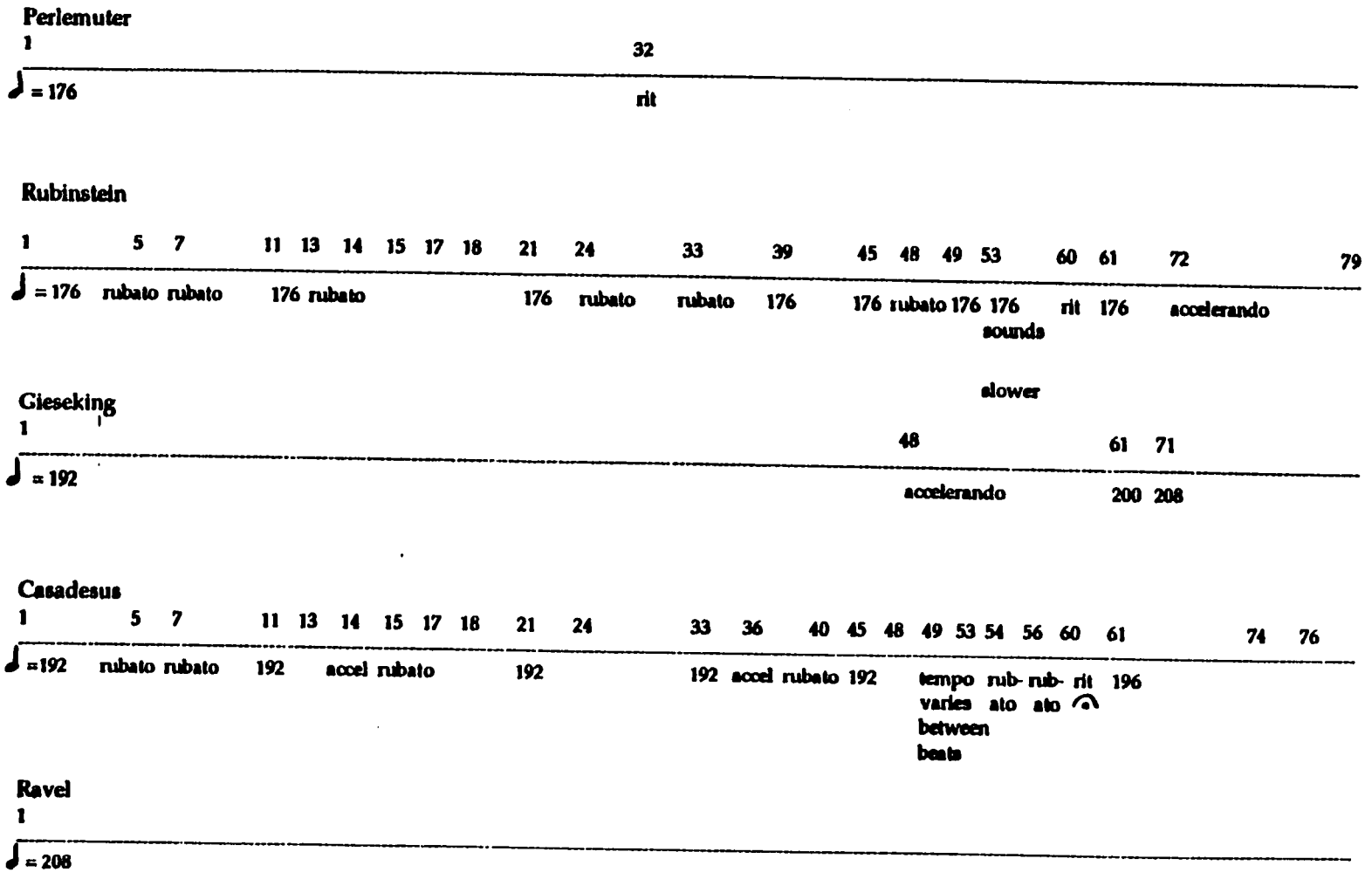
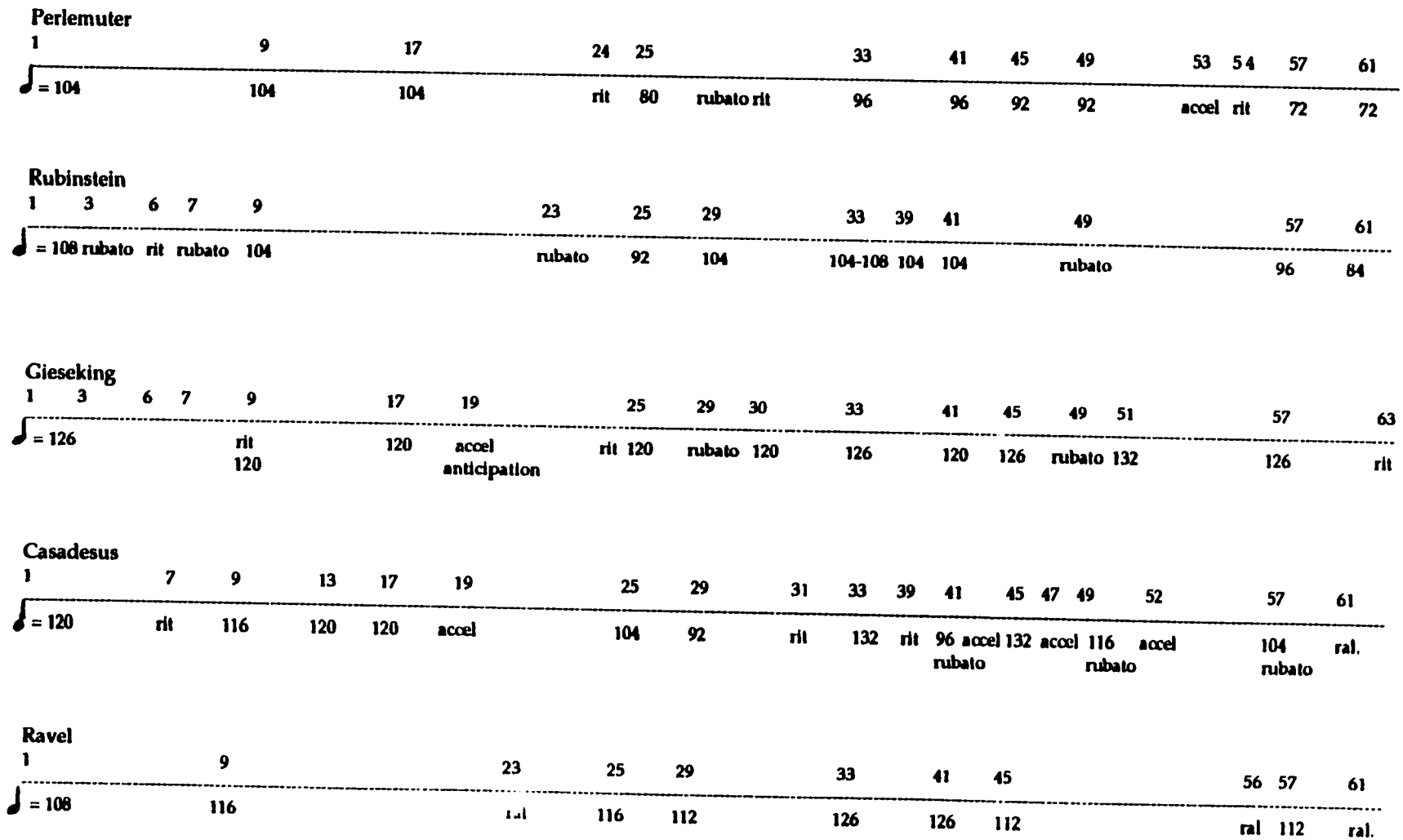
APPENDIX 1

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 1
Valses nobles et sentimentales



Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 2
Valses nobles et sentimentales



Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 3
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

1	17	25	33	39	41	47	48	57	65	71
♩ = 138	152	144	144	slight cedez	144	cedez	144	138	138	retenu

Rubinstein

1	7	8	17	33	39	41	47	48	57	61	62	65	69	71
♩ = 152	rit	rit	rit 168	rit 168	cedez	168	cedez	168	rit 144	94	cedez	144	rit	retenu

Giesecking

1	17	33	41	55	57	61	65	71
♩ = 168	rit 168	168	cedez 176	rit	168	144 ----------	138 ----------	rit

Casadesus

1	41	46	47	57	62	71
♩ = 200	no cedez	cedez	200	200	no cedez	slight rit

Ravel

1	34	41	57	58	62	67	71
♩ = 200	cedez tres peu	200	dwelling	200	cedez	168	retenu

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 4
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

1	30
♩. = 80	rit

Rubinstein

1	6	9	20	21	24	25	36	37	45
♩. = 69	rit	tempo	rit	tempo	rit	tempo	cedez	69	big rit second time

Gieseking

1
♩. = 88

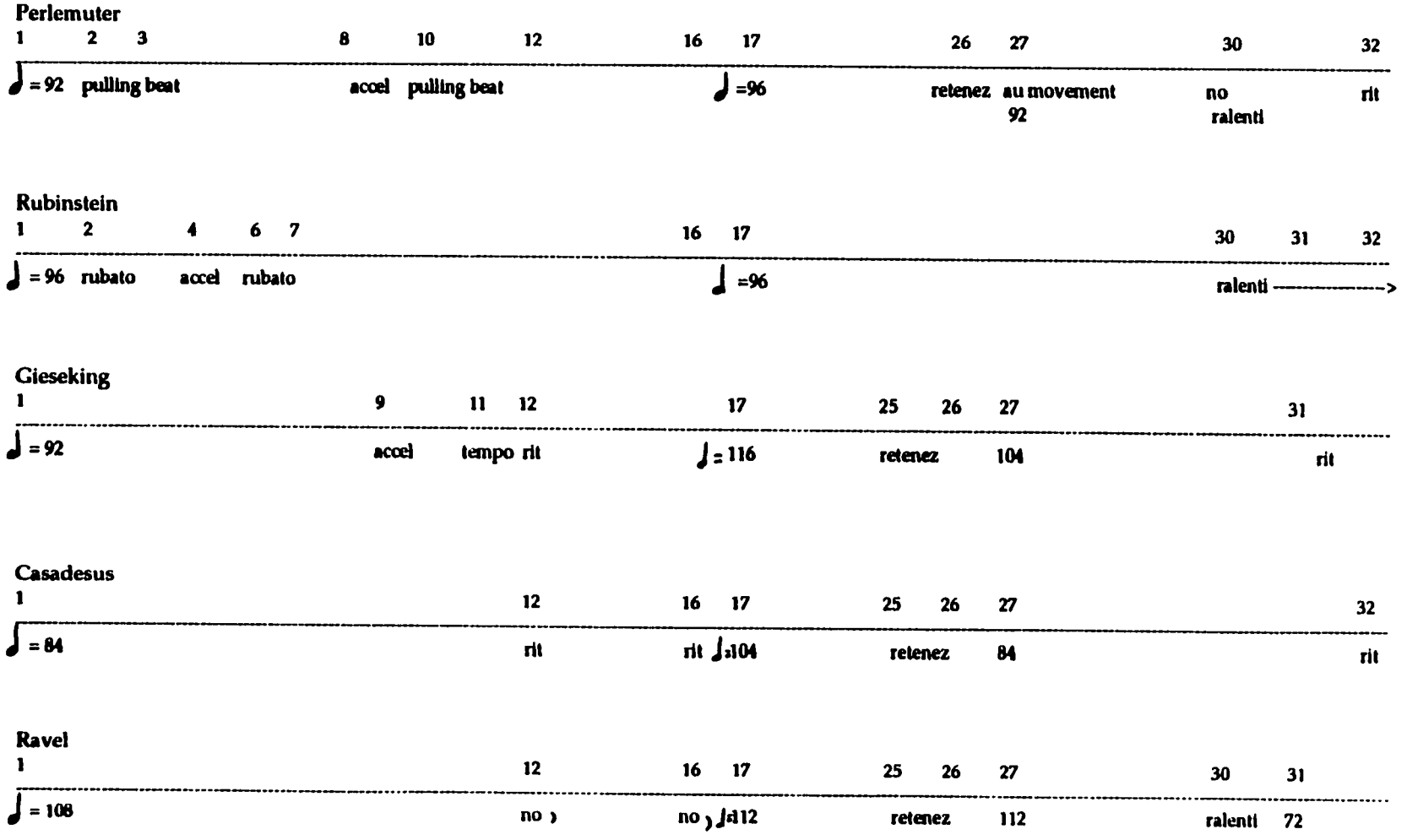
Casadesus

1
♩. = 80

Ravel

1	36	37
♩. = 92	cedez à peine	92

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 5
Valses nobles et sentimentales



Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 6
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

1	6	7	9	21	23	27	29	44	45	52	53	59
♩. = 100	accel	cedez a peine	tempo	rubato	tempo	rubato	tempo <>	ral.	100	cedez a peine	tempo	rit

Rubinstein

1	7	9	39	42	52	53
♩. = 92	cedez a peine	tempo	accel	ral.	cedez a peine	tempo

Gieseking

1	7	9	31	33	35	39	42	44	45	52	53	59
♩. = 92	cedez a peine	tempo	accel	tempo	accel	ral.....			.....tempo	cedez a peine	tempo	rit

Casadesus

1	7	9	42	45	51	52	53	59
♩. = 100	cedez a peine	tempo	ral.	tempo		cedez a peine	tempo	rit

Ravel

1	25	29	42	45	53	59
♩. = 112	accel	120	ral.	112	112	no rit

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 7
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

1	5	9	19	24	31	39	54	59	60	67
♩. = 100	84	40	69	accel compound rubato	69	72	rit	𝅗𝅥=60	♩.=69	88

Rubinstein

1	5	9	19	22	37	39	51	59	60	67
♩. = 56	56	rubato	𝅗𝅥=60	60	rit	76	63	♩ =69	♩.=63	76

Gieseking

1	5	9	19	24	39	47	51	59	60	67
♩. = 54	54	54	56	rubato	69	84	76	♩ =112	♩.=80	63

Casadesus

1	5	9	19	39	51	54	59	60	67
♩. = 69	60	54	63	76	broader	rall	un peu retenu	♩.= 69	88

Ravel

1	6	9	19	39	59	60	67
♩. = 84	69	60	76	88	un peu retenu	88	88

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 7 (continued)
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

111	121	131	147	151	152
♩. = 69	rit	72	𝄐 𝄐	♩ = 60	♩. = 72

Rubinstein

78	79	90	111	121	129	131	143	151	152
rit	66	80 rit	♩. = 69	rit	rit	76	63	♩ = 63	♩. = 63 rit 56

Gieseking

90	96	109	111	116	123	129	131	139	143	151	152
72	accel	84 rit	♩. = 63	rubato	63	rit	72	88	76	♩ = 116	♩. = 76

Casadesus

111	131	135	146	152
63	72	accel	broaden	un peu retenu 72

Ravel

111	127	151	152
76	96		un peu retenu 76

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 8
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

1	8	18	19	20	21	28	29	33	36	37
♩ = 72	rit	accel	rit	rit	72	rit	69	80	accel	88

Rubinstein

1	3	4	5	8	9	11	12	13	19	21	25	29	33	36	37
♩ = 72	rubato		80	rit	72	accel	rit	63	rit	72	76	66	66	pulling beat	

Gieseking

1	2	3	5	8	9	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	25	29	31	33	35	37
♩ = 76	hurry		88	slight rit	88	96	hurry		agitato		pulling beat		rit	76 hurry	80	100	76 hurry	92	84 hurry	100	84

Casadesus

1	5	9	20	21	25	29	33	37
♩ = 84	88	slight delay bass	slight rit	84	slight delay bass	80	slight delay bass	72

Ravel

1	5	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	16	18	19	20	21	29	37
♩ = 76	accel	rit	88	rit	88	rit	88	rit	76	rit	72 rit	72	72	80	63

Appendix I: Comparative Tempo Chart 8 (continued)
Valses nobles et sentimentales

Perlemuter

39	41			46	48	49	50			54	55	56	57	58	59		61	62			65	66	67	68			71	72	73
rit	72			66	accel	rit	76			cedez	54	no rit	54	slight accel	rit 66		rit	60			cedez		56	54			rit	50	44

Rubinstein

40	41			46			50	51	52	54	55	56	57	59		60		62			65	66	67			71	72	73
rit	58			66			63	60	50	no cedez		56	rit	♪ = circa 63		♩ = 52		60			cedez	52	52			rit	♩ = 27 ♪ = 52	

Gieseking

39	41	42	43		46			50			54	55	56	57	58	59		61	62	63	64	65	66	67		69	70	71	72	73
66	54 dwell bass	66	66		76			58			no cedez	72	no rit	58 accel	rit	accel	rit 66	rit	63	hurry		76	76 cedez	66		rit	56	54	42

Casadesus

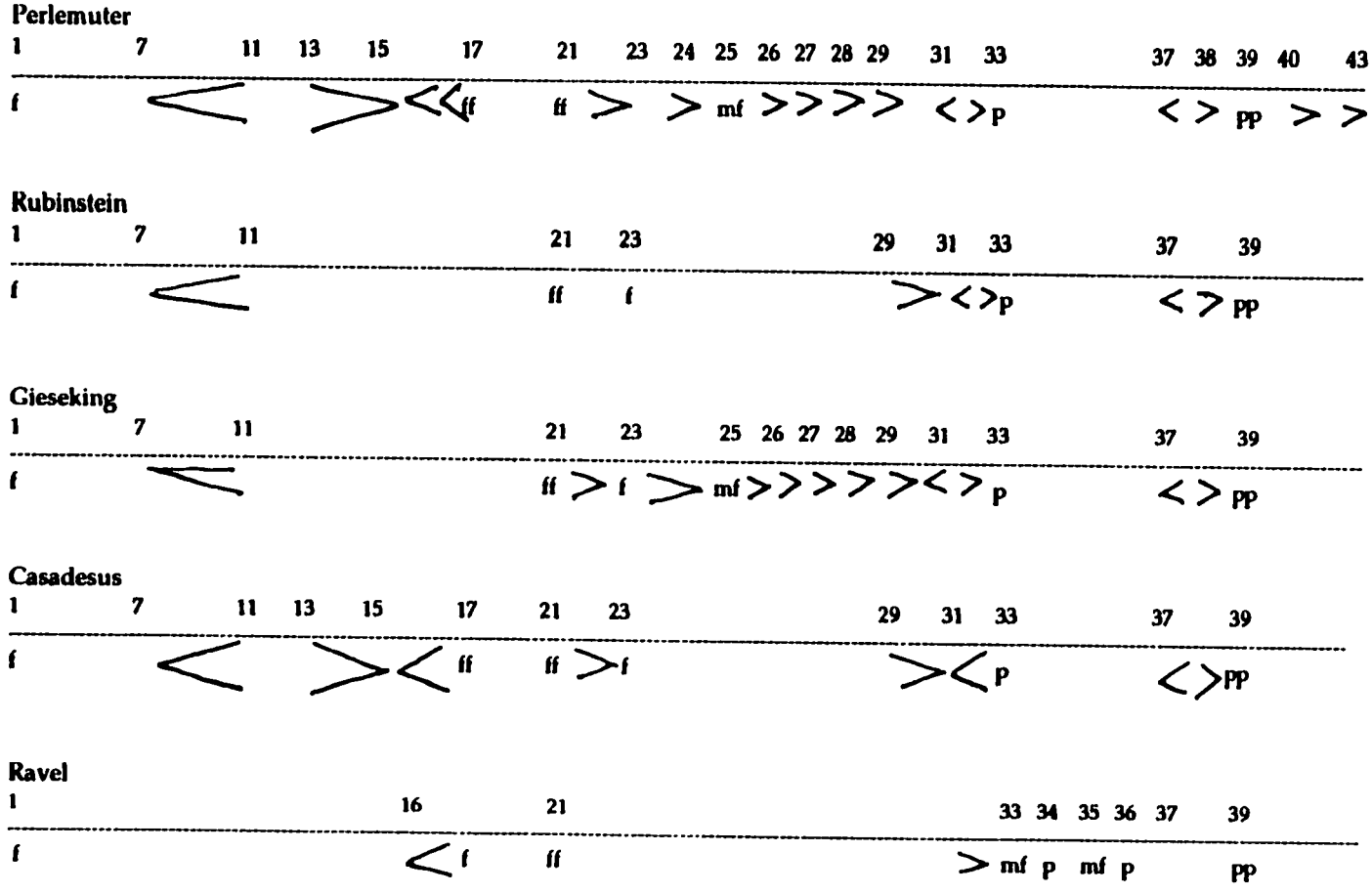
40	41			45	46				52	54	55	56	57	58	59	60		62		64	65	66	67			71	72	73
rit	66			slight hesitation	66				rit 66	cedez	66	no rit	54	no cedez	cedez	60 54		66		72	no cedez	72	60			rit	54	42

