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Paul Dukas's Music-Text Aesthetics: A Study of its Sources, Theory and Practice, 1891-1907
Paul Dukas’s Music-Text Aesthetic: A Study of its Sources, Theory and Practice, 1891–1907

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2008

Laura Watson

Trinity College Dublin
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Summary

This thesis examines the sources, theory and practice that inform the music-text aesthetic of the French composer Paul Dukas (1865–1965). Three major strategies were used in this project to determine the main principles of the aesthetic.

The first involved an investigation of the relevant source material. I analysed Dukas’s autograph scores, manuscripts of his early unpublished music and fragments of later abandoned works. Many of these documents had never been studied before. The insights that they yielded proved essential to developing a model of the composer’s aesthetic and to contextualising the remainder of my research.

My second method entailed undertaking a focused study of Dukas’s critical writings published between 1892 and 1905. As part of this, I translated (many for the first time) a significant amount of these texts from French to English. An overarching theme in the articles was the relationship between music and text in programmatic, poetic and staged contexts. Thus, the key areas that defined the composer’s aesthetic were pinpointed in this section of my work.

Finally, I applied the above findings to my analyses of three of Dukas’s text-based works. The creation of the overture Polyeucte (1891), the symphonic poem L’Apprenti sorcier (1897) and the opera Ariane et Barbe-Bleue (1907) all paralleled the theoretical development of the music-text aesthetic as seen in the composer’s writings. I therefore explored to what extent a relationship existed between Dukas’s public opinions on music and his private means of composition.

As the major finding of the thesis, it was revealed that the composer’s music-text aesthetic systematically encompassed his philosophical and practical approach to the literature-inspired musical forms of the concert overture, symphonic poem and opera; and that it represented the crucial element of Dukas’s artistic outlook.
Acknowledgments

This thesis could not have been written without the support of several individuals and organisations. First of all, I wish to express thanks to my supervisor Simon Trezise for his interest, patience and practical encouragement over the past four years.

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Finally, thanks to friends, family, especially my parents Brenda and Richard, and Damien Conlon for their generosity, faith and love throughout the years.
For Damien
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Biographical background

Paul Abraham Dukas (1865–1935) was a French composer, critic, editor and teacher. Born in Paris, where he spent most of his life, he enjoyed a cultured upbringing in which his musical ability was encouraged, although he showed little interest in composition until his teenage years. Dukas may have inherited his talent from his mother Eugénie (née Gompertz), an accomplished pianist who died when the composer was five years old.1 Her husband Jules Dukas (1828–1915) was a banker by profession—as was his other son, Dukas’s elder brother Adrien. Not much is known about their sister Marguerite. The composer was very close to Adrien and became stricken with grief when he died unexpectedly in 1908. Adrien, too, was well versed in the arts and especially knowledgeable about Wagner.2 Jules Dukas, meanwhile, was an authority on aspects of French literary history, publishing at least two books on the topic.3 The composer’s attraction to the great writers more than likely stemmed from this source; he definitely consulted his father on linguistic and literary matters.4

As his name suggests, Dukas was not originally of French extraction, but his paternal Jewish relatives, as records in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) show, had been settled in France for at least three generations. Starting with his

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2 In 1891 Adrien wrote a letter to Paul that contained a lengthy critique of Parsifal at Bayreuth; in 1896 he sent him a similar review of Walküre [Carnet W52 (6), Département de la Musique, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF)]. Adrien also offered Paul advice on the art of music criticism. See Paul Dukas to Adrien Dukas, 8 July 1892, Correspondance de Paul Dukas, Georges Favre (ed.) (Paris: Durand, 1971), 14.
3 Jules Dukas, Recherches sur l'Histoire Littéraire du XVe siècle (Paris, 1876) and Étude Bibliographique et Littéraire sur le Satyricon de Jean Barclay (Paris, 1880). Recherches was reprinted in the late twentieth century (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1978). Jules held a Diplôme de Bachellier ès lettres from Université de France [Carnet W52 (3), BNF].
4 See discussion of Dukas’s abandoned music-drama La Tempête in chapter two.
great-grandfather Abraham, three members of his family, including his grandfather Isaac and his father, were honoured for their distinguished involvement in the French military.\textsuperscript{5} Paul, however, thoroughly disliked his brief stint in the 74\textsuperscript{th} infantry regiment at Rouen during 1889–90.\textsuperscript{6} Nonetheless, such a proactive role in the country’s affairs, coupled with a weakening attachment to their Jewish heritage, signified that the Dukas family wished to integrate fully with French society.\textsuperscript{7} The nationalist aspect of the composer’s identity, however, is far from being a settled issue. Five years after his opera \textit{Ariane et Barbe-Bleue} (1907) had been performed, Claude Debussy (1862–1918) remarked that it was a ‘masterpiece, but not a masterpiece of French music.’\textsuperscript{8} Dukas had known Debussy since 1885. Along with a host of other musicians with whom Dukas would stay friends and write about in his columns, they were students at the Paris Conservatoire. Théodore Dubois and Ernest Guiraud were Dukas’s most important teachers there,\textsuperscript{9} where he was narrowly defeated in his endeavours to win the Prix de Rome in 1888.\textsuperscript{10}

In many ways, the composer’s aesthetic was in sympathy with that of Vincent d’Indy (1851–1931) and his music institution, the Schola Cantorum. D’Indy’s emphasis on the history of the art, its basis in plainchant and his reverence towards Wagner, as expressed in the volumes of his text, the \textit{Cours de composition musicale},

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\item Carnet W52 (1–3), BNF.
\item Helen Julia Minors, ‘\textit{La Péri, poème dansé} (1911, Paul Dukas) in its cultural, historical and interdisciplinary contexts,’ (Ph.D. diss., Lancaster University, 2007) 10, n. 24. Minors notes that Dukas’s remains were interred in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, but not in the Jewish quarter.
\item Letter from Claude Debussy to Vittorio Gui, 1912, quoted in Jane Fulcher, \textit{French Cultural Politics and Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 178. In light of these complications, the tendency of the French press to celebrate Dukas for his pure, patriotic, symphonic style merits further investigation.
\item He once remarked that he hoped their influences could not be discerned in his composition. See a letter from Dukas to an unknown recipient, 9 December 1893, Favre, \textit{Correspondance}, 22.
\item Ironically, Guiraud was one of Dukas’s strongest advocates when the Prix came to be decided. In June 1888 he communicated to a colleague his feelings of surprise and deception that Dukas had not been awarded the prize, particularly in light of a previously encouraging discussion about the young composer. Ernest Guiraud to A. Marmontel, 27 June 1888, JOB/JPB 91–3, New York Public Library (NYPL), New York. Camille Erlanger (1863–1919) won the competition that year.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
accorded with Dukas’s views. The composer’s friendship with both Debussy and d’Indy is symbolic of his overall position in the French music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While he never relinquished his interest in Wagner, Franck and those other figures cherished by d’Indy, he was equally excited by the innovations in French music spearheaded by Debussy. Up until the outbreak of World War I, Dukas straddled the worlds of traditional form and novel harmonic language with ease. In particular, L’Apprenti sorcier: Scherzo d’après une ballade de Goethe (1897) and Ariane were simultaneously committed to the solid tonal plans of their Classical predecessors and to contemporary experimentation with the whole-tone scale. Dukas’s diplomatic personality, and perhaps an awareness of the non-French aspects of his background, meant that he refrained from reacting against Germanic music in the manner of d’Indy, or against Wagner specifically, as Debussy did. There is little to suggest, though, that Dukas was insecure about his Jewish background or that he experienced anti-Semitism. In any case, he was able to assimilate a long, Austro-Germanic tradition in a way that was alien to other French composers. At the same time, his talent for inventive orchestration and penchant for floating, unresolved harmonies meant that his music comfortably leant itself to comparison with early modern practices.

Paralleling his most prolific years as a composer was Dukas’s activity as a music critic. From 1892 until 1932 he wrote reviews and essays for numerous Parisian publications, although he was most productive in the years surrounding 1900. Just as his compositional style mirrors his meditative, sensitive character, so too the critiques reflect his thoughtful, tactful personality. Like Dukas’s creative work, his articles are grounded in an aesthetic of Classical form, Romantic expression and cautious innovation. While open-minded about the music he
encountered, above all he endorsed that which embodied structural coherence and original expression. His erudite analyses gained him the particular admiration of Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), as well as other composer and critics. The essays also contributed to the belief that Dukas was essentially an intellectual composer which, as we shall see below, had ramifications for the reception of his music. On a negative note, it is difficult to suppress the sense that the composer’s acute critical faculties caused him to take an unfairly dim view of his own output: a few months before his death he burned all his manuscripts that displeased him.\footnote{Rollo Myers, Modern French Music: its evolution and cultural background from 1900 to the present day (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 59. According to Myers, when Dukas’s friend Georges Enesco asked what would become of the remaining sketches the composer replied, ‘my dear George, I’ve burnt them all.’ (‘Mon cher Georges, j’ai tout brûlé.’)}

After the ‘choreographic poem’ La Péri (1912) Dukas composed only a few, small pieces that he was happy to have in the public domain. The reasons for this seem to have encompassed both the professional and the personal. As Modernism took hold, with ‘the shedding of a veneer of objective aesthetic norms and conventions … and the explicit distortion of traditional expectations [emerging] as legitimate responses to the irrationality and cruelty of contemporary life,’\footnote{Leon Botstein, ‘Modernism,’ in Stanley Sadie (ed.) The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 16 (London: Macmillan, 2001), 871.} Dukas felt progressively more isolated from compositional trends. An article he published in 1923 exposed his bewilderment at twentieth-century society’s expectations of composers: he resented the threat to musical integrity posed by the intrusion of external forces.\footnote{Paul Dukas, ‘Les Tendances de la musique contemporaine,’ (Courrier musical, 1923) Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique (Paris: Société d’éditions françaises et internationales, 1948), 666–72. See chapter three for more discussion of this article.} As an occasional editor of works by those such as Rameau and Beethoven for his publisher Jacques Durand, Dukas was still keenly engaged with the music of previous eras.

On a more mundane level, another explanation for his retreat from music’s
centre stage was his changing domestic situation. Following the death of his father, Dukas married former nurse Suzanne Pereyra (1883–1947) on 11 September 1916 at the age of fifty-one.14 She gave birth to their daughter Adrienne (named after the composer’s brother) on 12 December 1919.15 Hence, Dukas’s withdrawal from the forefront of the creative scene seems to have been motivated by practical as well as artistic considerations. He maintained, nevertheless, a high profile through his role as a pedagogue. In the early 1900s Dukas had taught classes on orchestration at the Conservatoire—and in 1913 Fauré appointed him professor of composition there.16 He remained in this post until the end of his life, occasionally presenting lectures at the Ecole Normale de Musique too, where he gave his last class a few hours before a fatal heart attack.17 Olivier Messiaen (1908–92), his most illustrious student, applauded his capacity as a composer and teacher. In recognition of his immense, if sometimes indirect, contribution to French musical life, Dukas was elected to the Académie des Beaux Arts in 1934 in succession to Alfred Bruneau.

Dukas in sound and words: the impetus for a study of his music-text aesthetic
Dukas’s life corresponded to an era of radical change for French music. One of the main nineteenth-century proponents of ‘music of the future,’ fellow Frenchman Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), was still alive when Dukas was born. Another native composer, Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921), instigated major progress in the country’s music when he co-founded the Société Nationale de Musique in 1871. A golden age of French music from around 1890 to 1910 saw musicians venture in diverse directions, although they were primarily inspired by Debussy’s revolutionary

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14 Carnet W53 (21), BNF. Pereyra’s sister Marie-Louise was a musicologist who had graduated from the Schola Cantorum with a second-class degree signed by d’Indy, Carnet W53 (22).
15 Carnet W53 (34).
16 Myers, Modern French Music, 59–60.
post-tonal œuvre. This was a major influence on Dukas too. The younger composer left his own mark on this era with *Ariane*: Edouard Dujardin (1861–1949) claimed that the work resonated with ‘the spiritual history of the époque’.  

Through *La Péri* the composer contributed to the revival of ballet in the second decade of the twentieth century. Within a few years of the end of World War I, however, much of the vanguard of the movement in which Dukas had participated had died. Furthermore, in the 1920s ‘Modernism and neo-classicism were allied through a common rejection of all forms of Romanticism,’ which left little room for Dukas’s attachment to the late nineteenth century. In Paris, the composer observed the output of ‘Les Six’ and their contemporaries from the sidelines. Amongst the artists discussed in the *Ecrits* essays, Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) is the only one of ‘Les Six’ to feature. Other key figures working in France such as Charles Koechlin (1867–1950) and Eric Satie (1866–1925) are not mentioned anywhere, while Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) is admired but not fully understood, as we see below. There is not a single reference to the Second Viennese School. In the end, Dukas would be viewed as a bridge figure, occupying the space between late Romanticism and early Modernism. Specifically, his music, tinged with whole-tone colour and exoticism, as well as an attraction to literature that included French Symbolist poets, meant that he came to be associated with the *fin de siècle* milieu.

Dukas’s fame is usually linked to a single work that embodies this milieu: *L’Apprenti sorcier*. Prior to *Sorcier*, the composer’s first published score, *Polyeucte: Ouverture pour la tragédie de Corneille* (1891, first performed 1892), had been well-received in Paris, as was its successor, the Symphony in C Major (1896). By the end of the 1890s, though, Dukas was becoming troubled by the fact that his name tended

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19 Botstein, ‘Modernism,’ 871.
to appear on concert programmes only in association with Sorcière. He wrote to one concert director:

Thank you for your intention to perform Sorcerer. I would much prefer the Symphony, which has not been played since the Opera, but I am happy to take what you offer me. 20

This may have sparked his decision to test his skills at abstract music. Whilst writing Ariane the musician also produced two solo works for the piano, a Piano Sonata in E Flat Minor (1901) and Variations on a Theme by Rameau (1903). Both confirm the musician’s immersion in a historical, Classical aesthetic. In particular, the weighty, four-movement Sonata pays homage to Dukas’s idol, Beethoven. The French pianist Alfred Cortot, describing the piece as ‘this magnificent edifice of sound,’ said that it represents one of the most important efforts ever made to adapt Beethovenian characteristics to the French pianistic style. 21 Rollo Myers also favourably compared the 1901 work to Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations. 22 The structured, cerebral logic of these works connects to the equally architectural nature of the 1896 Symphony, and all three scores have contributed to scholars’ notions of Dukas as an intellectual rather than emotional or sensual composer.

Indeed, much of the acclaim that greeted Ariane’s 1907 premiere was reserved for the music’s ordered, symphonic style. However, Dukas’s last major work, the ‘poème dansé’ La Péri indicates that Ariane might have benefited from being judged in a wider stage context rather than on mostly musical terms. Péri was almost destroyed by the composer, and it is a measure of his perfectionism that he published very little in its aftermath, despite living for another quarter of a century.

20 Letter from Paul Dukas to Joseph Guy-Ropartz, 27 December 1899 in Favre, Correspondance, 33. ‘Merci pour votre intention de monter le Sorcière. J’aimerais mieux la Symphonie, non jouée depuis l’Opéra, mais je suis heureux de prendre ce que vous m’offrez.’
22 Myers, Modern French Music, 58.
His smaller occasional works comprise a Villanelle for horn and piano (1906), a Vocalise-Etude for voice and piano (1909), two solo piano pieces (Prélude Elégieque sur le nom de Haydn, 1910; La Plainte, au loin, du faune, 1920) and Sonnet de Ronsard for voice and piano (1924). The abandoned (presumed destroyed) scores include a second symphony, a violin sonata, a symphonic poem and four operas (Horn et Rimenhild, L’Arbre de science, Le Nouveau monde, La Tempête). His abiding interest in music-drama suggests that rather than celebrating the large-scale abstract works in order to balance the popular notion of him as a writer of a well-known piece of representational music, it would be better to acknowledge the reality that Dukas’s compositional ideal was a combination of the two, with Ariane the surviving example.

Ariane, as we have mentioned, garnered much praise, as did the Sonata. Debussy admired it, while some prominent pianists of the day (Blanche Selva as well as Cortot) championed it through performance. Therefore, while Sorcier certainly enhanced the composer’s reputation a great deal, it would be to wrong to suggest that it was wholly dependent upon it. After the composer’s death his standing declined, for various reasons, but today there are promising signs of a reawakened interest in Dukas’s œuvre. Since 2004, new discs of the same works lauded at the dawn of the twentieth century, the Sonata and Ariane, have appeared. The latter has also undergone a recent revival at the hands of major opera companies. In particular, its centenary year has led to renewed curiosity: not only was a contemporary recording released in 2007, but the Opéra-Bastille in Paris

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23 His review of the work is mentioned in chapter three.
25 Stage performances of the work have recently been given in Switzerland, 2004; New York, 2005; Paris, 2007.
staged a new production in the autumn. If the complexity of the Sonata and opera appear to sit strangely with the accessibility of *Sorcier*, it is because we still await a full re-evaluation of Dukas’s output. This dissertation, in offering an assessment of the composer’s text-based music from his earliest work (*Polyeucte*) to that which represents the apex of his abilities (*Ariane*), partly aims to redress this problem.

Little attention has been given to the importance of literature, philosophy and drama in the life of this most learned French musician. While it is widely recognised that he was a keen reader of Goethe, Nietszche and Shakespeare, researchers tend to ignore the resonances of those writers in Dukas’s music, even in the works explicitly inspired by certain authors. To an extent, this is a reflection of the composer’s own perspective on the music-text relationship: he was a vociferous critic of those *littérature* who insisted on grounding an interpretation of Wagnerian music-drama in the realm of words rather than sound. The major reason, however, that commentators (particularly in the composer’s native country) marginalised the presence of text in the three selected works was ideological. Once the Société Nationale was established, instrumental forms were emphasised as the French musical ideal. The model narrowed further in the 1890s, following César Franck’s three-movement Symphony in D minor (1889); this abstract form with its attendant links to French classicism became widely extolled. D’Indy’s writings on the nationalistic significance of the form also had a vital effect on how symphonic music was perceived. Dukas’s own symphony happens to be a tripartite construction. Whether this was intended as a gesture of patriotic allegiance is unclear, but the ‘purity’ of *Ariane*’s symphonic music was exploited by those in the press intent on reading it as further evidence of France’s role in the world of instrumental music. The libretto that accompanied the score was substantially excluded from discussion
about the merits of *Ariane*.

A hint of this agenda may be detected in the reception of *Sorcier* too. More than one critic praised its viability as a piece of ‘pure’ music, which is testament not only to the reigning symphonic hegemony but also to the unsteady footing of programme music in France at this time. As an overture, and one by a then-unknown composer, *Polyeucte* did not stir any controversy. In effect, the way in which music and text functioned in any of the works was never thoroughly examined by the *fin de siècle* French press. One might argue that it was not the critics’ place to do so. Nevertheless, there was one commentator who considered it his duty to explore the relationship between music and text in both instrumental and stage works: Dukas himself (though he never deigned to comment publicly on his own processes).²⁶

The music-text interaction was, in fact, the focal issue in his writings, especially during the years spanning 1892–1905, a period marked at one end by the recent completion of *Polyeucte* and by the closing stages of his work on *Ariane* at the other. In these essays, Dukas develops theories about programmatic instrumental music, traditional opera and Wagnerian music-drama. Not only do these ideas act as a barometer of French critical thought: as a large swathe of Dukas’s compositional career was devoted to the creative realisation of this aesthetic, they also become imperative to an appraisal of the composer. I label these theories and subsequent creative manifestations his *music-text aesthetic*.

**Explorations of Dukas’s music-text world in twentieth-century performance**

Dukas reception in the twentieth century beyond France was influenced by the music’s presence in the concert hall, performance in the theatre and appearance on

²⁶ Dukas’s single discussion of his own work (an essay on *Ariane*) was first published in the special *La Revue musicale* tribute to the composer in May 1936 and reprinted in a collection of his articles in 1948. See ‘*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*: Moralité a la façon des contes de Perrault,’ (1910) *Ecrits*, 623–7. However, this text was actually written as a private letter to Robert Brussel in 1910.
the cinema screen. Polyeucte has never featured prominently in concert programmes, but Sorcier and Ariane have both been the subject of intriguing re-workings which shed further light on their intertextuality. During the Second World War, the composer’s Jewish provenance caused him to disappear from concert programmes in Europe. In America, however, conductor Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957) staunchly continued to play Jewish composers, notably Dukas, with whom he seems to have once been personally acquainted. Sorcier figured regularly in his concerts, and in two recordings: one with the New York Philharmonic in 1929 and another with the NBC Symphony Orchestra in 1950. His involvement with Ariane was drawn out across many years too.

He conducted the opera’s US premiere at the Metropolitan in 1911 and its Italian debut at La Scala some time before 1929. Uniquely, he also arranged the opera into a suite which was played as the central part of an NBC programme featuring Franck’s Rédemptions: Symphonie Interlude and Debussy’s La Mer. Dating from the 2 March 1947, this suite is just over twenty-one minutes long and, like Toscanini’s Sorcier, offers a sparkling, rhythmic and vivacious account of the music. According to Mortimer H. Frank, the impetus for the Suite arose from the fact that Toscanini ‘came to judge [the complete opera] a dull work. But he believed

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27 JOB/JPB 89.2 No. 2, Toscanini Legacy, NYPL. This is a one-page sketch of Dukas’s Piano Sonata in E Flat Minor. On the top of the sheet Dukas has written a short note to Toscanini in English. Unfortunately, it is largely illegible but it does makes reference to ‘The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,’ in that language, and ends ‘?!’
28 18 March 1929, New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, RCA 60317; 19 March 1950, NBC Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall; RCA 60322. Ray Burford characterises the difference between the recordings as follows: ‘The 1929 Philharmonic-Symphony record is [...] famous for its drive and controlled fire, and considering the brevity of the work it is surprising that the NBC performance is slower by almost two minutes.’ Ray Burford, ‘Discography,’ in Denis Matthews, Arturo Toscanini (UK: Midas Books, 1982), 143.
29 Matthews, Toscanini, 113.
that passages were worth preserving. The criteria that went into selecting what parts of the score were suitable for the arrangement points to the influence of Ariane's symphonic reception. The suite is entirely orchestral until approximately four minutes before the end, when a female chorus chants the single set-piece, 'Les cinq filles d'Orlamonde.' A soprano then sings a few of Ariane's lines and the music builds to a climax, which bears a strong resemblance to the close of the full version's Act I. Indeed, the entire suite sounds like it came from that act, which is not in itself surprising since this section contains all the important musical motifs.

While Toscanini played a part in legitimising the abstract, symphonic ideology of Ariane's reception, his conductor contemporary Leopold Stokowski (1882–1977) arguably did the opposite with Sorcier. He was approached by producer Walt Disney in 1937, who was hoping to revive interest in the Mickey Mouse character by making a short cartoon. This eventually expanded into the feature-length film Fantasia (1940), which used the music of several composers as the backdrop for animated vignettes. Stokowski was enthusiastic about using Dukas's work and even mooted the possibility of 'writing an overture on its themes and of expanding it through various other compositional devices.' A recording of Sorcier made towards the end of that year by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra became the basis for the soundtrack.

However, the music was severely edited (it is not known by whom) to accompany the onscreen events. While Stokowski is unlikely to have been

32 Frank, Toscanini, 154.
34 Chassins's discography states that the piece was recorded on 7 November 1937 for Victor (WDX; VM 171).
35 In January 2006 I gave a paper on this topic at the Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference at the University of Leeds. 'Stokowski and The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Fantasia's Interpretation of Paul Dukas Reconsidered' analysed in detail the cuts that were made to the music. See Appendix I for a table of differences between Dukas's Sorcier and the one featured in Fantasia.
responsible for the final cut, he did encourage the cartoonists to think of the music in a strongly visual way. According to one writer:

[Stokowski] emphasized that whereas the element of repetition is strong in music and welcome to the ears, it is both boring and tiring to the eyes. Consequently, he cautioned the animators and cameramen to avoid using the same shots and angles when the music is recapitulated. They followed his advice (to good advantage) and won great praise.36

As it happens, the most heavily cut parts of the Dukas soundtrack are repetitions of phrases. It is a pity that the worldwide and enduring success of Fantasia (a new edition was released in 2000) contrives one of the composer’s best works as a somewhat simplistic piece of ‘descriptive’ music.37 The upshot of this, though, is that it seems to have spurred academics into serious study of the work.

A century of scholarship on the composer and his music-text aesthetic

A wealth of general resources on French music is available to those who wish to study Dukas. Martin Cooper’s post-World War II book remains an excellent starting point for researchers, situating the composer in relation to his contemporaries and the turn of the century milieu, and offering some incisive commentary on his music.38 In dealing with Dukas however, such texts tend to categorise the work composed at the peak of his powers (Ariane) as the more symphonic (and therefore conservative) relation of Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande (1902). This consensus is a reflection of the ideology that coloured contemporary French reception of the composer. It is neatly summed up in Henry de Busne’s assessment of Ariane, which deemed it to consist of an ‘absolutely modern and original form’ that managed ‘all the while to remain faithful to tradition.’39 His comment that it was ‘less a revolution than an

36 Chassins, Stokowski, 173.
37 Dukas argued that descriptive music was of a lower order than programme music in the 1894 article ‘Music and Comedy’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 1894). See chapter three for more.
evolution’ in opera confirmed Dukas’s position as an artist on the cusp of old and new.  

Louis Laloy, another critic, concurred with this opinion. Contrasting *Ariane* to *Salome* (1905) by Richard Strauss (1864–1949), he condemned the German composer for pushing Wagner’s ideas to their final limits. On the other hand, he congratulated Dukas for writing music that was ‘developed according to the eternal laws of the recollection of motifs and of variation.’ By doing so, he emphasised Dukas’s strong connections to the past and played down his innovative attributes. This appears to have been the mainstream view, despite what Ricciotto Canudo claimed in an article published around the same time. He argued that Dukas, Debussy and Strauss formed ‘the triad of new musical drama,’ with Dukas thus classed as one of music’s ‘eminently modern thinkers.’

Whatever about the composer’s perceived modern credentials in 1907, the case was less clear-cut after the First World War. As the proscription of his works during the short period of the German occupation of Paris was not to blame for this, it appears that there were deeper cultural shifts taking place. Octave Séré’s *Musiciens français d’aujourd’hui* was published in 1921. It charts the musical trends in post-war Paris. Séré impresses upon us the sense of music being pulled in two different directions: back to the familiar and forward to an age which ostensibly had no anchor in the past. The latter tendency jarred with Dukas’s philosophy of musical progress.

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(3). ‘La partition que vient d’écrire M. Dukas [...] est d’inspiration et de forme absolument moderne et originale tout en demeurant fidèle aux traditions.’

40 *Ibid.*, 5. ‘Cette œuvre marque moins une révolution qu’une évolution.’

41 *Ibid.*, ‘Elle est [...] un poème symphonique, développé suivant les lois éternelles du rappel des motifs et de la variation.’


In 1903 Dukas claimed that ‘there is no such thing as new music. There are only new musicians.’

New music, he continued, was still grounded in the past:

The words ‘new lyricism’ [...] do not specify that music has changed its nature, but only that musicians’ sensibilities today are inclined towards different applications than previously.

He linked this change to the evolution of modern society, arguing that an understanding of how this affects music meant that new lyricism could only be understood ‘in light of the old.’

This seamless view of music was at odds with the artistic disarray that writers such as Henry Prunières later identified (see below).

Séré, it must be said, noted that Dukas was still a respected force, owing to the ‘probity, conscience and laborious effort’ that were hallmarks of his œuvre.

Despite the plaudits, though, and the acknowledgment that L’Apprenti sorcier remained a concert-hall staple, his treatise exudes the sense that Dukas would not figure in the future of French music.

André Cœuroy’s text Panorama de la musique contemporaine, written in 1930 when Dukas was still endeavouring to compose, agreed with Séré’s verdict. It recognised the musician mostly for his contribution to the younger generation—his advisory role to Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), for example, is mentioned. By the year of Dukas’s death, Henry Prunières spoke of the ‘arduous task’ of defining the current ‘chaotic’ tendencies in music. The composer was seen as a kind of musical

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45 Paul Dukas, ‘Le nouveau lyrisme,’ (Minerva, 1903) in Ecrits, 578–89 (578). ‘Il n’y a pas de musique nouvelle. Il n’y a que des musiciens nouveaux.’
46 Ibid. ‘Des mots “nouveau lyrisme” [...] ne spécifie pas que la musique ait changé de nature, mais que la sensibilité des musiciens d’aujourd’hui lui veut des applications différentes de celles où l’inclinaient les musiciens d’autrefois.’
47 Ibid, 579. ‘Nous ne comprendrons le nouveau lyrisme qu’à la lumière de l’ancien.’
48 Séré, Musiciens, 168. ‘Son œuvre musical commande le respect et admiration pour la probité, la conscience, le laborieux effort d’art dont il témoigne.’
49 André Cœuroy, Panorama de la musique contemporaine (Paris: Editions Kra, 1930). 43. ‘Les critiques avides de découvrir les influences répètent que si Falla [...] sait le prix de la brièveté délicate, du trait souple et des proportions mesurées , c’est à Debussy et à Dukas, ses conseillers [...] qu’il en est redevable.’
Degas ‘between the impressionists and the traditionalists’—he was classified retrospectively, in other words. Nevertheless, he could still make a direct impact at this time, as René Dumesnil’s recollection of the revival of *Ariane* at the Paris Opéra on the 28 January 1935 demonstrated. It is also a measure of Dukas’s influence that another reworking of *Ariane* as late as 1968 (also its earliest recording) was delivered by the conductor and composer Tony Aubin (1907–81), another one of his former Conservatoire pupils. These foregoing texts illustrate that there are rich possibilities for those wishing to investigate Dukas.

