

*F: Notes on
Debussy's Apres midi*

Name

Debby

Date

Apres midi

Subject and Section

Instructor

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~~Debussy, Claude: Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune~~

This composition of the year 1891 brings into focus the developing techniques that set the stage for Debussy's most mature style. The title suggests a program. It is drawn from the poem by Mallarmé. Primarily it is the music provides ~~an~~ an ambience, the representation of the mythological ~~faun~~ ^{faun,} half-man, half-beast, ~~the faun~~ by a main theme. This theme, first given by stated by the solo flute, ~~of~~ reappears again and again throughout the composition providing the thread of continuity. The diffuse quality ~~that creates~~ characterizing the ~~programmatic~~ ^{this style of impressionism is} ~~is~~ ^{achieved through} Thus, which the composition creator is primarily concerned with the effect of atmosphere rather than the unfolding of a series of events.

The reiteration of an identifying theme, fused with
and a ~~tonal structure clearly identified~~
unifying tonal structure combine to
create a wash of musical order with
dependence on other sources.

Orchestration & ~~After~~ Woodwind, including Bassoon
English Horn, 4 French Horns - 2 Drums and
String - no percussive effect cymbal at
end of movement & timpani
use of harps.

French Horn Woodwind - take a dominant
position (together with F. Horns.)

Strings - atmospheric. use 1 double
bass 1st & 2nd violins & violas last
part.

Expression
Main Theme prominent in winds. A
subordinate theme first - to violin solo. violin re-
enters theme at end.

delicate & dynamic shadings.
specific expressive markings e.g. doux
et expressif.

Special performance indications: sur la touche
bris en dehors (Fr. horns)

Rhythm

Figurations

Changes in meter - maintaining same basic
pulse, change framing for greater
convenience & groupings

Design: Continuous - restatement of Theme
4 in whole and in part. never the same -
follows shape but not always within
some interval - also sometimes it is exact
but starts on different tones. Vertical support
is almost always different.

No strict development.

Structure and Form

Theocratic reiteration with varying
(changes) or change of color. with episodes.
Continuity: ^{working} fragments. - with
reaffirmance of the main theme - from theme.

Subsidiary themes - ~~with one exception~~
for the most part they are aware of having
character

6 Harmonic counterpoint devices. ^{after} Brahms.
chromatic
prolonged chords frequently. chord
combining consonance and dissonance; swell
neighbor-tone motions: The sonority of the
chord, its color becomes almost an end in
itself: This, combined with the subtle
relaxation... orchestral colors. Brahms

Tonality: The tonal center is in clear cut

Emotion: The motions are not obvious and there are almost no immediate tonic-dominant relationships. Leading-tone chords are minimal - The motions are more subtle.
3 positions frequently substituted for root positions.

Form: While the design is continuous,

the structure clearly divides itself into

two parts: I moving to V + ~~attained~~
(at bar 30), attained ~~with~~ through its
own dominant; I rejoined at bar 79.

The last 17 ~~measures~~ bars constitute a Coda,
the tonic prolonged, the V coming
briefly in the 6th bar from the end.