Ravel

40	41		44		46			50	51	52	54	55	56	57		59		62		64			67			72		
rit	84		69		66			72	88	66	cedez	66	rit	60		88		66		63			54			52	same	

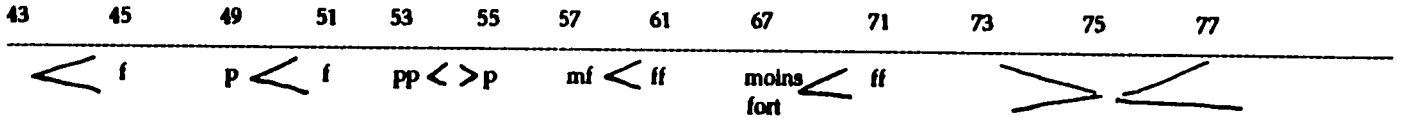
APPENDIX 2

Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 1

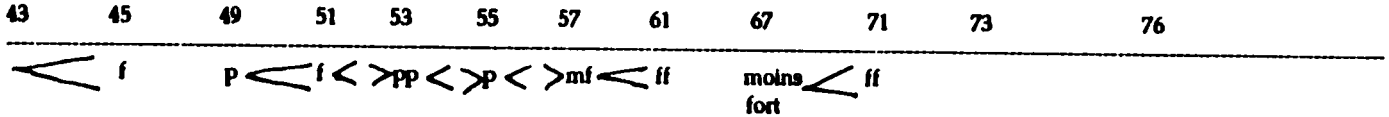


Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 1 (continued)

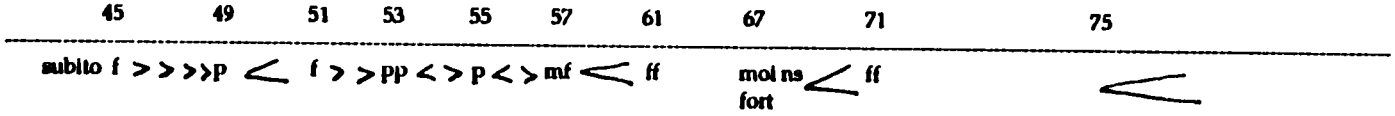
Perlemuter



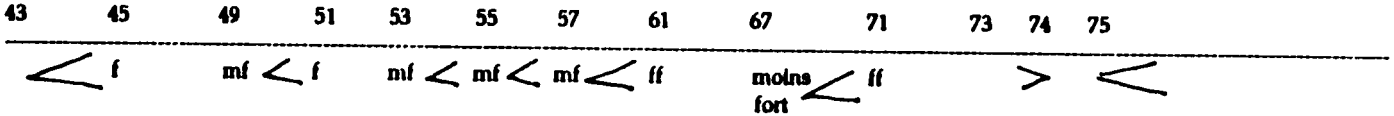
Rubinstein



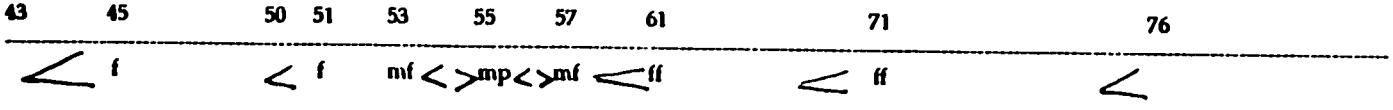
Gieseking



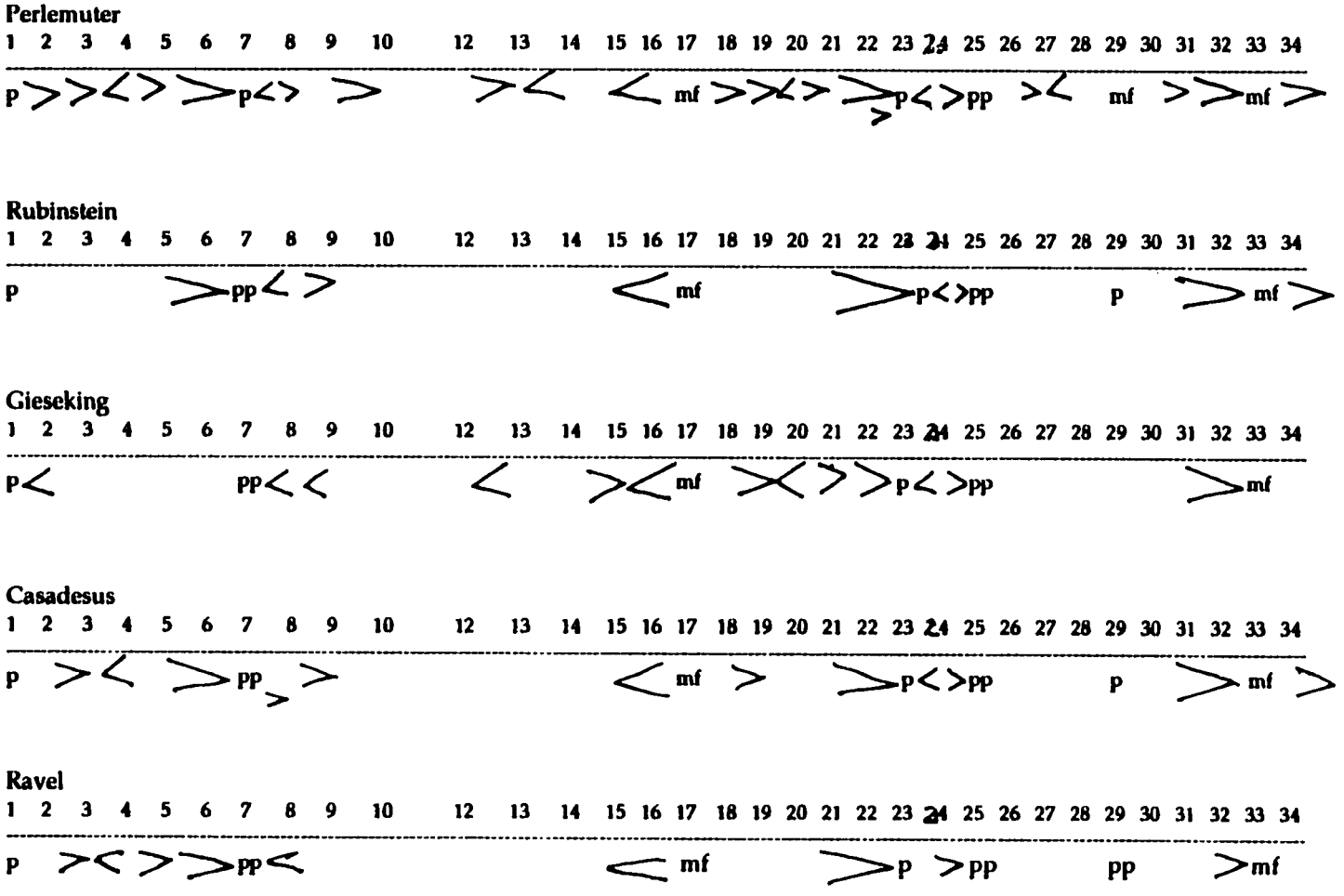
Casadesus



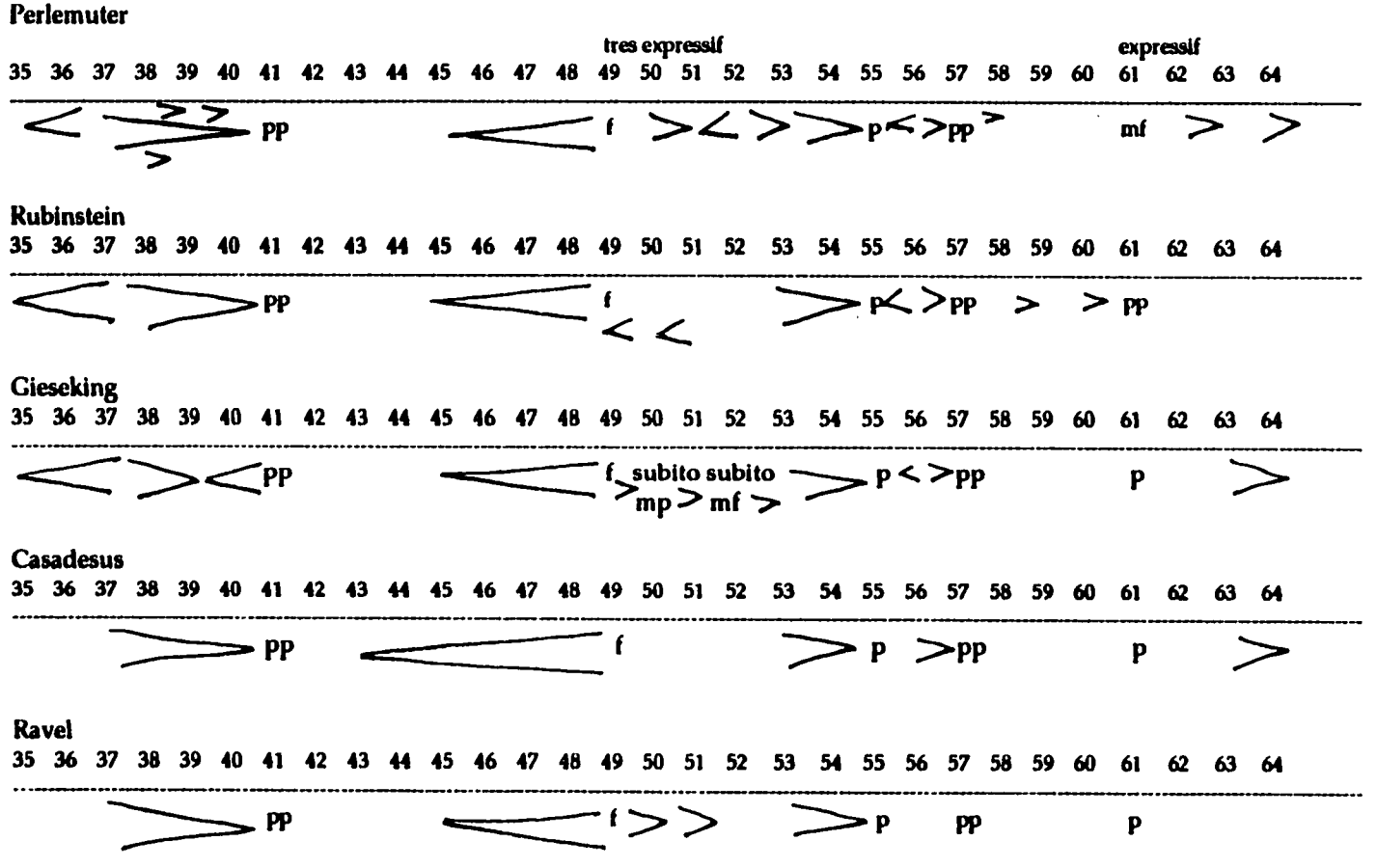
Ravel



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 2

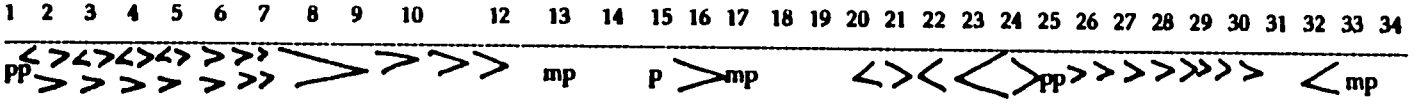


Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 2 (continued)

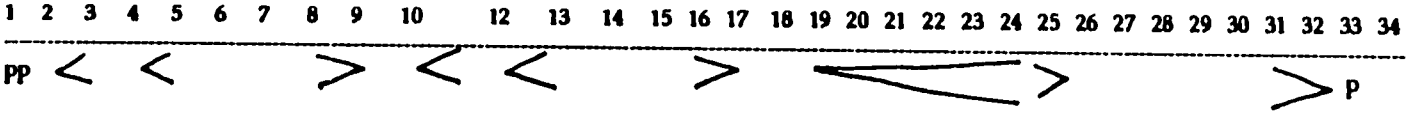


Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 3

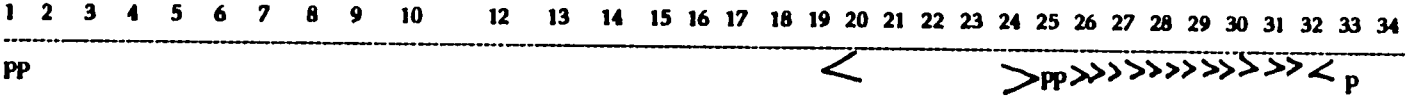
Perlemuter



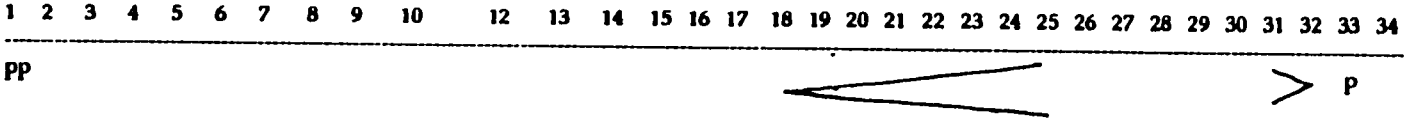
Rubinstein



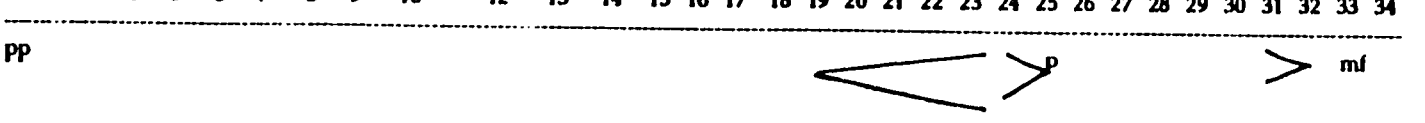
Gieseking



Casadesus



Ravel



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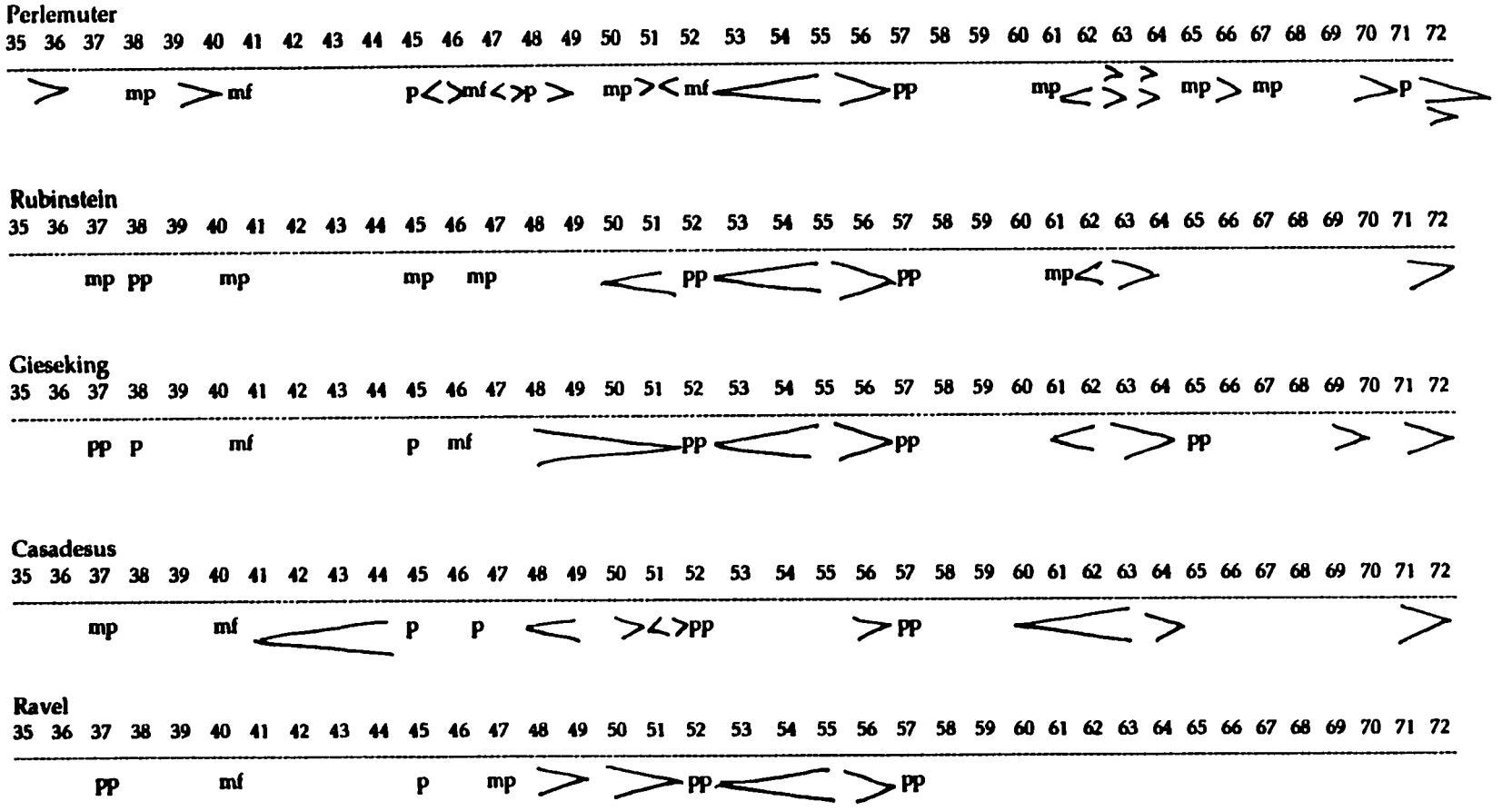

Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 4

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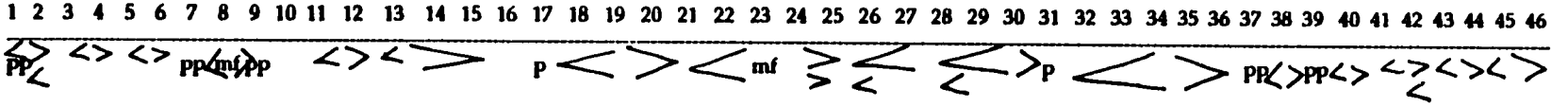
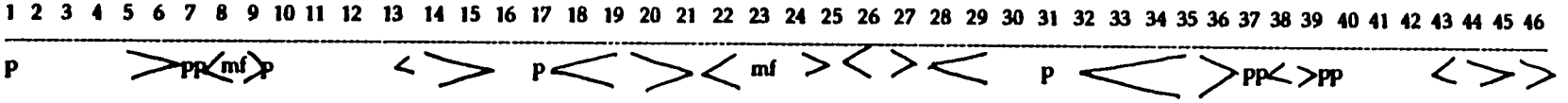
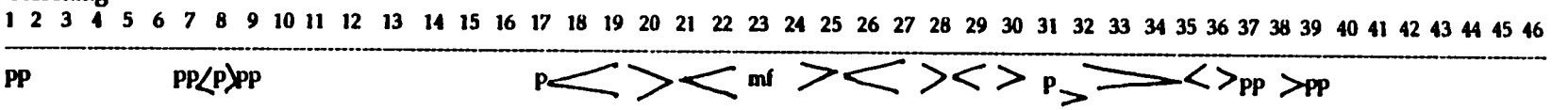


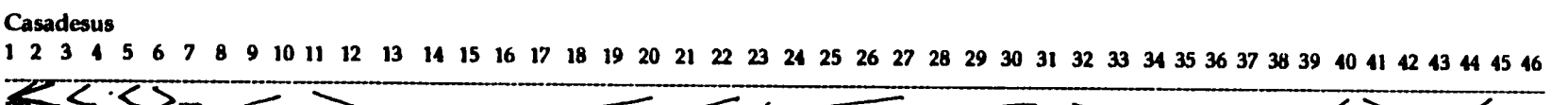
Rubinstein



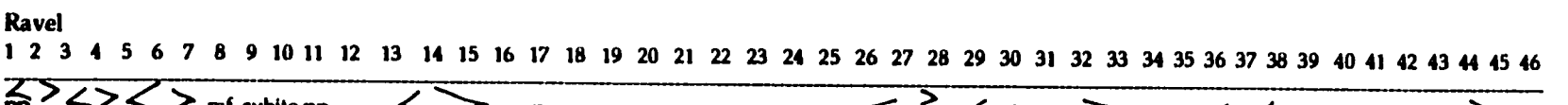
Gieseking



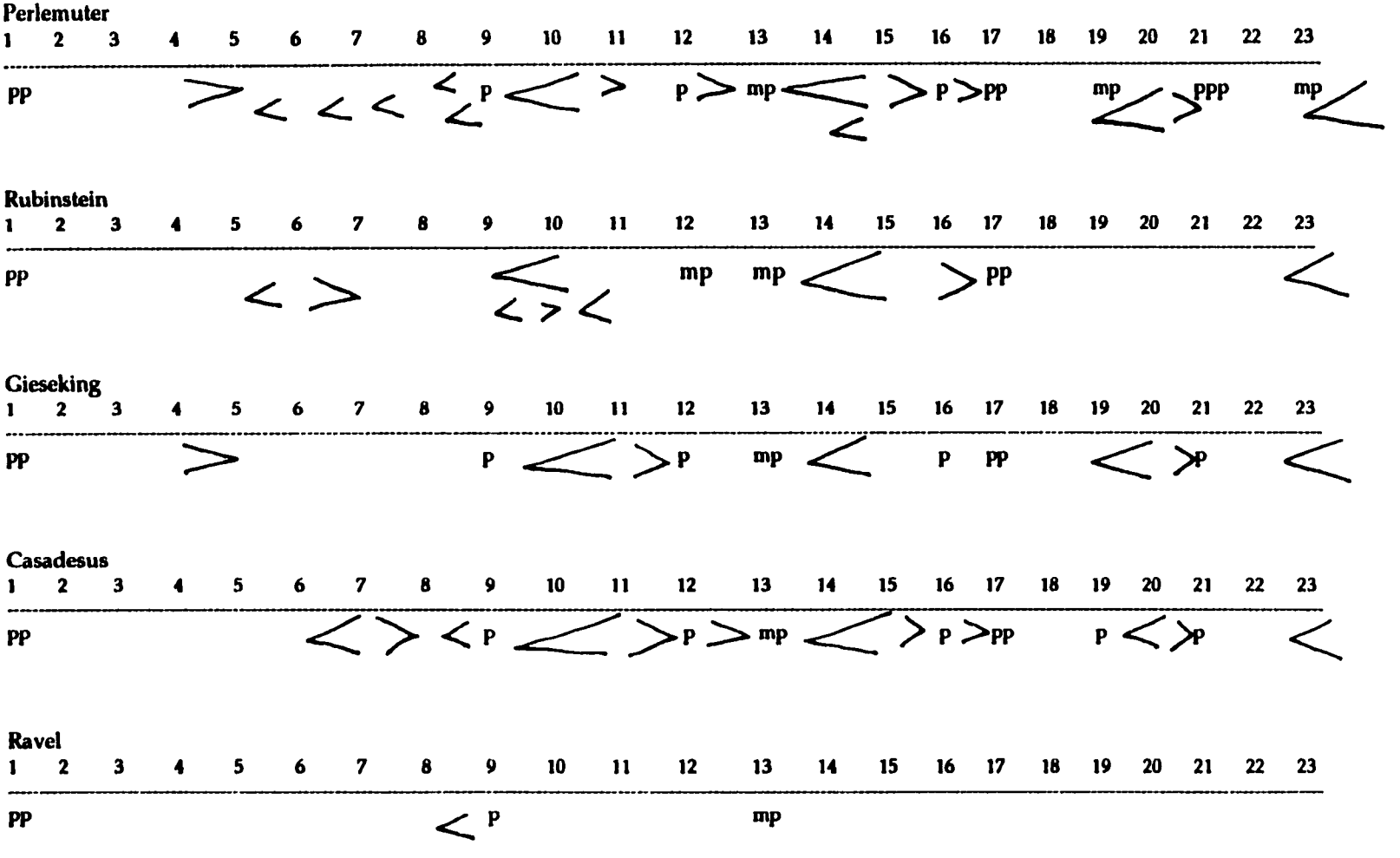
Casadesus



Ravel



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 5



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 5 (continued)

Perlemuter

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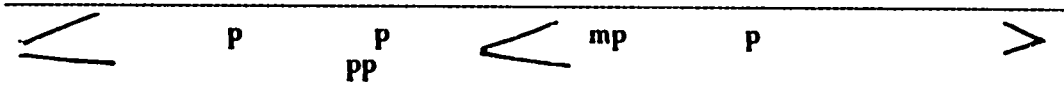
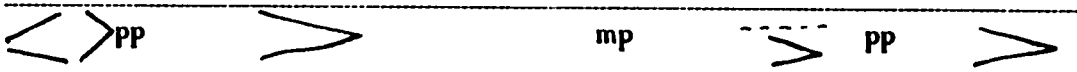


Rubinstein

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32



Gieseking

24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

Casadesus

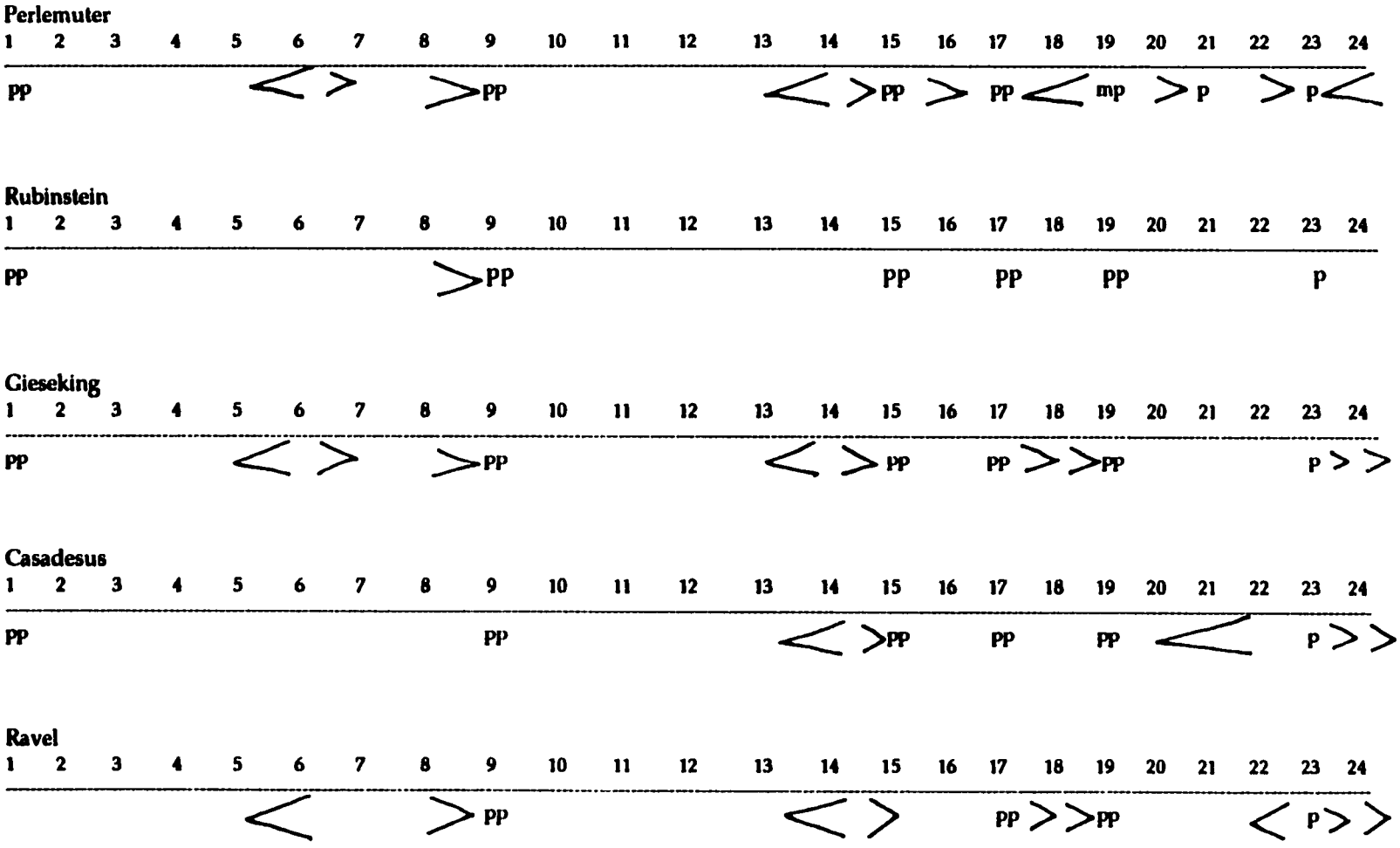
24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

Ravel

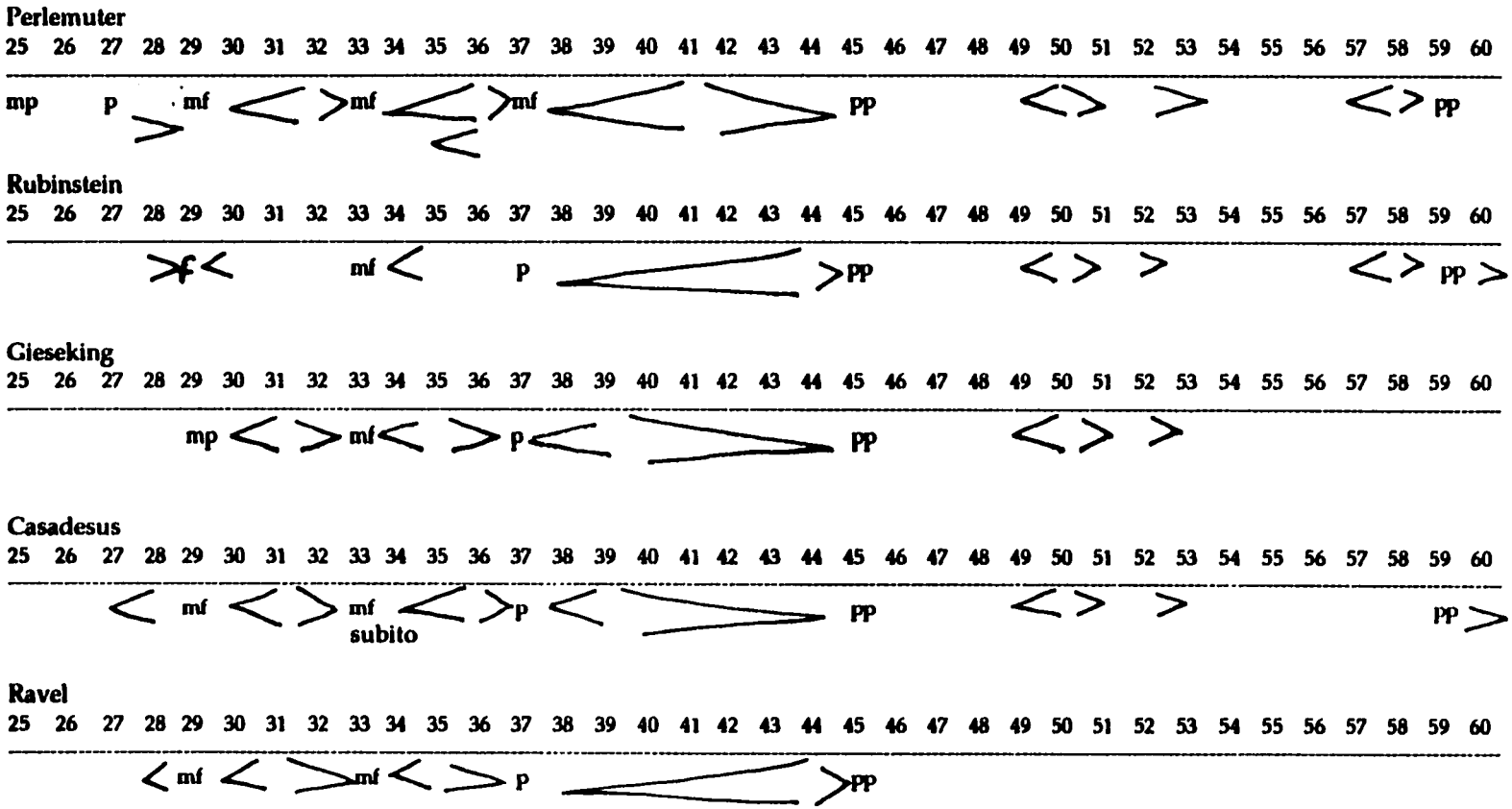
24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

sonore pp

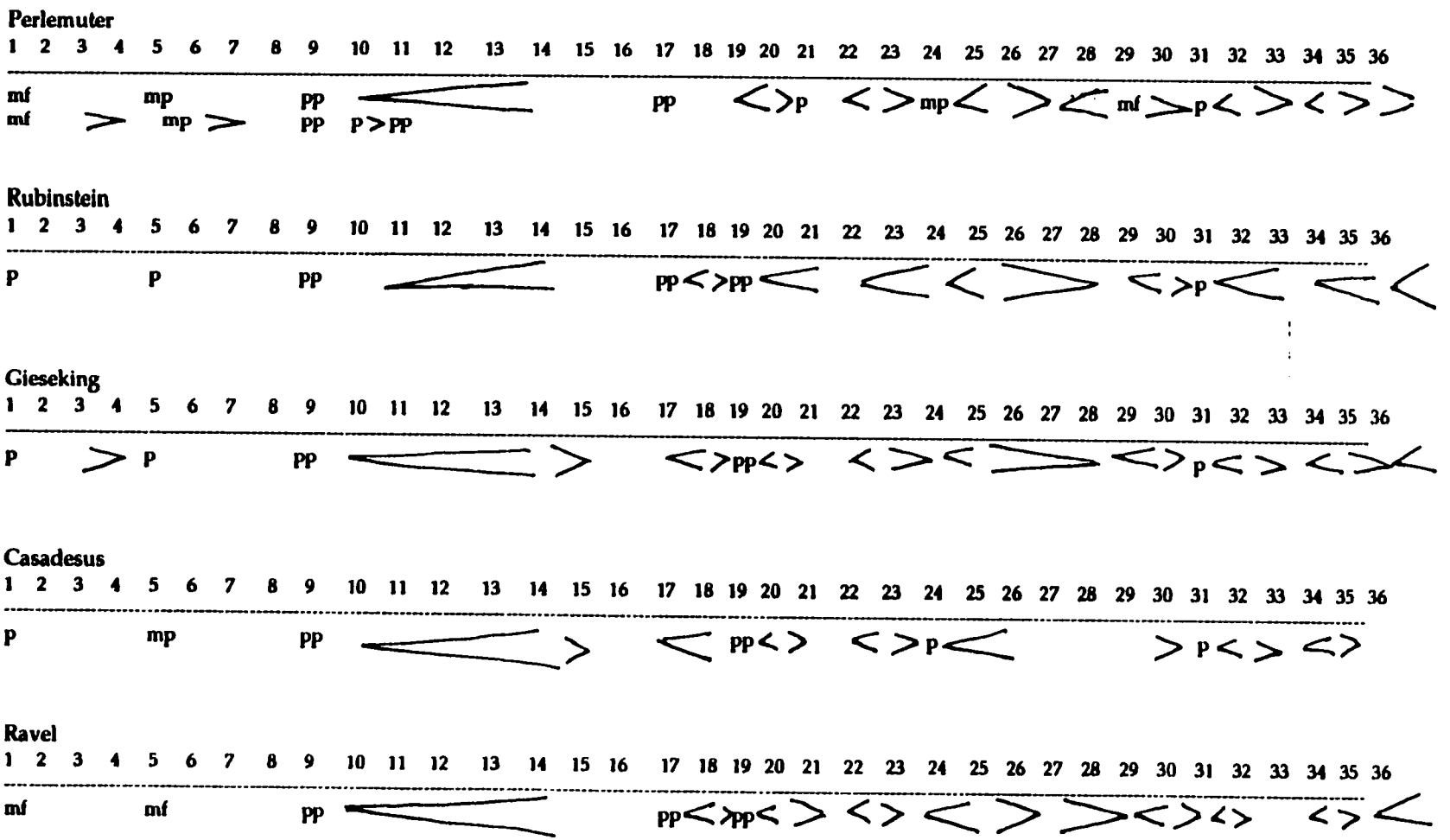
Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 6



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 6 (continued)



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 7



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 7 (continued)

Perlemuter

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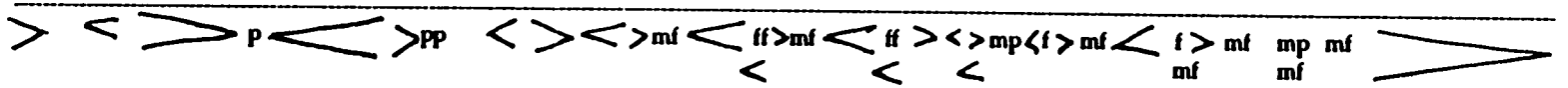

Rubinstein

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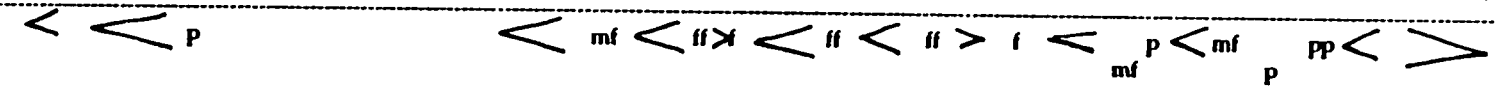