Only four books, however, are devoted solely to the composer. These are dotted across a century and are not contemporaneous with the volumes outlined above. They fall into the life-and-works variety of scholarship and, as the composer produced comparatively little after *Péris*, therefore tend to be rather sparse on details about Dukas after the war. Perhaps because the man lived a relatively uneventful life, published a select amount of works and dealt with not much more than a handful of key ideas in his writings, biographers have striven to cover the whole range of his art. Georges Favre, one of Dukas’s Conservatoire students, authored the most important of these (1948, revised 1969), and the texts that have appeared since then add little of novelty to our knowledge of the composer. Favre’s monograph contains valuable recollections of the composer as a teacher, thematic analyses of his major works and a short discussion of his criticism—its English translation would still be a

51 *Ibid.*, 32. ‘Paul Dukas, indépendant, a joué un peu le rôle de Degas entre les impressionnistes et les traditionalistes.’
52 Dumesnil, *La Musique en France*, 115. ‘La reprise d’*Ariane et Barbe-bleue* par l’Opéra le 28 janvier 1935 eut, au moins dans le monde des musiciens, un retentissement considérable.’
most useful asset to researchers today. There has never been a single book published in English on Dukas. Favre also edited a selection of Dukas’s personal correspondence and reprinted some of his earliest articles with informative commentary in the 1960s and 1970s.55 Again, these are confined to the French language.

For a good overview of the key facets to Dukas’s music and personality, the main source apart from Favre is a special edition of the journal *La Revue musicale* from 1936.56 This is packed full of tributes from Dukas’s friends, colleagues, students and admirers. It includes such names as Messiaen, Joseph Guy-Ropartz, Robert Brussel and Edouard Dujardin, all of whom talk about the composer with great affection. He is variously described as very private, highly intelligent and conscientious. *Revue* also deals with separate strands of his output, such as the piano music, symphonic works and opera. The dramatic substance of the latter is covered in a vivid, thought-provoking essay by Messiaen. Another important item related to *Ariane* here is the first complete publication of the essay Dukas wrote for Brussel in 1910 about the opera’s message. The *Revue* is also useful for those seeking to work on the composer’s critical writings, as it features the most comprehensive listing of Dukas’s articles anywhere.

The research avenues explored in the *Revue* were not followed up systematically. Study of the composer during the middle of the last century remained sporadic and uneven. In a small way this may be attributed to the precarious position of Jewish musicians in Europe during the Second World War. However, even after this event, the two decades between Favre’s biographies remained barren in terms of

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56 *La Revue musicale*, 157 (1936).
new research. The most notable contribution marked the centenary of Dukas's birth: to coincide with an exhibition at the BNF, François Lesure compiled a catalogue of sources that relate to several of the composer's works and which are housed in the library.\(^{57}\) These are still accessible and valuable today.

The relationship between music and text has not traditionally formed a large part of Dukas reception but this has the potential to change. The next major study of the composer would ideally incorporate a significant critique of his writings on that topic. Many of his essays were collected in an extensive volume in 1948. Only a few have ever been the subject of English translation.\(^{58}\) A comprehensive study of the articles has the scope to add serious depth to our knowledge of the composer. In the last thirty years, there have been occasional, concerted efforts by American scholars to grapple with aspects of Dukas's music-text paradigm. These have mostly developed within the focused environs of doctoral work.

The earliest dissertation, by Everett Vernon Boyd, studied *Sorcier, Ariane* and *Péri* mostly from a formal analytical perspective with the role of the text relegated to that of a minor consideration.\(^{59}\) Importantly, Boyd succeeded in illustrating the links between each of the works and traced the lines of Dukas's compositional development. The centrality of *Ariane* to the composer's œuvre was accentuated in William Angus Moore's work six years later.\(^{60}\) The strengths of Moore's work include an exploration of the composer's Wagnerism as seen through

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\(^{58}\) A handful of essays have been translated, or are at least partially quoted in commentaries on the composer. This will be discussed in detail in chapter three.


\(^{60}\) William Angus Moore II, 'The Significance of Late Nineteenth-Century Wagnérisme in the Relationship of Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin. A Study of their Correspondence, Essays on Wagner, and Dukas’s Opera *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*’ (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1986).
his articles, a basic analysis of the *Ariane* libretto and a motivic exploration of the opera.

Mary Heath, in her comparative analysis of Dukas’s *Ariane* and Bartók’s opera *Duke Bluebeard’s Castle*, posited a model of the work as a modified sonata-rondo form. This, however, is not supplemented with insights from the libretto, which results in a dissatisfying separation of music and text.\(^61\) Julie McQuinn revisited the *Ariane* libretto as part of her enquiry into discourses of gender and sexuality in *fin de siècle* opera.\(^62\) She concluded that there is a feminist voice in the work, but her findings prove problematic in light of the fact that she does not take into account the modifications that Dukas made to the text. Prior to this, Anya Suschitzky had also studied the libretto, with her main focus on the potent political significance of its symbols. She postulated that for the composer the image of light, in particular, stood for ‘a kind of truth, freedom and aesthetic guidance.’\(^63\) More generally, she saw *Ariane* as representative of the French nation on stage at the turn of the century.

Study of Dukas beyond these dissertations has mostly succeeded in returning *Sorcier* to the musicological spotlight. In 1989 (rev. 1991), as part of a treatise on music and narrative,\(^64\) Carolyn Abbate tackled both Dukas’s score, and the Johann von Goethe’s ballad on which it was based, *Der Zauberlehrling*. Her controversial approach, I shall argue in chapter five, was not wholly successful. A year later, James Parakilas addressed *Sorcier* within similar parameters. He contended that the

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\(^62\) Julie McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses of Gender and Sexuality at the Opéra-Comique during the Belle Epoque’ (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University 2003).


symphonic poem could be located within the instrumental ballade tradition. Carlo Caballero responded to both these commentaries (especially Abbate’s) in 2004 with the suggestion that *Sorcière* was essentially a musical manifestation of the Freudian psychological phenomenon of the uncanny rather than an instance of musical narrative.  

Caballero’s research into the composer is not limited to the 1897 work. His book *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* probes Dukas’s writings on originality and sincerity as part of an effort to frame Fauré’s output as a musician. More recently still, the composer’s essays have been appropriated for use in Berlioz scholarship. Christian Goubault has also located the articles within the framework of the French musical press between 1870 and 1914. While it is heartening to see the growing recognition of Dukas’s worth, a comprehensive evaluation of his writings on their own terms has yet to be seen. Admittedly a daunting task in light of the several hundred articles thought to exist, some progress has been made in this regard. Helen Julia Minors utilised Dukas’s concept of drama, as articulated in selected essays of his on the theatre, in her reading of the composer’s last large-scale work, *La Pé ri.* This imparts a more rounded view of that composition.

One of the more noticeable gaps in the study of Dukas, especially regarding his music-text aesthetic, concerns *Polyeucte.* Only Palaux-Simonnet has discussed the overture in recent years. As the first work that the highly perfectionist musician saw fit for public consumption, it deserves greater scrutiny. The absence of literature  

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69 Minors, ‘*La Pé ri.*’
on significant stages in Dukas’s œuvre is indicative of the pressing need for research in the area. More specifically, *Polyeucte* immediately precedes the critical-compositional dialogue surrounding music and text that characterised the composer’s career during the decades either side of 1900. It is thus a key subject of enquiry here.

**Scope of dissertation**

This dissertation appraises Dukas’s music-text aesthetic through the following ways:

Part I explores the manuscripts, sketches and miscellaneous documents concerning the literature-inspired music (chapter two) and dissects the composer’s relevant critical writings (chapter three). Chapter two’s preliminary investigation into compositions in their developmental states exposes music-text relationships not necessarily readily apparent in the finished works but which are nonetheless essential to their conception. Chapter three reveals the rationale behind Dukas’s creative decisions. In Part II, the earlier findings are applied to analyses of his three large-scale, text-based works: *Polyeucte* (1891); *L’Apprenti sorcier* (1897); and *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1907). These constitute chapters four, five and six respectively.

Chapter one has set forth the motivation for investigating Dukas’s music-text aesthetic, considered how the relevant works are treated in performances and recordings, and offered an overview of this concept’s presence in Dukas studies. In chapter two I examine the surviving *Polyeucte, Sorcier* and *Ariane* sources, most of which have never been treated by scholars in spite of the important insights they offer into these works in their completed forms. To demonstrate that the dynamics of the music-text relationship were of lifelong significance to the composer, I also discuss his unpublished student cantatas and overtures, and remnants of mature, abandoned stage works. Chapter three considers the theoretical reasoning behind
Dukas’s creative strategy by reviewing and contextualising his work as a critic during the years 1892–1905. This serves as preparation for Part II.

Analysing *Polyeucte* I find that, although created before its author published any articles, the aesthetic that pervades the writings exists here. Already there is consistency between Dukas’s compositional and critical outlooks—and one which continues with *Sorcier*, scrutinised in chapter five. I show that the Scherzo advances the composer’s harmonic idiom, amplifies the dramatic gestures of *Polyeucte* and absorbs the programme into the music with a poetic originality. In *Ariane*, as chapter six highlights, Dukas’s expanded tonal language accompanies an elaborate engagement with the text. The two work in close association to bring the composer’s aesthetic ideal of the emergence of a new musical ‘poem’ to the fore. This will be illustrated through my examination of focal music-text intersections in the work.

Concluding my study of Dukas’s philosophy and practice, I comment briefly on the inherent intertextuality of the works, *Sorcier* and *Ariane* in particular, and on the composer’s claim to musico-textual authority. While the music-text aesthetic was not Dukas’s only concern, it was, nevertheless, of prime importance to his art.

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70 Dukas frequently used the term ‘poem’ to describe the dramatic union of music and text. This is examined in detail in chapter three.
Chapter Two: Primary Sources and the Origins of Dukas’s Music-Text Aesthetic

Introduction

Manuscripts, sketches and miscellaneous documents housed in the BNF, Paris are all crucial to unearthing the core of Dukas’s music-text aesthetic. These resources are supplemented by material in the NYPL and the Morgan Library, New York. This investigation, however, concentrates on the French archive which, in relation to Velléda, Polyeucte, Ariane and La Tempête, remains largely unexplored. In labelling this material the origins of the composer’s aesthetic I wish to highlight two points. Firstly, many of the sources predate the hypothetical formulation of Dukas’s aesthetic but in being solidly consistent with it they must be regarded as its earliest manifestation. Secondly, the sources pertaining to works such as Ariane reveal the root of the aesthetic effect achieved in its complete form.

Autograph scores of the published works at the heart of this study (Polyeucte, Sorcier and Ariane) have been preserved in the library, as well as the musician’s notes on the latter two pieces. Tracing the development of Ariane proves particularly fruitful, as the copy of the libretto by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949) from which Dukas worked also survives. Annotated with many of the modifications that would appear in the definitive opera libretto, this document contributes immensely to an understanding of how the composer reconciled the conflicting demands of text and sound in his music-drama.

Evidence of Dukas’s abiding interest in the union of music and literature is further found in the form of early, unpublished manuscripts and fragments of later,

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71 Although Maeterlinck intended Ariane primarily for operatic consumption, he also allowed it to be staged in 1902 as a play; hence, either ‘play’ or ‘libretto’ may be used to described his original text.
destroyed projects now in BNF collections. The composer's educated background and extensive reading meant that it was natural for him to engage with literature in his music in the first place.\textsuperscript{72} The extant works include two cantatas, \textit{Hymne au Soleil} and \textit{Velléda}, which were finished during the musician's student years. Two other early text-based works, the overtures \textit{Roi Lear} and \textit{Goetz de Berlichingen}, will also be discussed a little. The former is in private ownership, while \textit{Berlichingen} is presumed to have been destroyed. Nevertheless, a few comments on these works will help contextualise the \textit{Polyeucte} overture.

The remaining sketches of the planned text-based works after 1907 are vital to the task of identifying Dukas's artistic principles. It is significant that no actual musical fragments of the choreographic poem \textit{Le Sang de Méduse} or the music-drama \textit{La Tempête} survive. By that point in his career, Dukas was so preoccupied with ensuring that the works' extra-musical elements were compatible with his overall vision that he expended considerable energy on literary and stage matters. Consequently, the composer's French translation of Shakespeare's play is all that remains of \textit{La Tempête}. Meanwhile, our knowledge of \textit{Méduse} is reduced to Dukas's designs for the stage scenery and a couple of pages verbally elaborating upon these sketches. If this material is not illuminating in terms of musical detail, it nonetheless demonstrates that, after \textit{Ariane}, the composer's music-text aesthetic had expanded to include the issue of its theatrical setting.

**Early unpublished text-based works**

Dating from August/September 1883, \textit{Ouverture du Roi Lear} was written while Dukas was a student at the Paris Conservatoire. The now-destroyed \textit{Goetz de
Berlichingen, after Johann von Goethe (1749–1832), was composed in 1884. The substance of Goethe’s 1774 drama is striking in light of Dukas’s later attraction to Maeterlinck’s Ariane: rather like that text, it is a commentary on human destiny and the problem of individuality. The composer’s musical organisation of the five-act Berlichingen as an overture may also have served as a useful template to the setting of the similarly structured five-act play Polyeucte seven years later. Lear remains unpublished but received its world premiere in 1995.

Palaux-Simonnet describes Lear as lacking the maturity that only time and experience provide but illustrating Dukas’s already elevated thought and orchestrational skill. One notable detail about the score, in light of the composer’s mature formal approach, is its symmetrical shape. Palaux-Simonnet describes it as a thematic plan that unwinds ‘in a circular arc’ and evokes ‘the ultimate thought of Lear’.

The notion that the music alludes to ‘the ultimate thought of Lear’ is an assumption in the vein of that which asserts Polyeucte’s themes are dramatically derived and that the bassoon theme in Sorcier represents a broom. However, we know from Dukas’s own notes on Sorcier that what is ostensibly one of the most straightforward cases of programmaticism in the late-nineteenth-century orchestral canon is actually more complicated.

With regard to these earlier works, then, the dramatic symbolism of musical gestures is even less concrete—partly owing to the composer’s anachronistic use of the concert overture as a frame. (Sorcier, on the other hand, is subtitled ‘scherzo’.)

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75 Bénédicte Palaux-Simonnet, Paul Dukas ou le musicien-sorcier (Geneva: Editions Papillon, 2002), 20. ‘L’organisation intérieure et son architecture […] se déroulent en arc de cercle […] à suggérer la pensée ultime de Lear.’
76 Dukas was very careful not to label the bassoon theme definitively.
The Lisztian symphonic poem had become popular in France in the 1870s and 1880s, thanks to Saint-Saëns, Franck (Le chasseur maudit, 1882) and d’Indy (Saugefleurie, 1884). D’Indy, along with other French musicians, had previously been an advocate of the overture (Antoine et Cléopâtre, 1876; Trilogue de Wallenstein, 1881). Before the upheaval of French music in the 1870s, Berlioz’s many overtures had coincidentally included a piece based on King Lear (1831). Dukas’s youthful preference for the overture seems to be a reflection of an aesthetic that is concerned less with a genre’s programmatic potential and more with its historicity. At a time when French composers preferred the symphonic poem to its overtly Austro-Germanic ancestor, Lear and Polyeucte quietly indicate Dukas’s determination at this time to maintain links with an earlier symphonic tradition.

An important manuscript archived at the BNF consists of three early Dukas compositions: the short cantata Hymne au Soleil (pp. 2–8), a Fugue for SATB (pp. 11–30), as well as the more substantial cantata Velléda, scène lyrique. The Hymne (pp. 2–8) is signed by the composer and dated 14 May 1888. The text to which the music is set was written by Casimir Delavigne (1793–1843) and is an excerpt from Le Paria (Act 1, scene v), a five-act tragedy dating from 1821. Velléda (whose pages are numbered separately) achieved Second Prize in the Conservatoire’s Prix de Rome competition in 1888. That year’s winner was Camille Erlanger.

Velléda, for three solo voices and orchestra, is based on a text by Fernand Beissier (1858–1936). Its opening section, though, comprises a ‘Prélude’ headed by a quotation from Martyrs (ou le triomphe de la religion chrétienne) by François-René

77 Ms. 1035, Musique, BNF.
78 Lili Boulanger composed a Hymne au Soleil on the same text for mezzo soprano, chorus and piano in 1912.
79 Casimir Delavigne, Œuvres complètes (Paris: HL Delloye et V Lecou, 1836), 90.
80 It is likely that the Hymne and Fugue were written specially for the preliminary stages of the Prix de Rome competition.
Chateaubriand (1768–1848). The reference to a work that celebrates the triumph of Christianity over pagan Romans is strangely prophetic of *Polyeucte*'s subject matter. Even in his formative years as a composer, Dukas was enraptured by tales of heroic missions motivated by mystical idealism. In *Polyeucte* this concept is channelled into the travails of a specific character. The protagonist of Corneille’s play, however, is not eulogised as a saviour, and only receives any kind of recognition upon his death. In contrast, Maeterlinck’s Ariane is immediately hailed as a liberating, Messiah-like figure by those around her. Because of this, and by virtue of the fact that she transcends the trappings of her situation to arrive at a personal epiphany, Dukas’s subsequent opera after this play may be said to represent the epitome of his interest in the spiritual.

Part of the Chateaubriand work (upon which Beissier apparently based his text) narrates the tragedy of a woman, Velléda. A Gallic druid who falls in love with a Roman soldier, Eudore, she eventually commits suicide. From Book IX (1809), Dukas cites this phrase: ‘She sang while struggling against the storm and seemed to play in the winds.’

It is the first of some unexpected textual allusions that the cantata contains; these lean towards the kind of literary symbolism one might expect to find in an overture or symphonic poem. This serves to make the dearth of programmatic references in Dukas’s first published work of only three years later, *Polyeucte*, all the more anomalous.

Two separate scenes are clearly marked in the *Velléda* score. Prior to these, the Prelude consists of an eight-bar introductory *Lento*, followed by an *Adagio—non troppo lento* in C major with a part for solo violin. Page 15 heralds Scene I,
Moderato. The setting is ‘a forest at the edge of a lake.’ We are further told that this is the ‘first scene—Eudore is alone.’ Eudore enters at the beginning of the scene. His part anticipates the step movement and chromaticism characteristic of Ariane’s vocal writing. The second scene, starting on page 49, is a contrasting Andante in which ‘the small boat neared the thunderstorm, Velléda’s voice soars upwards.’ Velléda and Eudore begin a duet at this point. Following an Appassionato section, the composer directs the music to be played ‘softly and solemnly’ on page 169. Unusually, this expressive instruction is underlined, as if to elevate it to the same underlined, descriptive phrases employed earlier to delineate the scenes. As though to emphasise the programmatic allegiance of this marking, the comment ‘the day begins’ is etched underneath it in smaller writing and enclosed in parentheses.

This remark, placed towards the end of the piece, and the opening Chateaubriand excerpt hint at a desire to explicate the music’s connection to the text a stage beyond the scope of what two indicated scenes and vocal parts already convey. That the composer was successful in his attempts is evidenced by Ernest Reyer’s remarks that one could sense in Velléda ‘the truth of the dramatic expression and the feeling of the colour.’

Dukas followed Velléda with another Prix de Rome attempt, the cantata Sémélé, before moving on to Polyeucte. Based on a text by Eugène Adenis (1854–1923), Sémélé was composed in 1889. The full score of the cantata is thought to have

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82 Ibid. ‘Un forêt au bord d’un lac.’
83 Ibid. ‘Scène première — Eudore seul.’
84 Ibid. ‘Le barque touché au wrage (sic), Velléda s’élance à tenor.’
85 Ibid. ‘Doux et solennel.’
86 Ibid. ‘[Le jour commence.]’
87 Quoted in Georges Favre, L’œuvre de Paul Dukas (Paris: Durand, 1969), 15.
been destroyed but an annotated pre-orchestral manuscript for two voices (the parts of Jupiter and Sémélée) and two pianos survives in a private collection.\textsuperscript{88} Excluding the prescribed Prix de Rome cantata texts and the aforementioned overtures, the extent to which literature featured in Dukas’s earliest compositions is remarkable. His first piece is thought to be \textit{Air de Clytemnestre} (1882) for voice and small orchestra. In a way, it could be considered a precursor to the later abandoned \textit{Méduse}, as both works seek to illuminate figures in Greek mythology (\textit{Ariane} also has Greek connections). The later song \textit{L’Ondine et le Pêcheur} (1884) for soprano and orchestra was sourced in a poem by Théophile Gautier (1811–72).\textsuperscript{89} The \textit{Chanson de Barberine} for soprano and piano dates from this year too and is based on the Alfred de Musset poem of the same name.\textsuperscript{90} Three years later, Dukas wrote \textit{La Fleur} (1887) for chorus and orchestra, after a text by Charles Millevoye (1782–1816).\textsuperscript{91} Palaux-Simonnet remarks that ‘the symbolic image of the flower prefigures that of \textit{La Péri}.’\textsuperscript{92} The preponderance of texts in the composer’s student output was not limited to those works that called for vocal expression. A piano composition from 1885 entitled \textit{Les Caresses} was inspired by verses by the French poet Jean Richepin (1849–1926).\textsuperscript{93}

In this light, perhaps the composer’s decision to frame his next work, \textit{Polyeucte}, as an overture rather than a symphonic poem may be seen as a deliberate effort to distance himself from text-driven music.

\textsuperscript{88} Many thanks to Robert Orledge for bringing this score to my attention in December 2007. See also Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ Appendices I-C and I-E, 323–5.
\textsuperscript{89} This work, credited with ‘lavish, evocative scoring,’ was performed in 1991 following the discovery of the manuscript in the Morgan Library, New York.
\textsuperscript{90} Many thanks to Robert Orledge for providing me with a copy of the autograph manuscript in December 2007.
\textsuperscript{91} Boyd records both \textit{Clytemnestre} and \textit{Fleur} as being in private collections. Appendix I-B, 322.
\textsuperscript{92} Palaux-Simonnet, \textit{Paul Dukas}, 26. ‘L’image symbolique de la fleur préfigure ainsi celle de \textit{La Péri}.’
\textsuperscript{93} Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ Appendix I-B, 322.
Published text-based works, 1891–1907

i. Polyeucte

Ms. 1033 is the autograph score of the overture Polyeucte, written in the composer’s hand and signed at the end ‘Paul Dukas, Septembre/Octobre 1891.’ While no inscription appears in the published score, this manuscript was dedicated to French musicologist and composer Charles Malherbe (1853–1911) in 1898 ‘as a friendly reminder of a Beethovenian afternoon.’ This document is fascinating for the insights it provides into the creation of the work. The score includes many sections that have been erased or papered over, suggesting a constant refinement of the work. Although many of these changes concern orchestrational issues (as can be gleaned from those superimposed pieces of paper not firmly glued down), some pages, especially towards the end, appear to have been entirely redrafted. The perfectionist tendencies which caused Dukas to destroy much of his later work seem to have been ingrained in his psyche from the outset of his career.

The opening bars of Polyeucte on unison cellos and violas constitute what is known as the Faith theme (I label it ‘Faith,’ Ia). Ms. 1033 reveals that it was originally also played by the first violins, before Dukas erased their part (b. 1–4). From b. 21–23 the same music is subjected to further re-orchestration. In the published score, the second violins, violas and cellos play Ia but, initially, as lifting the new manuscript paper inserted over these bars reveals, the second violins doubled the first violins and the violas played alternate pitches.

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94 'A Monsieur Charles Malherbe, amical souvenir d’une matinée beethovenienne, 10 mars 1898,' Paul Dukas, Polyeucte, Ms. 1033, BNF.

95 This term is used by Palaux-Simonnet in Paul Dukas, 31: ‘thème de la foi.’ It is derived from Favre’s more expansive description of the idea as one signifying religious fervour. See Favre, L’œuvre, 29: ‘le motif de la ferveur religieuse.’
With *Polyeucte*’s contrasting Love music (beginning at b. 41), it may be seen that the composer planned to double the string parts at b. 49–52 in the brass and lower woodwind, but eventually decided against it. It is apparent that Dukas was acutely concerned with the careful exposition of both the Faith and Love themes. The latter’s C minor transformation (lettered section E, b. 93–108) also differs in terms of orchestration, and possibly more. It can be deduced that Dukas first doubled the string parts in the lower woodwind and brass, but then revised this with new harmonies for the horn and trumpet. About a quarter of section E is altered. Still on the Love music, lettered section F (b. 109–130) consists of less than two pages, about forty percent of which is changed. Unfortunately, it is impossible to specify how these modifications differ from the composer’s incipient plan.

After this there are no changes until the last three bars of K (b. 176–185), during the juxtaposition of the Faith theme and a third episode. A similar figure to what the clarinets simultaneously play is added to the trumpet part (b. 182–185) apparently as an afterthought, written as it is in pencil (like other revisions) rather than ink. Sections L and M are unchanged, while N (b. 242–257) and O (b. 258–295) contain several new manuscript insertions. Dukas then seemed satisfied with the remaining music, leaving it untouched until V (b. 348–359).

Marked ‘Très calme,’ the last twelve bars represent the peroration of the work. Ms. 1033 is arranged so that lettered section V comprises the last two sheets of the manuscript. These final pages have been replaced with new manuscript in their entirety. While the composer was determined in his efforts to paste over his formative plans for *Polyeucte*, a few comments may yet be made about the music originally intended here. It is possible to see that in the opening bar (348) of the first

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V section, the ‘T’ of ‘Très calme’ is written on a lower line, suggesting the absence of flutes at that point. (The high G sharps that the flutes play in the amended edition could not have been written with the previous positioning of ‘Très’. Therefore, they were a later compositional or orchestrational addition.) Some basic ideas, such as the section’s harmonic structure, remained the same for both versions. On the second (last) page of V, the ties marked in the original, underlying paper are joined over from the preceding page to the definitive closing notes of the violas, cellos and basses.

Ms. 1033 is for the most part written in pen, so it may be conjectured that the pencilled markings denote decisions made in the concluding stages of composition. For example, the trumpet line mentioned above is written in pencil, as are many of the tempo indications (typically something Dukas tended to change his mind about), dynamic instructions and lettered sections. The indication ‘crotchet = 40’ in the first bar is inscribed with pencil; this also occurs with lettered sections C (dotted crotchet = 96) and H (crotchet = 42). The pencilled indications in the first two of the above examples also coincide with orchestrational revisions. The ultimate organisation of the work’s lettered sections is outlined in a mixture of pen and pencil (with some of the earlier inked decisions crossed out). It is summarised here as follows in Fig. 1:

**Figure 1: Sectional changes to Polyeucte as seen in Ms. 1033**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lettered sections</th>
<th>Bar numbers</th>
<th>Pen/pencil changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>16 (1–15 not marked)</td>
<td>Pen, unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pen, unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Pen, unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>D in pen, E in pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettered sections</td>
<td>Bar numbers</td>
<td>Pen/pencil changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>E in pen, H in pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>I in pen, J in pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Not marked in either Ms. 1033 or score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>348–359 (end)</td>
<td>Pencil only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neatly and precisely written, Ms. 1033 is presented in a hardbound cover, suggesting that Dukas’s revisions may have been an eleventh-hour compulsion. The temptation to improve his music was often too much for the composer to resist. However, there is no evidence that the composer had second thoughts regarding the large-scale structural underpinning of the work. This may be read as further proof of

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97 Dukas frequently availed of the opportunity to modify his music. We shall see in chapter six the steps he took to accommodate sopranos performing the lead role of Ariane et Barbe-Bleue, rewriting some of the more difficult sections on at least one occasion.
Dukas’s attachment to symmetrical configurations, of the kind that recur in *Sorcier* and *Ariane*.

**ii. L’Apprenti Sorcier**

Mss. 1037–1039 contain notes describing the main musical ideas in *Sorcier* and the autograph full score.\(^9^8\) At the top of the score Dukas wrote: *L’Apprenti Sorcier*, signed it and included the description *Scherzo (d’après une ballade de Goethe)*. Below this is: ‘*Texte de la Ballade Goethe. Poésies. Traduite Henri Blaze.*’ The unpublished Ms. 1037 note is particularly valuable in assessing *Sorcier*; indeed, it is central to the pursuit of developing an understanding of Dukas’s music-text aesthetics.

What this document tells us about the Scherzo’s chief bassoon theme has been discussed by Carlo Caballero in his interpretation of the work as uncanny.\(^9^9\) However, the Ms. 1037 leaf also provides fundamental information into the mechanics of Dukas’s compositional method with this work. The composer stated:

> The symphonic poem composed after this Ballad is developed out of three themes that appear more or less transformed in the slow *Introduction*, and which may be characterised in the following manner.\(^1^0^0\)

He then proceeded to discuss the three themes in detail but called them ‘motifs’ instead. This strongly indicates that Dukas conceived of his programme music in dramatic terms and had Wagnerian leitmotifs in mind. Of the three ‘motifs’ he expounds on, only Ia and III have any claim to this status; Ib and II are clearly themes rather than motifs.

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\(^9^8\) Paul Dukas, *L’Apprenti sorcier*, Ms. 1037–1039, Musique, BNF.