Gieseking

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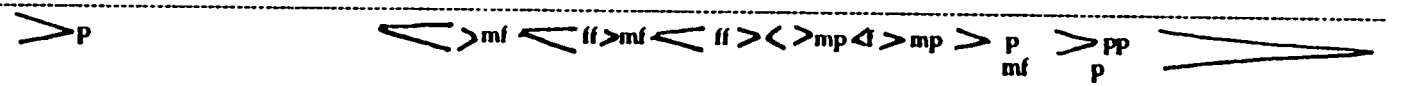

Casadesus

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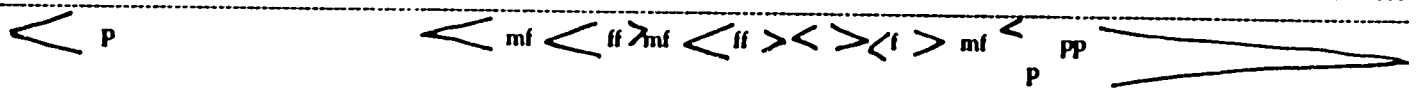

Ravel

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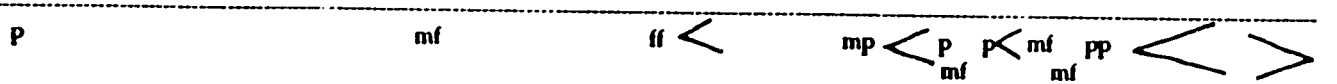
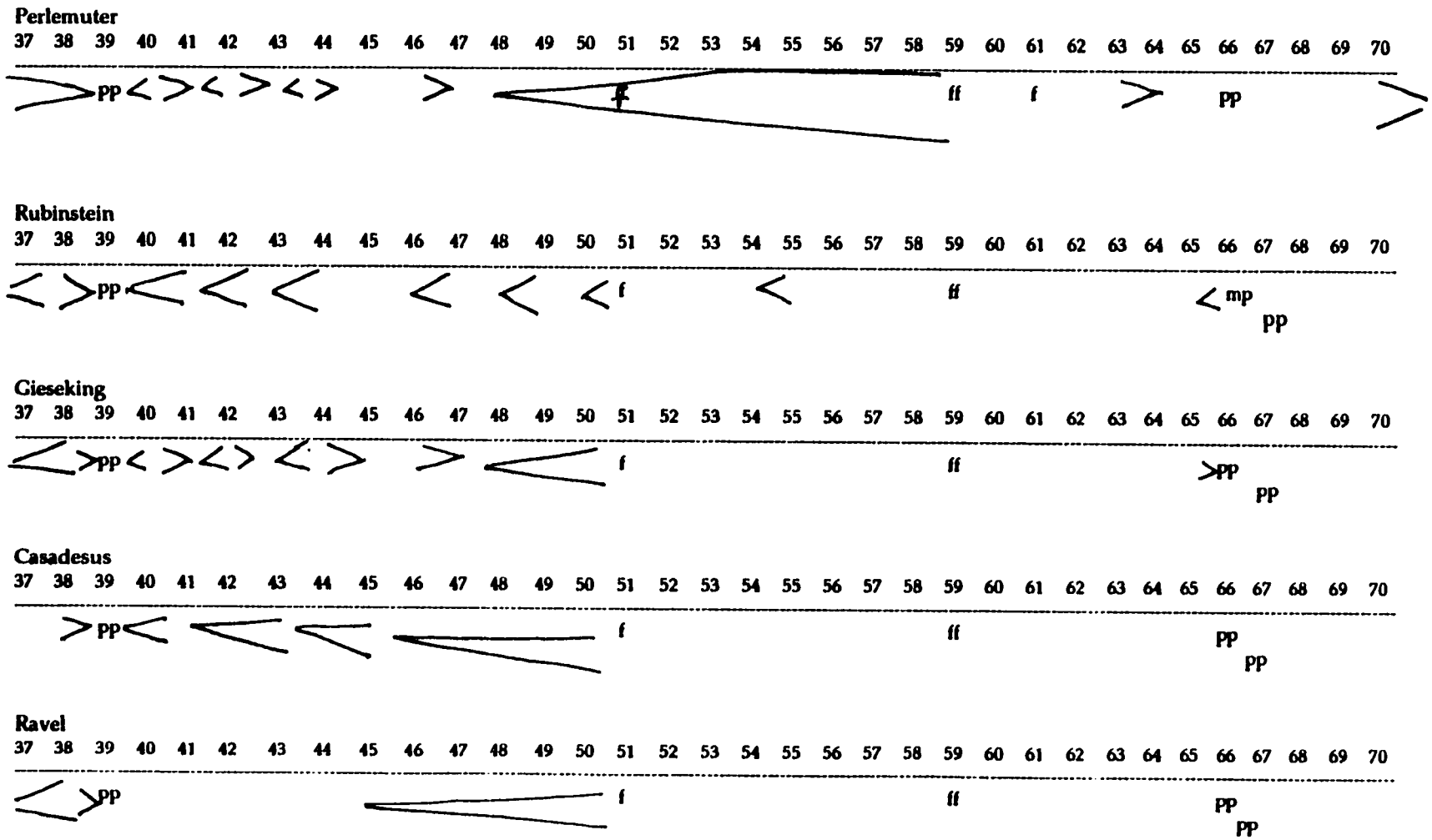
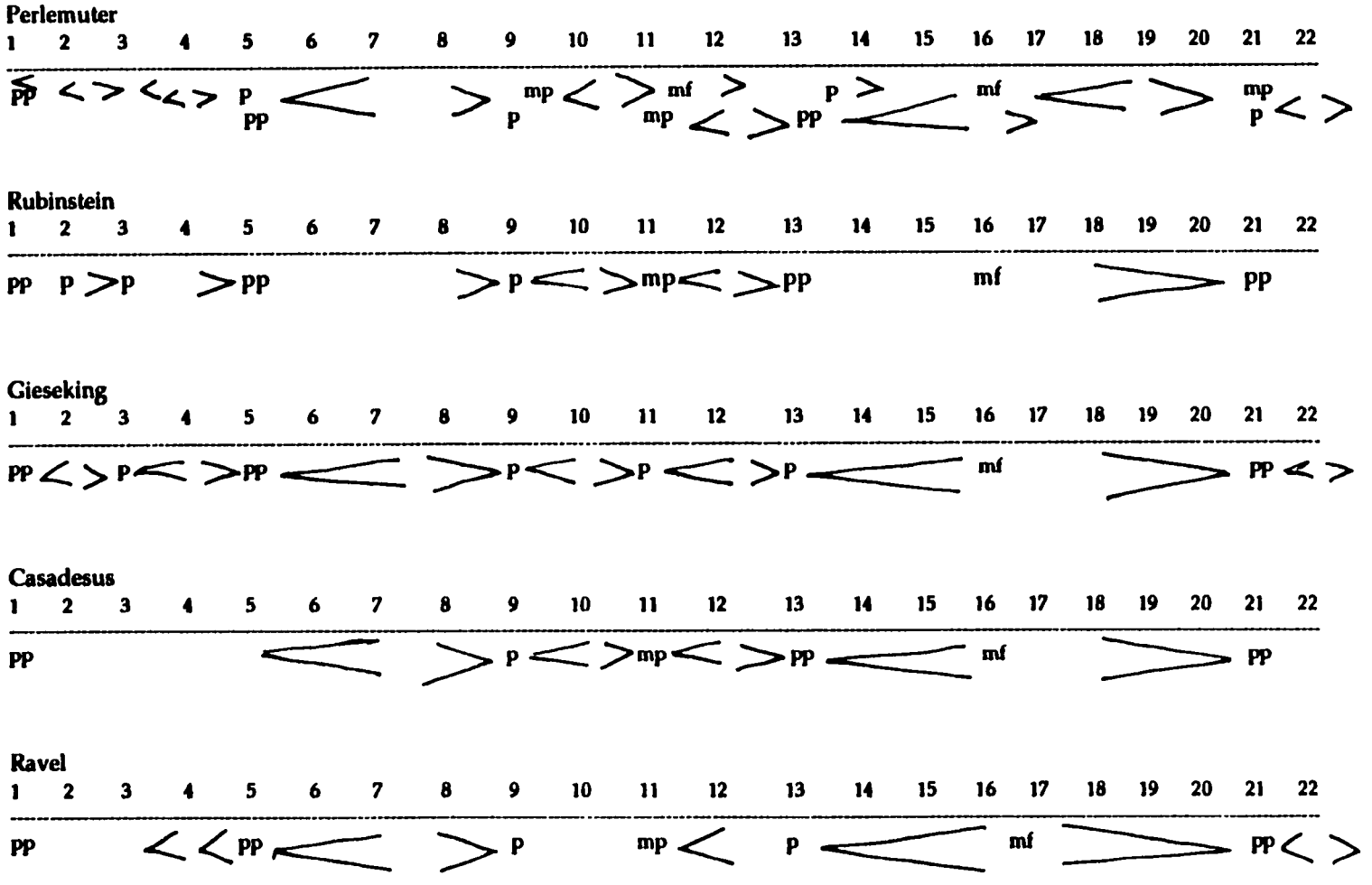


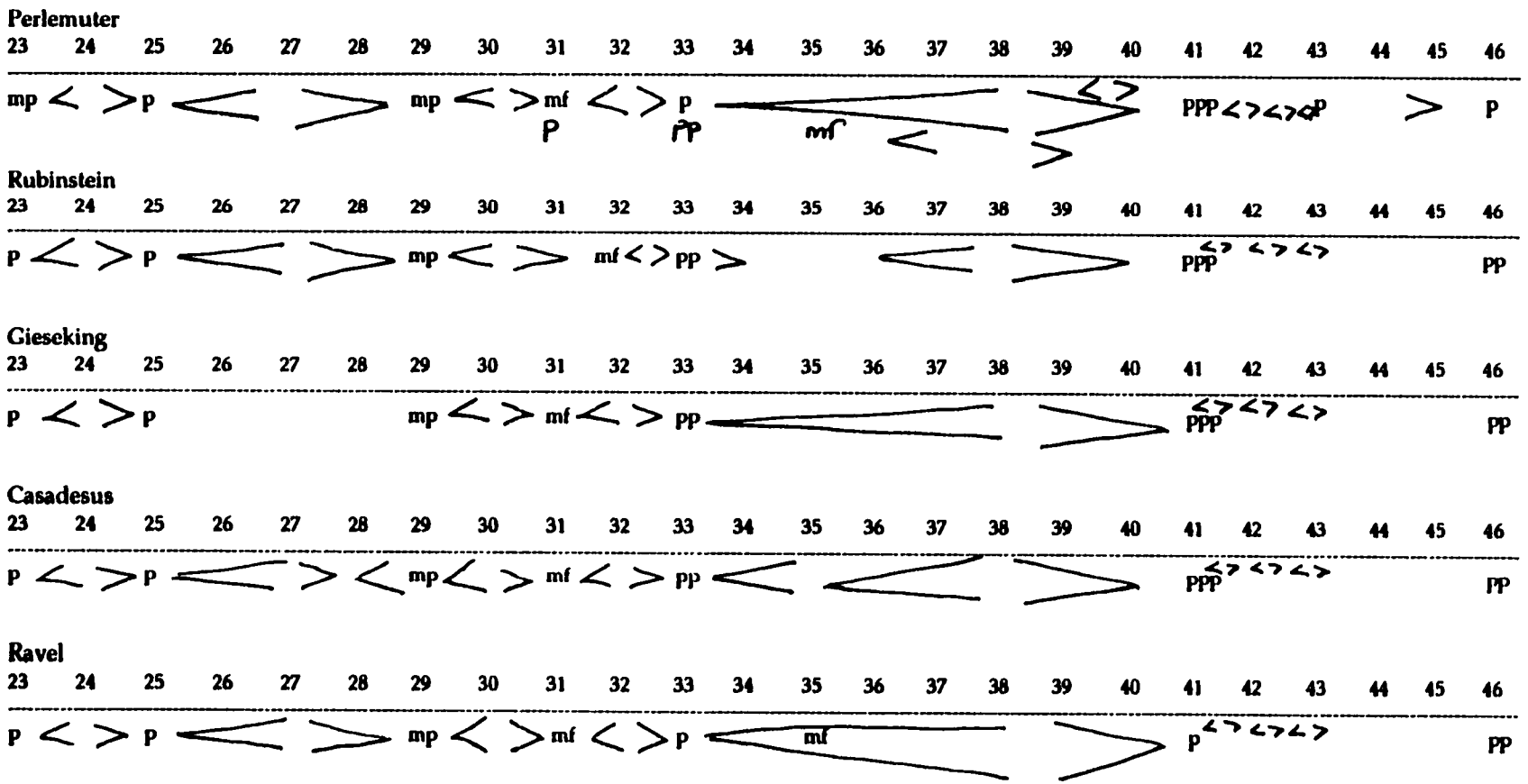
Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 7 (continued)



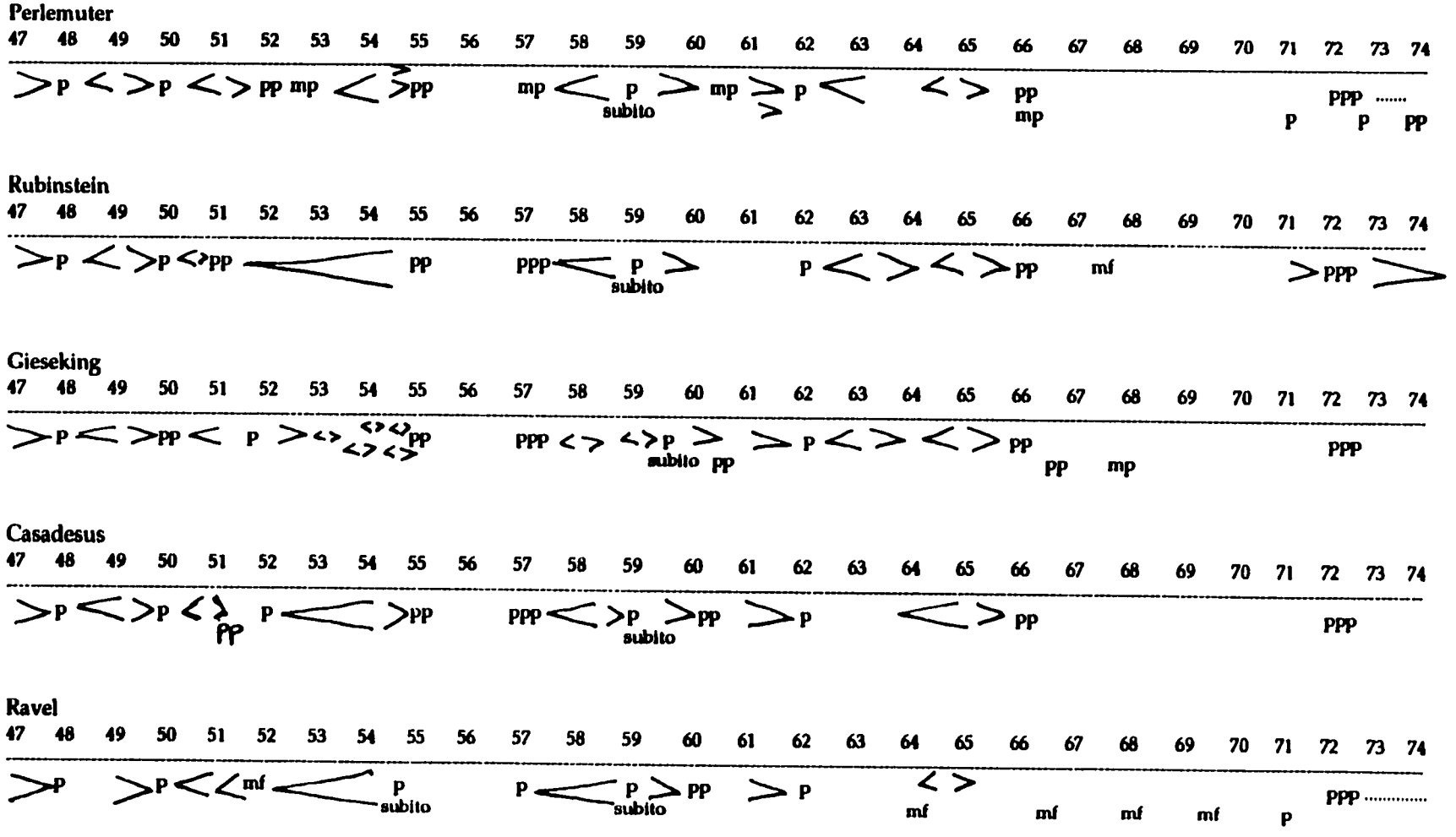
Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 8



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 8 (continued)



Comparative Dynamic Patterning: Waltz 8 (continued)



APPENDIX 3:
Agogic Modifications in Valses nobles et sentimentales

WALTZ 1

Maurice Ravel

Measures 1-4	clearly demarcated, whole chord, 4th chord cut short
Measures 5-20	heavily pedalled. No changes in stress despite his performing indications.
Measure 21	no stress on downbeat, third beat octave stress
Measure 23	recording problem.
Measures 25-30	consistent down beat chord stress not acknowledging the written in shift in measure 29
Measures 31,32	stress in groups of four
Measures 33,35	2nd beat chord stress and thick pedal
Measures 45-48	stress due to change of register
Measures 51-52	more deliberate chord stress
Measure 61	same as measures 45-48
Measures 71-72	slight stress on downbeat due to a slight break in the otherwise flood of pedal
Measures 77-78	Pedal held through

Robert Casadesus

Measure 1	Heavy down beat stress. Full value to 2nd beat. Stress on third beat every second measure.
Measures 5,6	no stress
Measure 11	chord stress plus change in pedalling
Measure 15	down beat chord stress
Measures 17,18	equal chord stress
Measure 19	groups of two
Measure 21	downbeat chord stress third beat octave stress
Measure 23	same
measures 25-28	no downbeat stress
measures 45,46,47	dry and equal first two beats, third beat short
Measure 48	pedal connecting second and third beats
Measures 51-52	short and dry
Measures 61-64	second and third beats slurred
Measure 71	definition of bass part. Each separate
Measure 72	different pedalling
Measures 77-78	chords, length
Measures 79-80	unclear upper voice (un peu pesant)

Arthur Rubinstein

Measures 1-4	articulation and pedalling. The preceding note is cut short plus a short pedal. Direct attack and release. Gives an up-beat release effect.
Measures 5,6	slight stress
Measure 11	slight stress on chord, pedal change
Measures 15,16	slight downbeat stress on chord
Measures 17,18	stress only on third chord due to slightly longer pedal
Measure 19	equal but no particular stress.
Measure 21	chord stress
Measure 23	break in pedal at end of preceding measure plus chord stress
Measures 25-28	down beat chord stress
Measures 45-48	third beat dry and short
Measures 51-52	third beat longer articulation
Measures 61-64	more pedal, chord stress
Measures 61-62	parts
Measures 71-72	slight chord stress on downbeat
Measures 77-78	long pedal and deep articulation last one more so
Measures 79-80	top voice (un peu pesant)

Walter Gieseking

Measures 1-4	third beat stress, chord plus pedal. Every second measure sharper release
Measures 5,6	no stress
Measure 11	no stress
Measure 16	slight stress on second chord due to pedal sustain
Measure 19	no stress
Measure 21	chord stress
Measures 25,28	ignores the stresses on the down beat
Measure 33	slight stress from length and upper part on second beat
Measures 45-48	third beat short and dry not particularly accented.
Measures 51-52	no stress
Measures 61-62	stressed, less the second time
Measures 63-63	same
Measures 71-72	heavy pedal, chord stress
Measures 77,78	short dry pedal. Silences in between beats
Measures 79-80	equal not very marked.

Vlado Perlemuter

Measures 1-4	stress on third beat of each measure, inner melodic part si, la sharp, la, la sharp, sustained pedal

Measures 5,6	stress achieved by distinguishing parts.
Measure 11	pedal change. and chord stress
Measure 14	slight stress on upper voice.
Measure 16	slight stress on upper voice creating the crescendo in waves
Measures 17,18	stress through length and release, sustained pedal without blurring
Measure 19	equal
Measures 21,23	chord stress
Measures 22.24	voice stress
Measures 25 -28	upper part, last (e) less
Measures 33,35	slight stress on second beat, upper voice
Measures 45-48	amplified contrast between first two beats (top voice) and third beat (chord)
Measures 51-52	length of stressed third beat
Measures 61-62	same
Measures 65-66	stress brought out through articulation of parts
Measures 71-72	downbeat chord stress preceded by definite cut in pedal
Measures 79-80	top voice (un peu pesant)

COMPARISON: (First page)

Measures 1-4

Pedalling: Similar one measure concept: Ravel, Perlemuter, Casadesus. What varies is the touch quality, attack and voicing.

Dry pedal: Gieseking, Rubinstein.

Stress pattern: Slight stress on downbeat, release upwards off third beat: Gieseking

Movement towards second and third beats: Casadesus, Rubinstein, Perlemuter

Movement towards third beat: Ravel

Measures 5,6

Cross rhythmic stress: Rubinstein Yes: Perlemuter (articulation and voicing) (voicing)

No: Ravel, Casadesus, Gieseking

Measures 7-10

Legato: all
Rubinstein: articulation and pedalling of lower parts

Measure 11

Pedalling: full measure: Gieseking, Perlemuter, Ravel
half measure: Casadesus, Rubinstein

Measure 17 — three chords

Pedalling: sustain: Perlemuter, Gieseking, Ravel
short pedal on each: Rubinstein
longer pedal on each: Casadesus

Cadential stress: equal on each: Perlemuter, Rubinstein
groups of two: Casadesus
no stress: Gieseking, Ravel

Measures 49,50

Upper part longer articulation than lower part: Gieseking, Rubinstein
Pedalled and fast: Ravel
Dry and detached: Casadesus
Variety of articulations (staccato, legato) and changes in pedalling: Perlemuter

Measures 53-60

Dry and staccato: Casadesus
Both parts more legato and equal in touch: Rubinstein, Gieseking
Shaped legato, still pedalled on each: Perlemuter

WALTZ 2

Maurice Ravel

prevalence of chord breaking or bass note preceding the rest of the chord. (With this technique he most probably intends to achieve the "expression intense")

See measures 1,2,4,9,10,11,12,14,16,17,18,19,20,29,30, 33,34,35,36,37,39,40,46,47,49,50,51,52,56,61,62

Measure 63 alters the written rhythm by playing two eighth notes instead of a quarter note on the last beat.

Robert Casadesus

Measure 5	chord stress, decay over next two measures achieved through pedalling. Pedal through the rests in measures 6 and 7, emphasizing instead the bass line C sharp, C sharp and C natural.
Measure 8	parts. Soprano D stands out. Inner voice is pedalled melodically
Measures 13,14,15	grace notes (d) are resonant and build to measure 16 where they become D (half note). Blending of voices creates the crescendo
Measure 17, 18	down beat chord stress
Measures 20-25	same treatment as parallel passage, except Measures 24 where the parts are less distinguished melodically and a harmonic decay is more apparent.
Measure 36	third beat accent is a chord stress. The upper voice decays very quickly, not allowing the line to carry through. Therefore in measure 37 the melodic line enters on the second beat, equally stressed on each tone.

Arthur Rubinstein

Measure 3	slight stress on bass note
Measures 5-7	diminuendo achieved by pedal change on lower part. Pedal through the rests
Measure 7	clear rest. Upper voice coloured, definition of voices
Measure 23	different stress. More direct
Measure 33	Upper voice
Measure 36	balance of parts. Upper part sings out above bass. Middle voice very subtle
Measure 49, 50	très expressif: Delay and deep articulation of second beat.

Walter Gieseking

Measure 1	stress on third beat. Contrary to Ravel's marking
Measure 3	an anticipation of the down beat and a similar anticipation

	on the second beat. Gieseking is using the offbeat stresses to bring the waltz alive
Measures 5,6	harmonic exhalation
Measures 7,8	stress on downbeat, upper voice with a restatement on second beat of next measure. Last beat, F, gives an upbeat feeling into next measure. Not what Ravel wrote.
Measure 12	stress on second beat
Measure 13	stress on third beat
Measure 16	stress on second beat
Measure 19	anticipation of downbeat and anticipation of second beat right hand
Measure 21	upper part stressed lower parts and release of pedal on second beat of measure 22 create decrescendo
Measures 23,24	same as 7,8
Measure 25	(rubato) anticipation of second beat, slight suspension of last eighth and quiet first beat of 26 create a long line. Rubato is cross rhythmic
Measures 29	expressif: precise time, internal rhythm is marcato.
Measure 31	sustain of soprano E marked with finger. Pedal on low D Vibrato pedal to define rest in next measure.
Measures 33, 34	très expressif tenor voice 2nd beat very defined
Measure 35	anticipation of downbeat echoed by anticipation of entrance in melodic part.
Measure 36	strong accent on third beat. Upper voice marcato
Measure 40	last beat slightly stressed as upbeat
Measure 41	chords on second beat very subtle
Measure 43	eighth notes lightly articulated
Measure 45	chords on second beat becoming stronger
Measure 47	eighth notes legato
Measure 49	très expressif slight delay, expressive lower part
Measure 50	subito dynamic change (mp)
Measure 51	subito dynamic change, anticipation in all parts
Measure 52	diminuendo defines Ravel's marked stress.

Vlado Perlemuter

Every voice has a different touch

Measures 1,2,3	lower parts lightly harmonic. Impressionistic octaves, almost equal in touch.
Measures 3,4	crescendo achieved by slight stress on third and first beats in upper part with slight stress on low F. A melodic line emerges between the bass and the lower voice of the downbeat chord in measure 5 giving it length, where Ravel has indicated a stress. The C sharp octaves are n o w defined very differently than the previous four measures

Measure 7	stress on upper part, clear rest middle part sustained legato sustain of third beat quiet lower voice in Measure 8
Measure 9	a tempo slight stress on downbeat
Measure 16	aware of four independent parts expanding
Measure 17	octaves barely audible
Measures 25-29	cross rhythmic rubato.
Measures 26 and 28	pulse on second beat leads into next measure.
Measure 29	clear rest. Definite entrance with more tone.
Measure 30	delay and colour, lower parts pulling against the beat
Measure 35	très expressif: Upper part very defined. Third beat much quieter. Lower parts clear yet subtle.
Measure 41	middle voice
Measure 45	entrance of upper voice. Chords becoming increasingly present
Measures 47-48	definition of each beat
Measures 49, 50	très expressif: Stress on downbeat chord. Lower parts create a sense of sustain. Continued resonance of thumb to fifth finger
Measure 61	Warmth of low D. Slightly more length. Upper part expressif. More tone
Measure 62	Pulling of the beat.

WALTZ 3

Maurice Ravel

Measure 1	beat two, bass before soprano. Resulting in some rhythmic distortion of the first two eighth notes. Third beat staccato is articulated sharply and leads into the next measure.
Measures 9,10 etc.	where Ravel indicates rolled chords, he plays them almost solid. No apparent difference between what he indicates as solid or broken
Measures 19,20 and 22,23	heavy pedal and thickness of touch in all parts create a sudden crescendo
Measure 25	pedalled staccato only slightly defining the two note phrase groups
Measures 31,32	pedal blurring
Measures 33-36	chord stress on downbeat of first and third measure of four measure phrase
Measure 38	accent achieved by breaking the chord
Measures 39-40	pedal blurring
Measure 41...	heavy pedal causing harmonic and melodic blurring
Measure 49	downbeat comes in early third beat extremely short

Measures 57 -60	pedal used throughout each measure, completely changing the articulation and the internal phrasing
Measure 61	syncopated pedalling sustains bass notes
Measure 65	different notes on first beat chord
Measure 71	pedal becomes clearer

Robert Casadesus

Measures 1-4	dry pedal, second and third beat staccatos equal and short
Measure 8	second and third beat staccatos more rounded
Measures 9-12	warmer tone. pedal for first into second beat. Second beat melody more sustained, third beat short staccato
Measure 17	syncopated pedal over each measure line. Chords are not voiced. Equal in attack
Measure 25	direct pedalling with two beat phrase. Short staccato on the first of the four measure unit, others longer in duration where pedal releases slightly after the finger
Measure 29	similar treatment.
Measure 33	slightly more sustained tone. Small pulse stress on downbeat of each measure combined with syncopated pedalling produces a build-up of resonance
Measure 47	suspended second beat
Measure 48	pp lower part
Measure 56	last B slightly stressed. Upbeat into recapitulation
Measure 60	thickening of tone and touch and full measure pedal in anticipation of the très expressif in Measure 61
Measures 61-63	crescendo in all parts equally supported by a heavy bass
Measures 64,66	equality of touch on second and third beats
Measure 67	voicing of soprano part and slightest downbeat stress produce the soutenu
Measures 71,72	one pedal, light and clear articulation of upper parts

Arthur Rubinstein

Measures 1,2,3,4	dry pedal, equal short staccatos on second and third beats
Measure 5	with Ravel's rhythmic change (1-2, 1-2, 1-2 etc.) more sustained release
Measure 9	more pedal rolled chords almost solid with emphasis on upper voice
Measures 9,10	has an overall two measure phrase due to length of last beat in each measure. Measure 9 is longer measure 10 shorter articulation Measure 11,12 same pattern
Measures 13-16	long phrase. Upper voice legato
Measure 15	slight hesitation before last beat marks out the cadence
Measures 17-25	one long phrase warmer pedal

Measures 25,26	three equal two note phrase groups. Second beats not too short
Measures 27,28	one longer phrase
Measure 32	pedal, definite articulation on each eighth note, ritard
Measure 33	Upper voice. Movement towards second beat in both hands
Measure 38	Ravel's accent on third beat is brought out by a subito pp
Measures 41	very light left hand eighth notes, having an upbeat rhythmic feel
Measure 47	slight dwelling on second beat
Measure 48	no stress on downbeat
Measures 52,53	harmonic unit
Measure 54	definite new phrase, lower part very quiet
Measure 57	identical to opening
Measure 60	last beat slightly suspended
Measure 61	très expressif: very legato, slower tempo, more sustained pedal
Measure 65	definition of inner part (seconds) sustains a legato feeling
Measure 71	pedal sustains low G

Walter Gieseking

Measures 1-4	dry pedal. Short staccato articulation on second and third beats
Measures 5-7	two note groups, very short
Measure 9	quick rolled chords
Measure 16	warmer tone on E, pedal, harmonic resonance of third beat
Measure 17	Bass slightly anticipates upper parts. Very quiet bass. Long phrase to Measure 25
Measure 25	short, dry two note groups
Measure 33	slight accelerando, deeper touch, movement towards second beat
Measures 38-39	Accent not stressed yet downbeat of 39 is anticipated
Measure 41	same anticipation in bass part. Upper part, legato pulling the beat against a very light, sustained closely articulated bass line
Measure 43	slight breath and release of pedal before the downbeat of 44 defines melodic part
Measures 45,46	same
Measure 47,48	same Every second measure the same little breath. Marking out Ravel's structure.
Measures 52-56	pedal, long harmonic phrase
Measure 57	same as opening
Measure 60	accelerando, more pedal on second and third beats
Measures 61-62	très expressif: More tone, stress on second beats

Measures 62-63	phrase moves towards second beat . Softer
Measures 63-64	placed cadence and into tempo. Harmonic pedal
Measure 65	movement towards second beat
Measure 67	more tone and colour change on second beat defines the soutenu.
Measure 71	fade-out, equality of upper and lower voices

Vlado Perlemuter

Measures 1-4	dynamic and stress counterpoint. Upper part slight stress on downbeat movement towards second beat. Third beat lightly staccato, in second measure more so. Bass part diminuendo into second beat
Measure 5	both parts stressing first beat, releasing on second
Measures 7,8	two measure phrase moving towards sustain of E. Second and third beats of measure 8 harmonic and very quiet
Measure 9	upper part more legato and placed on each one. Harmonic blending of tenor and alto
Measure 13	very subtle roll emphasizing soprano
Measure 15	no stress on downbeat defines the cadence
Measure 17	warmer tone, more pedal, longer phrase incorporates movement towards the second beat of each measure
Measure 20	Perlemuter quotes Ravel's insistence on the diminuendo at the end of the phrase. (Ravel d'après Ravel 47)
Measure 25	both parts work together
Measures 31,32	same cadential treatment as Measure 7-8
Measure 33	upper part mp. Expansion to middle of phrase. Bass pp
Measures 41-44	slight stress on lowest B in bass part creates three two group phrase units instead of Ravel's six shorter units. Upper part is one long line
Measure 45	movement towards second beat
Measure 47	slight hesitation before second beat
Measure 48	clarity and subtle definition of lower part. Two measure melodic phrase
Measures 50 -52	crescendo
Measure 52	mf, stressed downbeat supported by bass note
Measure 55	inner part brought out C sharp, D, D sharp
Measure 57	different than opening. Harmonic middle part is brought out. Stress on bass note confirms tonality and creates a rhythmic pulse
Upbeat to Measure 61	no staccato
Measure 61	downbeat stress, Expressive tone. Upper part
Measure 62	diminuendo into second beat. Bass part warm melodic tone. Parts blending. Cédez: third beat slightly behind the beat.
Measure 65	tempo. Stress on downbeat, mp
Measure 66	no stress.

Measure 67	downbeat mp. Equality of touch between third and downbeat of 68
Measure 70	colour change on downbeat begins diminuendo
Measure 71	upper part stands out
Measure 72	diminuendo in bass part

WALTZ 4

Maurice Ravel

Excessively fast. The pulse and feel of a waltz are absent.

Robert Casadesus

Measures 1-7	long phrase not following Ravel's indicated internal stress pattern. Measure 2 stress on second beat, lightness of touch on upbeat into Measure 3. Similar treatment of measure 4 with slightly less stress on second beat. No stress in measures 5,6
Measure 6	pedal is lifted preceding the pp
Measures 6,7	impressionistic, harmonic, individual articulations downplayed. Pedal held through, lower part barely touching
Measure 16	cut off very short
Measure 17	metrical beat. Quiet entrance of bass part
Measure 20	equal marcato touch, crescendo
Measures 21-24	equality of beats and touch
Measure 24	marcato inner part. Soprano lost
Measure 25	downbeat stress. Equality of chords
Measure 27	upper part marcato and crescendo
Measure 30	parallel phrase rounded off and shaped
Measure 31	colour change. Difference between the parts, upper part p lower part pp. Long phrase
Measure 35	bass line harmonically conceived. Upper part expressive touch
Measure 37	au mouvement: one long phrase till the end peaking in measures 40-41
Measures 44-45	very short, eighth note, more like a sixteenth upbeat. Heavy stress on beat one and two of Measure 45. Triplets are like grace notes to the last A (cut off abruptly)

Arthur Rubinstein

Stylized waltz. Evocation of a picture. The whole scene — almost visual - depicting the dance.

Measure 1	slight dwelling on down beat. Third beat, no stress yet length of tone. Tonality established with warmth of bass tone
Measures 5,6	bass very quiet. Last beat clearly articulated in both parts, low E flat slightly detached and upper part clearly placed, full rhythmic value
Measure 7	downbeat, pp clearly placed. Triplets articulated very clearly. Melodically conceived
Measures 9,10,11,12,13	syncopated pedalling. Upper part breaking for upbeats (measure 10,12)
Measure 15	articulation of each note of triplets, Slight ritard
Measure 16	pedal vibrates through third beat
Measure 17	clear entrance lower part
Measure 19	quiet bass
Measure 20	beats one and two, definition of upper part. Slight ritard before third beat
Measure 21	entrance in lower part
Measure 25	diminuendo between second and third beats. Ritard
Measure 25	lower part, harmonic chords. Two measure unit, one measure unit
Measures 25-26	upper part one three measure phrase. Placed articulation of final three beats of diminuendo.
Measures 28-30	same
Measure 31	slight dwelling on downbeat in upper and lower parts. Syncopated pedalling with light expressive touch
Measure 36	very slow
Measure 45	finger articulation of each note, ritard and continued resonance through third beat. In the repeat a bigger ritard

Walter Gieseking

Measures 1-16	Refined. Crescendi-diminuendi ignored. Clarity of tone, light, resonant upper part. Eighth notes very lightly articulated. Bass: refined touch, minimal pedal
Measure 7	barely audible bass, triplets: impressionistic yet not blurred
Measure 16	short downbeat
Measures 19,20	outstanding breathing. Each part is lightly legato. Absolutely unstressed. One phrase
Measure 27	slight holding back. Exhalation, harmonic decay
Measure 31	bass part and pedal become more prominent

Measures 44-45	finger articulation of each note. Final A slightly sustained. Second time more articulated run and longer final A

Vlado Perlemuter

Animé — energetic

Measure 1	tonality established with clarity of bass part. Moves toward downbeat of measure 2. Upper part definite stress on third beat. Length and clarity of second beat Measure 2 due to release of pedal. Upbeat into Measure 3,4 same treatment
Measures 5,6	stressed third beat upper part is amplified by stresses on third and first beats in lower part. Harmonic mix is very rich
Measure 7	Ravel's instructions to Perlemuter: "Sinueux mais musclé" Quiet lower part. Articulation of triplets becomes increasingly leggiero
Measure 16	pedalled staccato incorporates shimmering resonance of overtones from the triplet, with its augmented fourth
Measure 17	breath rhythm. Lower part enters on second beat
Measures 19-20	lower part one phrase. Upper parts clearly defined. and coloured
Measure 21	entrance of upper voice
Measure 24	parts. Diminuendo in every part
Measures 25,26,27	parts. Melodic tenor voice. Upper part one three measure phrase. Lower parts, two measure/one measure
Measure 31	magnificent inner part written into Perlemuter's score by the composer. Taken from orchestral version
Measure 35	soprano enters
Measures 37,38	triplets. Articulation and tone changes as he changes register. Like orchestral instrumentation
Measure 44	slight dwelling on second beat
Measures 44-45	upbeat moves to melodic stress on both first and second beats. Triplets, beginning on second group articulated diminuendo. Shimmering overtones on last A flat.