\(^1^0^0\) Ms. 1037. Dukas comments: ‘Le poème symphonique composé d’après cette Ballade, est développé sur trois thèmes qui apparaissent plus ou moins transformés, dans l’*Introduction* lente et qu’on pourrait caractériser de la manière suivante.’
I is titled Motif des Sortilèges (Sorcery Motif) and, in the composer’s words, ‘comprises two thematic elements.’ The first of these (Ia), he said, ‘remains almost unchanged throughout the piece,’ while ‘the second [Ib] engenders the (crossed-out words) Scherzo proper.’ At this point Dukas sketched the outline of bars one to four. Interestingly, this comprises not just the first two bars’ ethereal chords but also a clarinet F-C dyad that begins the bassoon melody (the second thematic element). This may be taken as early evidence of organic unity in the music.

The second part of Sorcery (Ib) is depicted as the bassoon part of b. 72–99, music now widely and programmatically known as the Broom theme. It may be considered a continuation of la in the sense that the melody commences with the F-C dyad of before, now an octave lower on the bassoon. The introductory Ib tonic chords in thirds (starting at b. 42) are not recognised by Dukas as key to ‘the Scherzo proper,’ but the melodic fifth is. This echoes the fifth-centric musical substance of Polyeucte (see chapter four). In Caballero’s view, the use of the third elsewhere is significant for programmatic reasons. Equally intriguing is the word scribbled out by Dukas as he tried to articulate what exactly Ib does. In eluding concrete definition, it is seemingly reclaimed by the composer for the purely musical realm. Nevertheless, the verb engendre implies that there is more to this: that this theme is an agent of extra-musical action. This possibility will be examined later.

II is the programmatically straightforward Motif de l’Apprenti (Apprentice Motif). Here, Dukas wrote out twelve bars with no further comment. The music is the 3/8 theme first outlined from b. 201–12 in the Scherzo. It originates in the

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101 *Ibid.* ‘Ce motif exposé dès le début, comprend deux éléments thématiques: le premier demeure presque immuable au cours du morceau tandis que le second engendre le (crossed-out words) Scherzo proprement dit.’

Introduction as a skittish *Vif* four-bar 9/16 phrase (b. 14–17). Out of the three evocative musical ideas that Dukas addressed, this was the only one that he perceived as representing a tangible object. How this ultimately destabilises the common interpretation of *Sorcier* as pivoted on the Ib Broom theme will be scrutinised later.

Finally, Dukas labels III the *Motif d'Évocation* ( Conjuring Motif). Nine bars of the Introduction’s brass fanfare are given, starting with the F-A-D flat chord (b. 24–32). An explanatory remark follows:

> This call on the brass instruments is mixed in different combinations with the two principal themes: it expresses, in the end, the idea of *Maitrise* by appearing enlarged in the *Postlude* which brings back the calm movement of the *start* of the Introduction.

Dukas’s last comment on *Sorcier* points to a thematic hierarchy within the work. It suggests a form of sonata-like proportions with I and II operating almost as first- and second-subject groups. III is employed episodically, thus giving rise to the modified sonata-rondo form present in the music.

In summary, the insights offered by Ms. 1037 encourage a re-evaluation of accepted truths about *Sorcier*, namely those rooted in the nature of its music-text interaction. Dukas’s vivid ‘motivic’ explanations categorise the piece as essentially dramatic rather than programmatic, built upon a Wagnerian leitmotivic foundation. This leads us to rethink the role of Goethe’s ballad in the work and, as shall be seen in chapter five, to infer that the text functions more as a preface to, rather than a programme for, the musical action. Chapter three reveals that this theory is supported by the views espoused during the 1890s in Dukas’s articles.

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103 Ms. 1037. ‘Cet appel des instruments de cuivre se mêle aux différentes combinaisons des deux thèmes principaux: il exprime, à la fin, l' idée de Maîtrise en apparaissent, élargi dans le *Postlude* qui ramène le mouvement calme du début de l’Introduction.’
iii. *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*

Mss. 1030, 1031 and 1032 correspond to, respectively, Acts I, II and III of Dukas’s opera.\(^{104}\) Ms. 1032 also includes a section titled ‘to be corrected’.\(^{105}\) Réserve Th. B 128 is Dukas’s personal copy of Maeterlinck’s original libretto, marked with most of the composer’s eventual changes to the text.\(^{106}\) Since the literary modifications had a direct impact on the resulting music, the details of B 128 will be considered first. These adjustments have been overlooked by scholars who tend to conflate Dukas’s music with Maeterlinck’s libretto. In reality, Dukas’s appropriation of the libretto is very much tailored to his overall music-drama goal, the successful execution of which depends upon the alignment of the textual source with the musical concept, not *vice versa*. In the following section we present the particulars of these modifications, while in chapter six their effect on the opera will be studied.

*Libretto (Réserve Th. B 128)*

The full title of Maeterlinck’s play is *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue, ou la délivrance inutile* (*Ariane and Bluebeard, or the Useless Deliverance*).\(^{107}\) By way of further explanation, it is described as a ‘Conte en trois actes’ (*Fairytale in Three Acts*). Significantly, the latter comment is printed again by Dukas at the top of the first page of B 128. However, Maeterlinck’s ‘useless deliverance’ subtitle appears nowhere in the published opera score—and thus may be regarded as the composer’s first adjustment to the text.

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\(^{104}\) Paul Dukas, *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*, Ms. 1030–1032, Musique, BNF.

\(^{105}\) Ms. 1032, ‘à Corriger.’

\(^{106}\) Réserve Th. B 128, BNF.

Problematically, this has gone unacknowledged, which has led to confusion regarding the ‘message’ of the opera. Dukas’s subsequent changes may be read as an effort to further neutralise the perceived moral of Maeterlinck’s text in favour of promoting his own dramatic aim. Conversely, some alterations are purely semantic and syntactic, and serve to improve the musical qualities of the text. A list of examples from the first act demonstrates this point:

**Figure 2: Act 1 syntactic and semantic changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Maeterlinck libretto</th>
<th>Dukas modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘il faut d’abord désobéir’</td>
<td>‘d’abord, il faut désobéir’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘les autres ont eu tort et si elles sont perdues, c’est quelles ont hésité’</td>
<td>‘les autres ont eu tort et les voilà perdues pour avoir hésité.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘je jette les six autres et garde la dernière’</td>
<td>‘je jette les six autres et garde celle-ci’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>‘voilà les portes’</td>
<td>‘voici les portes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘je cherche la septième et ne la trouve point’</td>
<td>‘je cherche la septième mais...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>‘oh! la troisième y entre – et entraine ma main’</td>
<td>‘oh! la troisième y entre – elle entraine ma main’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>‘il y en a assez pour orner un royaume’</td>
<td>‘on en pourrait orner tout royaume’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘ouvre la deuxième porte’</td>
<td>‘ouvre la seconde porte’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>‘la deuxième’</td>
<td>‘la seconde’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>‘ma mante va crever’</td>
<td>‘ma mante va s’ouvrir’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariane</td>
<td>‘et ne mourrez jamais’</td>
<td>‘vous ne mourrez jamais’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives</td>
<td>‘ont ouvert quatre cents salles’</td>
<td>‘ont traversé trois cents salles’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In order to placate Maeterlinck, who had been resolute that this opera would maintain his play intact, Dukas treated the issue of modification with great sensitivity. (The front cover of the score generously credits the ‘poème’ to Maeterlinck alone, a conciliatory gesture that acknowledges the playwright’s genesis of the libretto, yet still hints at the composer’s poetic reconstruction of it.) This may be why changes substantial in content but, like those above, subtle in style are frequently missed, resulting in the widespread misconception that Dukas set Maeterlinck’s libretto verbatim.109 Act I is critically important in this regard. While the composer made obvious, practical cuts in Act III, it is the first third of the opera that determines the dramatic agenda. Therefore, a few ostensibly insignificant, but intentional, differences between the play and the B 128 libretto (and the subsequent published opera) will be scrutinised.

The first example concerns Maeterlinck’s Act I, scene ii line for Ariane, ‘l’occasion de pêcher est rare et fugitive’ (‘the time to sin is rare and fleeting’). Here, Ariane urges the Nurse to unlock the doors in their chamber before Bluebeard returns. On Dukas’s copy of the libretto and in the final score, this becomes ‘l’heure où l’on peut agir est rare et fugitive’ (‘the time to act...’). The orchestra almost silenced, this line is powerfully declaimed by the heroine, thus, as Moore points out, portraying Ariane as heroic.110 However, Dukas’s substitution here might still be interpreted as a musical rather than dramatic exercise (and, one imagines, might have been justified to Maeterlinck on these grounds); the fairly close rhyming qualities of l’heure, agir and rare are measurably stressed in the vocal part.111

109 William Angus Moore II. ‘The Significance of Late Nineteenth-Century Wagnérisme in the Relationship of Paul Dukas and Edouard Duja
d. A Study of their Correspondence, Essays on Wagner, and Dukas’s Opera Ariane et Barbe-Bleue’ (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 219. To date Moore is the only scholar to have discussed these changes.
110 Moore, ‘Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,’ 219.
111 Paul Dukas, Ariane et Barbe-Bleue (Paris: Durand, 1907), voice and piano score, 49.
Another line that almost merits inclusion in the above table of minor alterations is Ariane’s question ‘Combien de temps ont-elles supporté la défense?’ (‘How long have they withstood his defence?’), whereby Dukas changes supporté to subi, ‘suffered.’

Faithful enough in appearance and meaning to seem like an abbreviation of the original longer sentence, Moore points out that this is, in fact, ‘a subtle modification that attributes the onerous situation of the wives to Bluebeard’s tyranny rather than to their own passivity.’ Further encouraging us to view the female characters as possessing their own agency, Dukas adjusts the libretto once more. Ariane’s response to her Nurse’s order to close the door, upon hearing the captive women’s subterranean chant, changes from ‘je ne peux pas’ (‘I’m not able to’) to the more authoritative ‘je ne veux pas’ (‘I don’t want to’).

This alteration, again almost imperceptible in the text, is given preferential musical treatment within the chant scene. Sung loudly and insistently by Ariane, it counterpoints the climax of the first orchestrally-accompanied rendition of the wives’ song ‘Les cinq filles d’Orlamonde.’

Dukas accommodated the subterranean chant into the score rather differently to Maeterlinck in his play. The trapped women continue with the second verse of the song—we have lit five lamps, opened the towers—before the Nurse intercepts with ‘close this door!’ (In Maeterlinck, the Nurse speaks before the women do.) Her speech is interrupted by the wives—we have crossed three hundred rooms.

During this, the Nurse anxiously cries ‘the song is filling the room, it is

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113 Moore, ‘Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,’ 219.
114 In the *Ariane* orchestral score (Paris: Durand, 2007) the words incorrectly read ‘Je ne peux pas’ (156). However, the piano reduction (73) and the Tony Aubin and Leon Botstein recordings of the work accurately reproduce it as ‘Je ne veux pas.’
115 The chant begins on p. 72 of the piano score. In the Slatkine edition of the play, the interactions between the wives, the Nurse and Ariane encompass pp. 140–41. The first verse of the chant is as follows: Les cinq filles d’Orlamonde ont allumé leurs lampes, ont ouvert les tours, ont traversé trois cent salles, sans trouver le jour.
116 Dukas, 73. ‘Renfermez cette porte.’
everywhere!" Oblivious, the wives continue—*without finding daylight* —and it is on the sustained last word that Ariane answers the Nurse with ‘*je ne veux pas.*’ The third verse of the song is heard in parallel to the Nurse’s remonstrations to Ariane to help her shut the door. Finally, the entire last verse forms the backdrop to the conversation between the other two women, coinciding with the Nurse’s ignored command to ‘*hush this voice!*’

This leads to the denouement of the first act, where Bluebeard angrily confronts Ariane in the chamber. Offstage, as directed by the playwright, we hear the agitated crowd. However, Dukas ventures beyond the play’s possibilities by using the reappearance of the mob to form a dramatic and musical symmetrical structure in the act. Taking his cue from the peasants’ shouts of ‘*à mort!*’ at the start of Act I, Dukas recapitulates the opening action by interpolating these same words (which are absent from Maeterlinck’s text) into the end of the act. They are heard in the gap between the subterranean ‘Orlamonde’ chant and Ariane’s remarks to the peasants before the curtain falls: ‘What do you want? He has not hurt me at all.’

A pattern emerges with Act I’s dramatically-motivated modifications: those crucial in distinguishing the Maeterlinck libretto from Dukas’s are placed at critical musical junctures. Even the comparatively minor rearrangement (see Fig. 2) of ‘*je jette les six autres et garde la dernière*’ to ‘*je [...] garde celle-ci*’ is seized by the composer as an opportunity to mould the libretto to the score. This is achieved with the introduction of a new motif at the words *celle-ci.* With *celle-ci,* the heroine refers to the final key given to her by Bluebeard, which she regards as an enticing

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117 *Ibid.*, 73. ‘*Le chant remplit la salle, il se répand partout!*’
118 *Ibid.*, 75. ‘*Etouffons cette voix!*’
119 Maeterlinck, 143. ‘*On entend gronder et s’agiter la foule. [...] Les paysans furieux mais hésitants se pressent sur le seuil.*’
120 Dukas, 83. ‘*Que voulez-vous? Il ne m’a fait aucun mal.*’
121 *Ibid.*, 34.
symbol of freedom. The tension generated by this particular *celle-ci* contrasts starkly with the Nurse’s mundane use of the phrase in a different context.\textsuperscript{122} In sum then, the first-act modifications employ strategies that function primarily to establish Ariane as an active and autonomous character. Dukas’s re-interpretation of the main role in the first act necessitates the following acts’ larger cuts and interpolations. Most changes match important musical developments, as we see in chapter six, thus suggesting a calculated attempt to develop the opera in a highly dramatic fashion.

Curiously, B 128 suggests that Dukas only intended small details to change in Act II, but the eventual score saw much of Maeterlinck’s sensual imagery in this act toned down. The only two alterations marked in Act II of B 128 concern Ariane and one of the wives, Sélysette. The protagonist merely tags an *aussi* to the end of the sentence ‘Viens, viens, les miens attendant.’ Later on, Sélysette says ‘Oui, nous avons vécu longtemps dans cette obscurité’ but Dukas re-arranges this as ‘Oui, nous avons *longtemps vécu*...’

The second act’s substantive modifications, as found in its published form, centre on the conversations between Ariane and the wives—Sélysette, Bellangère, Mélisande, Ygraine and Alladine. Upon discovering the women, Ariane embraces them before launching into a monologue in which she contemplates their physical beauty. Maeterlinck’s heroine begins with an exclamation of relief:

> Ah! I have found them! They are full of life and full of sweetness! I had thought I would see them dead, and now while crying I kiss adorable mouths!\textsuperscript{123}

Dukas alters the last sentence to read: ‘I kiss the adorable *beings!*’\textsuperscript{124} Ariane is then drawn to the women’s bodies, with the playwright’s text reading: ‘And here are your

\textsuperscript{122} *Ibid.*, 38. See chapter six.

\textsuperscript{123} Maeterlinck, 146–7. ‘Ah! Je vous ai trouvées! Elles sont pleine de vie et pleines de douceur!’ J’avais cru voir des mortes et je baise en pleurant des bouches adorables!

\textsuperscript{124} Dukas, 210 (orchestral score), ‘êtres adorables!’
bare arms, supple and warm, and your round breasts,' while the composer changes the last word to 'shoulders.' The speech continues with the protagonist asking the women: 'But why do you tremble?' Directly after this, Dukas cuts Ariane’s intimate words:

I embrace shoulders and I hug hips, I don’t know what I touch, I kiss bare chests and mouths all around me.

He replaces these with the following:

What spring has suddenly burst out of the darkness! Here is the fire in your eyes and the air you breathe on my hands!

Afterwards, the remainder of the speech is left intact (recommencing with ‘and these torrents of hair!’).

The last adjustment to Act II occurs as Ariane attempts to find a way out of the dungeon. Imploring Séllysette to help her climb onto a rock, Maeterlinck’s character simply observes that the vault in which they are trapped is ‘in the form of an ogive.’ Dukas’s character, however, triumphantly declares that she has reached the top of the vault.

The third-act modifications as presented in B more fully resemble the libretto of the finished opera. The first change occurs in Ariane’s opening speech. It consists of a seemingly irrelevant alteration in which the phrase ‘unless his conscience or another force has spoken’ becomes ‘unless [...] some other force...’ In French, however, Dukas’s substitution of quelque is a musically improved and

125 Maeterlinck, 147. ‘Et voici vos bras nus qui sont souples et chauds et vos poitrines rondes; Dukas, 96, ‘épaules ronde.’
126 Dukas, 97. ‘Quel printemps a jailli tout à coup des ténèbres! Voici les flammes de vos yeux et voici sur mes mains le souffle de vos lèvres!’
127 Maeterlinck, 147. ‘Et ces cheveux qui vous inondent!’
128 Maeterlinck, 153. ‘La voûte est en forme d’ogive.’
129 Dukas, 123. ‘Je touche au sommet de la voûte.’
rhythmically emphasised match with the alliterative sounds of ‘a moins que sa conscience’ which precede it. (This was not modified in B 128.)

Dramatic intent lies behind the next change, which again concerns Ariane. In preparation for life beyond Bluebeard’s tyranny, Maeterlinck’s protagonist exhorts the other women to be beautiful. Dukas’s heroine, on the other hand, proffers ‘we are going to be free’ by way of explanation for why they must be beautiful. Next (and marked in B 128) the composer deletes Ariane’s effusive description of Sélysette’s arms: ‘They seem to raise themselves up to call for love, and my tender eyes caress all their gestures.’

Shortly afterwards, Ariane muses on the women’s attractiveness again, in a speech that Dukas removed entirely from the B 128 libretto. Nonetheless, his completed opera borrows from this Maeterlinck monologue. The passage follows Sélysette’s complaint that her bare arms are too cold. Ariane responds at length:

But no, since they are lovely... [Going to Bellangère] Where are you Bellangère? Just this instant, there was a throat that filled this entire mirror with a mellow glow. It is essential that I free all...And all these jewels that shine on your feet, were they created to die on the stones, or to light up again in the warmth of your chest, arms, hair? [She collects the precious jewels until her hands are full and pours them over her companions.] Truly, my young sisters, I am no longer astonished that he did not love you as he should, that he wanted one hundred women...He had nobody. [Removing the coat that Bellangère put on her shoulders] Here are two sources of beauty that are lost in the darkness...Above all, do not be afraid, we will have nothing to fear if we are very beautiful.
The most vital modification Dukas makes to the third act (which is not outlined in B 128) is, as Moore observes, the creation of a ‘dramatic structure for act three which parallels that of the first act: individual doors with different jewels in act one, individual interchanges with each wife in act three.’ This is achieved through using the above speech as a frame in which whole lines are cut, some details tinkered with, and the composer’s own text added. The effect of this is that Ariane addresses each woman separately, not just Bellangère.

This section of the act shall now be considered in chronological order.

Dukas’s Ariane praises Bellangère’s reflection not because it illuminates her physical assets, but instead because it suggests that she possesses internal beauty. Thus, ‘throat’ (gorge) is changed to ‘smile’ (sourire). Next, he extends Bellangère’s participation in the scene. Attempting to fix flowers in her hair (another Dukas direction), she complains that they won’t cooperate. Ariane comes to her assistance, asking ‘You are beautiful and the flowers will not obey?’

Focusing her attention next on Alladine who ‘is trying on veils and scarves of somewhat startling colours,’ Ariane alludes to her companion’s exotic provenance:

‘And you, my Alladine, what are you doing far from us?’ Ygraine turns around and bursts out laughing at Alladine, demanding to know ‘where can she have found such strange colours?’ ‘On her island of fire, without doubt’ is Ariane’s reply.

Returning to Alladine, Ariane advises her:

\[135\] Dukas, 175. ‘Un sourire qui l’emplissent tout entier de suaves lueurs.’
\[136\] Ibid., 175–6. ‘[Bellangère essayant de fixer des fleurs dans sa chevelure.] Ils attendent que ces fleurs veuillent bien s’incliner.’
\[137\] Ibid., 176. ‘Tu es belle et les fleurs ne t’obéissent pas?’
\[138\] Ibid., 176–7. ‘[à Alladine qui se pare des voiles et d’écharpes un peu vives] Et toi, mon Alladine, que fais-tu loin de nous?’
\[139\] Ibid., 177. ‘[Ygraine se retournant et éclatant de rire] Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Où donc a-t’elle pris ces flammes inconnues?’
\[140\] Ibid., ‘Sans doute en son île de feu.’
But you see, Alladine, here, under our clouds, the sun shines less brightly, the flowers are less brilliant, and the birdsong duller. Thus, the women should always follow the advice of the birds and flowers, who translate the sun’s ways for them. Remove the too blazing veil and scarf.141

Sélysette then ponders ‘which rings shall I choose?’ Rather than dismiss this as vanity, Ariane judges it ‘right’ that the jewels should be brought to life.142 At this point, the composer yields to Maeterlinck’s words above, albeit slightly rephrased, so that Ariane asks ‘What would you do with the jewels that shine on your feet?’143 This is a brief respite, though, for Dukas’s own voice re-enters the scene immediately. Instead of preserving the text: ‘Truly, my young sisters [...] He had nobody,’ the composer refers directly (and symmetrically) to the jewels of Act I, before rephrasing the above sentiments. The interpolated text, in which Ariane divides out Bluebeard’s treasures amongst her newly-discovered friends proceeds as follows:

Ariane: Here are pearls for Ygraine, sapphires for Mélisande and rubies for Sélysette.
Sélysette: I prefer these emeralds.
Ariane: Now, that fills me with wonder and makes me happy! Life is returning since the desire to please has been resuscitated.
Bellangère: Do you like this opal and amethyst necklace?
Ariane: I would put these opals in your hair. These curls are too restrained. And then this cold coat on these warm shoulders ... [taking off the coat] Here are two sources of light which were lost in the darkness. Truly, my young sisters, I’m no longer astonished he didn’t love you as he should, and that he wanted a hundred women. He had only your shadows.144

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141 Ibid., 177-9. ‘Mais, vois-tu Alladine, ici, sous nos nuages, les rayons sont moins vifs, les fleurs moins éclatantes, et les oiseaux plus ternes. Or, il faut que les femmes mes suivent toujours l’avis des oiseaux et des fleurs qui traduisent pour elles les conseils du soleil. Enlevons cette écharpe et ce voile trop ardent.’

142 Ibid., 180. Sélysette: ‘Quelles bagues choisirai-je? Ariane [elle fouille les pierres précieuses]: ‘C’est juste.’

143 Ibid., 180. ‘Que faites-vous des mille pierreries qui brillent à vos pieds?’

Suddenly, the Nurse disrupts the conversation with a terrified ‘He’s back!’

Maeterlinck’s libretto resumes, with the women looking on at events outside as the crowd grapples with Bluebeard. Having captured the tyrant, a few peasants victoriously present him to Ariane, announcing in the play ‘we bring you the package.’ Dukas alters that last word to ‘assassin’ and capitalises on the rhythmic and alliterative character of the resulting sentence: ‘nous vous apportons l’assassin.’ The peasants’ discussion of where to put Bluebeard forms the subject of Dukas’s penultimate textual revisions. These revisions, combined with the earlier ‘assassin’ adjective, culminate in a portrayal of the oppressor more monstrous than that evoked in the play.

After one of the peasants soothes the women with the news that ‘[Bluebeard] will not hurt you again,’ Dukas cuts a handful of lines from the play, until the moment where another man asks ‘have you got what you need to kill him?’

During this interlude, the composer favours phrases that allude more dramatically to the previous fight, such as ‘don’t be afraid, his arms are tied well.’ The opera also suggests that Bluebeard came to greater harm with the crowd than is conveyed by Maeterlinck, with Dukas’s antagonist offering no resistance to the peasants dumping him against a wall—they note that he will not budge. On the other hand, Maeterlinck’s villagers are less aggressive towards the tyrant; notably, they do not exhibit the same thirst for retribution as the opera characters do. Just before we revert to the playwright’s text, the old peasant in Dukas’s libretto advises Ariane to ‘avenge his actions however you like.’

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145 Ibid., 186. ‘Il revient! Maeterlinck, 169.
146 Maeterlinck, 169: ‘Nous vous apportons le paquet.’
147 Maeterlinck, 169: ‘Il ne vous fera plus un grand mal [...] Avez-vous ce qu’il faut pour le tuer?’
148 Dukas, 223. ‘N’ayez pas peur, ses bras sont bien liés.’
149 Ibid., 223. ‘Où faut-il qu’on le porte?’ ‘Par ici, près du mur. Là, voilà. Il ne bougera plus.’
150 Ibid., 224. ‘Vengez-vous comme vous voudrez.’
As the men bid the protagonist farewell, Dukas abbreviates their last comment to ‘Madam, I don’t know how, but it had to be said...Really, you were too beautiful. It was not possible.’\(^1\) This is written into the B 128 source, as is the text analysed above, unlike many of the second-act alterations. Towards the very end of this document, however, Dukas penned approximately ten lines that do not correlate to the opera’s definitive libretto. Although indecipherable, we can deduce that they succeed Ariane’s comment ‘the moon and stars light up the way along the roads’ and were intended to replace the closing moments of the play. Out of these projected changes, only one sentence was actually used. Following the mention of ‘the moon and stars,’ Dukas interpolates: ‘The forest and the sea call out to us from a distance.’\(^2\)

Having outlined how the composer modified Maeterlinck’s work, the question now remains as to why he enacted the changes that he did. Some fundamental issues were at stake. Dukas argued (as we see in chapter three) that opera must be rooted in music. Therefore, the text’s structural symmetrical modifications could be regarded as reflecting the composer’s penchant for symmetrical designs, as seen in his earlier *Polyeucte* and *Sorcier* scores. Moulding Maeterlinck to his music also enabled Dukas to assume at least some degree of ownership over the libretto—something that was vital to a composer who prior to *Ariane* had never considered using the texts of another in his music-dramas. What mattered most, however, was his poetic vision for *Ariane*. Dukas sought to transform (and succeeded in doing so) the relationships Ariane shared with the wives and Bluebeard in order to produce a music-drama that interrogated ideas about autonomy and freedom: ideas that were of personal concern to the composer too.

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1. Maeterlinck, 170; Dukas, 226–7. ‘Madame, je ne sais pas...mais il fallait vous dire...Vrai, vous étiez trop belle...Ce n’était pas possible.’
2. Dukas, 242. ‘La forêt et la mer nous appellent de loin.’
The discrepancies between Dukas’s B 128 document and his ultimate text may be attributed to the prolonged gestation of the work (1899–1907), which surely encouraged the composer to contemplate dramatic issues deeply. The supreme success, in Dukas’s eyes, of Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1902 plausibly emboldened the composer to indulge in a greater degree of poetic license with Maeterlinck’s text. Dukas’s approach to the original libretto arguably implies that, all along, the composer considered Maeterlinck’s play more of a prologue than a definitive text for his finished opera. B 128 ought to be considered a document which relates to the final object just as musical sketches anticipate a complete work. It is an important artefact that assesses Dukas’s tentative efforts at melding the literary and musical worlds into one stage form. The musico-dramatic effectiveness of this approach will be discussed in chapter six.

*Manuscript score (Mss. 1030–1032)*

Always self-critical, the composer’s practice of designating portions of scores for correction goes back, as we have seen, to *Polyeucte.* As is the case with the earlier overture, *Ariane*’s revisions basically consisted of rewriting some orchestration, rather than a larger structural overhaul. The comparatively few amendments may be explained by way of the composer’s more pressing preoccupation with the setting of particular textual passages, notably the underground chant scene, in which Bluebeard’s previous wives sing ‘Les cinq filles d’Orlamonde.’ According to Henry Prunières, despite arranging this passage twenty times, Dukas was still not satisfied with the finished result.\(^{153}\) As the second act makes wide use of the Orlamonde song, it is thus not surprising to discover that Dukas was still drafting Act II until 21

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\(^{153}\) Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ 228.
January 1905, that is, almost until the opera as a whole was complete. It seems that the composer may have worked thematically rather than chronologically on the project.

The section ‘to be corrected’ on Ms. 1032, which is otherwise taken up with the opera’s third act, refers to an exchange between Ariane and the Nurse in Act I. Having discovered the amethysts, sapphires and pearls, the Nurse advises Ariane ‘Allez-vous en, les autres! Faites place aux plus belles!’ (Go, collect the others! Make room for the most beautiful!) This correction merely involved thinning out the orchestral texture through the omission of the cor anglais and glockenspiel parts. These had initially doubled the other wind instruments for the two bars over which ‘les améthystes, les sapphirs et les perles’ is inscribed (vs, p. 105). There is also a scribbled, illegible comment beside the cello part at the same point.

These alterations are typical of changes that occur intermittently throughout Mss. 1030–1032. On page one of the opera is the first adjustment, with the opening cello and bass parts pasted over with fresh manuscript. In the final version, the cellos double the woodwind octaves. Meanwhile, the double basses provide more than harmonic support; their robust rhythmic profile drives the menacing atmosphere of the music, vindicating Dukas’s reconsideration of this section. Later on, just before and after rehearsal number three, the lower strings are changed again. The figures added are virtually identical to those in the opening bars.