WALTZ 5

Maurice Ravel

emphasis on the second beat. Heavily over-stressed. Thick tone
eg. second line Measure 5 melodic bass line is unclear due to syncopated

pedalling and weighted attack on second beat
Breaking the chord in measure 1,2,3 clearly detracts from the bite of the dissonance and the length of the melodic note on top
Last measure is written in what appears as two note groups, a trap most musicians would do their best to avoid. Ravel seems to fall into his own trap

Robert Casadesus

Measures 1-4	simple and unstressed
Measure 5	accelerando
Measures 5,6,7	bass notes pedalled. Chords equally articulated with half pedalling
Measure 6	bass note stressed
Measure 7	bass note heavily stressed. Soprano line three equal phrases, fourth phrase uses upbeat into measure 8
Measure 8	stress on last eighth note creates a crescendo into Measure 9
Measures 9-12	melodic inner part
Measure 12	quiet yet muffled bass. Upper part individually placed. Ritard. Pause on last beat. Pedal
Measure 13	More tone in lower part. Melodic inner part
Measure 16	same as Measure 12
Measures 17, 18	quicker tempo. Clear articulation of each eighth note in upper voice as well as each quarter note in lower part. Two phrases in upper part. One phrase in lower part, lightly staccato at the end
Measures 19,20	upper part stands out. Off-beat stress on chords. Bass part very quiet and unstressed
Measure 22	last two eighth notes act as upbeats into melodic part
Measures 23,24	heavy stress on off-beat chords
Measure 25	low C sharp very "sonore". Resonant pedal, deep touch. Chords on second and third beats heavily stressed. Some carrying over of pedalled resonance into measure 26
Measure 27	pianissimo is achieved by subito dynamic change with a slow lifting of the pedal. Upper voice pure, clear tone
Measures 29,30,31	slight stress on second beat chord. Pedal carries some resonance of third beat into next measure
Measure 32	clear downbeat pedal change. Resonant tone and voicing of bass chords. Upper part phrased independently of bass.

Arthur Rubinstein

The bass line throughout has an expressive, melodic role unlike any of the other performers. Seems to direct and sustain Ravel's long phrase lines.

Measures 1-3	upper voice gently stands out. Inner part very quiet
Measure 3	lower part begins to emerge. Deeper tone
Measure 4	accelerando, more pedal, last eighth note is coloured and leads directly into lower voice downbeat of measure 5
Measure 5	chords on second and third beats very quiet and clear
Measure 6	bass note mf, deep tone
Measure 7	bass note p
Measure 8	pp and very light touch..Last eighth note in alto part pp
Measures 9,10,11,12	each note of the bass part has a different dynamic. Suggestion of a string instrument making crescendo and diminuendo on single tones. Anticipation of downbeat in third measure of phrase. Upper part becomes increasingly expressive in tone. Measure 11 stress on s e c o n d eighth note propels the line into the cadence. No break at end of phrase. The resonance of the tenor E is picked up in Measure 13
Measures 13-16	identical treatment of bass line as in previous phrase except for the anticipation of the downbeat of the third measure. This time a slight delay. Once again no break at the end of phrase
Measure 17	slight dwelling on first beat. Pedal held through two measure bass phrase
Measure 18	last two eighth notes as upbeats
Measure 19	upper voice stands out. Full lengths yet unstressed, creates legato upper voice. Bass barely audible. Inner part present yet unstressed
Measure 21	slight dwelling on first eighth note. One measure phrase groups
Measure 24	diminuendo and ritard on last two eighth notes
Measure 25	pp down beat. Instead of the resurgence of sonority indicated by Ravel, Rubinstein's phrase continues to dissolve until Measure 27. At the au mouvement there is some rubato (accelerando and slight ritard) placing the apex of the phrase at Measure 29
Measure 29	mezzo piano allows for a long four measure, very pronounced diminuendo and ritard

Walter Gieseking

Interesting use of the pedal. Minimal use, juxtaposition of syncopated, direct and no pedal, effects the melodic lines and inner parts.

Measure 1	slight stress on second beat chord
Measure 2	same stress yet this time pedal cuts prior to third beat, allowing upper voice to stand out.

Measure 3	second beat stress. Break now occurs at the end of the measure, highlighting the cadential measure 4. Contrary to Ravel's distinction between a four measure phrase in the right hand and a three and one measure phrase in the left, Gieseking makes the phrase groups identical.
Measures 5,6,7	second beat chord slightly broken
Measure 8	accelerando on last eighth note into next measure
Measure 9	inner part very distinct yet quiet. Pedal break between second and third beat
Measure 10	stress on second beat, pedal joining second and third beat. Third beat in lower part is detached, setting up the peak of the phrase in measure 11. Diminuendo, no stress on second beat
Measure 12	last two eighth notes detached. No break at end of measure
Measures 13,14	dryness of inner part. Stress on second beat in upper part
Measure 15	accelerando
Measure 16	bass part is finger pedalled. Upper part detached
Measures 17,18	two one measure groups, each with a slight accelerando
Measures 18,19	last two eighth notes lead to upper voice establishing a pattern (2-3-1, 2-3-1, etc.) Quiet bass
Measure 21	downbeat stress, diminuendo on last two eighth notes
Measure 22	down beat stress, last two eighth notes lead to upper voice. Same pattern as previous phrase
Measure 25	like Rubinstein, not "sonore". Gieseking pedals more in the inner parts giving perhaps a warmer more sonorous overall feeling in this measure
Measure 26	pedal cuts again between second and third beats
Measure 27	subito pp, bass note completely absent. Perhaps a mistake. Upper voice, magnificent calm and quiet touch. Accelerando on last beat into measure 29. Minimal ritard until the final measure.

Vlado Perlemuter

Ravel wrote in his score "Dans l'esprit d'une valse de Schubert"
Relationship of parts very clear. Upper voice "très en dehors", bass line secondary, inner part extremely subtle.

Measure 4	diminuendo over third, fourth and fifth eighth notes, lighter touch. Last eighth note is upbeat
Measure 5	inner parts very quiet yet tenor voice slightly more evident
Measure 6	deep bass tone
Measure 7	quieter bass tone

Measure 8	last beat upper voice stressed, giving length. Inner part lighter articulation and accelerando
Measure 9	inner part chords begin to be warmer in tone, the lower voice of the third moving melodically towards the end of the phrase. Upper voice more legato in touch and tone colour is different
Measure 11	colour change causes the diminuendo. Bass part similar to Rubinstein's: Demonstrates the attempt to create swells on individual tones.(transcending the limitations of the instrument)
Measure 10	stress on F, third beat pedal creates a crescendo-diminuendo into quiet G (measure 11)
Measure 12	diminuendo, third and fourth eighth notes lightly articulated. No break at the end of the phrase
Measure 13	more tone in upper voice. Bass line moves this time into third measure
Measure 16	subito p, placed attack in upper part
Measures 17,18	two one phrase groups
Measure 19	upper part exquisite tone. Each dotted quarter is pedalled. Inner chords totally unstressed and quiet. Warmth of bass downbeat, the remainder quiet and unstressed
Measure 21	mp, upper voice
Measures 21,22,23,24,25	internal rhythm changes from 6,6, to 3,3,3,3, and then 4
Measure 23 to end	One long phrase
Measures 25-26	full tone on bass note. All parts decrescendo individually creating a cross rhythmic rubato
Measure 27	subito pp in bass. Upper voice mp
Measures 28-29-30	accelerando, crescendo, slight suspension on downbeat of 29. Emergence of tenor voice, stress on E sharp
Last two measures	slight ritard. Slight wait before final chord

Comparison

Stress on inner parts: Ravel, Gieseking

Quiet harmonic inner parts: Rubinstein, Perlemuter (Casadesus)

Expressive melodic bass line: Rubinstein, Perlemuter (Casadesus, at times)

Quiet, secondary importance: Ravel, Gieseking

Handling of sections:

Joining. eg. Measure 8:
As written: Ravel, Casadesus

Dynamic alteration: Rubinstein
Tempo modification: Accelerando. Gieseking, Perlemuter

Punctuation:

Measure 12: All disregard Ravel's indication to break.
Measure 16: Only Ravel makes a break

Cross rhythm:

Measures 19,20	Quiet, unstressed inner parts: Perlemuter Varying higher degrees of stress: All others

"Sonore":

Measure 25	Bass note and other parts louder: Ravel, Casadesus, Perlemuter Different than indicated: pp: Gieseking, Rubinstein

WALTZ 6

Maurice Ravel

Touch is heavy with off beat accents occurring throughout. Emphasis on top notes.
First two beats: Ravel indicates a precise and highly detailed articulation. (Peculiar double slur in the top part and the harmonic - rhythmic lower part. Lowest dotted half note tied over through the downbeat of measure two. The tenor part (third beat), occurs simultaneously with the upper staccato part, is also tied over. Two measure unit in the bass.) With Ravel's pedalling and articulation it all goes by unheard.
Seems to have great difficulty with voices. He hears counterpoint but his hands play chords. Uniform weight in all parts.

Robert Casadesus

variety of articulations. Hemiola unmarked.

Measures 1,2	upper part second and third beats equally staccato. Lower part very quiet and unstressed. Pedal break at the end of

	measure 2
Measures 3,4	different articulation. Under one slur with third beat staccato. Lower part also in one measure unit
Measure 5	resonant bass note, upper part legato
Measure 7	communicates Ravel's "très doux et un peu languissant" by lightening the articulation in the upper part.
Measure 8	very slight ritard. Definite break in all parts and pedal before au mouvement
Measure 16	pedal held through causing some overlap of dissonances
Measure 19	rolled chords almost imperceptible. Melodic line stands out by being equal and marcato in touch
Measures 20-21	crescendo joins the two phrases
Measure 22	beats one and two marcato and crescendo. Same treatment in next phrase
Measure 29	more pedal. Marcato upper part. Bass cross rhythm brought out by stressing each chord
Measure 31	harmonic bass part
Measure 33	lower part more harmonic this time, less cross rhythmic tension.
Measure 37	mf. Quiet bass no accents. Upper part, two measure phrase unit, unstressed
Measure 39	stress on downbeat marking out new two measure phrase unit
Measures 41-44	beats one and two in upper part are slurred, while the harmonic second on the third beat is very quiet. Four one measure phrase groups against two, two measure units in the lower part
Measure 43	lower part becomes more expressive in tone and the accent on the downbeat of 44 is warm and sustained Last measure pedal held through

Arthur Rubinstein

Variation in articulation. Hemiola unmarked. Very dry pedal.

Measures 1,2	all three beats staccato. Two one measure phrases. Lower part very quiet and unstressed. Two measure unit
Measures 3,4	one slurred group, last note staccato. One measure direct pedalling
Measure 5	left hand chord on third beat, staccato obscuring the hemiola
Measures 6,7,8	long melodic line with a generous ritard at the end. Bass part also one long phrase
Measures 9,10,11,12	a variety of articulations in upper part
Measure 13	same as Measure 5
Measure 16	clarity of upper voice. Clarity of pedalled resonance

Measures 17,18	legato and pedal in both parts
Measure 19	upper part, non legato. Quick rolled chords. Lower parts minimal pedal light staccato articulation
Measure 22	last beat of phrase slightly sustained in both parts
Measures 23,24	less pedal than measures 17,18
Measure 25	internal phrasing in upper part, non-legato touch, lower part unpedalled and staccato, even low bass notes
Measure 28	last note pf phrase more sustained in both parts
Measure 29	F down beat stress in both parts. Hemiola marked out by pedalled length of left hand chords. Last chord softer than first
Measure 32	upper part A sharp!, both times
Measure 37	very quiet bass, no accents. Upper part first two beats slurred, last beat staccato. Two measure phrase unit, last note slightly more sustained
Measures 41-44	down beat stresses. Lower part two measure units with stress on down beat of second measure. Crescendo until measure 44. Slow release of pedal completes the diminuendo
Last measure	no ritard, no fermata, no stress, no added length

Walter Gieseking

Right hand oriented. Extremely subtle unstressed left hand. Minimal pedal. Not much emphasis on binary\ternary cross rhythm.

Measures 1,2	upper part, second and third beats staccato
Measures 3,4	slurred until last beat
Measures 6,7,8	Low G staccato, definition of short phrase groupings in left hand
Measure 8	down beat stress
Measures 13,14	both bass notes staccato. No emphasis on parts
Measure 15	slight ritard, clarity of upper voice
Measure 19	lightly articulated rolled chords. Bass parts very quiet and staccato
Measure 22	last beat of phrase more sustained
Measure 29	lower part mp. Expressive tone, more pedal. Importance of cross rhythm
Measures 31-32	accelerando
Measure 33	a tempo, expressive lower part
Measures 35,36,37,38	accelerando and overlap of phrases
Measures 37,38	slight staccato on last beat of 37, none in 38
Measures 39,40	same stress pattern, rallentando until 45
Measures 41-44	no downbeat stresses, no stress in lower part
Measures 58,59 60	upper part, articulation of each note, slight ritard. Bass part staccato. fine articulation.

Final note lasts complete measure. No pedal, finger release

Vlado Perlemuter

Totally different than all the others. In Ravel d'après Ravel (p 51) describes Ravel's "vif" "Le vif de Ravel n'est jamais bousculé" He explains that the cross rhythm that is absolutely essential in this piece is only possible at a certain speed. He refers to Ravel's insistence on the rhythmic tension and indicates that the only way to achieve it is to make the left hand very evident. Interestingly enough in Measures 1,2 the left hand is quite subtle. However at Measure 9 it is very present. The third beat is heavily stressed, while the upper part is clearly in one measure groups. Perlemuter's tone is magnificent and varied. Not simply a question of articulation as in the others, but of tone colour, stress, part relationships and breath rhythm.

Measures 3,4	deep tone like a bassoon. Both hands stress the down beat
Measures 5,6,7,8	one long phrase in the upper part
Measures 5,6	lower part length of tied bass note, stress on third beat giving it length into the next measure. Pedal cut at end of measure
Measures 7,8	one measure groups tone colour change in all parts
Measure 9	deep tone in upper part. Lower part marked stress on third beat for the hemiola
Measures 11,12	both parts down beat stresses
Measure 13	hemiola
Measures 13,14,15,16	one long phrase in the upper part. pp is achieved through a colour change in the tone. No ritard
Measures 19,20	magnificent legato. Inner melodic lines, on offbeats create a counter rhythm.(A,F,E)
Measures 21,21	echo, no stress, expressive tone in lower parts
Measure 27	echo, diminuendo in tenor line
Measure 29	crescendo. Bass part emphasis on off beat chords Peak in measure 32 in all parts
Measure 35	bass down beat stress
Measure 36	stress in all parts
Measures 37,44	down beat stress in upper part, slides into second beat. Last beat simply harmonic and very quiet
Measure 44	down beat is coloured. Rallentando begins at this point
Measure 51	warmth of pedal and tone on downbeat harmonic C, echoed in Measure 52
Last measure	pedal all the way into next piece

Comparison

Articulation:

Upper part articulation in Measures 1,2 different than following measures: ALL

Second beat staccato:

Rubinstein, Casadesus, Gieseking

Second beat unstressed:

Perlemuter, Ravel

Hemiola and cross rhythms:

Emphasized: Perlemuter
Unstressed: ALL others
Measure 29: Syncopation in lower part: All

Phrasing: Measures 5-8

Overlap of phrases: Rubinstein, Perlemuter
As written: all others

Handling of rolled chords: Measure 19

Subtle: Gieseking, Rubinstein, Perlemuter
Solid: Casadesus

Handling of Melody: Measure 19

Non-legato: Rubinstein
Legato: all others
inner voices: Perlemuter

Handling of transition to recap:

Quiet beginning: Rubinstein, Gieseking
Louder: Casadesus, Perlemuter

Stress on third beat:

None: Casadesus, Perlemuter
Stress: Rubinstein, Gieseking

Downbeat stress: Measures 41-44

None: Gieseking, Casadesus
Stress: Perlemuter, Rubinstein

Pedalling in general:

minimal: Gieseking, Rubinstein
more: Perlemuter, Casadesus, Ravel
eg.(Measures 13,14,19,25)

Handling of final chord:

Pedalled into next piece: Perlemuter
Natural decay into silence: Gieseking
Precisely a half note and rest: Rubinstein
More than a half note and a break: Casadesus

WALTZ 7

Maurice Ravel

Misses peaks eg.Measures 51,53, 61,93,97 etc.

Robert Casadesus

Last measure of preceding waltz, pedal held through till end of measure, then a break.

Measures 4 and 8	pedal held through rests causing a continuous vibration of the C
Measure 13	chord stress
Measure 16	complete silence
Measure 19	quiet bass. Stress in all parts on third beat
Measure 20	quiet lower part, clear pedal exposing the rest. Second beat less stress. Third beat and downbeat of next measure slightly marked
Measure 24	more tone on downbeat. Expressive tone

Measure 25	downbeat softened tone colour, stress on third beat giving length to the syncopation
Measures 27,28	duple rhythm in groups of two
Measures 28-29	no phrase division
Measures 24-30	very quiet bass line
Measure 31	new phrase. Clearer articulation in bass. Third beat dry and staccato
Measure 32	second beat warmer tone colour
Measures 38-39	bass line joins two phrases
Measures 39-40	upper part clear articulation with stress on first note of phrase. Lower part: stress on second beat followed by equal dry staccatos for each chord. Crescendo through the phrase
Measures 41-42	same
Measures 43-44	pedalled stress on low A. Chords are thicker and more pedalled. Upper part sudden accelerando and thickening of tone
Measures 45,46	harsh attack on downbeat. Same articulation as previous two measures
Measures 47-48	stress on downbeat. Impressionistic tenor line. Last beat of phrase, upper part, staccato. Break in pedal at end of measure
Measures 49-50	same
Measures 51-52	less stress on downbeat octave. Warmer tone in upper part. Syncopated pedal from octave to octave. Last two beats of phrase equal and marked
Measures 53,53	rallentando, each chord in measure 54 equally marked
Measure 55	no stress on downbeat. Grace notes: very fast wash of sound. Chord stress on second beat. Last eighth note very short, moving into next measure
Measures 57,58	same with more stress on downbeat of 58 and more stress on each beat, broadening the tempo
Measure 59	"un PEU retenu" . Pedalled resonance of bass octave. Full value of eighth note leading into next measure
Measure 63	staccato on second beat, equal marked stress on third and down beat of next measure
Measure 64	second beat is dry, no pedalled resonance
Measure 66	last note of section is dry and heavily stressed. A complete break follows
Measure 66	upper line brought out. Bass unarticulated. Pedalling is harmonic
Measure 70	pedal is somewhat unclear and lacking in definition
Measure 89	deeper tone on the first beat bass note
Measure 93	strong stress in both parts on downbeat. Bass eighth notes are harmonically conceived
Measures 96,97	melodic notes are equally marcato. Low C is heavily stressed

Measures 98-99	same melodic stress pattern. Low c in Measure 99 is less accented
Measure 104	delay of third beat achieves the pp

Arthur Rubinstein

Last measure of previous waltz: Long silence.

Measure 1	rich tone colour, slight accent on first beat, soprano voice
Measure 4	pedal through rest with slight break before measure 5
Measure 6	downbeat chord held with fingers while pedal changes on third beat. D minor chord resonates through measure 7
Measure 8	pedal through rest, slight break before measure 9
Measure 9	rubato as a consequence of colouring of second beat and slight anticipation of bass note before the chord on the third beat. Cross rhythmic pull
Measures 13,14	upper voice of chords slightly stressed
Measure 16	full measure rest
Measures 17,18	marking out of upper line, pedal on last chord
Measure 19	slight fermata on downbeat. eighth note is very quick, leads to a resonant third beat. Measure 20 second beat is the point of arrival. Bass clear. Third beat is voiced as part of the harmonic sonority
Measure 21	second and third beats clearly voiced upper line
Measures 22,23,24	same Measures 19,20
Measure 24	expressif is legato
Measure 25	diminuendo, quiet bass
Measure 26	new phrase group
Measure 30	last chord is stressed acting as upbeat
Measure 31-32	anticipation of downbeat. Harmonic resonance through the rest
Measure 37	rubato, colouring of each chord
Measures 39-40	warm tone on downbeat. Lower part, energetic touch Measure 40 first and second beat slurred, last beat staccato and slightly stressed
Measures 41,42	same
Measures 43,44	same
Measures 44,45	more legato in lower part, last beat less staccato
Measure 47	moving eighth notes clearly articulated. Divided into groups of three and seven. Last note defined by pedal. Upper part magnificent tone
Measure 50	last two beats in all parts more clearly articulated and defined

Measure 51	deep tone on bass octave. No harshness. Chords in left hand lighter in touch. Upper part eighth note is very light and quick
Measure 59	deep resonant pedalled octaves. Suspended second beat, clearly marked third beat. Eighth note very quick and light
Measure 63	equal, staccato and dry, reminiscent of first waltz
Measure 64	second beat pedalled, lasting into next measure
Measure 66	octave is short and accented
New section	begins with each note articulated
Measure 67	upper voice emerges as most important, as the inner part recedes. Bass line is quiet yet clear
Measure 77	harmonic blending of all parts yet melody still remains clear
Measure 78	top C is brought out, bass becomes very quiet
Measures 86-87	more intensity in inner parts
Measure 89	melody marked out
Measure 90	upper part clearly enters, bass less
Measure 93	bass stress
Measure 97	same
Measure 99	same
Measure 100	ff. Upper part very marked
Measure 101	bass stress
Measures 102,103,104	strong accents on each C
Measure 106	second beat accent is coloured, third beat pp

Walter Gieseking

Final chord of last piece is left to decay naturally. No sudden silence.

Measure 1	slightly more tone
Measure 4	decay without pedal. Slow lifting of the fingers
Measure 7	no resonance of previous chord
Measure 8	similar decay of sound
Measure 9	third beat, lower part anticipates upper part
Measure 16	complete silence
Measure 19	third beat, short, light and dry
Measure 20	downbeat, clear and light. Second beat, placed longer sound
Measures 24-25	expressive upper voice, slight rallentando. Upper and lower parts pulling the beat
Measure 26	accelerando, feeling of a triplet
Measures 27,28	expressive two note slurred groups. All this against a distinct yet light, clearly pedalled bass line
Measure 30	slight catch breath before second beat. Second beat is stressed acting as an upbeat into 31, where the downbeat arrives early

Measure 31	third beat more resonance than first time. Bass clearly articulated in one measure phrase groups
Measure 37	third beat, expressive touch
Measures 38-39	third beat moves gently into downbeat
Measures 39-40	upper part, non-legato articulation, slight break before last chord, which is placed and not too short. Lower part is sustained legato voiced to the top. Pedal breaks at the end of the measure.
Measures 41,42	downbeat stress and the same
Measures 43,44	same
Measures 45,46	same
Measures 47,48	accelerando. Upper part very light, quick eighth note. Last chord leads directly into bass note of Measure 49. Lower part eighth notes impressionistic
Measures 51-52	downbeat stress second measure less
Measure 55	no stress on downbeat, all parts move to accented second beat
Measures 57-58	chords in lower part harmonic
Measure 59	strong downbeat stress. "un PEU retenu" Third beat quieter. Upper part, eighth note has full value moving to downbeat of next measure. Lower octave strongly stressed
Measure 61	bass octave quieter
Measure 63	not dry
Measure 64	downbeat staccato. Second beat light and pedalled, leading to third beat
Measure 65	final three eighth notes come early. Last octave brusque, sudden staccato

New section totally different feeling. Slow swinging rhythm.

Measures 67-70	upper part definitely marked in one measure groups with a stress on the downbeat. The bass similarly cuts slightly at the end of the first measure
Measure 70	entrance of tenor line
Measures 71-74	upper voice is stressed equally on each beat
Measure 74	tenor voice emerges
Measures 75-77	upper voice marked on each with last three melody notes grouped together
Measures 78-82	each melodic tone is bell like, equal and ringing. Last three melodic tones are grouped
Measures 83-86	same, last three tones diminuendo
Measures 87-90	same
Measure 90	high D anticipates the beat
Measure 91	downbeat stress. Lower part grouped in one measure units
Measure 92	upper notes have different articulation and touch
Measure 93	F. Low C very resonant
Measure 96	upper notes not marked. G sharp accelerates into next measure

Measure 98	same accelerando
Measure 100	same accelerando with heavy stress on low C
Measure 104	second beat p
Measure 106	second beat pp

Vlado Perlemuter

Last chord of waltz VI held through with pedal.

Measure 1	energetic tone. Mf. Lower part slightly precedes upper part. Third beat, lower part stressed
Measure 4	pedal held through to measure 5
Measure 5	mp. Third beat, lower part stressed at a lower dynamic level than measure 1
Measures 6,7	each C progressively softer
Measure 8	pedal held through
Measure 9	pp. Third beat, lower part pp
Measure 10	upper voice of chord stressed. Third beat, lower part p, getting softer in the next measure
Measures 13,14	upper voice of chord stressed
Measures 1-16	one long diminuendo and ritard
Measure 16	pedal held through two beats of rest, than finally a break
Measure 17	tone colour
Measures 19-20	upper voice. Melodic continuity between beat three, (no staccato), and beat one and two of measure 20. Crescendo into downbeat of measure 20. Third beat of measure 20 leads into measure 21
Measure 21	entrance of melodic line slightly anticipates the beat. Upper voice brought out
Measures 22,23	same as 19,20
Measure 24	second beat. Expressif: Phrase begins with magnificent deep tone. Superb example of Perlemuter's masterful handling of breath rhythm and compound rubato from 24-30
Measure 29	stress on upper part on downbeat and third beat, last chord in measure 30 softer and slowed down
Measure 31	downbeat placed yet quiet (pp)
Measure 32	pedal on first beat clears the rest. Second beat stress on upper part
Measure 33	stress on second beat begins the phrase
Measure 35	beat two quieter stress than measure 32
Measure 38	second beat, quiet length. of upper voice
Measures 39-40	lower part "Incisive" (Ravel to Perlemuter) Not much pedal. Second beat staccato. Measure 40, downbeat stressed and staccato, second beat direct pedal, no staccato. slight break before staccato third beat. Pedal

	break at the end of measure.
Measures 41-42	no staccato on second beat. Longer stress on fourth beat of two measure phrase. Deeper tone than previous two measures. Light release on staccato of sixth beat
Measures 43-44	same
Measures 45,45	same
Measures 47-48	quiet bass note. Upper line legato and unstressed. Different touch and tone than previous eight measures
Measures 49-50	legato upper part, slight stress on fourth beat
Measures 51-52	bass octave only mf. Slight break between third and fourth beat in upper part. Beat five and six more stress. Sixth beat broken chord
Measures 53,54	beat five and six equally placed with sixth chord broken
Measure 55	fermata on second beat. Depth of tone and stress on all parts. Harmonic bass. Third beat light eighth note
Measure 256	second beat harmonically stressed
Measures 57,58	same
Measure 59	tremendous deep resonant bass octave stress. Second beat rolled chord with tenor line marked out. Third beat, tenor line marked out. Upper part eighth note moving into next measure
Measure 61	bass octave f
Measure 63	downbeat staccato. Second beat stressed and pedalled for harmonic resonance
Measure 66	pedal. No silence between sections
Measure 67 etc.	quiet bass. Upper voice legato and "en dehors"
Measures 70-71	alto voice diminuendo, change in articulation
Measures 77-78	upper voice diminuendo
Measure 78	entrance of high C deeper tone
Measures 81-82	marked out, length of tone in upper voice
Measure 83	tone colour
Measure 86	length of sustained upper voice
Measure 90	melody note quiet tone
Measures 92-93	definition of two outer parts, Measure 93 definition of all three parts. Bass is defined on each eighth note and moves towards third beat
Measure 94	colour change, mf
Measure 97	crescendo in bass while alto decrescendos
Measure 99	same
Measure 101	change in articulation in alto
Measure 102	colour on upper voice. Mf and very present. Each melody note is brought out.
Measure 104	lower voice, second beat strong stress. Upper voice mf
Measure 106	lower voice, second beat strong stress, upper voice mezzo forte tone to begin the diminuendo

(an example of Perlemuter making changes in Ravel's indicated dynamics in

order to better achieve Ravel's musical intention). Using the piano's potential to the fullest.

Comparison

Handling of rests and silence:

Measure 4:
No silence: Ravel, Casadesus, Rubinstein, Perlemuter
Decay of chord without pedal: Gieseking

Measure 16:
Complete measure rest: Gieseking, Rubinstein, Casadesus, Ravel
Minimal break: Perlemuter

Rubato: Measure 9:

Bass note preceding upper part: Rubinstein, Gieseking.

Handling of stress of third beat and implied resonance: Measure 19

Resonance over rest: Ravel, Rubinstein, Perlemuter
Clear and dry: Casadesus, Gieseking.

Fermata on downbeat: Rubinstein
In time: all others

Handling of cross rhythm: Measure 27

Groups of two: Casadesus, Gieseking
One long unstressed phrase: Rubinstein, Perlemuter, Ravel

Phrasing: Measure 30-31

Last chord upbeat and anticipation of downbeat: Rubinstein, Gieseking.
One phrase ends new one begins: Perlemuter, Casadesus

Dynamic stress of lower part: Measure 39

Crescendo-diminuendo: Gieseking, Perlemuter
crescendo: Casadesus, Rubinstein

Articulation of running eighth notes: Measure 47

impressionistic: Casadesus, Gieseking
melodic: Rubinstein, Perlemuter

Peaks: Measure 59

Sustained fermata: Rubinstein, Perlemuter
less sustained: Casadesus, Gieseking, Ravel

Handling of cadence: Measure 63

Articulation: all different

Pedalling of low octave: Measure 64

Dry: Casadesus
Pedalled: all others

Articulation of final chord: Measure 66

Pedalled warmth: Perlemuter
Dry: all others

Handling of legato upper voice: Measure 67

Highly defined melodic pulse and internal stress: Gieseking
Long legato line: all others

Peak: Measure 93

Steady marcato melodic build-up: Perlemuter, Casadesus, Rubinstein
Changes in articulation and pacing: Gieseking
Weakening: Ravel

Dynamic stress: Measure 104

Mezzo forte: Perlemuter
Pianissimo: all others.

WALTZ 8

Maurice Ravel

The direction and clarity of chord breaking is random
In general pedal is heavily used. Some unusual breaks:

Measures 34-34	releases tied chord on downbeat of 35, completely losing it.
Measure 45	complete break in pedal

Robert Casadesus

Measures 1-2	bass tone quite deep and resonant. Pedal blurring the harmonies between the third and first beats
Measures 3-4	clearer pedal
Measure 5	bass voice full sound and quite present. Una corda. Upper part is quiet unvoiced chords
Measure 6	third beat stress in both parts
Measure 7	release of una corda and change in tone colour. Upper voice
Measure 10	slight blurring of harmony
Measure 12	clearer
Measure 13	pp, una corda, impressionistic, unvoiced chords
Measure 15	release of una corda, slight stress on bass note
Measure 16	second beat stress. deeper tone, resonant marked out bass
Measure 19	bass less defined, upper voice coloured
Measure 22	some pedal blurring
Measure 23	resonant bass tone
Measure 24	clearer pedalling
Measures 25-26	slight delay of downbeat. Three note rhythmic units move to third eighth note in both parts
Measure 27	stress falls on first of each group. Bass is quiet
Measure 28	stress on second and third beat moving into downbeat of 29. Deep tone
Measure 31	resonant bass note
Measure 32	some pedal blurring
Measure 33	slight delay of downbeat. Unstressed chords, equally voiced in all parts
Measure 35	third beat stressed
Measures 36-37	marked out bass
Measure 37	emergence of tenor voice. Marcato upper voice
Measure 38	rolled chord emphasises inner voice rather than top
Measure 42	last sixteenth note is rhythmically like the eighth notes in measure 43

Measure 43	first group: 3 unpedalled staccatos and a tenuto. Next three groups pedalled, some blurring
Measure 45	slow broken octave
Measure 46	no stress on downbeat. Unvoiced chords. No blurring with pedal held through
Measure 48	resonant bass. Balancing of parts in chords. Some pedal blurring
Measure 50	slight stress on third note of each group
Measure 51	light articulation, staccato, of third. Lower part triplets richly pedalled
Measure 52	second and third beats of triplet blended harmonically
Measure 52	second beat, bass stress, upper part anticipated
Measure 53	fourth, fifth and sixth eighth notes marcato
Measure 54	first, second and third eighth notes marcato, last three less so. Third beat in the bass held with sostenuto pedal
Measure 55	clear resonance of bass tone from previous measure (sostenuto pedal) Upper parts damper pedal
Measure 57	upper voice
Measure 58	some pedal blurring between second and third eighth notes
Measure 59	heavily pedalled. Unvoiced. Sustained legato in upper part
Measure 60	second beat pedal, third beat no pedal and staccato articulation
Measure 61	upper part non-legato, detached
Measures 62-72	resonant bass notes all having a similar tone colour. Last two measures each bass tone is softly coloured
Measure 66	stress on third beat
Measure 67	stress on third beat brings out tenor voice. No ritard until end of Measure 71

Arthur Rubinstein

Measure 1	chords unvoiced
Measure 3	stress on third beat
Measure 5	gentle. Upper voice
Measure 6	lower voice stress on downbeat
Measure 7	stress on lower voice downbeat. Upper voice some stress on eighth notes as they move to the next beat
Measure 8	pedal break at end of measure
Measure 13	chords are unvoiced and equal
Measure 16	not much stress on second beat. Mp dynamic
Measure 17	upper voice deeper tone
Measure 18	second beat softly coloured
Measure 19	quiet eighth notes
Measure 20	end of measure pedal break
Measure 21	unvoiced chords

Measure 26	stress on the first of each group with a slight break at the end of each
Measure 27	longer tone on first eighth note as part of a six beat phrase. Completed on the downbeat of measure 29
Measure 31	low note stressed
Measure 33	pp. Chords unstressed, unvoiced and resonating
Measure 36	no stress on second beat
Measure 37	gently expressive. some stress on second eighth note in upper part. Counterpoint between upper melodic line (G, F sharp, F natural, E) and soft yet clear tenor line
Measure 38	slowly rolled chord, no stress
Measures 41,42,43	one phrase. Descending alto voice. Lower part, third beat of triplet slightly resonating each time. Last sixteenth note in upper voice acts as upbeat into measure 43
Measure 43	first group staccatos and one tenuto, second group two staccatos and two slurred notes, third group more pedal and all notes slurred slightly tenuto on the last, fourth group the same
Measure 44	last beat stressed and resonant
Measure 46	first beat stressed and resonant, picked up by the F in the G sharp minor seventh on the downbeat of measure 47
Measure 48	low G pedalled through, Chords unvoiced
Measure 50	slight stress on the first of each group
Measure 51	soprano B beautiful tone colour. Lower voice triplets very quiet
Measure 52	low voice unstressed. Upper voice equally marked on each
Measure 54	no "cédez" Last eighth note coloured
Measure 55	no resonance of low G's. Each melodic note pedalled
Measure 57	upper voice. Rubato. Quiet chords in lower voices
Measure 59	very slow. The eighth note of the triplet is the same as the eighth note of the duple. Upper voice is suspended on each long tone of the triplet
Measure 60	lighter articulation on the downward run. Second beat group two staccatos and two slurred notes, third beat group all staccatos
Measure 66	stress on third beat
Measure 67	quiet downbeat
Measure 70	lightness of articulation on eighth notes
Measure 71	pedal lifted on third beat, giving colour to the D which is picked up in the next measure and then again, with a fermata in the next. The last two low G's very quiet

Walter Gieseking

Similar in feeling to the second waltz. Same kinds of anticipation and stress as well as pedalling.

Measure 1	absolute clarity of harmony of each chord. Pedal on each
Measure 2	a feeling of movement between the last beat of measure 2 and the first beat of measure 3
Measure 3	slight break in the pedal preceding the downbeat of measure 4
Measures 4-5	slight hurrying from third to first beat
Measure 5	clear simple tone
Measure 6	slight stress on third beat upper voice
Measure 7	downbeat upper voice quieter. Second and third beats more placed
Measures 10-11	same slight hurrying
Measures 11-12	same slight hurrying
Measure 16	not much stress on second beat. Bass movement. Hurrying over the measure line
Measures 17-18	lower part, stress on third beat and hurrying over the measure line. Upper voice slight stress on last eighth note of measure 17 and second eighth note of measure 18
Measures 18-19	third and first beat equally placed without anticipation
Measure 20	second beat, broken chord
Measure 22	third beat slightly anticipates the beat.Hurrying over the measure line
Measure 24	same
Measures 25,26,27	three note groups, last note slightly staccato
Measure 29	deeper tone
Measures 30-31	hurrying over the measure line. and anticipation of entrance of second beat
Measure 32	third beat anticipated
Measure 33	entrance of second beat slightly delayed
Measures 34-35	acceleration and hurrying in all parts
Measures 36-37	resonant tone of bass notes
Measure 37	stress on second eighth note upper voice. Deeper tone. slowly rolled chord
Measure 39	quiet bass
Measure 41	dwelling on downbeat in all parts
Measure 43	upper voice first group, all staccato, second group more legato, third beat staccato fourth beat staccato. Quiet bass not sustained. Third beat staccato
Measure 46	no stress on downbeat
Measure 50	light touch, clear pedal, slight movement toward second sixteenth of each group
Measure 51	upper voice
Measure 52	lower part clear pedal
Measure 52	equal touch on each eighth, quiet bass
Measure 53	first three eighths equal, last three eighths slight acceleration
Measure 54	two low G tones sustained through first beat of 55. Pedal every half measure. No staccatos

Measure 56	last half measure no pedal
Measure 59	marked out eighth notes for ritard. Stress on second beat in upper and lower parts. One phrase till second beat next measure. Measure 60 second beat all staccatos, voiced parts
Measure 61	slurred groups of two, voiced parts
Measures 63-43	hurrying over the measure line
Measures 65-66	perfectly in time over the measure line
Measure 69	upper voice, slight pedal break preceding downbeat Measure 70 slight stress on downbeat
Measure 71	slight pedal break preceding downbeat
Measure 73	third beat resonates through last measure

Vlado Perlemuter

Measures 1,2	voiced chords, deep sound. Low A resonates all the way through without blurring. Subtle adjustments in pedalling. Last Measure 2 third beat chord very quiet
Measures 3,4	third beat and downbeat slightly stressed. Bass D very quiet, third beat very quiet
Measures 5,6	downbeat bass note deeper tone while the remaining bass melody is quiet yet present. Upper voice is placed and defined on each note
Measure 7	second eighth note upper voice has deeper sound
Measure 8	first beat, slightly suspended. Second and third beats, coloured and slowing down
Measure 9	upper voice blending with harmonic chords of lower parts
Measure 11	upper voice mf
Measure 13	right hand chords unvoiced. Beats two and three slurred and diminuendo
Measure 14	slight stress on downbeat. Third beat stress on upper voice and lower voice
Measure 15	chords unvoiced
Measure 16	second beat upper voice stress
Measure 17	quiet downbeat. Upper voice deep tone. Offbeat melodic line brought out. Crescendo
Measure 18	second beat harmonic dissonance brought out
Measure 19	inner parts coloured and ritard
Measure 21	resonant bass, upper voice
Measure 23	more resonant bass, upper voice
Measure 25	all parts unstressed
Measure 28	last two beats marked and leading into downbeat of 29
Measure 29	bass note, deep growling tone. Duet between upper voice of right hand and upper voice of left hand chords
Measure 33	bass note coloured as a gong. Upper voice