Additional revisions of the lower strings are evident in Act II, rehearsal number 118, with a new piece of paper firmly pasted over the old part. The sparse, staccato chords preceding this section (which perhaps originally continued into 118) are replaced with sustained, lower-pitched chords (full score, p. 318). Next, attention

154 D877.A696, Robert Owen Lehman Collection, Morgan Library, New York. This manuscript contains a draft of most of Act Three as well as the previous act. At the end of Act Two, Dukas wrote ‘Fin de deuxième acte. 26 janvier 05.’
is focused on the upper strings, with the violin part at rehearsal number 119 reconsidered. This ushers in a brief, ethereal violin solo, pitched on various overtones. As Act II draws to an end, at ‘Un peu élargi—au mvt’ (full score, p. 376), Dukas considered moving a figure in the glockenspiel to the timpani, but eventually excised it altogether. In the third act, yet more revision of the strings is apparent.

In summary, both B 128 and Mss. 1030–1032 reflect the composer’s flexible approach to the libretto. Even the opening of the opera adapts Maeterlinck’s wishes slightly. The playwright’s version begins thus:

‘The curtain rises from the first bars of the overture and one immediately hears, across the music, the voices of the invisible crowd.’

Dukas did not furnish the opera with a separate musical introduction, nor did he allow the curtain to be raised immediately, postponing this until bar nineteen. Two bars later, the composer incorporates stage directions into the score that are not present in Maeterlinck’s play. It is only at this point, too, that the sounds of the ‘invisible crowd’ materialise. The peasants of Orlamonde are heard off-stage; specifically, though, Dukas requests for the chorus to be positioned ‘at the back of the theatre.’ He also orders those playing the villagers whose voices are heard in isolation to be situated ‘as near as possible to the orchestra.’ These supplementary dramatic guidelines are confined to the opening of Act I and to the Ariane-wives section discussed above in Act III. The composer’s next stage works (La Péri and the abandoned Sang de Méduse) would demonstrate a more protracted involvement with the music’s theatrical realisation.

155 Maeterlinck, Ariane. ‘Dès les premières mesures de l’ouverture, le rideau se lève et l’on entend immédiatement, à travers la musique, les voix de la foule invisible.’
156 Dukas, Ariane, 5.
157 Ibid., 5.
Incomplete text-based works after 1907

Buoyed by the success of *Ariane*, Dukas proceeded with another opera from 1908–10. *Le Nouveau Monde*, however, is now presumed to have been destroyed. The composer’s determination to invent his own libretto for the work may have contributed to its musical downfall (as happened to *Horn et Rimenhild* in 1892, which never progressed beyond the first act).\(^{158}\) Dukas’s friend Robert Brussel recalled that the ‘musical drama’ *Le Nouveau Monde* was set in Genoa during the Renaissance era. He described it as revolving around two very different brothers—one an adventurer and the other an introverted man—and their admirable mother.\(^{159}\)

Apart from this work, the other text-based orchestral music destroyed after *Ariane* constitutes the symphonic poem *Fil de la Parque* (1908); a music-drama based on Shakespeare’s *Tempest* (ca.1899–1912); the ballet *Le Sang de Méduse* (c. 1912); and an untitled symphonic poem destined for Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony (c. 1930). According to Brussel, Dukas conceived *Parque* ‘during one of the most distressing times of his life, after the death of his beloved brother.’\(^{160}\) Meanwhile, the 1930 symphonic poem was meant to commemorate the founding of the Boston Symphonic Concerts. Of the foregoing works, extra-musical plans for *Méduse* and *Tempête* survive; hence, they will be examined below.

Carnet W50 (42, 43, 51, 52) documents some of the embryonic plans for Dukas’s projected work *Le Sang de Méduse*.\(^{161}\) Presumably inspired by the

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\(^{158}\) Dukas mentions this in a letter to his brother Adrien on 14 March 1897 in Georges Favre (ed.) *Correspondance de Paul Dukas* (Paris: Durand, 1971), 30. ‘Je n’en poussai pas la musique plus loin que la premier acte, m’apercevant trop tard que les développements de l’œuvre étaient plus littéraires que musicaux.’


\(^{160}\) *Ibid.*, 25, ‘conçu à l’une des heures le plus douloureuses de sa vie, après la mort d’un frère tendrement chéri.’

\(^{161}\) Paul Dukas, *Le Sang de Méduse*. Carnet W50 (42, 43, 51, 52), Musique, BNF.
achievement of his ballet *La Péri* during the previous year, the composer conceived *Méduse*, based on an ancient myth, as another short piece of programmatic dance music. He developed it during a holiday in Italy in 1912. The composer hoped to realise his objectives for the stage scenery with the assistance of René Piot, who had already collaborated with him on *Péri*. In Brussel’s words, Dukas ‘dreamed of a kind of enamel, translucent, dazzling’ decor.

In a contract drawn up by his publisher Jacques Durand and signed by the musician on 30 December 1913, when he was living at Rue de l’Assomption, the work is described as ‘a choreographic poem in one act.’ Moreover, the agreement outlines that Dukas was to own the rights not only to the envisaged score but also to the accompanying programme, as well as its translation. Thus, Dukas evidently intended to write the scenario himself. No trace of it exists today, though. Heavily invested in this project, the composer devised plans for *Méduse*’s stage production too—and these happen to have been preserved.

W50 (42, 43) consists of a few pages entitled ‘Projet de décor pour *Méduse.*’ For this, the composer sketched out a picture illustrating how the stage ought to be prepared for the piece’s production. Two supplementary pages of notes expand upon the scenery in the drawing. Unfortunately, as is the case with Dukas’s similarly text-oriented projected work, *La Tempête*, no musical drafts for *Méduse* survive. Whether this is due to Dukas completing the piece but then destroying it, or if little of the music was written, is clouded in uncertainty. Prunières noted that, years later, he still did not know why Dukas had ceased work on it. It is worth remembering that the

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163 Brussel, ‘Souvenir,’ 25.
165 ‘Une poème chorégraphique en une acte.’ Carnet W50 (51), Musique, BNF.
166 *Ibid.*, ‘la Partition et du Livret ainsi que de sa traduction française.’
167 Henry Prunières quoted in Brussel, ‘Souvenir,’ 35, n. 2. ‘Je ne sais pas toujours les raisons de son
composer lamented the failure of *Rimenhild* owing to its literary rather than musical progress. Hence, it might have been the case that the composer’s detailed schemes for other aspects of *Méduse* consumed his creativity to the detriment of the music.

Prior to *Méduse*, Dukas had worked extensively on *La Tempête*. It is not absolutely certain what musical form the composer contemplated for his setting of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, or when he devoted himself to this project. Decoding what appeal the play held for Dukas, however, is a relatively straightforward task. An avid reader of Shakespeare, the composer’s reviews of works like Verdi’s *Otello* and Berlioz’s *Roméo et Juliette* are suffused with insightful comments about the plays and how they are rendered in musical adaptation. His theoretical musings provided a foundation on which to construct his own interpretation of the bard. A prerequisite for such a project was a good French translation of Shakespeare. On more than one occasion, though, (in an article he wrote on Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*, for example) Dukas accused librettists such as Jules Barbier of denigrating Shakespeare’s prose for the sake of operatic convention. Consequently, it seems that he decided to undertake responsibility for producing a translation that would be both faithful to the original and flexible enough to sit well in a musical setting.

Why Dukas chose *The Tempest* from Shakespeare’s repertoire is open to speculation. The answer appears to lie in the content of the play and in the vivid possibilities suggested by it. Commenting in 1901 on incidental music Ernest Chausson had written for the play (Op. 18, 1887), he praised it as one of his ‘most colouristic and characteristic works.’ Based on Dukas’s music-text aesthetic, I

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168 See chapter three for discussion of Dukas’s article ‘Shakespeare and Opera.’
169 Paul Dukas, ‘Les Concerts,’ *(Revue hebdomadaire, 1901)* Les Écrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique (Paris: SEFI, 1948), 547–555 (548), ‘une de ses œuvres les plus colorées et les plus caractéristiques.’ It is not known whether Dukas also knew Tchaikovsky’s *Tempest* (Symphonic Fantasy after Shakespeare), op. 18. Even if he did, it is unlikely to have been a strong influence on
suggest that he intended to mine the play’s evocative otherworldliness for lyrical potential, just as he did in *Ariane* when evoking the fairytale land of Orlamonde.

Substantively, in common with Goethe’s ballad *Der Zauberlehrling*, *The Tempest* is pervaded by the theme of magic. The sorcerer Prospero controls events on the island but, just like the apprentice sorcerer in Goethe’s poem, he surrenders his supernatural powers in the end.

Brussel classified Dukas’s subsequent music as ‘an important score that would accompany his new translation of *The Tempest*.‘

Critic Pierre Lalo described the piece thus:

> It was, simply, a music drama; now scenic music, still other times a vast symphonic poem, in which each part would have expressed the personality of the various characters.

The ambiguity of this description disguises the fact that *La Tempête* was almost definitely destined for the stage as a music-drama. As we know, the composer went to the trouble of producing his own, abridged, French translation of the play, confirming that a vocal element once featured prominently in his plans. If at times the score was reminiscent of a symphonic poem, this is no more than what would be expected from one whose 1907 opera placed heavy emphasis on programmatic orchestral interludes. The single substantial objection to *La Tempête* as an opera may be contended on the premise that it contradicts the central hypothesis of the composer’s article from the 1890s, ‘Shakespeare and Opera.’ This problem will be addressed in chapter three. For now, it suffices to say that whether or not Dukas’s

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His composition given that out of all the Russian composers, Tchaikovsky was perhaps the one he rated least. He published a wholly negative review of his *Pathétique* Symphony (*Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité*, 1898), *Ecrits*, 407–9.

170 Brussel, ‘Souvenir,’ 25, ‘l’importante partition qui accompagnait sa traduction nouvelle de *la Tempête*.

aesthetic position precluded his capacity to complete the project, all the evidence indicates that it was indeed intended as a music-drama.

Regarding the provenance of *La Tempête*, Favre believed that Dukas, after dwelling on the matter for some time, worked on the score between 1910 and 1912.\(^{172}\) We know, however, that the composer sought his father’s advice on the issue as early as 1899. He wrote to Jules Dukas inquiring about the verb *embaumer* following a discussion with his friend Paul Poujaud about the translation of a line from *The Tempest*.\(^{173}\) Perturbed by a grammatical detail concerning the phrase in question—‘the air breathes upon us here most sweetly’ (II, 44)—Dukas said:

‘[Poujaud’s] explanations, as well as the examples from Darmesteter and Hatzfeld,\(^{174}\) have not convinced me that one can say:

“Le souffle de l’air *nous* embaume.”

I wrote in a translation:

“Le souffle de l’air embaume.”

[...] (The discussion between P. and me, you will have guessed, concerns the translation -upon us.)\(^{175}\)

Evidently, he was intensely preoccupied with his Tempest text—to the extent that it must have been earmarked as a potential libretto. The above letter dates from an unspecified time in 1899, and as Dukas was still fervently pursuing the composition of an opera despite his recent failure with *L’Arbre de science*—and had had no contact with Maeterlinck regarding *Ariane* until that same year—the possibility cannot be discounted. As of 30 June 1899, Dukas was still trying to ascertain if

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173 Paul Dukas to Jules Dukas, 1899, Favre (ed.) *Correspondance*, 34.
174 *Ibid.*., 34. According to Favre, this is a reference to the famous *Dictionnaire Général de la Langue Française*, published by Arène Darmesteter and Hatzfeld.
175 *Ibid.*., 34.
Maeterlinck had reached a definitive decision about whether he would be permitted to set the libretto, or if it would fall to Edward Grieg.\textsuperscript{176}

As has been mentioned, no musical sketches of \textit{La Tempête} survive. The extant material, Carnet W51 (94 a, b, c), contains Dukas’s notes on and his translation of \textit{The Tempest}.\textsuperscript{177} The material (94 a, b, c) may be divided up as follows:

(a) Handwritten notes;
(b) Some loose, typed notes;
(c) Printed and bound lengthy translation of the play.

In all likelihood, 94.a is rough work for what would eventually become 94.c. Acts I and II are written out in 94.a, while notes for Act III are jotted down on some fragments of paper enclosed at the end of Act II. Approximately sixty pages long, 94.c is typed and bound, with \textit{La Tempête} written in Dukas’s hand on the front cover. There are no marks or comments anywhere on the text (unlike the composer’s working copy of the Maeterlinck libretto), which indicates that this was part of a libretto in its final form.

The loose, typed-out pages from 94.b are numbered VII – XXXII. They appear to be a continuation of the play as presented in 94.c; the latter ends abruptly on page sixty in the middle of a speech by Prospero. Folio 94.b consists of exchanges between Prospero and Miranda: conversation between the pair concludes with Prospero ordering: ‘Viens, suis-moi! (à Miranda). Pour lui plus un mot!’ They exit after this (‘Ils sortent’). The fifteen loose pages comprising 94.b are typed out, as in the case of 94.c, but not double-spaced or bound, which perhaps indicates that Dukas

\textsuperscript{176} Dukas wrote to the musician Gabriel Fabre on this date, saying that he must surely have met Maeterlinck and discovered whether he or Grieg would have the privilege of setting \textit{Ariane}. Autograph letter from Paul Dukas to Gabriel Fabre, 30 June 1899, MFC D877.F123, Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, Morgan Library, New York.

\textsuperscript{177} Paul Dukas, \textit{La Tempête}. Carnet W51 (94 a, b, c), Musique, BNF.
was not quite finished working on them. This is supported by the fact that a few words are also crossed out or changed.

Act I in 94.a omits Shakespeare’s first scene, moving on instead to the next one in Prospero’s cave, whereas we are told in 94.c that events begin on an island (‘Dans une île’). Dukas alters the characters’ lines slightly from the (a) to (c) versions, but generally communicates the same basic ideas. One example of this occurs with Miranda’s line: in 94.a Dukas starts with ‘dear father’ but this becomes ‘Oh! My beloved father’ in 94.c.178 The improved scope for vocal expression in ‘Oh! Mon père bien aimé’ over ‘père chère’ is noticeable. Actually, Miranda’s brief remark is the very first line in the entire 94.a version, whereas 94.c, in line with Shakespeare, opens with the sound of the sailors’ cries.179 Dukas is also a little less specific with theatrical contexts in the 94.a folio, merely describing the setting for Act II, scene 2 as ‘another part of the island,’ rather than ‘a scene representing the island from another aspect’ as is stated in 94.c.180

A minor detail nonetheless worth mentioning concerns Dukas’s modification of conjunctions such as maintenant in manuscript 94.a. Such words are sometimes repositioned in sentences, hence resembling the composer’s syntactical adjustments of Maeterlinck’s Ariane libretto. Understandably, alterations of that nature were made to the latter sung text in order to aid its rhythmic and lyrical execution. Therefore, if Dukas had planned to compose The Tempest as an orchestral work only, it is extremely doubtful that he would have gone to such measures to refine his programme.

178 W51 (94.a), ‘Père chère’; W51 (94.c), ‘Oh! Mon père bien aimé.’
179 W51 (94.c), ‘Ohé! Enfants!’
180 W51 (94.a), ‘un autre partie de l’île’; W51 (94.c), ‘scène représentant l’île sous un autre aspect.’
Conclusion

If it is at all true that Dukas imagined *La Tempête* as chiefly, though not exclusively, orchestral, in the manner of a ‘vast symphonic poem’ it is indicative of the degree to which the composer’s aesthetic sensibilities had developed. The composer’s re-scripting of the Shakespearean text and re-moulding of its function show the extent to which his desire for creative autonomy had affected his perception of programme music. In a genre conventionally associated with at least some external literary agency, Dukas was determined to impose his authorship on the subsequent music such as to subvert this expectation. The unrealistic expectation that this was possible with a writer of Shakespeare’s magnitude is the key to the non-publication of *La Tempête*. No matter what strategies Dukas employed to translate the drama in a musically satisfying manner, the fact remained that the play’s fame ensured it would always be regarded as Shakespeare’s poetic property. The desired musico-dramatic transformation could never become real because Dukas could not guarantee that the *Tempête* music-drama had sprung from his own creative impulses.

On the other hand, his modifications to *Ariane* were compatible with his aesthetic of originality. For one thing, it was slightly easier for Dukas to lay poetic claim to the 1907 music-drama, because the Maeterlinck text was not very well known. Moreover, the operatic *Ariane*’s message of individuality and autonomy uncoiled not from the slightly superficial play but from the composer’s contemplative adaptation of it. The transformed music-drama reflected Dukas’s deepest philosophical beliefs: he cherished the individual, freedom and truth above all. For this reason, we should not regard cuts made to sexually suggestive scenes in the second act as a gesture of prudery. The notion that Dukas implemented these

181 Paul Dukas to Maurice Maeterlinck, 6 October 1901, Favre, *Correspondance*, 42–3. This letter expressed the composer’s disappointment that the play had been staged before his music-drama was finished. It is discussed further in chapter six.
changes to comply with the censor is unfounded, as the 1902 performance of the play passed off without any record of controversy. Simply, it is that the intimate chitchat of Maeterlinck’s women was not conducive to articulating Dukas’s elevated ideals.\footnote{Chapter six addresses this topic in more detail.}

The music-text aesthetic of \textit{Ariane}, as illustrated in a study of its sources, may be viewed as a summation of the composer’s previous experiments in this category of music. \textit{Berlichingen} alluded to the same subject of human destiny, while \textit{Lear} was a study of one central figure. \textit{Velléda}, meanwhile, is the first sign that Dukas wished to bestow a dramatic function on his aesthetic. Through delineating scenes by indicating what characters are present and where, it is a precursor to \textit{Ariane}, which supplements Maeterlinck’s stage directions with Dukas’s own instructions. By denying the \textit{Polyeucte} manuscript any programmatic markers but in obviously tweaking the two central contrasting musical materials, he points to the dramatic heart of the work by other means. Likewise, it can be deduced that the composer refined the orchestral prelude to \textit{Ariane}—and it is in this section that the main motifs of the work reside. Therefore, we can tell that his perspective on the music-text aesthetic is reflected in the key ideas. This is made most explicit in the \textit{Sorcier} documents, which designate the precise quality of the musical and literary interaction.

With \textit{Ariane} defining the summit of Dukas’s text-based aesthetic, the abandoned \textit{Tempête} with its limited scope for authorial input now comes across as an anachronistic endeavour. \textit{Méduse}, though, in trailing the groundbreaking path of \textit{Péri}, would surely have been a success had it been completed. The fact that the sum of the text in these two works consisted of brief scenarios signals the composer’s
move towards a broader dramatic concept. As we shall see in the next chapter, Dukas’s theory of music and text had already led him to the conclusion that its ultimate effect was the creation of drama.
Chapter Three: Paul Dukas as a Critic and the Theoretical Development of his Aesthetic

Introduction

This chapter will consider Paul Dukas’s output as a music critic. In particular, we will focus on the essays that emerged during the same period as the composer’s text-based musical œuvre (Polyeucte, 1891; L’Apprenti sorcier, 1897; Ariane et Barbe-Bleue, 1907). Part I offers a contextual discussion of his writings on the music-text relationship; Part II identifies the key aesthetic precepts of Dukas’s art and analyses the core aspects of his music-text philosophy. Alongside this, we examine how the composer’s music-text principles relate to his œuvre in practice. It is discovered that Dukas’s theoretical model of music in combination with literature or drama finds a very real application in his overture, symphonic poem and music-drama.

The main source for this study is a large volume of Dukas’s articles, selected by the composer’s wife Suzanne Dukas and published in 1948. While not exhaustive, Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la Musique contains most of the important essays. Georges Favre addressed the shortfall in Ecrits by later publishing some of Dukas’s earliest reviews (of Wagner’s Ring) and three articles from the 1890s devoted to lyric theatre. Given the extent to which Dukas worked as a critic it is surprising that his articles have been so neglected. One reason for this is that they never been printed in any language other than French. Apart from a handful of

183 For an extensive list of Dukas’s articles, see La Revue musicale, 157 (June 1936): 124–36.
articles which have been translated and analysed, Dukas the critic has not received much systematic attention.\textsuperscript{186} While many commentators show at least passing familiarity with an essay in \textit{Ecrits} on \textit{Ariane et Barbe-Bleue}, this was sent as private correspondence to the composer’s friend Robert Brussel in 1910. It only reached a public forum posthumously through a special edition of \textit{La Revue musicale} in 1936; therefore, it ought not to be considered archetypal of Dukas’s output.\textsuperscript{187} The writings merit much attention: their value lies not only in what they teach us about the composer, but also in the fact that ‘the legacy of Dukas’s reviews and essays survive as the most penetrating, fair and prescient of that period.’\textsuperscript{188}

\textbf{Part I}

\textbf{Scope of Dukas’s music criticism}

Dukas began his career as a music critic shortly after the first performance of \textit{Polyeucte}. Prior to his work for the press, Dukas had written programme notes for the Harcourt Concerts. His first review, for the \textit{Revue hebdomadaire}, critiqued Charles Bordes’s Saint-Gervais choir’s performance of Vittoria, Palestrina and Bach.\textsuperscript{189} Even with this tentative critical foray Dukas’s voice resonates clearly. Almost immediately, he asked questions of modern music and how far it had strayed


\textsuperscript{188} Caballero, \textit{Fauré}, 79.

from the ‘essential conditions of its existence.’ While this line of enquiry is not pursued in great depth, the composer’s next series of essays, on Wagner’s Ring, further probes music’s historical threads.

These encapsulate the composer’s Wagnerian-influenced views on the intersection of music, text and drama. In general, though, the range of the composer’s criticism is very diverse; we encounter new works and new performances in his reviews, but he also grapples with vital aesthetic issues of the fin de siècle French milieu. A handful of major themes may be discerned: the importance of originality and sincerity; the development of a music-text aesthetic; the evolution of music in a dramatic context, with special consideration of Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk; and a desire to locate contemporaneous developments within a historical field that was also mindful of the future. The composer’s ideas were highly respected by Debussy, Fauré and d’Indy—although it can be seen that he patently differs from his colleagues in some ways. Fauré encouraged Dukas to collect his articles in an enduring publishable form but the composer did not perceive this degree of value in his criticism.

As the articles span the years 1892–1932, they understandably investigate a variety of matters. They were written over two distinct periods: 1892–1905 and 1923–1932. From 1910–23 Dukas was engrossed in staging his works, teaching and a busy personal life. The first of his two periods as a critic is more significant. During this era, discussions of ‘Music and Literature,’ ‘Music and Comedy,’ ‘The Interpretation of Lyric Drama,’ ‘Shakespeare and Opera,’ ‘Poems and Libretti,’ ‘Music and Originality,’ ‘The Exact Interpretation,’ ‘The New Lyricism,’ ‘The Scenic Deception,’ not to mention three essays on Goethe’s Faust, filled the pages of

190 Ibid., 24, ‘au point d’en être venu à méconnaître ses origines et les condition essentielles.’
191 For a probing discussion of Dukas’s main essay on originality, see Caballero, Fauré. See Minors for analysis of Dukas’s concept of drama.
Revue hebdomadaire. Dukas also contributed to La Gazette des Beaux-Arts and its supplement Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité. Indeed, he helped shape the critical direction of these journals. With the Revue, this was assisted by the fact that it had only been founded in 1891 and Dukas’s tenure there extended from 1892–1902. Concurrent with this was his work for the Chronique, spanning 1894–1905. The composer proved to be the first in its line of illustrious writers: he was succeeded in 1905 by Louis Laloy and then by fellow composer-critic Koechlin in 1909.

The parallel between the orchestral music Dukas produced during this time and the subjects to which his critical eye was drawn is apparent. Although Polyeucte was published too soon for Dukas’s theoretical models to have affected it, the fact that its formal shape is consistent with the later two works indicates that the composer had been guided by definite aesthetic principles from the outset. Several aforementioned articles refer to the Lisztian symphonic poem, Russian programme music, and musical settings inspired by Goethe—traces of all these influences exist in Dukas’s L’Apprenti sorcier, after Goethe. The more specific text-oriented articles informed Dukas’s approach to Maurice Maeterlinck’s libretto when composing Ariane et Barbe-Bleue. As for the Shakespeare essay mentioned above, Dukas never completed an opera inspired by the playwright, but he did produce a translation of The Tempest with the intent of using it in a dramatic context. Additionally, one of his unpublished student works was an overture after King Lear.

In the last decade of his life Dukas was less productive as a composer, and also wrote shorter articles for La Revue musicale and Le Quotidien. (The other publications in which Dukas’s writings appear are Le Courier musicale et théâtrale, Minerva, Latinité, Le Monde musicale, La Revue bleue and Comédia.) A few of his

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192 The exception to this is ‘Le nouveau lyrisme,’ (Minerva, November 1903) Ecrits, 578–89.
pieces from the 1920s took the form of obituaries, with tributes paid to André Messager (1853–1929), as well as Fauré and d’Indy. These were musicians for whom Dukas felt true affinity. The same could not really be said of younger composers such as Stravinsky and Milhaud, whose merits he clearly acknowledged but with a palpable sense of detachment. He judged his former student Milhaud a reformatory figure in ‘the world of young music,’ while his sincere admiration for Stravinsky’s *Noces* did not make it any less ‘strangely’ powerful.

Coinciding with Dukas’s creative decline, the later reviews are generally less meditative, apart from one in January 1924 titled ‘The Tendencies of Contemporary Music.’ Preceding this essay by just a few months is a discussion of ‘The Wagnerian Influence,’ which mirrors the uneasy contrast between the aesthetic that Dukas upheld and the trends of the 1920s. In attempting to assess contemporary music, the composer complained of having hardly any time to reflect upon it and likened his exploration to ‘descending into an abyss’ with only a little lamp to guide him. Nonetheless, he wrestled with modern music, which he saw as deeply embedded within the fabric of modern society.

This society, he said, was in a state of evolution, with music forced to search for ‘its own equilibrium, like everything else.’ In greater detail he explained:

[Music] tries to adapt to the exterior conditions of life, conditions whereby material progress, which drives life more and more, has accelerated rhythm to the point of transforming the notion of time, which forms the basis of our art.

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197 ‘Les tendances,’ 667. ‘Le *Courrier Musical* me donne huit jours... A peine le temps de me passer une corde autour du corps, d’allumer ma lampe de mineur et de descendre dans le gouffre [...]. Je n’aurai sûrement pas le temps de l’explorer et de remonter à la surface avec le trésor de pensées définitives.’

For a contemporary of Mozart’s, musical rhythm could seem faster than the actual tempo of existence. It is now a long time since the prestissimo of the street trailed behind the highest numbers of the metronome. [...] To conquer the public during the few hours they grant them, musicians [...] are required to astonish. [...] And that is how, little by little, a violent and rapid art is formed, with brief formulae repeated indefinitely, relying on the persistence of elementary rhythms for effect.\(^{199}\)

Dukas’s fundamental objection to modernity rested on the demands it placed upon music. To a composer who was uncomfortable with the intrusion of other arts into his work, the notion that music might be forced to accommodate non-artistic exigencies was quite horrifying.

**Dukas’s criticism in the fin de siècle press**

Dukas’s brand of music criticism developed from and responded to several personal and cultural influences. One of these was his relationships with other composer-critics, especially Debussy. Another was a prominent French music journal from the middle of the nineteenth century, *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, published from 1834–80.\(^{200}\) Evidence of Dukas’s knowledge of the Gazette abounds in his frequent references to celebrated Gazette writer Fétis in articles and in correspondence with others. Dukas’s frame of reference, though, was not confined to the musical.

\(^{199}\) *Ibid.*, 670. ‘[La musique] tente aussi de s’adapter aux conditions extérieures de la vie, dont les progrès matériels, qui la mécanisent de plus en plus, ont accéléré le rythme au point de transformer la notion de temps qui est à base de notre art. Pour un contemporain de Mozart, le rythme musical pouvait sembler plus rapide que le mouvement réel de l’existence. Il y a longtemps que, pour nous, le prestissimo de la rue fait paraître traînants les chiffres les plus forts du métronome. [...] Pour conquérir [le public] pendant les quelques heures qu’il leur accorde, les musiciens [...] sont contraints de l’étonner [...]. Et c’est ainsi que s’est peu à peu formé un art violent et rapide, tout en formules brèves indéfiniment répétées et dont l’effet s’appuie sur la persistance de rythmes élémentaires.’

\(^{200}\) Although Dukas was only fifteen years old when the last edition of the Gazette was published, he seems to have been very familiar with it. See Katherine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La revue et gazette musicale de Paris, 1834–80* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2. She clarifies that ‘annual indexes of the Gazette and detailed annual tables of contents in *Le Ménestrel* indicate their character as publications to be collected and consulted.’
In that sense a periodical with broader cultural sensibilities, the *Revue wagnérienne*, proved important. Co-founded by the composer’s friend Edouard Dujardin (1861–1949) in 1885, it came to typify the kind of literary Wagnerism to which Dukas was opposed and felt compelled to respond from a musical perspective in his writings. An important contributor to the *Revue* was Villiers de l’Isle-Adams (1840–89), whose typically extravagant account of Wagner is illustrated in this critique of *Das Rheingold*:

> The god of lightning begins a song of triumph, the stage is enshrouded in clouds, flashes zigzag through the harmony … the storm runs through the violas and brass and the trumpet notes, borne off on the tempest of the violins like leaves torn away on the mountain-tops, whirl through space.

Here, the music is a vehicle for the dramatic (and by implication, textual) action. As Jensen points out, Villiers lived at a time when ‘much attention was focused by writers on the relationship between words and music.’ Therefore, Dukas’s work (which began a few years later) served to counteract the growing dominance of the literary view.

The *Gazette* provides perhaps the clearest picture of music criticism and its evolution in nineteenth-century France. Its contributions reflect all aspects of French musical life, as well as the burgeoning interest in criticism as a cognisant, philosophical activity. Ellis argues that the work of the *Gazette* critics became ‘tied to that of the formation of a musical canon whose aesthetic quality had been tested by critics and was deemed irreproachable.’ Decades later, Dukas’s essays would implicitly acknowledge the judgments passed by his predecessors. In fact, his work plays the role of reifying the *Gazette* position through not only identifying with its

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201 See Moore, ‘Dukas and Dujardin,’ for more on the relationship between the two.
204 Ellis, *Gazette*, 236.
aesthetic but also extending it using the argument that it was upheld by an objective, historical rationale.

Opinion had been divided amongst the *Gazette* generation of critics regarding the place of programme music, specifically the symphonic poem, in the canon. Ellis describes one writer’s dilemma:

[Charles] Bannelier excitedly observed the emergence of a new branch of French music—the flowering of a long-awaited indigenous school of [programmatic] instrumental composition. [...] Yet, as a formalist, he remained opposed to many of its defining characteristics. [...] For Bannelier, instrumental music stood or fell purely on its musical merits; the suitability of that music to its programme was irrelevant when he came to judge a particular piece.205

In Dukas’s era, the symphonic poem’s claim to canonic authenticity was still far from guaranteed. Partly, this was because it had ‘fallen into regrettable discredit in the opinion of artists and critics too inclined to judge it only on the abuse done to it.’206 For a composer whose renown from 1897 on rested largely on *Sorcier*, this was problematic. Therefore, much of his writing from the 1890s is successfully dedicated to validating the genre through exploring aspects of the music-text relationship, despite a personal ambiguity towards the genre. In this regard, he advanced the critical discourse of music in the late nineteenth century.

Dukas’s views on the symphonic poem demonstrate the conflation of aesthetic quality with historical determinism that characterises many of his essays. Legitimising the Lisztian genre partly on the aesthetic grounds that it could be considered a smaller-scale version of music-drama, he stated:

This uniquely musical faculty, to create forms by developing the ideas of a poetic text, created programme music. This, in considering its best examples,
seems as legitimate as dramatic music; it differs only by the liberty with which it applies the same principle of musical unity.\textsuperscript{207}

Locating the symphonic poem in Wagnerian territory then easily enabled Dukas to account for its historical worth. The most common way in which he did so was by extolling Wagner’s innovations as the only way forward for symphonic music after Beethoven.

The grand heritage that he perceived in this category of programme music by no means conformed to a wider critical consensus, as his words from 1894 indicate:

\begin{quote}
We do not have the intention of saying too much today on the topic of the picturesque in music. This subject has given rise to so many controversies and to so many misunderstandings that it is preferable not to insist too much on it for fear of seeing oneself badly understood.\textsuperscript{208}
\end{quote}

Dukas, though, was not at all troubled by the prospect of going against the grain. As Christian Goubault points out, he was part of a chorus of innovative voices in French music criticism. Together with commentators such as Debussy, Louis Laloy, Romain Rolland, Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, Emile Vuillermoz, he was attracted to ‘daring endeavours’ and ‘attentive to the march of Art.’\textsuperscript{209} Goubault maintains that this group of critics ‘loved to use a mordant or ironic style in order to provoke reaction,’\textsuperscript{210} but Dukas usually adopted a more taciturn tone.

Regardless of the divide between conservatives and progressives, Dukas’s 1895 essay on ‘Music and Originality’ appears to have appealed to every calibre of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[207] Paul Dukas, ‘Le nouveau lyrisme,’ \textit{(Minerva}, February 1903) \textit{Ecrits}, 578–89 (588). ‘Cette faculté propre à la musique, de créer des formes en développant les données d’un texte poétique, a engendré la musique à programme. Celle-ci, à en considérer les meilleurs exemples, apparaît aussi légitime que la musique dramatique; elle n’en diffère que par la liberté avec laquelle elle applique le même principe, qu’elle ramène simplement aux lois de l’unité musicale.’
\item[208] Paul Dukas, ‘Musique et comédie,’ \textit{(Revue hebdomadaire} September 1894 \textit{Ecrits}, 196–202 (197). ‘Sur la pittoresque en musique nous n’avons aujourd’hui l’intention de trop rien dire. Ce sujet a donné lieu à tant de controverses et à tant de malentendus qu’il est préférable de n’y pas trop insister de crainte de se voir mal compris.’
\item[209] Christian Goubault, \textit{La Critique musicale dans la presse française de 1870 à 1914} (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1984), 85. ‘La critique novatrice soutient les tentatives hardies. Elle est curieuse, attentive à la marche de l’Art.’
\item[210] \textit{Ibid.}, 85. ‘Elle adore utiliser un style mordant ou ironique afin de pourfendre la réaction.’
\end{footnotes}
French musician. Caballero has investigated the piece as a means of understanding Fauré’s statement in 1887 that French composers faced ‘a moment when it is more difficult that ever to be an original composer.’\footnote{211} Fauré made this claim at a time when Wagner’s dominance in France was highly problematic. Dukas’s essay attempts to reconcile that influence and the question of originality. Aside from closely coinciding with Fauré’s ‘personal tendencies and beliefs,’\footnote{212} ‘Music and Originality’ also contextualises Debussy’s antagonism to Wagner. Dukas understood artistic originality as an offshoot of human sincerity. He defined its musical form as ‘an auditory impression not yet experienced.’ To procure such an effect on the listener, he argued that:

> The ingeniousness of combinations and their more or less pleasing effect, remain powerless if they do not follow on from a private necessity, from a living sensation separated from foreign influence and from all imitative preoccupation.\footnote{213}

Originality, therefore, cannot be attained merely through knowledge of musical procedures. Dukas likened this mistaken approach to the creation of ‘a more or less perfect body,’ but one ‘not gifted with the spark of life.’\footnote{214} Exploring historical cases of the phenomenon, he condemned Hummel’s ‘cold pastiches’ of Beethoven. He described his music as a ‘forgery’ of Beethoven’s because it is ‘without correspondence to the aspirations of a troubled and tragic soul.’ It merely makes us feel, he argued, ‘a sentiment analogous to one that the ridiculous impersonation of a hero would inspire in us. It’s Polonius aping Hamlet.’\footnote{215}

\footnote{211} Quoted in Caballero, 
\footnote{212} Ibid., 79. 
\footnote{213} Paul Dukas, ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 1895) Ecrits, 287–94 (288–9). ‘Si l’on voulait définir l’originalité musicale, on pourrait en effet la nommer “la résultante d’une impression auditive non encore ressentie;” il est bien certain que, pour procurer une telle impression à l’auditeur, l’ingéniosité des combinaisons et leur effet plus ou moins heureux demeurent impuissants s’ils ne découlent pas d’une nécessité intime, d’une sensation vive dégagée de toute influence étrangère et de toute préoccupation imitatrice.’ 
\footnote{214} Ibid., 290. ‘Un corps plus ou moins parfait, mais non doué de l’étincelle de vie.’ 
\footnote{215} Ibid., 290. ‘Quand nous retrouvons chez un Hummel […] les mêmes accents dramatiques et la
Dukas then targeted his vitriol at those musicians who ‘possessing entirely dissimilar personalities, are nothing less than passionate or meditative in the style of Richard Wagner.’\textsuperscript{216} He decried the fact that \textit{Tristan and Isolde}’s lavish harmonies had been debased to ‘a common currency’\textsuperscript{217} by those who ‘adopt these procedures without having reflected on their value and without having examined if they suit their own disposition.’\textsuperscript{218} At the root of Dukas’s displeasure is the fact that Wagnerian imitators were oblivious to the difference between intrinsic originality and its outward manifestations. In the appropriation of their idol, they are dismissed as nothing more ‘slaves to the individuality of another.’\textsuperscript{219} This strident rhetoric is actually echoed, fortuitously enough, in the message of Dukas’s own music-drama years later.\textsuperscript{220} Finally, marrying originality to sincerity, as this essay does, enabled the composer to equate cerebral musical expression with the poetic, once the latter had sprung from true originality.

Sincerity, as Caballero informs us, ‘has a real aesthetic presence, specifically French’ and ‘pervades’ French writings on music between 1890 and 1930 ‘as constantly as ideas about decadence, impressionism, or the conflicting currents of the classical and the modern.’\textsuperscript{221} In the foregoing essay Dukas demonstrated his idealistic but profound commitment to the progress of modern French music. Through the principle of sincerity he identified new avenues open to French artists less extraordinarily gifted than their idol Wagner:

\begin{quote}
contrefaçon de la même structure harmonique et mélodique, mais [...] sans correspondance avec les aspirations d’une âme tragique et troublée, nous ressentions un sentiment analogue à celui que nous ferait éprouver le travestissement ridicule d’un héro. C’est Polonius singeant Hamlet.’
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Ibid.}, 291. ‘Des artistes qui en possèdent un [caractère] entièrement dissemblable, étant rien moins que passionnés ou méditatifs à la manière de Richard Wagner.’

\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}, 291, ‘monnaie courante.’

\textsuperscript{218} \textit{Ibid.}, 291. ‘Ceux-là adoptent ces procédés sans avoir réfléchi à leur valeur et sans avoir examiné s’ils conviennent à leur tempérament.’

\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Ibid.}, 291. ‘Ils se rendent esclaves de l’individualité d’autrui.’

\textsuperscript{220} See chapter six for more.

\textsuperscript{221} Caballero, \textit{Faure}, 11.
If everyone had the courage to affirm musically one’s own nature instead of subjugating oneself to a foreign nature, powerful as it is, one would see the appearance of works perhaps less ambitious, but definitely a lot more interesting.\textsuperscript{222}

Thus, not only did Dukas’s aesthetics echo those of the celebrated composers in his immediate circle, they also proposed to enrich French music by allocating a space to those lesser-talented but equally ‘sincere’ artists on the peripheries. As such, his articles from the 1890s participate in the multi-voiced dialogue of French musical discourse.

It is vital to remember that this conversation was far from confined to discussion of contemporary music. Ideological battles still surrounded past composers, the most notable from a French perspective being Berlioz. As Jean-Michel Nectoux has observed about that composer, the fact that ‘so many of his works are inspired by literature is a weakness for which Berlioz was reproached by many turn-of-the-century writers.’\textsuperscript{223} Dukas, though, forgave this on the grounds that when an artist finds it necessary to express a thought that is new and beautiful, who cares whether he has broken such and such a rule or violated such and such a category!\textsuperscript{224}

In doing so, he opposed both the views of d’Indy and Debussy, who found little ‘particularly French or musical about Berlioz,’ and the practices of the Opéra-Comique, which in the 1890s had yet to include \textit{Les Troyens} as part of their repertory.\textsuperscript{225} Instead, Dukas distinguished himself as one of the few critics to ‘emphasize Berlioz’s role as ancestor of the modern French school.’\textsuperscript{226}

\textsuperscript{222} Dukas, ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ 291. ‘Si chacun avait le courage d’affirmer musicalement sa propre nature au lieu de l’asservir volontairement à une nature étrangère, si puissante qu’elle soit, on verrait paraître des œuvres peut-être moins ambitieuses, mais à coup sur beaucoup plus intéressantes.’


\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Ibid.}, 140.


\textsuperscript{226} \textit{Ibid.}, 161.
the aesthetic basis upon which Dukas based to this conclusion could richly enhance its potency. It is just one example of how an understanding of the composer’s music-text theories can be applied to broader French scholarship.

Finally, Dukas’s critical work contributed to and eventually became symbolic of a greater context than that of either his own art or the French press. It owes this to the climate in which it was born. The 1890s, as Carl Dahlhaus recognised, epitomised the early years of ‘modernist music,’ a trend that lasted until about 1910. Importantly, this descriptive term (coined by Hermann Bahr) originated in the era itself, demonstrating that ‘the age had historicist leanings, viewed itself in terms of history, and produced journalism that anticipated future historiography.’

Dukas made his historicist leanings a focal tool in his critical methodology. In addition to this, the span of his output—he wrote about music, albeit intermittently, for forty years—provided him in later life with a personal narrative of developing Modernism. To pick out some of the main events: his youthful discussions of the 1890s cherish Wagner as the pinnacle of modern music; the early twentieth-century writings delight in Debussy’s innovations; and, finally, the composer’s disillusion with music in the 1920s implicitly acknowledges his status on the cusp rather than at the heart of modern art. Aided by this chronology, he speculated about the future in a manner that would surely have been impossible without the chronological self-awareness exhibited in his essays from the beginning.

**Dukas and Debussy: contemporary composer-critics**

For forty years, Dukas aimed for objectivity in appraising most works, composers and performers. However, he became decidedly partisan when speaking of

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institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire and Opéra, whose uninspiring policies he condemned as unsupportive of young composers. In this respect, his pieces were similar to Debussy’s, though his former classmate was far more forthright about using his articles ‘as a platform from which to launch attacks on what he viewed as the malaise pervading French modern music.’229 While Paris had other composer-critics in this era, such as Fauré and Koechlin, it is most useful to compare and contrast the styles of contemporaries Dukas and Debussy given their shared connection to Maeterlinck’s dramas and that Debussy’s appropriation of the playwright’s work would eventually exert a strong influence over Dukas.

Despite Debussy’s colourful views, and those of his alter ego Monsieur Croche, he was a fair critic and particularly forgiving of younger composers. This was also true of Dukas—and evidence of reciprocal support emerges in the pages of their reviews. Dukas first appraised Debussy in a glowing review of his String Quartet in May 1894.230 Describing him as ‘one of the most richly talented and most original artists of the new musical generation,’ the critic was nonetheless aware that chamber music connoisseurs might need persuasion to seek out Debussy’s ‘harmonious audacity.’231 He reassured them that this newcomer was primarily concerned with the expression of ‘musical sentiment’ and transcended those ‘for whom music is only the most vehement manner of rendering impressions and general thoughts.’232

232 Ibid., 175. ‘[Debussy] ne se propose de caractériser rien d’autre que des sentiments musicaux, contrairement à ce qui se peut remarquer chez bien des compositeurs pour lesquels la musique
He also assessed the first of Debussy’s *Nocturnes* in February 1901 and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in May 1902. The *Nocturnes* review taps into Debussy’s hostility towards the notion that artists could be classified into ‘schools.’ Dukas argued that Debussy ‘cannot be tidied away into any of the categories where […] one registers the composers of the present day: students of Franck, Massenet, disciples of Wagner, followers of Liszt.’ In 1901, it was the turn of Dukas to form the subject of a Debussy article. The composition in question was the four-movement Piano Sonata in E Flat Minor. As Donnellon reports, Debussy applauded ‘its freedom from “parasitic developments,” in direct contrast to the majority of reviewers who chided Dukas for the sonata’s unwieldy length and structural weaknesses.’ Debussy grasped better than others Dukas’s objective:

Monsieur Dukas understands the potentialities of music: he doesn’t consider it merely for its brilliance—something to titillate our ears until they can’t stand any more.

Dukas returned the compliment in his review of *Pelléas* the following year. Then, in 1903, Debussy was moved to write about the Sonata that ‘we really only have one piano sonata representative of our time—that of Paul Dukas.’

Returning to 1902, Dukas’s robust defence of *Pelléas* as ‘a masterpiece’ emphasised the magnitude of Debussy’s novel accomplishment notwithstanding the stagnation of the Parisian opera scene:

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234 ‘*Nocturnes,*’ 529. ‘Debussy ne peut être rangé dans aucune des catégories où […] on inscrit les compositeurs du temps présent: élèves de Franck, élèves de Massenet, disciples de Wagner, adeptes de Liszt.’


237 *Ibid.,* 201. The article from which this is taken is titled ‘A Consideration of the Prix de Rome from a Musical Point of View,’ *Musica,* May 1903.
To tell the truth, the poetic conception and the musical realisation of this lyric drama differ too much from that to which the public is accustomed to be accepted as a modern formula for sung theatre. [...] Maeterlinck’s poem, on its own, must seem an unsolvable enigma to a crowd of people more familiar with Jules Barbier than with Shakespeare. His broken-up structure, his intentional naiveties, his often strange symbolism, the primitive toughness of some of his episodes, contrasting with the fluid delicacy of certain others; these could all surprise and put off a great number of spectators. If one adds to this that the music of Debussy is not analogous with traditional art at all, that is, no longer having anything in common with the recently elaborated Wagner-influenced scores, one can understand those at the theatre who are frustrated with so much daring at the one time.238

Not convinced of the validity of the public position, Dukas then cynically confronted those (including critics) unwilling to foster individual, informed opinions:

It’s an old story that will finish up like its precedents: in a few years, the whole world will want to have been the first to proclaim the beauty of the work; the critics, like the public, not having any memory, will put themselves first in this chorus of voices. [...] They will feel more cheerful in recommending, on the next occasion, this excellent pleasantry.239

Much of the remainder of the review concentrated on how Debussy dealt with Maeterlinck’s poem. It was summed up thus:

In the total impression produced by this sort of sonorous transfusion, it becomes impossible to distinguish [the music] from the text that it penetrates; to the point that the musical work can seem to be the unconscious work of the poet rather than the overall poem being that of the musician.240

As Dukas was in the process of composing *Ariane* at the time, he was highly motivated to address the music-text relationship in Debussy’s work. At the core of

238 ‘*Pelléas,*’ 572. ‘A vrai dire, la conception poétique et la réalisation musicale de ce drame lyrique diffèrent trop de ce que le public s’est accoutumé à accepter comme formule moderne du théâtre chanté. [...] Le poème de M. Maeterlinck, à lui seul, dût paraître à une foule de personnes, plus familières avec Jules Barbier qu’avec Shakespeare, une énigme insoluble. Sa structure morcelée, ses naïvetés voulues, son symbolisme souvent étrange, la rudesse primitive de quelques-uns de ses épisodes, contrastant avec la fluide délicatesse de certains autres, tout cela peut surprendre et rebuter un grand nombre de spectateurs. Si l’on y joint que la musique de M Debussy ne présente presque point d’analogie avec l’art traditionnel, non plus qu’avec les partitions récemment élaborées sous l’influence de Wagner, on comprendra que ceux qui sont, au théâtre, les guides prétendus de l’opinion se soient montrés déçus de tant de hardiesse à la fois.’

239 *Ibid.*, 572. ‘C’est une vieille histoire qui finira comme les précédents: dans quelques années, tout le monde voudra avoir été des premiers à proclamer la beauté de l’ouvrage; les critiques, comme les peuples, n’ayant pas de mémoire, se mettront à la tête du chœur. [...] Ils se sentiront plus allégres pour recommencer, à la prochaine occasion, cette excellente plaisanterie.’

240 *Ibid.*, 574. ‘Dans l’impression totale produite par cette sorte de transfusion sonore il devient impossible de la dissocier du texte qu’elle pénètre; au point qu’en dernier lieu elle peut aussi bien apparaître l’œuvre inconsciente du poète que le poème celle du musicien.’
the review is an insistence upon the fact that the music cannot be separated from the libretto, and that attempts to do so damage the integrity of the Pelléas musical poem.

Clearly, Dukas and Debussy shared many of the same aesthetic ideologies. However, one area in which they differed was Wagner. François Lesure claims that in turn of the century Paris, ‘the most important hallmark of any music critic was his attitude to Wagner.’²⁴¹ The young Debussy’s disparaging remarks, although he grew more conciliatory, marked him out as extraordinary; Dukas, on the other hand, maintained a reverential gaze towards the German composer’s art. Differing critical perspectives reflect diverse compositional aims. Although Debussy has been credited as ‘the first composer or critic of the period to stand up for his individual ideas about music’²⁴² and noted for ‘the extent to which he applied his beliefs to his music;’²⁴³ Dukas did the very same thing, albeit less conspicuously. While Debussy loudly rejected Wagner’s influence on fin de siècle French composition, his former Conservatoire classmate reasoned that his predecessor was a product of a historical lineage. Therefore, he exalted Wagner for leading symphonic construction towards a new goal after Beethoven and praised his pursuit of originality as something that French composers needed to heed. In Polyeucte, Sorcier and Ariane, Dukas endeavoured to develop his own, symphonically informed style, as Wagner had done, but to avoid copying the material processes of his idol.

If their opinions occasionally clashed, Dukas and Debussy were united in their resentment of the schools of musical styles that had sprung up around them, with ‘Wagnerism’ the main offender. Debussy believed that Wagner’s methods were ‘too personal to be followed by anyone else,’ as did Dukas.²⁴⁴ In 1893 Dukas eagerly

²⁴¹ Lesure, Debussy on Music, 65.
²⁴² Ibid., 10.
²⁴³ Donnellon, ‘Debussy,’ ed. Trezise, 58.
²⁴⁴ Lesure, Debussy, 66.
wrote to d’Indy about an anticipated Debussy article that was to appear in *Idée Libre* (but never materialised) titled ‘On the Uselessness of Wagnerism.’245 Dukas opposed Wagnerism on the grounds that it damaged creative originality, warning its followers that:

Wagnerian imitation, limited to the more or less servile reproduction of exterior procedures of the master’s music, [...] equates, we believe, to the simple adoption of a formula. [...] Wagner himself had foreseen the situation in which nearly all musicians presently find themselves and had guarded them against his own powers, if the words attributed to him are authentic: ‘Don’t belong to any school...especially not mine!’ And it is precisely because everyone wants to be in his school that the vast part of music written at present seems like music of *écoliers*, followers who have often mastered the material part of their art, but who lack the stamp of authority and the charge of responsibility that one recognizes in true creators.246

Both French composers may have been at variance in music tastes, but it is plain that they esteemed ‘true creators’ above all. Expressed in their articles is essentially that which they strove to achieve compositionally through discrete individual means.

**Dukas and the act of criticism**

1892 was a busy year for Dukas. In addition to producing the Wagner articles, he reported on several other performances and wrote his first theoretical essay, ‘Music and Literature,’ all for the *Revue hebdomadaire*. Nonetheless, the composer maintained an ambivalent stance towards the act of criticism itself throughout the 1890s. Discussing the reception of d’Indy’s *Fervaal* in a letter to his brother Adrien in 1897, he observed that ‘criticism passes and the works remain. *Fervaal* will

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246 ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ 288. ‘L’imitation wagnérienne, bornée à la reproduction, plus ou moins servile, des procédés extérieurs de la musique du maître, [...] équivaut, selon nous, à la simple adoption d’une formule. On aurait tort de faire de cette adoption la condition première de toute liberté musicale. [...] Wagner lui-même avait, d’ailleurs, prévu la situation dans laquelle se trouvent presque tous les musiciens d’à présent et les avait mis en garde contre sa propre puissance, si le mot qu’on lui attribue est authentique: “Ne soyez d’aucune école...surtout pas de la mienne!...”'
remain.'247 This outlook might also be compared to Debussy’s, who described his printed remarks on music as nothing more than ‘impressions.’ Dukas once commented that Weber may have written ‘a volume full of judicious reflections’ but ‘who does not prefer Illusion musicale (in Freischiitz) to his too sensible theories?’248

However, the composer also took a serious interest in music criticism, as his references to the Gazette’s Fétis, his reading of Schumann, Liszt and Wagner, and his expectations for Debussy’s ‘Wagnerism’ article illustrate. He was especially impressed with Liszt:

As a writer, Liszt left extremely brilliant studies, many of which were published in French; he handled our language with surprising ease, and the richness of his vocabulary is only comparable to that of his orchestration.249

Despite his protestations, Dukas accorded at least some value to his own critical writings, as is evident from another comment he made about Liszt. He admitted wanting ‘to try to do justice to him better than one has generally done up until the present.’250

In 1894 Dukas reviewed a French publication of Schumann’s writings. Warmly greeting the appearance of Henri de Curzon’s Robert Schumann, Ecrits sur la musique et les musiciens, he observed that:

Schumann’s writings on the art that he so gloriously illustrated were assembled long ago, but apart from a few exceptions which we will talk about, nobody has attempted to provide us with a full translation.251
That Dukas was already acquainted with some French translations of Schumann’s writings, despite their obscurity, attests to the informed, historically attuned nature of his aesthetic. As such, this article opens with an indication of Dukas’s impressive familiarity with the topic at hand:

‘Until 1850,’ declares Fétis, ‘the music of Schumann did not have convinced admirers in Germany. In a journey which I made in 1838, I only heard of him spoken of as a critic of whom people did not approve.’ [...] In France as in Germany, Schumann is now in full possession of his glory and it is a long time since that which Fétis speaks of, when people only talked about him as a music critic with reprehensible opinions.

As well as Fétis, Dukas invoked another famous critic whilst assessing Schumann:

How many fine and exquisite words of appreciation are expressed in a biting form that recalls [ETA] Hoffman’s music criticism in his famous tales!

The manner in which Dukas evaluated the content of the writings says as much about his critical approach as it does about the German musician’s. Schumann’s reflections on the pillars of Bach and Beethoven, for example, are treated chronologically by Dukas. As if seeking to confirm his own philosophy of musical development throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he contextualised Schumann’s comments on the two composers within his own frame of reference. As such, the mention of Bach in one of Schumann’s essays on Beethoven is highlighted and, overall, Schumann’s remarks on Beethoven are read by Dukas as ‘fully justifying’ Wagner’s views on his predecessor. Even his view on Schumann’s observations of Schubert and Berlioz (rightly described by Dukas as the most valuable articles) are conditioned by his own bias towards a construction of originality rooted in history. Thus, regarding Schubert he said:

252 ‘Schumann,’ 178–9. ‘“Jusqu’en 1850, déclare Fétis, la musique de Schumann n’eut pas en Allemagne d’admirateurs convaincus. Dans un voyage que je fis en 1838, je n’entendis parler de lui que comme d’un critique qui n’était pas approuvé.” [...] En France, comme en Allemagne, Schumann est donc en pleine possession de sa gloire, et le temps est loin dont parle Fétis où l’on n’entendait parler de lui comme d’un critique musicale aux opinions condamnables.’
253 Ibid., 180. ‘Combien de mots exquis et de fines appréciations exprimées dans une forme piquante qui rappelle la critique musicale d’Hoffmann dans ses contes célèbres!’
It is perhaps Schubert, out of all the German musicians, to whom Schumann felt the closest attachment. It is in any case him with whom he had greatest affinity. [...] *Bach, Beethoven and Schubert*, here are his gods, as the reading of these writings makes sufficiently clear. His genius was formed at the school of *these three masters*, and one senses it in his works, through his native originality, the influence that they exercised on his development. From this point of view, Schumann’s appreciations of Schubert are of high interest.254

Dukas’s remarks on the Berlioz articles again underline the centrality of originality to his aesthetic:

As far as Berlioz is concerned, Schumann had the merit to salute and recognise one of the first works of genius of the French master. With remarkable sagacity, he analysed the *Symphonie Fantastique* that Liszt had just arranged for piano and clearly traced all its attributes and faults. The significance of this unequalled and genial work, what it promised for the future, what new elements it contributed to the art—all this appears in a full light.255

Here, it is Schumann’s ability to identify a musical visionary that struck Dukas. We noted that the *Pelléas* reception had disappointed but not shocked the composer: he dismissed the public and many critics as unable to recognise the virtues of new music. This was an issue about which he had much to say. A later essay details the uncomprehending initial reaction to Wagner’s reforms:

The public of its time [...] was as little prepared as possible for this. [...] Indeed, the musical novelty of the Wagnerian work was already a grave obstacle to their diffusion.556

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254 *Ibid.*, 184 (emphasis mine). ‘C’est que Schubert est peut-être de tous les musiciens allemands celui auquel il se rattache le plus complètement. [...] *Bach, Beethoven et Schubert*, voilà ces dieux, la lecture de ces écrits le fait comprendre suffisamment. Son génie s’est formé à l’école de ces trois maîtres, et l’on sent dans ces œuvres, à travers son originalité native, l’influence qu’ils ont exercée sur son développement. À ce point de vue, les appréciations du Schumann sur Schubert sont d’un haut intérêt.’

255 *Ibid.*, 184. ‘En ce qui concerne Berlioz, Schumann eut le mérite de saluer et de reconnaître un des premiers le génie du maître française. Avec une sagacité remarquable, il analyse la *Symphonie Fantastique* qui venait alors de paraître arrangée pour le piano par Liszt et en tire au clair toutes les qualités et tous les défauts. La signification de cette œuvre inégal et géniale, ce qu’elle promettait pour l’avenir, ce qu’elle apportait d’éléments nouveaux dans l’art, tout cela lui apparut en pleine lumière.’

556 ‘Le nouveau lyrisme,’ 583. ‘Le drame wagnérien replace la création musicale sur le terrain du lyrisme métaphysique. [...] Le public de son temps [...] était aussi peu préparé que possible. [...] Certes, la nouveauté musicale de l’œuvre wagnérienne, était déjà un grave obstacle à sa diffusion.’
Schumann’s acuity of vision concerning Berlioz met with Dukas’s approval because it kept alive the distant possibility that challenging new compositions could meet with a sympathetic reception. Dukas’s cynicism was well-founded: after all, his defence of Pelléas, almost a whole decade later, was repeated in these terms—and he must have feared what this signified for his upcoming music-drama. While Debussy had smoothed the path a little for Ariane, Dukas was surely aware that its ‘musical novelties’ (including a ubiquitous soprano and a women’s chorus) might hinder its wide dissemination.