Measure 37	movement into bass note from preceding measure. Duet between the tenor and the soprano
Measure 39	last eighth note stressed as upbeat into measure 40
Measure 41	all parts legato and unstressed. Sixteenth notes very light. Aware of inner melodic line moving down through the registers
Measure 43	upper voice. First group: stress on first note, third and fourth staccato, Second group: third note slightly stressed and slurred to fourth, Third group: same with less stress on third note, Fourth group: same with more stress on third note
Measure 46	downbeat F brought out. Grace notes melodically lead into a stressed second beat, voiced to the top. Pedal held through measures 46-47, no blurring
Measure 48	blending of upper voice of right hand with upper voice of left hand
Measure 50	tenor voice. Two larger phrases with a slight stress on the third two note group. Upper part quiet and unstressed
Measure 51	light articulation on the grace note. First beat upper part absolutely magnificent tone. Lower parts quietly harmonic
Measures 52-54	bass quietly resonating through, unstressed. Upper voice deep tone each eighth note equal and marked out with slightly more tone on the third of each group. The last group is more legato with a diminuendo between the first and second eighth notes. The last eighth note of measure 54 is stressed with a marvellous coloured attack which keeps it resonating.
Measure 55	bass from preceding measure resonates through till measure 57. Upper voice, full, resonant tone equal on each eighth note, no staccato. Lower part quiet and clear
Measure 57	bass picks up resonance. Upper voice very present, mf. internal phrasing moves towards second eighth note of measure 58. This chord is slightly rolled. and then slight accelerando and ritard towards second eighth note of measure 59. This chord is slightly broken. Lower voices are brought out from second beat of measure 58
Measure 59	subito piano. Upper voice, light touch and tone colour, delicate sixteenth notes. Lower part lightly articulated
Measure 60	slight stress on first note of downward run. Lighter and sharper articulation. Second beat: deep tone, mezzo piano, quite marked and equal, not staccato
Measure 61	pp, slurred legato. Third beat bass note stressed
Measure 62	quiet downbeat. Upper voice
Measure 66	third beat very resonant stress (mp) lasting through until it is picked up on the third beat of the next measure

Measure 71 slight stress on the down beat of the melody. Third beat D is stressed and resonates through, as does the third beat D in measure 72 which is quieter, and the third beat D in measure 73 which is still quieter

Comparison

Sustain of low tone:

Blurring pedal: Ravel, Casadesus
no sustain, no blurring: Gieseking
some sustain, no blurring: Perlemuter, Rubinstein

Dynamic stress: Measures 1,2

Crescendo-diminuendo: Rubinstein, Gieseking, Perlemuter
Equal: Ravel, Casadesus

Voicing of chords:

Measures 1,2:
Upper voice: Geiseking, Perlemuter
unvoiced: Casadesus, Rubinstein, Ravel

Measure 13:
unvoiced through whole phrase: Casadesus, Rubinstein,
unvoiced/voiced: Perlemuter
voiced: Gieseking

Handling of first cadence point:

Ritard: Perlemuter, Gieseking, Ravel
Pedal break: Rubinstein
Delay of downbeat: Casadesus

Très expressif: Measure 16

Tone colour: Rubinstein, Casadesus, Ravel
Tempo and tone and part relationships: Perlemuter
Rubato of parts: Gieseking

Cross-rhythm: Measure 25

unstressed: Perlemuter

pronounced shifting of stress: Casadesus, Gieseking
short groups/longer groups: Rubinstein
accelerando: Ravel

Tenor voice melody: Measure 37

all

voicing: Measure 29

Parts: Perlemuter
Upper voice: all others

Articulation: Measure 43

all different

Articulation: Measure 52

all highly articulated, all colouring last note in varying degrees.

Pedal tone resonance: Measure 55

Held through: Perlemuter, Casadesus
half measure: Gieseking
none: Rubinstein

Dynamic stress: Measure 54

Mezzo piano: Perlemuter
Pianissimo: all others

Au mouvement: Measure 59

subito tempo and dynamic change: Perlemuter, Gieseking, Ravel
no subito change: Casadesus, Rubinstein

APPENDIX 4
Historical Recordings (1912-1939)[1]

For further reference, a number of rare piano rolls and early recordings of the music of Maurice Ravel are available at the following institutions. These document performances by the composer, his colleagues and other contemporaries who recorded during the opening decades of the twentieth century.

France:	Phonothèque Nationale, Paris
	Bibliothèque Nationale, Département de la Musique, Paris
Great Britain:	British Institute of Recorded Sound, London
United States:	Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
	Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York
	Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.

The following is a selected listing:

Menuet antique

1920 Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist*
L'Édition Musicale Perforée (France), Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) RA1802

Pavane pour une Infante défunte

(1912)[2]	Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist* Aeolian, Pianola (Great Britain, United States) TL21204
1913	Perforated Piano roll, *Rudolph Ganz* Solodant (Germany) 14748
1920	Perforated Piano roll *unidentified artist* L'Édition Musicale Perforée (France), Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) RA2813
1922	Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Duo-Art (Great Britain, United States) 084
1925	Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Dumesnil* Pleyela (France), Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) AP5269
(1926)	Perforated Piano roll, *E. Robert Schmitz* Ampico (United States) 65473H

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[1] Orenstein, Ravel Man and Musician 247.

[2] approximative date

Jeux d'eau

(1912) Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist* Aeolian, Pianola (Great Britain, United States) TL20183; 65 notes, L2459

1919 Perforated Piano roll, *E. Robert Schmitz* Duo-Art (United States) 6199

1920 Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist* L'Édition Musicale Perforée (France), Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) RA1799

1921 Acoustical Disk, *Alfred Cortot* 30 cm. Victor (United States) 74659,6065, Gramophone (Great Britain, India) 05657, (Great Britain, France, Holland) DB643

(1923) Acoustical Disk, *Walter Gieseking* 30 cm. Homocord (Germany) 1-8446

1925 Perforated Piano roll, *Suzanne Welty* Pleyela (France), (Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) AP8746

1928 Electrical Disk, *Robert Casadesus* 25 cm. Columbia (France) D13054, (United States) 1864D, 2080M

1928 Perforated Piano roll, *E. Robert Schmitz* Ampico (United States) 69383H

1928 Electrical Disk, *Madeleine de Valmalète* 30 cm. Polydor (France, Germany) 95176

1932 Electrical Disk, *Alfred Cortot* 30 cm. Gramophone (Great Britain, France) DB1534, Victor (United States) 7729

Sonatine

I *Modéré*
II *Mouvement de menuet*
III *Animé*

1913 I,II Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Welte-Mignon (Germany) C2887

1923 Perforated Piano roll, *Mieczyslaw Horszowski* Pleyela (France), Aeolian (France) and Odéola (France) AP815638

(1928) II Perforated Piano roll, *Dimitri Tiomkin* (issued privately without serial number) Ampico (United States) N12; roll reissued in 1973

1931 Electrical Disk, *Alfred Cortot* 30 cm. Gramophone (France, Great Britain) DB1533/4, Victor (United States) 7728/9

1932 Electrical Disk, *Franz Joseph Hirt* 25 cm. Gramophone (Germany) EG1762/3, (Great Britain) B4127/8

Miroirs

I *Noctuelles*
II *Oiseaux tristes*
III *Une Barque sur l'océan*
IV *Alborada del gracioso*
V *La Vallée des cloches*

(1912) V, Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist* Aeolian, Pianola (Great Britain, United States) TL21117; 65 notes, L2859
1922 II, Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Duo-Art (Great Britain, United States) 082
1928 V, Electrical Disk, *Franz Hirt* 25 cm. Gramophone (Germany) EG815
(1928) II, Perforated Piano roll, *Dimitri Tiomkin* (issued privately without serial number) Ampico (United States) N12; roll reissued in 1973
1929 V, Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Duo-Art (Great Britain, United States) 72750
1930 IV, Electrical Disk, *Marcelle Meyer* 25 cm. Columbia (France) LF11

Gaspard de la nuit

I *Ondine*
II *Le Gibet*
III *Scarbo*

1922 II, Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Duo-Art (Great Britain, United States) 0219
(1924) I, Perforated Piano roll, *Walter Gieseking* Welte-Mignon (Germany) 3831
1937 I, Electrical Disk, *Walter Gieseking* 30 cm. Columbia (Great Britain) LX623, (France) LFX539, (Australia) LOX354
1939 II, Electrical Disk, *Walter Gieseking* 30 cm. Columbia (Great Britain) LX772, (France) LFX580, (Australia) LOX509
1939 III, Electrical Disk, *Walter Gieseking* 30 cm. Columbia (Great Britain) LX813, (Germany) LWX282, (Australia) LOX432, (United States) set X141 (I, II, III)

Valses nobles et sentimentales

1913 Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Welte-Mignon, (Germany) C2888

Le Tombeau de Couperin

I *Prélude*
II *Fugue*
III *Forlane*
IV *Rigaudon*
V *Menuet*
VI *Toccata*

1920 Perforated Piano roll, *unidentified artist* L'Édition Musicale Perforée, (France), Aeolian (France), and Odéola (France) RA1798, RA1800/1
1922 VI, Perforated Piano roll, *Maurice Ravel* Duo-Art (Great Britain, United States) 086
1922 III,V Acoustical Disk, *Charles Scharres* 30 cm. Gramophone (France) L297
1928 IV, Electrical Disk, *Victor Staub* 25 cm. Odéon (France) 166045
1933 Electrical Disk, *Madeleine de Valmalète* 25 cm. Polydor (France) 522754/5, Decca (Great Britain) PO5088/9, Brunswick (United States) B85027/8 30 cm. Polydor (France) 516577, Decca (Great Britain) LY6079, Brunswick (United States) B90337
1935 III, Electrical Disk, *Arthur Rubinstein* 30 cm. Gramophone (Great Britain, France) DB2450

Concerto pour la main gauche

1938 Electrical Disk, *Jacqueline Blanchard*; Orchestre Philharmonique de Paris, *Charles Munch*, conductor 30 cm. Polydor (France) 566192/3, (Germany) 67192/3, Decca (Great Britain) X204/5, Fonit (Italy) 91077/8, Vox (United States) set 168
1939 Electrical Disk, *Alfred Cortot*, Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts du Conservatoire, *Charles Munch*, conductor 30 cm. Gramophone (France, Great Britain) DB3885/6, Victor (United States) 15749/50 (set M629)

1932 Electrical Disk, *Marguerite Long*, Orchestre Symphonique, *Pedro A. de Freitas-Branco*, conductor 30 cm. Columbia (France) LFX257/9, (Great Britain) LX194/6, (United States) 68064/6D (set M176), Odeon (Germany) 0-9413/5

Of particular interest are the recordings made on disc by three pianists, all of whom studied under the tutelage of the composer.

Robert Casadesus, (1955, CBS 13062-4)
Jacques Février, (1972, ADES 7041-4)
Vlado Perlemuter, (1961, VOX VBO 410 1-3; 1077, NIMBUS 2101-3, reissued CD NI 5005, 5011)

Appendix Five
Methodological Considerations

The analyses of recorded performances used in this study were conducted over a period of five years (1991-1996) in collaboration with my principal advisor, Professor Philip Cohen. Our research was organized as follows: The material was listened to both independently and collaboratively. Data was tested and verified minimally twice each week. (While it is impossible to say with any precision, the total number of hours of listening required by this study was in the thousands). The analyses themselves were divided into two stages.

a) Each piece of music, or movement was listened to its in entirety in order to experience the performance as a whole and to identify the particular relationships that stood out as most characteristic of the performance in question. These preliminary listenings occurred at a minimum of five times at each sitting. Metronomic tempo indications were compared to actual performed tempi. Notated dynamic patterning was compared to performed dynamics. Notated indications for phrasing, stress patterning, articulations, pedalling and related textual aspects were compared to those as performed on the recording. A preparatory sketch was completed at this point.

b) Differences from the given text most characteristic of the individual performance were then listened to and notated symbolically in a minimum of four sittings of ten repeats each. Tempi, and internal rhythmic variants were

noted through the use of standard metronomic indications as well as musical terminology denoting rhythmic movement, e.g., accelerando, ritard, rubato, etc. Dynamic patterning that differed from the text was notated — in as much as it was possible to assign an unambiguous symbol to sonority in motion — through the use of standard musical symbols, e.g., *pp* (pianissimo), *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). Phrasings that differed from the text were indicated by a standard slur denoting the performed melodic groupings. Stress patterning, articulations and pedalling that differed from the notated text were indicated by both standard musical symbols, e.g., accent, tenuto, fermata, staccato, legato, marcato and syncopated pedalling, etc., as well as specially coined symbols designed to indicate specific agogic modifications. These are defined in the Legend: Symbols Indicating Performer Generated Structuring (page xi).

The system of performance analysis adopted is a modification of a technique originally developed by Professor Cohen, primarily for work in aural perception. This involves representing relationships within a given performance with coloured markers; however, this colour code system was not felt to be entirely appropriate for the present study. In the process of analysis it became increasingly clear that any attempt to be highly precise in the symbolic or graphic representation of absolute qualitative totalities that distinguish one performance from another was not only unwieldy but a distortion of the very nature of the findings. Therefore, while the analyses do identify and compare certain specific and even determining aspects of individual performances through the use of graphic and symbolic terms, the

focus throughout has been on *relative* differences, in particular, those crucial aspects of a performance which defy reductive representation.

In our selection of recorded performances, we took into account the variability in reproductive fidelity between recordings spanning over three quarters of a century (refer to chapter five, *Recorded Performance: A New Direction in Musical Communication* for a more detailed discussion of the recordings used in this study). For example, the primitive, "authentic" acoustical recordings made in the early decades of this century do not reproduce the subtleties of a performance demanded by the present study. Furthermore, there is some controversy over the "authenticity" of certain available recordings of Ravel's own performances of his music. While, testimony by Ravel's contemporaries unanimously attests to the remarkable precision of the Welte-Mignon recording system upon which the composer recorded his own compositions, certain writers see problems in assessing the reliability of the transfer process of these piano rolls to long-playing discs. Maurice Hinson, for example, points to the discrepancies between metronome markings as indicated by the composer in the text and those on the Sony Superscope recording of Valses nobles et sentimentales (recorded by Ravel on the Welte-Vorsetzer system in 1913) as problematic[1]. However, Hinson's argument, based on random inconsistency, becomes less convincing when we consider that the percentage of discrepancy in notated and performed tempi is inconsistent from movement to movement. Rather, the discrepancies reinforce

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[1] Maurice Ravel, preface, Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, by Maurice Hinson (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., n.d) 8.

one of the basic premises of this thesis, namely that creative variability is inevitable in complex musical performance.

The analyses were conducted using four different playback systems. It became clear that variation in speed, sound quality and pitch occurred from one system to the other. Initial comparative listening was performed using a Sony stereo recorder CFS-210, a Rotel integrated stereo amplifier RA-8208, Philips compact disc player CD471, and Lenco turntable L1333 and a Toshiba Stereo sound system SL 3358. However, for the principal analyses reported in this thesis, Bryston amplifiers, Tascam tape recorder 122 MKII and Tannoy speakers were used. These are state of the art equipment, located in the Leonardo Research Project facilities at Concordia University.

IMAGE EVALUATION
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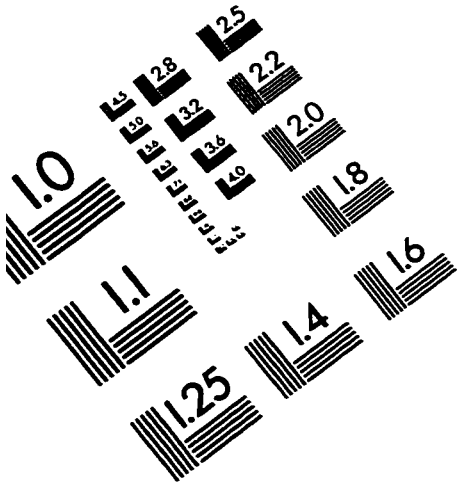

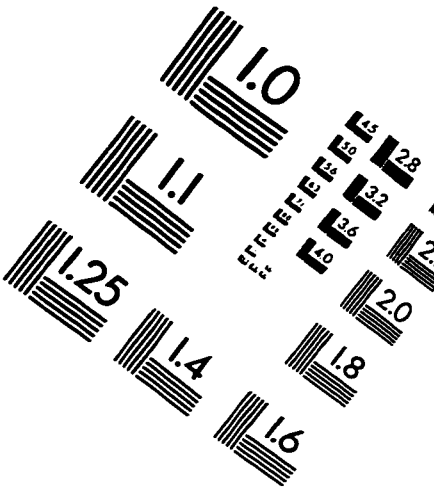

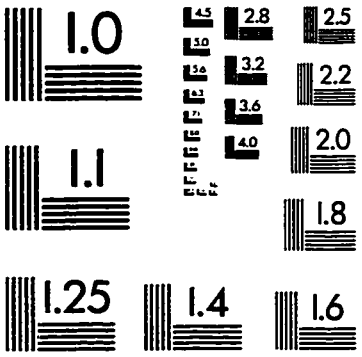

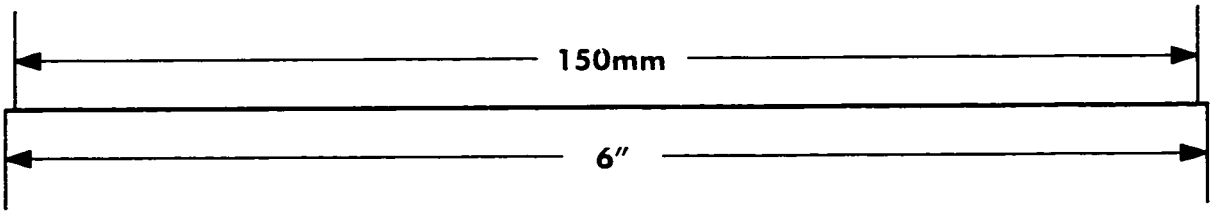

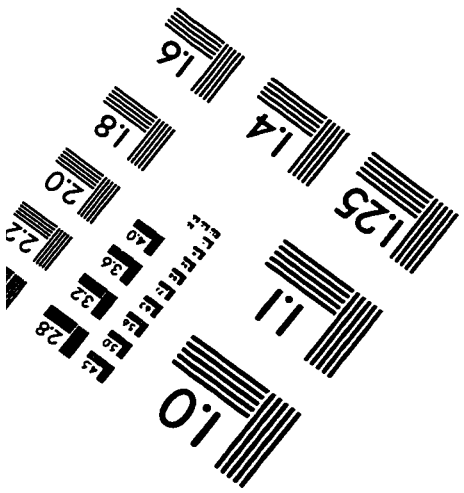

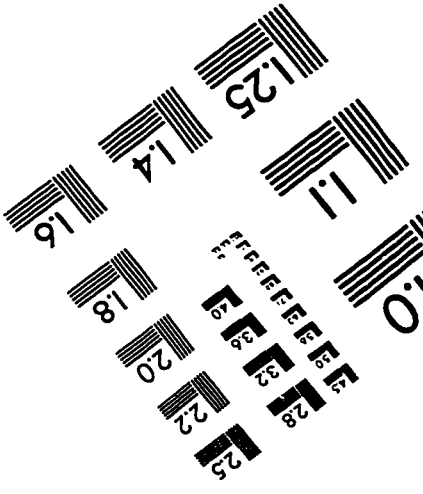

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