Aside from the illuminating critiques, Dukas advocated this book because he detected the outline of Schumann the composer in the lines recorded by Schumann the critic. Dukas attached little intrinsic value to the act of criticism itself—it was only useful when correlated to corresponding creative activity. In one article he observed that the Finale of Schumann’s Scenes from Faust was ‘marked with such a high character of idealism that it would be as vain as useless to attempt an analysis of it.’

We see here where Dukas identified the boundaries of music criticism. Furthermore, he was sceptical of critics’ abilities to identify that vital quality, originality. ‘Music and Originality’ was written partly as an exercise to determine whether originality in his era really was ‘as rare as the critics claim,’ with the conclusion that ‘musical originality is no rarer than the people capable of recognising it.’

Dukas thus associated critical insight with creative inspiration. In ‘Shakespeare and Opera,’ he accused only those composers who lacked a developed

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258 ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ ‘Nous recherchons si vraiment [l’originalité] est aussi rare que le prétendent des critiques’ (287); ‘L’originalité musicale n’est pas plus rare ne le sont les personnes capables de la reconnaître.’ (293)
critical sense of thinking that musical translations of complete dramatic masterpieces were possible.\textsuperscript{259} On a personal level, he also told d'Indy in 1893 that his previous summer had been ‘quite dismal and rather fruitless’ in compositional terms and equally strained when it came to writing music criticism:

\begin{quote}
With each chronicle it’s the same joke [...] : the notion that I am going to have to \textit{spout} on a given subject horrifies me for three days in advance and I am paralysed of any idea.\textsuperscript{260}
\end{quote}

A trend that may be observed throughout Dukas’s career is that his most thoughtful essays frequently correspond to his busiest compositional periods.

\section*{Dukas's early view of Wagner}

We now turn to the London articles on Wagner’s \textit{Ring}. Moore, in relation to Dukas’s later essays on Wagner, observes that ‘a feature common to all [...] is Dukas’s continuous effort to specify, analyze, and describe the generating force behind the creation of the Wagnerian music drama.’\textsuperscript{261} To this I would add that the composer’s greater interest lies in extracting the essence of the music-text relationship, and that his findings thus have relevance to musical concerns beyond Wagnerism.

Conversely, while Moore confines his study of Dukas’s Wagnerism to those writings obviously linked to the matter, I believe that the investigation of essays pertaining to other matters such as the symphonic poem yields insights into the composer’s concept of Wagner.

The earlier 1892 pieces manifest Dukas’s tendency to write what are ostensibly reviews of works and performances but which soon expand into studies of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{259} Paul Dukas, ‘Shakespeare et l’Opéra—Musique basque,’ (\textit{Revue hebdomadaire}, October 1894) \textit{Ecrits}, 214–19.
\item \textsuperscript{260} Dukas to d’Indy, 1 October 1893, Favre, \textit{Correspondance}, 19. ‘A chaque chronique c’est la même comédie [...] : l’idée qu’il va falloir dégoiser sur un sujet donné m’horrifie pendant trois jours à l’avance et me paralyse de toute idée.’
\item \textsuperscript{261} Moore, ‘Dukas and Dujardin,’ 175.
\end{itemize}
one or two aspects of the work. Favre felt that these chronicles dwell too much on the
libretti:

He lingers lengthily on the incidents of the libretto [...] and only devotes a few lines to the score. This disproportion can seem surprising for a composer.262

Dukas himself conceded that his articles could appear unbalanced; while still in
London he wrote to Adrien about his recent excursions into music criticism:

Thanks for your advice on how to write an article. I realise that perhaps I could have talked more about Rheingold’s music; nonetheless, I’m trying to develop an ensemble of considerations on the work’s general character and the manner in which it is attached to the following three parts [of the Ring], in the way that means I must relate the story; as I do the four works, it is not a lost job and it means I will avoid having to explain many things later on.263

Therefore, while Dukas’s biographer put the discrepancy down to inexperience, the composer’s approach to the libretto is actually already typical of his more complex discussions of the music-text relationship in later years.

Dukas refused to differentiate between text and sound when examining music-drama. In his Rheingold review he noted that ‘[Wagner’s] music and words are always marked with the most astonishing plasticity.’264 His next article protested the number of cuts made to Die Walküre on the same grounds:

How clumsy the majority of these cuts were! How they denatured not only the music but also the poem!265

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262 Favre, ‘Les débuts de Paul Dukas,’ 84–5. ‘Il s’attarde longuement sur les péripéties du livret [...] et ne consacre que peu de lignes à la partition. Cette disproportion peut paraître surprenant chez un compositeur.’
263 Paul Dukas to Adrien Dukas, 8 July 1892, Favre, Correspondance, 14. ‘Je te remercie de tes conseils sur la façon de faire un article. Je reconnais que j’eusse peut-être dû parler davantage de la musique de L’Or du Rhin, pourtant je cherche à développer des considérations d’ensemble sur le caractère général de l’œuvre et la façon dont elle se rattache aux suivantes, de sorte que je devais raconter le poème; comme je fais les quatre ouvrages, ce n’est pas de la besogne perdue et cela m’évitera d’expliquer bien des choses dans la suite.’
264 Paul Dukas, ‘L’Or du Rhin,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 16 July 1892) Favre, ‘Débuts,’ 63. ‘Sa musique et son verbe sont toujours empreints de la plus étonnante plasticité.’
265 Paul Dukas, ‘La Walküre,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 23 July 1892) Favre, ‘Débuts,’ 65. ‘Comme la plupart de ses coupures sont maladroites! Comme elles dénaturent non seulement la musique, mais encore le poème!’
His commentary on *Siegfried* engaged further with the music-drama fusion. After reminding us that the drama ‘is so penetrated and invigorated by the music that it seems impossible to recognise the point of fusion of the two arts,’ Dukas claimed that ‘it is not the poem that makes the music, but rather the music that makes the poem.’ He elaborated:

The gesture and the symphony can merge and harmonise with one another to the point of forming a sonorous voice of expressive force as new as irresistible.

A final emphasis is given to the music’s role with the remark that ‘the symphony carries the action from beginning to end of each act, without cold stops or banal repetition.’ In discussing *Twilight of the Gods* Dukas referred to the dramatic aspects of the *Ring* as having their own principles. He states that:

There are laws of drama to which the symphony is applied; it is, therefore, necessary to conform to these laws and to find in the symphony a particular mode of development.

On first glance, it may seem that Dukas promoted the libretto and drama above the music. However, above all, he advocated that music find a way of adapting to externalities through cultivating a different but equally organic character. We can observe the practical application of this theory in his music-drama *Ariane*, which absorbs the vocal parts into the orchestral texture such that the music may be made into a unified, at times symphonic, structure.

Elsewhere in the *Twilight of the Gods* piece, Dukas made another important point which became a standard marker of his mature critical approach. By way of

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266 Paul Dukas, *‘Siegfried,’* (Revue hebdomadaire, 30 July 1892) Favre, ‘Débuts,’ 76. ‘L’esprit même de la musique semble avoir inspiré ce drame lumineux; il est tellement pénétré et vivifié qu’il semble impossible de reconnaître le point de fusion des deux arts.’

267 Ibid. ‘Le geste et la symphonie peuvent se confondre et s’harmoniser au point de former un verbe sonore d’une force expressive aussi neuve qu’irrésistible.’

268 Ibid., 77. ‘La symphonie emporte l’action du commencement à la fin de chaque acte, sans froids arrêts ni banales redites.’

269 ‘Le Crépuscule des Dieux,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 6 August 1892) Favre, ‘Débuts,’ 82. ‘Ce sont les lois du drame auxquelles la symphonie est appliquée; il fallait donc se conformer à ces lois et trouver à la symphonie un mode de développement particulier.’
introducing a discussion about Wagner’s *leitmotif* technique, he mentioned Beethoven, specifically the opening of the Symphony No. 5 in C minor:

In these four notes Beethoven knew at a glance all of the rhythmic and harmonic consequences that could be made to give the first movement of his symphony a particular allure.\(^{270}\)

He then situated Wagner in relation to his predecessor:

From here comes Wagner’s idea of using themes to indicate the characters’ passions and their diverse attributes. These themes do not represent any more than expressive elements; they are not, despite their defining role, the expression itself, no more than the four notes which contain the whole development of the C minor symphony’s first movement are the work itself.\(^{271}\)

What is interesting is Dukas’s observation of the similarities between the composers’ methods. In later years he was more inclined to single out Beethoven as having brought music to the apex of its absolute powers, while praising Wagner for having discovered a new path for symphonic music through fusing it with drama.

**Part II**

**Justifying the aesthetic: Dukas on the opposition between ‘pure’ and ‘expressive’ music**

Few of the theoretical writings under scrutiny in this discussion deal with music alone. This fact reflects Dukas’s habits as a composer: there are only about a handful of ‘absolute’ works in his repertoire. Prior to publishing any abstract works, Dukas noted in 1893 that French composers were abandoning the symphonic poem for the

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\(^{270}\) *Ibid.*, 82, ‘Dans ces quatre notes Beethoven a saisi d’un seul coup toutes les conséquences rythmiques et harmoniques qui devaient donner au premier morceau de sa symphonie une allure particulière.’

\(^{271}\) *Ibid.*, 82. ‘De là, l’idée de Wagner de caractériser par des thèmes les passions de ses personnages et leurs divers attributs. Ces thèmes ne représentent pas plus que des éléments expressives; ils ne sont pas, malgré leur caractère défini, l’expression elle-même, non plus que le quatre notes qui contiennent tout le développement du premier morceau de la symphonie en *ut minor* ne sont ce morceau même.’
‘incontestably more pure form’ of the symphony. He condemned the assumption that ‘pure’ music was of a superior class:

If solely descriptive music, being compelled to reproduce episodes of exterior action or having as its object the sonorous imitation of natural phenomena, belongs without contest to an inferior genre, one does not know if as much can be said for *programme* music.\(^{272}\)

In doing so, he differentiated his aesthetic from that of d’Indy: though the two had much in common, d’Indy’s espousal of the abstract symphony was not in total agreement with Dukas’s practice.

The matter of programme music, Dukas said, was ‘infinitely more delicate,’ as it touched ‘on the principles themselves of musical art.’ The key question came down to this:

*Is music a pure play of sonorous forms or the particular expression of a determined feeling?*\(^{273}\)

The ‘determined feeling’ connects to the aesthetics of sincerity and originality mentioned earlier—because with any setting of text to music, Dukas maintained that the unifying force must spring from the composer, from ‘musical emotion’ which ‘has to be at the root of the work.’\(^{274}\) Further eroding the ‘pure music’ position is Dukas’s claim that ‘there is no such thing as absolutely impersonal music.’\(^{275}\) His aesthetics were centred on a musical spectrum that encompassed the abstract and the programmatic, but above allcherished original expression.\(^{276}\)

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272 Paul Dukas, ‘Musiciens Russes—Antar de Rimsky-Korsakov,’ *Revue hebdomadaire* (November 1893) *Ecrits*, 145–8 (147), emphasis mine. ‘Si la musique purement descriptive, soi qu’elle s’astreigne fi reproduire les péripéties d’une action extérieure ou qu’elle prenne comme objet l’imitation sonore de phénomènes naturels, appartient sans conteste à une genre inférieur, on n’en saurait dire autant de la musique à programme.’

273 ‘Musiciens russes,’ 147. ‘La musique est-elle un pur jeu de forme sonores ou l’expression particulière d’un sentiment déterminé?’


275 ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ 291. ‘Il n’y a point de musique absolument impersonnelle.’

276 Caballero’s explanation of how Dukas differentiates ‘originality’ and ‘sincerity’ is useful. ‘Originality is a by-product of sincerity, and […] sincerity more than anything else can counter external influence. […] [Dukas] proposed that there are really two forms of originality: a novelty of style, objective and therefore subject to imitation, and a novelty of spirit, which is radically
A key issue for the composer was not so much the opposition between the ‘pure’ and ‘expressive’ as the need to ensure that the musician, in expressing an idea, did not adhere to an alien nature. This was a guiding principle of his approach to the music and text relationship. Dukas obeyed the tenets of this philosophy when appropriating the ‘foreign’ texts of *Polyeucte*, *Der Zauberlehrling* and *Ariane* through musical interpretations. This theory perhaps holds most relevance for *Ariane*: the composition of the music-drama demanded that the composer hold steadfastly to his own art so that in expressing Maeterlinck’s libretto, the musical form retained the mark of its creator.

**An alliance of music and text: towards Dukas’s concept of music-drama**

Dukas published a lengthy essay on the topic of ‘Music and Literature’ in 1892. Taking into account the innovations of Gluck and Mozart, Beethoven’s symphonic accomplishments, and Wagner’s reforms, this critique outlined why Dukas felt compelled to support collaboration between music and text. The motive for this aesthetic stance, it is explained, lies chiefly with Beethoven. The German composer, Dukas maintained, had pushed music, particularly the instrumental kind, to ‘its own limit.’ This left symphonic art with a decisive choice:

What to do? Could it retrace its steps, return to previous phases of its development? That would have been an absurd inconsistency. Music thus supported itself by its old alliance with poetry.

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subjective’ (Caballero, *Fauré*, 85).

Dukas rarely uses the word ‘opera’ when discussing Gluck, Mozart, Wagner or, later, Debussy. He tends to reserve the term for the music of Rossini and the Italian school generally. For Dukas, opera was little more than a musical spectacle. He says it is ‘to Wagner’s eternal glory’ that he presented a ‘law of unification’ beyond the ‘flat conventions and banalities of opera. See Paul Dukas, ‘La Musique et la Littérature,’ *(Revue hebdomadaire*, September, 1892), *Ecrits*, 51–8 (52). ‘Ce sera l’éternelle gloire de Wagner d’avoir pressenti, par delà les plates conventions et les écoeurantes banalités de l’opéra, cette loi d’unification.’

‘Littérature,’ 54. ‘Que faire? Pouvait-elle retourner sur ses pas, revenir aux phases antérieures de son développement? C’était été là un absurde inconséquence. Elle se souvint alors de son antique alliance avec la poésie.’
In order to survey this ‘old alliance with poetry,’ Dukas began his chronicle of the music-text history with Ancient Greece. It was here, he said, that the artistic partnership had first been ‘sealed’—and ‘in the name of Word.’ However, the renewal of the music and poetry relationship, he reassured readers, was instigated on rather different terms, because music was no longer an art of secondary ranking:

After the long divorce of the arts that followed the collapse of the ancient world, music grew alone in the shadows, and so that after two thousand years it found itself facing poetry, having become completely transformed and an art with its particular language and methods of expression.

Not forgetting about poetry, Dukas remarked that this art had been transformed so that:

No longer living as before, no longer sung nor even spoken, but a written thing, poetry had become literature.

Following this is a potted history of the various ways in which literature and music interacted: with Gluck, ‘music only aspired to […] a reinforcement of poetry;’ Mozart, it is reported, saw drama ‘uniquely through the sparkling prism of his music;’ most crucially, Beethoven’s music was no longer ‘attached to an exterior action, but to the universal drama, to the interior tragedy of the human soul.’

This turning point in musical signification caused Dukas to dwell on Wagner’s expressive, dramatic reforms.

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279 ‘Littérature,’ 53. ‘L’alliance des arts ait été scellée au nom du Verbe.’
280 ‘Littérature,’ 53. ‘Après le long divorce des arts qui suivit l’écroulement du monde antique, la musique a grandi solitaire dans l’ombre, et voici qu’après deux mille ans elle se retrouve en face de la poésie, complètement transformée et devenue, elle aussi, un art ayant sa langue particulière et ses moyens d’expression propres.’
281 Ibid., 54. ‘Non plus vivante comme autrefois, non plus chantée, ni même parlée, mais une chose écrite, la poésie était devenue la littérature.’
282 Ibid., 55–6. ‘Ma musique ne tend qu’au […] renforcement de la poésie. […] [Mozart] vit son drame uniquement à travers le prisme chatoyant de sa musique. […] Avec Beethoven […] [la musique] ne fut plus à une drame particulier, à une action extérieure qu’elle s’attacha, mais au drame universel, à la tragédie intérieure de l’âme humaine.’
In ‘Poems and Libretti’ (1895) Dukas sought to explore how music expresses text in the specific musico-dramatic context. Regarding the question of Wagner’s reforms, Dukas insisted that these were rooted in the composer’s ‘poetic originality.’ He complained that this was little understood amongst French musicians:

[Wagner’s] musical originality derives uniquely from his poetic originality, and unless one is really poetically gifted, it is impossible to follow him on the true grounds of his reform.

The ‘true grounds’ of his reform, Dukas argued,

actually lie entirely in the manner through which the drama and music are mutually engendered and in the relationship that unites their reciprocal conception.

Hence, ‘a poem Wagnerian in one way, with music that is Wagnerian in another will never produce a Wagnerian work.’ Consequently, Dukas was unrepentant in his view that ‘all efforts to produce something in this way will necessarily have to be aborted.’

Finally reaching the nub of the matter, the composer declared:

One could set down in principle that from now on the struggle is declared between the poem and the libretto. That the poem is mediocre as literature, that the libretto is poetically superior, is not the issue. The principal is that the poem is conceived of musically, so that the symphony then appears as its most natural and necessary sonorous transcription.

Here, the ‘poem’ refers to those verbal ideas that become musically and dramatically manifest. As Dukas put it:

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283 He also contemplated the identifiable, good Wagnerism of Mozart’s Don Juan and Beethoven’s Fidelio in this article, but we confine our discussion to Wagner here.

284 ‘Poèmes,’ 283. ‘On n’arrivera à une claire intelligence de ce qu’il faut imiter chez Wagner qu’après s’être fermement convaincu que son originalité musicale dérive uniquement de son originalité poétique, et qu’à moins d’un don poétique réel, il est impossible de le suivre sur le vrai terrain de sa réforme.’

285 Ibid., 283. ‘Celle-ci git tout entière, en effet, dans la manière dont le drame et la musique s’engendrent mutuellement et dans le rapport qui unit leur conception réciproque.’

286 Ibid., 283. ‘C’est pourquoi un poème wagnérienne d’une part, une musique wagnérienne de l’autre ne feront jamais une œuvre wagnérienne, et tous les efforts pour en produire une de cette façon devront nécessairement avorter.’

287 Ibid., 283–4. ‘On peut poser en principe que désormais la lutte est déclarée entre le poème et le libretto. Que le poème soit médiocrement littéraire, que le libretto soit supérieurement poétique, ce n’est pas l’affaire. Le principe est que le poème soit conçu musicalement, de sorte que la symphonie en paraisse comme la transcription sonore la plus naturelle et la plus nécessaire.’
In the special case where we understand it, the word ‘poem’ designates the ensemble of the dramatic and musical conception that produces the lyric scene.  

Therefore, in *Ariane*, the ‘poem’ does not consist of Maeterlinck’s libretto. Only after this text was moulded by Dukas, with musical and dramatic requirements in mind, did it contribute to the formation of a ‘poem.’

Insisting on this point, Dukas contemplated the redundancy of superficial Wagnerism:

The most tangible result of the Wagnerian influence up to the present day, and the manner in which it manifests itself, may be reduced in sum to the association of a more or less literary libretto and a more or less complicated music, in which, naturally, the *leitmotivs* intervene as obligatory components of all ‘advanced’ composition.

That the *leitmotiv* technique was best avoided by composers was reiterated:

With Wagner, the *leitmotivs* function as the essential organs of the musical language, owing to the nature itself of the poetic creation. Adapted to the musical setting of an ordinary libretto, their use is no more than a valueless technique to which one attaches an exaggerated importance. In more than one contemporary work, they appear only for the form and are not incorporated the least into the world of the symphony.

Less cynical is Dukas’s admission of the difficulties faced by those striving to make their musical poem conform to an autonomous whole. ‘To unify it by the musical style alone is a little less easy; believe me,’ he observes. This seems to be a veiled reference to the composer’s own struggles with music-drama. He abandoned musico-dramatic works in the 1890s because in at least one instance (*Horn et

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288 Ibid., 284. ‘Dans le cas spéciale où nous l’entendons, le mot poème désigne l’ensemble de la conception musicale et dramatique que met en œuvre la scène lyrique.’

289 Ibid., 284. ‘Le résultat le plus net de l’influence wagnérienne jusqu’à présent et la manière dont elle se manifeste se réduisent en somme à l’association d’un livret plus ou moins littéraire et d’une musique plus ou moins compliquée, dans laquelle, naturellement, les *leitmotiv* interviennent comme compléments obligés de toute composition “avancée.”’

290 Ibid., 284–5. ‘Chez Wagner, les *leitmotiv* apparaissent comme les organes essentiels du langage musical, par suit de la nature même de sa création poétique. Adapté à la mise en musique d’un livret quelconque, leur emploi n’est plus qu’un procédé sans valeur auquel on attache une importance exagérée. Dans plus d’une œuvre contemporaine, ils ne figurent que pour la forme et ne s’incorporent pas le moins du monde à la symphonie.’

291 Ibid., 284. ‘L’unifier par le style musicale seul est un peu moins aisé, on peut nous en croire.’
Rimenhild, 1892) the libretto had advanced more than the music. (Dukas had authored the text himself). It is notable that the relative confinement of Maeterlinck’s libretto for Ariane seems to have forced the composer to devote more energy to the music.

That the author of the libretto was irrelevant was a point later stressed by Dukas (1895). The composer’s failures in the textual aspect certainly provided him with motivation to develop this ideology. Indeed, he later declared that:

Whether the musician is or is not his own librettist, if he employs leitmotivs or condemns their use, matter little to us.²⁹²

In ‘Music and Literature’ he had also decentred the libretto, claiming:

If Wagner’s dramas have a poetic value, they draw it from the same genius of music, not the literary spirit, and the occasions of his dramas where he lets his effort sag are precisely those in which he lets himself be momentarily dominated by the conventions of text.²⁹³

Moreover, Dukas classified those who took a special interest in Wagner’s libretti as guilty of assigning ‘a false point of departure’ to his conception.²⁹⁴ He wrote that ‘these people, in general, are literary types,’ who are driven to ‘an absolute misunderstanding of [Wagner’s works’] true nature.’ According to these littérateurs, Wagner’s reforms ‘would have had an origin outside of music and the honour would have been redirected to literature.’²⁹⁵

From the foregoing comments, it is plain that Dukas deemed the libretto little more than a prologue to integral music-drama. This might be compared to the way in which some symphonic poems rely on texts insofar as they preface the music, but

²⁹² Ibid., 286. ‘Que le musicien soit ou non son propre librettiste, qu’il se serve des leitmotiv ou qu’il en condamne l’emploi, peu nous importe!’
²⁹³ ‘Littérature,’ 57. ‘Les instants de ses drames où il laisse fléchir son essor sont précisément ceux dans lesquels il se laisse momentanément dominer par les conventions de la poésie écrite.’
²⁹⁴ Ibid., 53, ‘un faux point de départ.’
²⁹⁵ Ibid., 53. ‘Des littérateurs […] jugent de Wagner avec des sensations surtout littéraires: […] La réforme de Wagner aurait ainsi une origine en dehors de le musique et dont l’honneur reviendrait à la littérature.’
whose scores do not depend on interspersed commentary.296 Given the composer’s alignment of music-drama and the symphonic poem at times, it is plausible that he perceived such a link.

Dukas ended by reiterating his key advice as far as poems and libretti are concerned.

One must sufficiently understand now the difference that we are establishing between the musical poem and the book set to music. [...] The essential thing is that at the desired moment the poem appears and separates itself from the musical emotion that engendered it. This musical emotion, which has to be at the root of the work, cannot be born of any systematic preoccupation; we have seen that it is musical emotion alone that gives value to the most different productions, and, especially, where we find it, we encounter Wagnerian drama. Outside it, everything consists only of cold and calculated combinations, and works externally the most Wagnerian are those, precisely, which can be the least suggestive to us.297

Thus, poetic drama is a prized quality. Minors has detailed the composer’s concept of drama in more detail and how it affected the production of the ballet La Péri. Even text-based works not destined for the stage, however, are subjected to similar aims. Sorcier, as chapter five illustrates, plays out a type of miniature drama. Indeed, Dukas’s sketches for the work describe the famous bassoon idea as ‘the theme which engenders the Scherzo proper.’298 His perplexing refusal to call it the name by which it is inevitably known, the Broom theme, acquires new significance in light of the above summation of how music and text fit together. In ‘Poems and Libretti,’ Dukas

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296 Dukas sometimes criticised Liszt for being too reliant on the text; his symphonic poem Hamlet, for example, contains occasional comments to guide the listener.

297 ‘Poèmes,’ 286 (emphasis on engendered mine). ‘On doit entendre suffisamment à présent la différence entre le poème musical et le livret mis en musique. [...] L'essentiel est qu'au moment voulu le poème apparaîsse et se dégage de l'émotion musicale qui l’a engendré. Cette émotion musicale, qui doit être à la racine de l'œuvre, ne saurait naître d’aucune préoccupation systématique; nous l’avons vu, c’est elle seule qui donne du prix aux productions les plus différentes, et partout où nous la trouvons nous avons des chances de nous rencontrer avec le drame wagnérien. En dehors d’elle, tout n’est que calcul et froides combinaisons, et les œuvres extérieurement les plus wagnériennes sont celles qui, précisément, peuvent le moins nous la suggérer.’

298 Emphasis mine.
used *engender* to describe the moment at which music leads to the poem’s drama; with *Sorcier*, the exact same word describes the main musical event.

That Dukas recommended a Wagnerian way forward for music-drama indicated his hopes for the future of the canon, which (until Debussy) had always ended with Wagner. Dukas ended this critique by pleading for ‘works of progress.’ Anxious that Wagner’s reforms would not become stale like those works of Gluck and Mozart which had aged, Dukas urged the next generation of musicians to build on, rather than erode through a proliferation of pale imitations, the foundations laid down by the creator of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

**Programme music**

**i. *The Lisztian symphonic poem***

A significant issue for the composer’s theory and practice of programme music was the Lisztian symphonic poem. Displaying his tendency to evaluate composers based on their canonical reputation, Dukas praised Liszt’s influence on ‘the modern Russian school,’ ‘composers from Germany and Austria,’ and ‘not the lesser ones’ of France’s musicians. He condensed his contribution to composition:

Liszt, apart from his concertos and his rhapsodies which are picturesque music, wrote nothing purely symphonic. His art is before all literary and descriptive, and it is always a poetic or philosophical idea that serves as the basis for these compositions and motivates their expressive content.²⁹⁹

While Dukas acknowledged Berlioz as the ‘true creator’ of the symphonic poem, he maintained that his French predecessor had ‘hardly extracted from it anything other than dramatic emotions or descriptive realizations.’³⁰⁰ This, he suggested, was

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²⁹⁹ *Le Faust de Liszt,* 318. ‘Liszt, en dehors de ses concertos et de ses rhapsodies qui sont de la musique pittoresque, n’a rien écrit de purement symphonique. Son art est avant tout littéraire et descriptif, et c’est toujours une idée poétique ou philosophique qui sert de base à ses compositions et motive leur contenu expressif.’

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 318. ‘Le genre du poème symphonique a pour véritable créateur Berlioz; mais celui-ci […] n’en a guère tiré que des émotions dramatiques ou des réalisations descriptives.’
because Berlioz treated musical form ‘following the laws of free symphonic language, but is not noticeably free from the construction of Classical periods.’

With Liszt, though:

Liberty of form is absolute, and nearly all his symphonic poems, such as his two great symphonies of *Faust* and *Dante*, offer us a scaffolding of free and independent periods.

Musical integrity was sustained by ‘the supplest transformation of principle motifs,’ which related to extra-musical expression thus:

These transformations, in their relationship with the feeling to be expressed and the adaptation of their diverse appearances to these modifications, form the driving current of the music and the plan constitutes those alone.

That Dukas did not have absolute confidence in such methods is apparent from his wary words. The ‘disadvantage,’ he said, of ‘this too close coming together of music and literature, philosophical or not,’ was ‘the unfortunate confusion that one can make of the author’s intentions.’ Furthermore, these ‘transformations’ meant that although *Faust* was classed a symphony, Dukas saw it as, in truth, a symphonic poem in three parts, of absolutely free form. One must search for neither a musically intelligible progression, nor a thematic deduction in keeping with the spirit of the Beethovenian symphony.

This formal effect, he argued, was an offshoot of Liszt’s excessive adherence to literary reason, ‘whose demands could seem exorbitant at certain moments.’

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301 *Ibid.*, 318. ‘La forme musicale y est traitée suivant les lois du langage symphonique libre, mais ne s’affranchit pas sensiblement de la construction des périodes classiques.’

302 *Ibid.*, 318. ‘Chez Liszt, la liberté de forme est absolue, et presque tous ses poèmes symphoniques, ainsi que ses deux grandes symphonies de *Faust* et de *Dante*, nous offrent un échafaudage de périodes libres et indépendantes.’


304 *Ibid.*, 318. ‘Ces transformations, dans leur rapport avec le sentiment à exprimer et l’adaptation de leurs divers aspects à ses modifications, forment le fil conducteur de la musique et en constituent à elles seules le plan.’

305 *Ibid.*, 319. ‘L’inconvénient de ce trop étroit rapprochement de la musique et de la littérature, philosophique ou non, c’est la fâcheuse confusion que l’on peut faire des intentions de l’auteur.’

306 *Goethe et la musique,* 523. ‘C’est, en réalité, un poème symphonique en trois parties, de forme absolument libre. Il n’y faut chercher ni une progression musicalement intelligible, ni une déduction thématique conforme à l’esprit de la symphonie béethovennienne.’

307 *Ibid.*, 523. ‘Ce n’est pas la raison musicale qui gouverne ici, mais une raison littéraire dont les exigences peuvent à certains moments sembler abusives.’
Nonetheless, Dukas described *Faust* as ‘rightly included in the category of those [works] which are simply inspired by the title of a known poem to justify their character.'

Owing to this programmatic flexibility, he was perplexed by Liszt’s formal decisions:

> I don’t very see very clearly what *Faust* has gained in freeing itself from the normal conditions of the symphonic structure. On the other hand, I know too well what it lost: it seems very regrettable to me that such a noble conception, realised with such mastery of detail, leaves, despite everything, the impression of an ill-proportioned work whose author confused liberty with disorder, and eloquence with verbosity.

Thus, the musical traits treasured by Dukas were ‘a noble conception,’ lucid symphonic structure and proportional form. Other niceties were of secondary interest.

As can be seen, Dukas had good reason for his uncertain stance towards this genre. These perspectives lead to the question: does *Sorcier* succeed as a true symphonic poem or does it operate in the more general realm of programme music?

Dukas never actually called his work a symphonic poem—and before it, his programme music was confined to the overture form. One public gesture, though, indicates his approval of the genre. The contract for *La Péri* makes provisions for the concert performance of the choreographic poem ‘under the form of the symphonic poem.’ By 1911, Dukas seems to have realised the malleability of the term ‘symphonic poem,’ but in 1901 he still separated it from less radical kinds of

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308 Ibid., 525–6. ‘Liszt ne s’est pas astreint à la réalisation d’un programme proprement dit. Son œuvre rentre bien dans la catégorie de celles qui s’inspirent simplement du titre d’un poème connu pour justifier leur caractère.’

309 Ibid., 526. ‘Je ne vois donc pas très nettement ce qu’elle a gagné à s’affranchir des conditions normales de la structure symphonique. Je sais trop bien en revanche ce qu’elle y a perdu: il me paraît même très regrettable qu’une conception aussi noble, réalisée avec une telle maîtrise de détail, laisse malgré tout l’impression d’une œuvre peu proportionnée et que l’auteur ait souvent confondu la liberté avec le désordre et l’éloquence avec la prolixité.’

310 Carnet W50 (47.4), BNF. “Dispositions concernant les exécutions de *La Péri* au Concert.” ‘Monsieur Paul Dukas cédé, comme d’usage, un tiers de ses droits d’exécution publique de *La Péri* sous forme de poème symphonique. Les parties contractantes se réservait leurs droits respectifs dans la Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de musique.’
programme music. The difference between generic programme music and symphonic poems is portrayed as one of proportion. Judging Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony an ‘illustrious example’ of balanced programmaticism, Dukas stated that there are ‘many degrees in the application of a principle that one seems to want to push to absurd consequences today.’ Overall, we ought not to be surprised at his hesitant approach to the genre: the realisation that even the creator of the prototype could fall victim to its formal traps sullied its reputation in Dukas’s eyes.

His ambiguous position also resulted from the fact that the symphonic poem essentially represented a conflict of Dukas’s aesthetic concerns. The ‘extreme liberty of structure,’ of which he was unsure, proved beneficial in leading to ‘the discovery a new principle,’ that derived from ‘the systematic use of leading themes.’ Therefore, in endorsing Liszt, Dukas was championing his cherished notion of originality. However, in supporting music so externally motivated, Dukas potentially undermined his conviction that text-based music must spring from musical emotion. This uncertainty stands in stark contrast to his views on Wagner.

Rarely did disparaging remarks on Wagner’s technique for combining music and text surface—criticism of leitmotiv use is reserved for Wagnerian sycophants. The music-drama’s ranking above the symphonic poem in Dukas’s formal hierarchy accounts for the frequent recourse to Wagner. Indeed, it also explicates the ‘dramatic’ sense of his Sorcier a great deal. In viewing the symphonic poem as miniature exercises in ‘the laws of dramatic unity,’ Dukas perpetuated an ideology whereby extra-musical symphonic inspiration, even the literary kind, must be channeled into a dramatic context. The key reason for this is the composer’s view of

311 ‘Goethe et la musique,’ 525. ‘Il y a bien des degrés dans l’application d’un principe que l’on semble vouloir pousser aujourd’hui jusqu’à des conséquences absurdes.’
312 Ibid., 523. ‘L’extrême liberté de structure […] le conduit […] à la découverte d’un principe nouveau […], l’emploi systématique des thèmes conducteurs.’
music as a fundamentally live art with dramatic secular origins (c.f. remarks on Ancient Greece). Inevitably, the successful transformation of literature into music depended upon a mutually dramatic core.

Dukas’s discussions of Liszt also brought the principle of sincerity to the fore. In ‘Liszt’s Faust’ (1896) Dukas critiqued the Faust Symphony, which had been played on two pianos by Edouard Risler and Alfred Cortot at a Société Nationale concert.313 Opening with the remark that ‘Liszt, the composer, is still a stranger to us,’ Dukas censured the amount of piano-based performances of the musician’s œuvre because it meant that ‘the important works that Liszt wrote for concert, and through which we can definitively grasp the essence of his personality’ had never been heard.314 Thus, the concept of sincerity as emanating from his personal originality is invoked.

The review of this concert was wrapped up by stressing the role of the symphony’s magisterial instrumentation in the composition. While Dukas praised Risler and Cortot as ‘worth an orchestra,’ he upheld the belief that the piano reduction ‘could only be to the original score what the print is to the picture.’315 The centrality of orchestration to Dukas’s aesthetic is indisputable: in his own programme music, Polyeucte was subjected to extensive revisions in this area (see chapter two). There are also a few corrections of this nature in Ariane. Furthermore, his notes on Sorcier identify thematic ideas which are each differentiated through instrumental colour: Ia is defined by string harmonics; Ib belongs to the bassoon; II involves the larger orchestra; and III is associated with the brass (see chapters two and five).

314 Ibid., 315–16. ‘Liszt, compositeur, est encore un inconnu pour nous. […] Nulle part nous n’avons entendu les œuvres importantes que Liszt a écrites pour le concert et par lesquelles on peut définitivement prendre idée de sa personnalité.’
315 Ibid., 315–16 ‘[L]’exécution […] ne pouvait être à celle de la partition originale que ce que la gravure est au tableau.’
Therefore, what is ostensibly a review of a piano performance of the *Faust*
Symphony is uncovered as a considered study of the symphonic poem; of its power
(or lack thereof) in performances foreign to its true nature; and it is instructive in
enabling us to assess Dukas’s own output in this domain.

**ii. Beyond Liszt and Wagner: Influence of the Russian school**

Another means of grasping Dukas’s approach to programme music is through
considering the valuable resource of his writings on the Russian school. They
illustrate that, although the symphonic poem was belittled by some for not attaining
the ideal of the abstract symphony, Dukas’s aesthetic entitled him to regard serious
efforts in this category as highly as other forms. He measured Slavic music by the
same standard used for the European art: how did it fit into an aesthetic of originality
and sincerity? It surpassed the Western equivalent in at least one sense.

Dukas’s first essay on the matter commended its creators:

The majority of the symphonic works produced by [the Russian school] are,
indeed, purely descriptive and resort to the genre of programme music. All
the same, it is proper to add that the Russian musicians have appropriated this
process *in a completely personal manner,* and that with them the worry of
*musical narration* never hampers the purity of the symphonic form, as
happens too often with Berlioz and Liszt. They *do not subjugate themselves*
to expressing the comments and details of the programme.316

Rimsky-Korsakov’s symphonic suite *Antar* is described as ‘the perfect model of the
symphonic poem’ and it is claimed that similar works by Borodin, Mussorgsky,
Balakirev and Glazunov, ‘conceived after the same aesthetic principles, are creations
of equally high value.’317 In Dukas’s eyes, this music triumphed for two reasons:

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( emphasis mine, except *musical narration*). ‘La plupart des œuvres symphoniques qu’elle a
produites sont, en effet, purement descriptive et ressortent du genre de la musique à programme.
Toutefois, il convient d’ajouter que les musiciens russes se sont appropriés ce procédé d’une
manièrte toute personnelle, et que chez eux, le soutien de la narration musicale n’entraîne jamais la
pureté de la forme symphonique, comme cela arrive trop souvent chez Berlioz et chez Liszt. Ils ne
s’asservissent pas à exprimer les phases et les détails du programme.’

317 *Ibid.*, 138. ‘Les poèmes symphonique de Borodine, de Moussorgsky, de MM Balakiref et
firstly, musical integrity was maintained and, secondly, an aesthetic of sincerity was evident. As ever, the critic reminded us that in text-based music, ‘the principle depends on a perfect concordance of poetic expression and musical expression.’

This emerged as a key tenet of Dukas’s programme music, in both the 1897 symphonic poem and the earlier 1891 overture.

This article, coincidentally published in the month of Tchaikovsky’s death, is very much a history lesson on the Russian school. Beginning with Mikhail Glinka and his 1836 opera *A Life for the Tsar*, it is argued that the composer’s inspirational dedication to ‘escaping from foreign influence’ enabled his contemporaries to follow the path that he had ‘gloriously indicated.’ A pleasing result of this method was Russian music could still hold to ‘its strongest originality’ —another aesthetic obligation set out by the French composer. Dukas observed a confluence of nationalism and innovation that acknowledged both the otherness of the music and its relevance to the canon. Paradoxically, for a composer who sternly reminded Wagnerian imitators that ‘there is no such thing as collective originality,’ Russian musicians were exempt from this dictum precisely because Dukas believed their uniqueness to be founded on mutual nationalist interests.

Dukas was one of many French composers attracted to the colourful orchestral palette of Russian music. Martin Cooper has shown that this country’s stylistic devices had an impact on *Ariane*:

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Glazounow, conçu d’après les mêmes principes esthétiques, sont également des productions de haute valeur.’

Ibid., 137. ‘Le principe repose sur une parfaite concordance de l’expression poétique et de l’expression musicale.’

Ibid., 130–31. ‘Chez Glinka, [...] on constate une préoccupation: échapper à l’influence étrangère. [...] La musique russe contemporaine n’a fait que suivre, en ses diverses manifestations, la voie que lui avait glorieusement indiquée son fondateur: elle en tire encore à présent sa plus forte originalité.’

‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ 291. ‘Il n’y a pas d’originalité collective.’
In Act III, scene I, Dukas builds up a whole scene symphonically on a mere phrase; but it is symphonic development in what may be called the Russian manner—by repetition and variation.321

In addition to this, elements of Russian text-based music influenced Dukas’s programmatic works. *Polyeucte*, as chapter four demonstrates, develops through the intensification and variation of two main themes, close to the manner advocated by Mily Balakirev (1837–1910), the leader of the Russian ‘Five.’ *Sorcier*, meanwhile, in appropriating the whole-tone scale to evoke magic suggests a connection to the representation of the sorcerer Chernomor in Glinka’s opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (1842).

iii. Propagating a programme agenda: ‘Music and Comedy’

That Dukas’s view of music encompassed more than the sublime, and that his view of programmaticism embraced more than the exotic themes that permeated Russian works, is evident in ‘Music and Comedy,’ an essay published in 1894. He mused:

> If [music] translates with an incomparable intensity the most ineffable feelings, the most divine thoughts of human nature, it is too, in other ways, an art of earthy joy […]. Side by side the song of the sanctuaries, its grandiloquent prose and its ascetic expansions, the public resounds with another song to tell of lesser desires and sorrows; love, dance, wine, the good dear, the faults of the neighbour and the good jokes about the misfortunes of marriage, all this is put into songs.322

Dukas’s allegiance to music expressive of ordinary humour is part of his project to validate the programme genre. ‘That of music which is most often contested, and by

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322 'Musique et Comédie,' 197. ‘Si [la musique] traduit avec une incomparable intensité les sentiments les plus indécibles, les penchants les plus divins de la nature humaine, elle est aussi, par d’autres côtés, un art de joie terrestre […]. A côté du chant des sanctuaires, de sa prose grandiloquente et des ses essors ascétiques, le peuple fait retentir un autre chant pour dire de moindres désirs et de moindres peines; l’amour, la danse, le vin, la bonne chère, les travers du voisin et les bonnes plaisanteries sur les malheurs du mariage, tout se met en chansons.’
shrewd minds and even musicians," he claimed, "is its picturesque power and its aptitude for the comic."323

To those who insisted that music was incapable of painting anything Dukas responded:

This reason would be completely irrefutable if music was only made for people without imagination and incapable of feeling any emotion. For those people, non-picturesque music itself evidently does not have to signify great things either. But is it for those that one writes?324

The composer's choice to make the case for programmaticism through the vehicle of 'Music and Comedy' is intriguing in light of his symphonic poem Sorcier, arguably the embodiment of musical wit. It was fortuitously good timing, too, that he chose 1894 to further the agenda of humour in music, just three years before he premiered that piece. Given that he worked on his symphony from 1895–6, and abstained from producing a scherzo for it, it may well be that the composer had mentally sketched plans for Sorcier as early as 1894.

In defending instrumental music's comic capacities, Dukas called upon the Finale of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. His explanation for the 'singular A flat that surges brusquely into the middle of the whirlwind making it stop so suddenly' signalled how invested he was in programme music and its comic constituents:325

Assuredly, in Beethoven's music, certain intentional anomalies remain unexplained if one does not unite these with a humorous outlook, in which case the meaning inevitably has to escape from its purely musical significance.326

323 Ibid., 197. 'Ce qui lui est plus souvent contesté, et cela par des esprits sagaces et même par des musiciens, c’est sa puissance pittoresque et son aptitude au comique.'
324 Ibid., 198. 'Cette raison serait à coup sur irréfutable si la musique n’était faite que pour des gens sans imagination et incapables de ressentir aucune émotion. Pour ceux-là, la musique même non pittoresque ne doit évidemment pas signifier grande chose non plus. Mais est-ce pour eux qu’on écrit?'
325 Ibid., 199. 'Que peut signifier ce singulier la bémol qui surgit brusquement au milieu de tourbillon qu’il arrête si soudainement?'
326 Ibid., 199. 'Il est certain qu’il y a dans la musique de Beethoven certaines anomalies qui demeurent inexppliquées si on n’y rattache une préoccupation humoristique dont le sens doit forcément échapper en dehors de sa signification purement musicale.'
Proceeding from instrumental music to opera, Dukas then referenced Mozart:

_The Marriage of Figaro_ or _Don Juan_ seem like harmoniously dissolved ensembles where all the effects, serious or amusing, flow without effort from the same heart of the music.\(^\text{327}\)

Dukas vindicated Mozart’s operatic humour because it sprung from the music rather than the text. Likewise, in _Sorci\`ere_ he strove for the same effect; the light-heartedness that characterises the Scherzo is not necessarily rooted in Goethe’s ballad, which adopts a more didactic tone.

**Situating Goethe and Shakespeare in programme music, opera and music drama**

Dukas wrote extensively about the role of literature in programme music. We shall discuss his general remarks on the matter first and then consider in detail his specific reactions to musical interpretations of Goethe and Shakespeare. Dukas displayed a strong attraction to these authors, as may be seen from his involvement in setting their texts.

The following comments refer to Goethe’s opus _Faust_ but they actually encapsulate Dukas’s opinion on the musical appropriation of texts in any situation:

The biggest fault of musical works inspired by Goethe’s _Faust_ is the lack of unity. It is not enough to be seduced by the profoundly poetic character of this gigantic conception, it is not sufficient to fix one’s choice on such and such scenes from this drama in disproportionate amounts, in coordinating the ensemble, one must still link up the chosen episodes, make them conform to a certain plan, in brief accept all the inconveniences of setting a work, comprised of material borrowed from a poetic composition complete in itself, in a conception of musical form.\(^\text{328}\)

\(^\text{327}\) *Ibid.,* 202. ‘Les partitions des _Noces de Figaro_ ou de _Don Juan_ nous apparaissent ainsi que des ensemble harmonieusement fondus où tous les effets, sérieux ou plaisants, jaillissent sans effort du cœur même de la musique.’

\(^\text{328}\) ‘Schumann,’ _Ecrits_, 157 (emphasis mine). ‘Le plus grand défaut des œuvres musicales inspirées par _Faust_ de Goethe, c’est le manque d’unité. Ce n’est pas assez d’être séduit par le caractère profondément poétique de cette conception gigantesque, ce n’est pas assez de jeter son dévolu sur telles ou telles scènes de ce drame aux proportions démesurées, encore faut-il en coordonner l’ensemble, relier entre eux les épisodes choisis, les conformer à un certain plan, bref accepter tous les inconvénients que comporte la mise en œuvre, dans une conception de forme musicale, de matériaux empruntés à une composition poétique complète en soi.’
The notion of Wagnerian unity permeated Dukas’s outlook on any serious, poetic attempt at a musical text-setting. In his own works, the composer was faithful to his ideal of making external literary ideas comply with a musical setting: the ‘plan’ to which he made them conform was always a tonal one.

An important thesis in Dukas’s critique is that the depth of certain literary masterpieces makes them incompatible with music. Faust, he claimed, was far from amenable to a musical interpretation:

As for trying to set in music a Faust that would truly be Goethe’s Faust, the whole Faust, that is an impossible enterprise. So tangled are the ramifications of this vast poem, so multiple and profound the philosophical causes that govern the course of action, so abstract sometimes and so little musical the real significance of events that affect the different characters and determine what one might call the superior logic of the drama, that it would be insane to attempt a condensation of it. 329

In calling the dramatic core of Faust ‘so little musical,’ the composer emphatically rejected the notion that one could reproduce the whole opus in the world of sound. ‘We have in music Fausts, and not the Faust,’ he said.330 As for complete adaptations of the work, he offered a scathing opinion of the effort by Italian composer Arrigo Boïto (1842–1918): ‘in his Mefistofele [he] seems to have wanted to show definitively that the true Faust is impossible in music.’331

Moreover, in describing this literary work as Goethe’s Faust, the issue of sincerity is once more under the spotlight. Goethe’s artistic temperament cannot be reinvented by another, in much the same way that a music-drama with Wagnerian attributes cannot be on a par with the original artist’s total conception. The

329 Ibid., 158. ‘Quant à essayer de mettre en musique un Faust qui soit vraiment le Faust de Goethe, le Faust entier, c’est une entreprise impossible. Si enchevétrées sont les ramifications de ce vaste poème, si multiples et si profonde les causes philosophiques qui régissent la marche de l’action, si abstraite parfois et si peu musicale la signification réelle des événements qui mettent aux prises les différents personnages et déterminent ce qu’on pourrait appeler la logique supérieure du drame, qu’il serait insensé d’en tenter une condensation.’

330 Ibid., 158 (emphasis mine). ‘C’est pourquoi nous avons en musique des Fausts et pas de Faust.’

331 Ibid., 158. ‘M. Boïto […], dans son Mefistofele, semble avoir voulu définitivement démontrer que le Faust véritable est impossible en musique.’
overarching importance of ‘musical emotion’ is, hence, completely denied in attempting a setting of the full Faust. The most fruitful kinds of adaptations, Dukas argued, were those in which a select group of detached scenes were rendered musically, even if this resulted in a lack of unity.

Schumann’s Scenes from Faust and Berlioz’s Damnation of Faust conform to this concept. Dukas described ‘these suites of pieces’ as only a sort of illustration in the manner of artists. The emphasis on illustration signified that, in Dukas’s view, these musical works did not function as dramatic renditions of Faust. For music to be successful in the dramatic domain, Dukas demanded that the poetic impulse spring from its own substance. Thus with his music-drama Ariane, it was necessary to modify Maeterlinck’s libretto so that the resulting score did not become merely a picturesque portrayal of the text. Enlarging upon the art metaphor, Dukas explained that these illustrators ‘assume of the listener a certain preliminary knowledge of the poem, because they play exactly the role of pictures between the pages of a book.’

Conflict arose because:

Even though illustrators endeavour to create the scenes most open to graphic interpretation, the musician searches chiefly for the passages that can lend themselves to truly startling musical expression. Only, these passages find themselves isolated and without relation to each other in the musician’s creation, for they do not lean, like the work of the artist, directly on the text.

In reuniting the isolated passages, Dukas complained that musicians must ‘bind them as well as can be expected by a more or less loose link that gives a kind of artificial unity and makes the meaning understood,’ even if this resulted in a case like

332 Ibid., 158. ‘Ces suites de morceaux ne sont en quelque sorte que des illustrations à la manière des dessinateurs.’

333 Ibid., 158. ‘Elles supposent chez l’auditeur une certaine connaissance préalable du poème, car elles jouent exactement le rôle de dessins entre les pages d’un livre.’

334 Ibid., 158–9. ‘Même que les dessinateurs s'attachent à rendre les scènes les plus susceptibles d’une interprétation graphique, le musicien recherche avant tout les passages qui peuvent se prêter à une expression musicale vraiment saisissante. Seulement ces passages se trouvent, dans son œuvre, isolés et sans rapport les uns avec les autres, car ils ne s'appuient pas, comme l’œuvre du dessinateur, directement sur le texte.’
Berlioz’s, whose ‘Faust ended up no longer having any relation with that of Goethe’s poem.’

‘Goethe’s Faust and Music’ (1901) is a richly detailed essay that uses concerts conducted by Edouard Colonne (1838–1910) and Camille Chevillard (1859–1923) as a means of appraising the music-text relationship, first in Liszt’s symphonic poem and then in Schumann’s vocal and orchestral setting of Goethe.

Dukas’s fixation with correctly translated and interpreted texts comes to the fore; as such, this piece is extremely useful in deducing what must have been the composer’s main concerns in adapting Maeterlinck’s Ariane and in setting Goethe’s Der Zauberlehrling.

The views espoused by Dukas here were wholly consistent with and more expansive than those introduced in the earlier Goethe articles. He maintained that Schumann and Liszt had had the most success with this text. On the other hand, Berlioz’s work was criticised for closing ‘with a conclusion diametrically opposed to that of Goethe’s poem’; Boito’s opera was again rebuked; and Gounod’s was given the dubious accolade of being ‘the work that has most contributed to distorting the real meaning of Faust.’ Dukas considered musical distortion of meaning a serious problem, because audiences unfamiliar with the original literary source could not ascertain the true value of it or its derivative creations. The critique opens:

Faust is assuredly one of the foreign masterpieces the least read amongst us: I mean the Faust by Goethe. This does not prevent everyone from thinking they know it. More favoured than other illustrious books that one generally admires with confidence, it owes its universal renown to innumerable musical adaptations for which it has supplied the material. It is true that this wholly

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335 Ibid., 159. ‘Il faut que le compositeur les rattache tant bien que mal par un lien plus ou moins lâche qui leur donne une sorte d’unité factice et en fasse comprendre le sens. Ainsi a fait Berlioz dans la Damnation, [...] si bien que son Faust finit par n’avoir plus aucun rapport avec celui de Goethe,’

336 ‘Goethe et la Musique,’ 523. ‘M Camille Chevillard nous a donné deux admirables exécutions.’

337 Ibid., 521–2. ‘Berlioz en arrive à donner [...] une conclusion diamétralement opposée à celle du poème de Goethe. [...] Boito [...] dans son Mefistofele [...] reste-t-il bien sommaire. [...] Faust [de Gounod] est aussi l’ouvrage qui a le plus contribué à en fausser le véritable sens.’

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superficial popularisation confines itself to episodes and that the mastered thought of this poem seems not to be apparent to any of the librettists who have exerted themselves in disfiguring it.  

Dukas burdened translators and librettists with a serious degree of responsibility. This discourse sets out a basic principle which Dukas believed was necessary in producing an opera based on the work of another (and at this point he was in the throes of composing Ariane). Admittedly, Maeterlinck’s play did not contain Faust’s ‘formidable heap of scenes of every nature,’ which force librettist to choose that which ‘can be reduced to the laws of dramatic unity and to average theatre proportions;’ but Dukas still sought to ‘touch upon the original meaning’ of that text. However, the compromised ‘touching upon’ implicitly recognised that ‘musical emotion’ will necessarily guide the work towards an expression somewhat different to its original verbal intent.

Much of the blame in the introductory paragraph is attributed to librettists, with Jules Barbier a principal target (we have already seen his work censured in the Pelléas review). Discussing Gounod’s Faust a little, Dukas offered his opinion that Barbier’s translation ‘has neither character, nor colour, nor the profundity of thought that would have made a good adaptation of it.’ Dukas’s disapproval of Gounod’s opera may have been connected to the fact that Barbier’s libretto was based on Michel Carré’s play Faust et Marguerite, itself a loose adaptation of Faust, Part 1. In relation to Barbier, the composer argued:

338 Ibid., 521. ‘Faust est assurément un des chefs-d’œuvre étrangers les moins lus parmi nous: j’entends le Faust de Goethe. Cela n’empêche pas que chacun pense le connaître. Plus favorisé que d’autres livres illustres qu’on admire généralement de confiance, il doit aux innombrables adaptations musicales dont il a fourni la matière. Une renommée universelle. Il est vrai que cette vulgarisation, toute superficielle, se borne à des épisodes et que la pensée maîtresse de ce poème semble n’être apparue à aucun des librettistes qui se sont exercés à le dé figurer.’

339 Ibid., 521. ‘Les différents opéras […] ne puissent qu’effleurer le sens original. […] Dans cet armes formidable de scènes […] les paroliers aient dû choisir ce qui pouvait se ramener aux lois de l’unité dramatique et aux proportions moyennes du théâtre.’

340 Ibid., 522. ‘Son œuvre n’a ni le caractère, ni la couleur, ni la profondeur de pensée qui en eussent fait une bonne adaptation.’
If one reads Mr Barbier’s libretto after a good translation of Goethe’s poem, if one examines the transformations that he subjects certain character to, certain events to, one will understand the repulsion, expressed from the outset in vehement terms [...] that Wagner felt towards the libretto of this opera.\footnote{Ibid., 522. ‘Qu’on lise après une bonne traduction du poème de Goethe le livret de M. Barbier, qu’on examine les transformations qu’il fait subir à certains personnages, à certains épisodes, et l’on comprendra la répulsion de Wagner […] manifesta […] en termes vêhéments […] contre le livret de cet opéra.’}

Seemingly unable to suggest any solution to the problem of large-scale translation and adaptation (which may account for the failure of his *Tempest* translation to make the leap to a stage setting), Dukas moved on to the practical issues of translating Schumann’s *Faust* scenes. He highlighted that inadequate translation of the text meant that the work as a whole risked being misunderstood:

One can only regret that a translation more worthy of the poem and music was not offered to us. Romain Bussière’s, written with excellent intentions, too often contradicts the meaning of the verse and melody so as to weaken the impression that they must produce.\footnote{Ibid., 522. ‘On ne peut que regretter qu’une traduction plus digne de la musique et du poème ne nous ait pas été offert. Celle de Romain Bussière, écrite dans d’excellentes intentions, contredit trop souvent le sens des vers et de la mélodie pour ne pas affaiblir l’impression qu’ils doivent produire.’}

While Schumann was acclaimed for bringing audiences closer to Goethe’s text, Dukas praised Liszt because his symphony remained ‘free to give a commentary on the thought of Goethe.’\footnote{Ibid., 522. ‘La symphonie restait libre de commenter la pensée de Goethe.’} The ‘thought’ appears to refer to the poetic motivation behind the literature. In this way, Dukas’s theoretical tenets have a practical counterpart in *Sorcier*: the content of Goethe’s *Der Zauberlehrling* is highly dramatic, and it is this idea, rather than textual detail, that Dukas aimed to convey in *Sorcier*.

As is discussed in chapter two, one of Dukas’s student works was an overture on *King Lear*; and he also planned to write a stage work based on *The Tempest*. In the article ‘Shakespeare and Opera’ (1894), Dukas probed composers’ longstanding attraction to Shakespeare; the deep-seated incompatibility between the bard’s plays...
and music by others; and why opera is the least suitable form for musical
appropriation of the English playwright.344

Dukas’s essay alleges that Shakespeare was best known in contemporary
Paris through the numerous lyric settings of his work. Yet again the composer
contended that unique literary and poetic genius had been diluted as a direct result of
poor adaptations of texts for operatic purposes. Once more, Barbier’s name was
invoked as a symbol of how the proliferation of second-hand interpretations exerts a
detrimental effect on the original:

Fortunately for librettists, Shakespeare’s œuvre has fallen (never was a word
more apt) into the public domain so much so that today one is not very sure if
Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet are the work of Shakespeare or that of Mr J.
Barbier. The latter was qualified one day by a writer in Little Journal thus:
‘the illustrious author of Faust, Mignon, Romeo and Juliet, and so many other
masterpieces (!!).’345

Dukas questioned why it was that so many musicians ‘from the obscure to the
renowned’ fell under the playwright’s spell—especially when the consequences were
often unpalatable. ‘Few of [Shakespeare’s] theatrical pieces,’ he asserted, ‘have not
been mutilated, transformed, denatured and vilified for the sake of lyric adaptation.’
His damning verdict on operatic transformation of Shakespeare concluded with the
remark: ‘never has a man of genius been more scandalously cross-sectioned than by
those sworn to our opera scenes.’346 Such vehement language would appear to rule
out the possibility of Dukas reworking The Tempest as an opera, but it transpires that
the issue was not quite that straightforward.

345 Ibid., 214. ‘Heureusement pour les librettistes, son œuvre est tombée (jamais mot ne fut plus juste)
dans le domaine public, si bien qu’aujourd’hui on ne sait plus très bien si Roméo et Juliette et
Hamlet sont de Shakespeare ou de M. J. Barbier. Ce dernier ne fut-il pas qualifié un jour par un
rédacteur du Petit Journal: “l’illustre auteur de Faust, de Mignon, de Roméo et Juliette et tant
d’autres chefs-d’œuvre (!)!”’
346 Ibid., 214–15. ‘Il est peu de pièces de son théâtre qui n’aient été mutilées, transformées, dénaturées
et vilipendées en vue d’une adaptation lyrique. Jamais homme de génie ne fut plus
scandaleusement mis en coupe réglée par les fournisseurs asserrmontés de nos scènes d’opéras.’
Before establishing why opera composers ought to resist the lure of Shakespeare’s dramas, he conceded that symphonic art offered a perfectly acceptable means of interpreting texts. In not possessing ‘the inconveniences of a theatrical adaptation,’ such music, he said, ‘in no way denatures the poet’s thought, and, hence, can lay claim to a certain artistic rank.’\footnote{Ibid., 215: ‘N’ayant pas les inconvénients d’une adaptation théâtrale, [la musique symphonique] ne dénature en rien la pensée du poète et par là peut prétendre à un certain rang artistique.’} While the ‘dramatic symphony’ is still problematic in some respects, Dukas rationalised that ‘at least it does not ridicule some beautiful conception.’\footnote{Ibid., 215. ‘Du moins [il ne pas] ridiculiser quelque belle conception.’} From Palaux-Simonnet’s praise of the Lear Overture, it seems that the composer’s own symphonic interpretation of Shakespeare also avoided denigrating the author’s original intentions (see chapter two). Berlioz’s Romeo and Juliet Symphony is provided as an example whereby the playwright ‘would not be assimilated with opera composers who, according to the rules of the genre, cut the poet’s text to carve out ariosos and duets.’\footnote{Ibid., 215. ‘[Berlioz] ne saurait être assimilé aux compositeurs d’opéra qui selon les règles de genre découpent en ariosos et en duos à effet le texte du poète.’} The destruction of texts for the sake of what Dukas elsewhere depicted as a banal, conventional art was unforgivable in his view, and a major reason as to why good operatic versions of Shakespeare were an aesthetic impossibility.

Calling this literary and musical partnership an ‘association of genius and stupidity,’\footnote{Ibid., 215, ‘cette association du génie et de la sottise.’} Dukas strove to explain that the fullness of Shakespeare’s thought meant that musical additions could only ever be superfluous. Plunging into his personal experience, he reminisced:

We still remember feeling a profound emotion after attending a performance of Hamlet in London a few years ago.\footnote{It seems likely that this was during the time Dukas attended the Ring in London.} Neither an effective opera nor music inspired by this extraordinary work has given us the musical sensation that emanated from the recital of the poem alone; never have we felt surer that Shakespeare contains latent, unformulated music.\footnote{Ibid., 215. ‘Nous nous souvenons encore avec une profonde émotion d’une représentation}
This ‘unformulated music’ phrase is important: in other articles, especially those related to theatre as Minors has observed, Dukas was inclined to use musical terms when speaking of other art forms. The use of such terms when discussing stage matters derived from the composer’s belief that a work with any musical facet must be engendered by ‘musical emotion’ first and foremost. Evidently, this was not possible in a Shakespearean context. Dukas warned that attempts to manifest the ‘unformulated’ and ‘latent’ music were futile because:

To try to make the inarticulate notes of this ‘song’ heard is to damage it, to make it such that nothing is left but melody.353

In other words, Dukas believed that setting verses to song irrevocably altered the meaning of their text because the music in which it is cloaked must obey the rules of its own logic. Further musical analogies underscored the ineffectiveness of this action:

Shakespeare, like Dante, and also Eschyle and Sophocle, was a lyricist. The fact of the matter is that his œuvre is, by itself, a ‘song’ modulated to its own particular laws.354

A fundamental oversight made by opera composers, Dukas believed, was that in the Shakespearean theatre conception, music ‘is not viewed as an organic element.’ Therefore, it ‘should not intervene as art, but only as a characteristic force in the confines where the poem calls for it.’ Musical instruments ought only to feature in such dramas ‘to reinforce […] the true music, entirely contained in such a

3.353 Ibid., 216. ‘Tenter de faire entendre els notes inarticulées de ce “chant” c’est le briser, c’est faire que plus rien ne reste de sa mélodie.’
354 Ibid., 216. ‘C’est que Shakespeare, comme Dante, comme aussi Eschyle et Sophocle, est un lyrique. C’est que son œuvre est, par elle-même, un “chant” modulé selon les lois particulières.’
situation. Revisiting his memories of *Hamlet* in London, Dukas said that the above strategy contributed to the success of the English performance:

Absolutely ordinary melodramas accompanied the action at the desired moment and produced an incomparably more profound impression, associated with the same words of the poet, than the same situation could conjure if reduced to a libretto and accompanied by the music of a great composer.

At all times, the composer accentuated the point that operatic adaptation of a work wholly complete in itself is bound to fail—effectively, what occurs is that one art form (literature) is exchanged for another (music).

‘Where one substitutes one art for another,’ argued Dukas, ‘one only manages to safeguard a shadow of resemblance with the model.’ Hence, musical appropriation could not lead to artistic fidelity here. Dukas’s reaction to Verdi’s *Otello* raises this problem. He disapproved of Verdi’s cuts to Shakespeare’s drama, concluding that ‘music can only lose in its struggles against literary drama.’ Composers were reminded that they could avail of the symphonic option but then, ‘most of the time [the music] risks not being understood at all, and it is wholly necessary that music is sufficient alone.’ Such a statement must also reduce the likelihood of Dukas setting *The Tempest* as an instrumental work. Meanwhile, the flipside of this programmatic ambiguity—composers taking refuge in ‘lyric

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355 *Ibid.* 216. ‘La musique n’est pas prise comme élément organique. [...] La musique ne doit pas intervenir comme art, mais seulement comme force caractéristique aux endroits où le poème l’appelle. [...] [Les instruments] ne sont là pour renforcer [...] la musique véritable, entièrement contenue dans telle situation.’

356 *Ibid.* 216. ‘Des mélodrames absolument quelconques accompagnent l’action au moment voulu et produisent une impression incomparablement plus profonde, associées à la parole même du poète, que la même situation ne pourrait le faire, réduite en libretto et accompagnée par la musique d’un grand maître.’

357 *Ibid.* 216. ‘Où on substitue un art à une autre, on parvient à sauvegarder une ombre de ressemblance avec le modèle.’

358 Paul Dukas, ‘*Othello (sic) de Verdi,*’ *(Revue hebdomadaire, November 1894)* *Ecrits,* 220–25 (225). ‘La musique ne peut que perdre dans ces luttes contre le drame littéraire.’

359 *Ibid.* 216. ‘La plupart du temps, risque-t-il de n’être point compris et il est de toute nécessité que sa musique se suffise à elle-même.’
situations so clearly designated’—accounts for the many misguided operas Dukas perceived.

Notwithstanding his misgivings about the convergence of Shakespeare and opera, Dukas mourned the fact that despite the emergence of respected, sometimes remarkable, musical works inspired by Shakespeare, ‘we still do not have the *complete* œuvre, the great work.’ He imagined Beethoven as the only person who could have changed this, had he written ‘the *Macbeth* he had once projected and which he finally renounced, maybe averted from the danger by his genius instinct.’

One wonders whether the same ‘instinct’ prevented Dukas from finishing his *Tempest* œuvre. Nonetheless, it seems very unlikely that he envisioned his plan as a ‘great work’ in the Beethovenian sense; the fantastical nature of *The Tempest*, for one thing, would hardly place it on a par with the previously mentioned tragedies of *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet*.

Dukas’s thoughts on this aspect of the matter are worth quoting in full, as they eloquently summarise his foregoing points:

It is impossible to give not only an equivalent of the original, but even one that comes fairly close. And it is in this that the powerlessness of opera to translate Shakespeare’s plays shines most clearly. The characters (which the music is incapable of painting) become purely conventional, the musical scenes appear in the most artificial manner, often even in the most incomprehensible manner. The drama disappears and the opera takes its place, the opera with its [...] falseness of every kind. Even the most shrewd, the most scrupulous, adaptations are powerless to offset this default inherent in the nature itself of the lyric transposition of the literary drama.

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361 *Ibid.*, 217. ‘Il est impossible de donner non pas un équivalent de l’original, mais même un à peu près. Et c’est par là qu’éclate le mieux l’impuissance de l’opéra à traduire le drame de Shakespeare. Les caractères (que la musique est incapable de peindre) deviennent purement conventionnels, les scènes musicales apparaissent de la manière la plus factice, souvent même la plus incompréhensible. Le drame disparaît et l’opéra prend sa place, l’opéra avec [...] des faussetés de toute sorte. Les adaptations même les plus adroites, les plus scrupuleuses, sont impuissantes à paliier ce défaut inhérent à la nature même de la transposition lyrique du drame littéraire.’
The possibility of Dukas ever producing such an opera certainly seemed extremely remote in 1894—yet five years later he was carefully crafting his translation of *The Tempest*.

Above, though, Dukas referred only to ‘opera’ and not to ‘music-drama’ when discussing the drawbacks of a close musical adaptation of Shakespeare’s text. Although Pierre Lalo’s description of what Dukas planned is vague, it mentions, amongst other genres, a lyric drama. *La Tempête* was bound to have been conceived thus, freed from operatic artifice, and not necessitating any ‘carving out’ of the text. Unfortunately, Dukas subscribed unconditionally to an ideology of music-drama which precluded the realisation of what at first may have seemed an ideal balance between the textural details of opera and the more natural drama of the symphony.

According to Dukas’s aesthetic position, a musical translation of Shakespeare even in a music-drama context is unfeasible because the principle is that the poem be conceived of musically. Working on this principle, he translated Shakespeare’s play, with the aim of producing his own libretto that harmonized with the musical intentions that were presumably at the root of the project. Ultimately though, a famous play was not ideal material for a form that sought to create the illusion of an entirely musical conception. It is likely that Dukas abandoned the music-drama having realised the fallacy of his goal. Incidentally, while in the process of making Maeterlinck’s libretto his own so that the poem could lay claim to lyrical origins, Dukas wrote to the playwright expressing his disappointment that he had allowed *Ariane* to be staged as a play in 1902. Considering the misapprehensions that still surround Dukas’s appropriation of Maeterlinck’s libretto today (c.f. chapters two and six), the composer was right to protect his paradigm of the music-drama.
Staging the music-text aesthetic

Having established the potential for poetic unity in the music-drama (and symphonic poems not dominated by literary reason), Dukas sought to maximize artistic concordance in the theatre. Although his ideas in this sphere are steeped in Wagnerian thought, they signal the composer's yearning for progressive lyric theatre in France. (Similarly, Dukas's espousal of Wagner's reforms was intended to spark a desire for progressive composition in the younger French generation.) Dukas's philosophy of lyric theatre is founded upon the aesthetic that governed his approach to music and text. His first article on the topic asserted: 'if the Lyric Theatre of the future spotlights one man of true talent its goal has been achieved and we can ask no more of it.' The emphasis on 'true' talent is aligned to the aesthetic of sincerity discussed above.

Between 1892 and 1905 he wrote about the minutiae of music for the stage, including three articles specific to French lyric theatre. From time to time reflections on stage issues crop up in other essays too. The impetus was explained thus: 'the necessity of an independent music theatre becomes more and more imperative.'

Highlighting the discrepancy between the positive treatment of young painters and sculptors by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Paris Conservatoire's policy towards promising composers, Dukas asked:

Is it not a supreme irony to award a prize for music, and to push unfortunate young people to write for the theatre, even though we do not have a theatre to offer them?\(^{362}\)

He argued that as the Opéra and Opéra-Comique were not suitable venues for youthful compositional efforts other support was required. A few months later, he

\(^{362}\) Paul Dukas, 'Le Théâtre Lyrique,' (Revue hebdomadaire, 9 September, 1893) Favre, 'Théâtre Lyrique,' 56. 'La nécessité d’un théâtre de musique indépendant devient de plus en plus impérieuse.'

\(^{363}\) Paul Dukas, 'Plus de Lyrique?' (Revue hebdomadaire, 10 July, 1897) Favre, 'Théâtre Lyrique,' 61. 'N’est-ce pas une suprême ironie de décerner un prix de musique, et de pousser de malheureux jeunes gens à travailler pour le théâtre, alors que nous n’avons pas de théâtre à leur offrir?'
wrote a column voicing his dismay that the upcoming theatre season offered little for new composers. Produced by a young musician working on his own lyric-theatre conceptions, these essays were clearly prompted by a substantial degree of self-interest.

Other articles examined the musico-dramatic tendencies seen on the Parisian stage. With the evolution of Wagnerian practices, Dukas contended that lyric theatre had come full circle from its Greek origins and returned to ‘its primitive social destination,’ in which drama was ‘an integral part of the social organism.’ Drama, he said, was part of the ‘faithful image of the Hellenic civilisation.’ He contrasted that to contemporary theatre:

[Greek drama] was a terribly serious, vital thing, while for us the theatre, no matter how magnificent the staged work is, is only ever a type of distraction, where we demand that the story and characters be as different to us as possible.

The ‘story and characters’ fantasy was seen to contradict another tenet of Greek drama, whereby the ‘object was itself with the spirit of the spectators.’ So important was this object that ‘the interpretation of Greek drama had to be in perfect harmony with [it].’ This unity of object, interpretation and context is what the composer cherished and wanted implemented in French lyric theatre. Dukas regarded Wagner as embodying these qualities and these as worthy of emulation.

In between the primitive perfection of Greek drama and Wagner’s edifying developments, Dukas charted the progress of lyric theatre through the ages. The

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364 Paul Dukas, ‘Toujours le Lyrique!’ (Revue hebdomadaire, 2 October 1897).
366 Ibid., 211. ‘C’était une chose terriblement sérieuse, vitale, tandis que pour nous le théâtre, si magnifique que soit l’ouvrage représenté, n’est jamais qu’un lieu de distraction, où nous exigeons que pièce et personnages soient aussi différents de nous qu’il est possible.’
367 Ibid., 211. ‘L’interprétation du drame grec doit être en aussi parfaite harmonie avec son objet, que cet objet l’était lui-même avec l’esprit des spectateurs.’
independent identity nurtured by music in the wake of the Renaissance was nominated by Dukas as the moment when:

One arrived at the idea that musical theatre was only another variety of concert where one would go uniquely to hear a lovely voice singing pleasant melodies accompanied by instruments.\(^{368}\)

Consequently, in this category of performance ‘drama was only the pretext.’\(^{369}\) Its perpetrators were censured solely on the non-dramatic basis of their music:

It is chiefly the Italian school that established this absurd idea, that since one sings, one can sing anything, provided the costumes and decorations are superb and that the singer’s voice is tolerable. It imposed the conception of the theatre-concert, where there is no theatre, where there is not even a concert, but simply singers.\(^{370}\)

Not only did the lack of dramatic merit trouble Dukas but he was also bothered by the superficial embellishment of the scenic setting

In Wagner Dukas discovered an antidote to the latter problem. He called the German composer’s lesson for stage music a ‘return to truth and sincerity.’\(^{371}\) Dukas aspired to carry these principles further along the creative continuum so that in producing works, composers looked to ‘practical theatrical means, painted wood and canvas, to suggest the ideal universe which can become infinitely prolonged.’\(^{372}\)

Anything else, it seemed, was merely a ‘scenic deception.’

‘The Scenic Deception’ (1896) teased out the implications that the choice of costume, decor and set could have for a theatrical piece, especially in the Wagnerian

\(^{368}\) Ibid., 212. ‘On [...] est arrivé à croire que le théâtre musical n’était qu’une variété de concert, où l’on se rendait uniquement pour entendre une belle voix chantant d’agréables mélodies accompagnées par les instruments.’

\(^{369}\) Ibid., 212. ‘Le drame n’était que le prétexte.’

\(^{370}\) Ibid., 213. ‘C’est par [l’école italienne] que c’est établie cette idée absurde que dès que l’on chante, on peut chanter n’importe quoi pourvu que les costumes et les décors soient superbes et que la voix du chanteur soit supportable. C’est par elle que s’imposa la conception du théâtre-concert où il n’y a pas de théâtre, où il n’y a même pas de concert, mais simplement des chanteurs.’

\(^{371}\) Ibid., 209. ‘Simplement le retour à la vérité et à la sincérité.’

\(^{372}\) Ibid. ‘Les moyens matériels du théâtre, bois et toiles peintes, pour suggérer l’univers idéal qui en devient ainsi l’infini prolongement.’
context. The motivation for the article was a recent performance of *Nibelung* in Bayreuth. Dukas commented on ‘the scenic disillusions that, it seems, plenty of people have brought back from Bayreuth productions.’ Without specifying the nature of these ‘disillusions,’ he proposed that the most important aspect of the scenery question was ‘precisely the concordance to be established between the music’s incessant suggestions and that which strikes the eyes.’

Just as Dukas conveyed the autonomy of Shakespeare’s œuvre in musical terms, music-drama on stage is also coded in this language, with the word ‘concordance’ forming a refrain throughout the essay. While the difficulty of maintaining equilibrium between the eyes and the ears had to be confronted, he was adamant that this was undertaken as a musical dialogue. This is made explicit here:

In Wagnerian art, where everything is calculated in perfect concordance between these diverse elements so that music has the function of unifying them, the least inaccuracy occasions a dissonance as appreciable as if an error of rhythm or intonation had affected an instrument in a concert.

That stage action must be unified by music is a natural effect of the leitmotiv technique. What is startling, however, is the extent to which the scenic background must also surrender to the music:

The tonality of the decor must be made to harmonise with the general character of the music and, with the tricks of light, follows its changes.

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373 ‘La déception scénique,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, October 1896) Ecrits, 348–53.
375 *Ibid.*, 352. ‘C’est précisément la concordance à établir entre les suggestions incessantes de la musique et ce qui frappe les yeux.’
376 *Ibid.*, 350. ‘Dans l’art wagnérien, où tout est calculé pour une concordance parfaite entre ces éléments si divers que la musique a pour fonction d’unir, la moindre inexactitude occasionne une dissonance aussi appréciable que le serait au concert des mesure ou d’intonation affectant la partie instrumentale.’
377 *Ibid.*, 352. ‘La tonalité du décor doit s’harmoniser avec le caractère général de la musique et, par les jeux de lumière, en suivre les modifications.’
Terms such as ‘tonality’ and ‘harmonise’ are pointedly used. More subtle is the advice that the scenery must ‘follow the changes’ of the music; Dukas appeared to be suggesting that the decor ‘modulate’ in accordance with musical events.

By the end of the article, though, he confessed that despite all the benefits of a musically-unified stage creation, music still ‘defies all concrete interpretation’. The sphere of interpretation remains particularly open to performers. Why Dukas did not invite them into the debate about the material representation of Wagner’s music is quietly hinted at later in ‘The New Lyricism.’ Voicing a rare moment of dissent about Wagner’s musical language, he suggested that it failed on the ‘purely human’ expressive level, and is reduced to signifying that which is ‘purely German’ (585). This casts doubt over the notion that Wagner’s art possesses a ‘universal power’ that can subsume lesser forces such as sets, costumes and interpreters. The uncertainty of Wagner’s universality was problematic for Dukas, but a trifling concern in comparison to the bigger problems of contemporary lyric theatre.

In ‘The Exact Interpretation’ (1896) Dukas made a simple request:

All that is demanded of interpreters is the attentive study of a text [...] and a respect for the author’s thought.

Unfortunately, in the composer’s view, the lyric theatre was an outdated environment which prevented this. He argued despondently that Wagner and other music-dramatists ‘destine their works for theatres which do not exist and which even cannot exist in the current conditions.’ Therefore:

There will always be conflict between the contemporary musical theatre, where tradition, still so hardy, goes back to the middle of the century, and works which call on other elements of interpretation. Of two things, one will

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378 Ibid., 353. ‘Elles oublient volontiers que cette musique défie toute interprétation concrète.’
380 ‘L’Interprétation du drame lyrique,’ 209. ‘Wagner et tous ceux qui s’inspireront [...] destinent leur œuvre à un théâtre qui n’existe pas et qui même ne peut pas exister dans les conditions actuelles.’
happen: either the work will be transformed by interpretive methods through which it is realised, or creative strategies deriving from dated routines will absorb the work and it will metamorphose into something like what they have created, that is to say a theatrical opera-concert. Up to the present, it is the latter which we witness and, we repeat, unfortunately it is to be feared that it will continue for a long time thus.381

What this meant for Ariane will be considered in due course. For the moment, suffice to say that although the composer’s abiding extra-musical interest was text, the performance of the music-text conception was something in which he later became increasingly involved.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a contextual discussion of Dukas’s music criticism and an analysis of the articles that illuminate his music-text aesthetic as it developed from 1892–1905.

In Part I, we presented the basis for a thorough discussion of the writings. It is shown that they offer invaluable insight into Dukas’s creative practice. Moreover, the essays contribute to the wider discourse of Parisian concert life in the late nineteenth century, confronting the issues faced by musicians who toiled in the backdrop of Wagner’s indomitable authority; and providing a measured and informed reaction to one of the most controversial productions of the fin de siècle, Debussy’s Pelléas et Mélisande. Perhaps more than other writers of this time, too, Dukas displays a keen sense of historical awareness, repeatedly comparing the musical tendencies of his own era to those of previous epoques. When read as a whole, these chronicles of

381 *Ibid.*, 210. ‘Il y aura donc conflit entre le théâtre musical contemporain, dont la tradition, encore si vivace, remonte au milieu du siècle et l’œuvre qui fait appel à de tout autres éléments d’interprétation. De deux choses l’une, ou l’œuvre transformera les moyen d’interprétation par lesquels elle se réalise, ou les moyens d’interprétation, dérivant des anciennes routines, absorberont l’œuvre et la métamorphoseront en quelque chose de semblable à ce pourquoi ils ont été créés, c’est-à-dire à l’opéra-concert dramatique. Jusqu’à présent c’est ce dernier fait auquel nous assistons et, nous le répétons, il est malheureusement à craindre qu’il en soit longtemps ainsi.’
compositional patterns (and performance trends) form a super-narrative in which one may discern the guiding aesthetic principles of Dukas’s creative practice.

Part II endeavoured to highlight the foremost aesthetic concerns revealed in the theoretical articles written in the 1890s and early 1900s. Although the composer was less concerned with music as a discrete art than when it acted as the governing force of a more complex conception, we may nonetheless ascertain that the integrity and independence of musical form was of vital import. In fact, the independence of the musician was the central point here: the plentiful references to sincerity and poetic originality in the writings illustrate that whether ‘absolute’ or externally expressive, the work in question had to exhibit individual thought. This necessitated an exploration of specialist topics—libretti, the musical poem, the symphonic poem, the music-drama, Goethe and Shakespeare, and the stage. These pinpoint Dukas’s greatest musical interests, and are explicit in outlining what we may expect from his text-based Polyèucte, Sorcier and Ariane of the same period. Therefore, their omission from Dukas scholarship (until very recently) is regrettable in that it has drastically narrowed the range of analytical approaches to the composer’s output, as we shall see in the following three chapters.

While Polyèucte may not have been shaped by Dukas’s critical thought, the overture would certainly appear to have moulded what the composer said about music and text in a symphonic context. In any case, his thoroughly consistent methods prevented him from verbally endorsing ideologies that might be construed as undermining what he deemed his more valuable artistic work. Later on, Sorcier and Ariane prove to be equally in harmony with the theories espoused in his criticism; indeed, we would argue that certain articles have a definite agenda in advocating Dukas’s decisions in the domain of text-based music. His campaign to
legitimise programme music (despite occasional misgivings about the symphonic poem) is undoubtedly the most important activity here. This, however, is far from indicating that the Parisian press functioned as a mouthpiece for the composer’s ‘real,’ creative work.

The composer’s criticism may be summed up as a demonstration of his commitment to integrating the multi-faceted aspects of artistry—including critical awareness, compositional aspiration and personal reflection—into one original, autonomous whole. The defining principles of Dukas’s general aesthetics, as we saw, are a commitment to artistic sincerity and an awareness of historical antecedent (especially with regard to form). In the specific arena of the music-text aesthetic, the composer insisted upon musical idea forming the heart of any multimedia collaboration. The frequent allusions to the poetry of music indicate the serious regard in which Dukas held its expressive capacities; therefore, he desired to clarify the parameters for musical, textual and dramatic interaction. His theories establish well thought-out modes of procedure for two particular genres: programme music and music-drama.

In Part II of the dissertation, we seek to appraise how Dukas’s compositions fit alongside his critiques into his conceptual music-text models. In Polyeucte, the essentially musical drama is analysed; with Sorcier I investigate the musical transformation of Goethe’s ballad; finally, a series of intersecting music-text moments in Ariane are explored with the objective of illuminating how Dukas put his music-drama theories into practice.
Chapter Four: Discourses of Musical Drama in *Polyeucte*

**Introduction**

*Polyeucte: Ouverture pour la tragédie de Corneille*, completed in 1891 and first performed in 1892, was Dukas’s first published work. It was played many times in Paris in the early 1890s, as Palaux-Simonnet has detailed. The overture is based on a tragedy written in 1642 by French playwright Pierre Corneille (1606–84). The play, set in Armenia during the reign of the Roman Empire, concerns the eponymous hero’s conversion to Christianity and its deadly consequences. Polyeucte’s pagan wife Pauline makes desperate attempts to convince her husband to recant, but to no avail. The drama ends poignantly, with Polyeucte executed in ignorance of the knowledge that his wife and her father, the Roman ruler Felix, have also been persuaded to adopt his religion, which thus ushers in a new era of spiritual tolerance.

In this chapter I aim to explore *Polyeucte’s* status in relation to the composer’s music-text aesthetic through demonstrating how it functions as programme music. To do so, I revisit the autograph score, which was examined in more detail in chapter two. Dukas’s interest in Corneille, and how the play might transfer to a musical setting, is then considered. This necessitates a formal analysis of the overture. Finally, I investigate the musical structure on the micro level. This reveals the composer’s preoccupation with intervals as a method of generating drama in music. It also leads to the discovery that each of the two thematic groups is characterised by opposition, but that they relate to one another mostly through juxtaposition, which is programmatically significant.

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Polyeucte was not the composer’s earliest programmatic effort (student overtures after King Lear and Goetz von Berlichingen have this honour) but it was his first mature accomplishment in the genre. It is early evidence of Dukas’s strong predilection for uniting notes and text in his symphonic œuvre. Furthermore, in this overture the composer established a formal template to which he had recourse in his 1897 symphonic poem and 1907 opera. Musical autonomy is balanced against literary agency such that the desired dramatic effect is accomplished, but not at the expense of the music’s integrity. Aside from re-using Polyeucte’s symmetrical frames in Sorcier and Ariane, Dukas also draws on the internal, intervallic processes of the overture for these later works.

Ms. 1033 and programmatic possibilities
A consideration of the extant sources for Dukas’s text-based œuvre reveals the overture to be unique in at least one respect. The only surviving manuscript pertaining to Polyeucte is its autograph score, Ms. 1033, which fails to illuminate the work’s music-text relationship any more than the published edition does.\(^{383}\) Whereas Sorcier’s programmatic intent is accounted for courtesy of the composer’s notes that label the three themes, the poetic content of the earlier work remains open to interpretation. Furthermore, while Dukas’s response to Maeterlinck’s libretto is explicitly tracked in the Ariane documents, his reaction to Corneille’s play is not readily explained.

As it stands, the score may be regarded as a general evocation of the moods suggested by the tragedy. Dukas’s differentiation of sections through expression marks, time signature and orchestration enables this. Apart from the Polyeucte title, both manuscript and score lack literary references: there is no subtitle quoting a line

383 Paul Dukas, Polyeucte, Ms. 1033, Musique, BNF. See chapter two for discussion of the manuscript.
from Corneille, nor a Lisztian commentary on events of the play at any stage. That
the composer felt no compulsion to annotate his work—either on its completion in
1891 or upon revisiting it in 1898 when he inscribed a dedication to Malherbe—
suggests that he was satisfied for it to be interpreted in a broadly picturesque sense.
Despite the absence of specific verbal cues, however, a belief persists amongst
Dukas scholars that Corneille’s five acts are mirrored in the music. This will be duly
scrutinised.

**Dukas and Corneille: the conception of Polyeucte**

Dukas had highly developed interests in fiction, philosophy and drama. These make
an appearance in his music through the programmatic overture, symphonic poem and
music-drama. Normally, the literary texts that inspired these works were written by
figures with whom Dukas had long been fascinated. This was certainly the case with
Shakespeare and Goethe, perhaps even Maeterlinck. Shakespeare, Goethe and
Nietzsche were said to be his favourite writers. Corneille, on the other hand, seems to
have been known to the composer mostly through the performance of his plays, other
musicians’ interpretations of his work and maybe through his father.384 Dukas was
particularly familiar with the history of Gounod’s operatic version of Polyeucte
(1878), which was based on a libretto adaptation by Jules Barbier.385

There are possibly a few facets to Dukas’s attraction to Polyeucte. In the
1890s, its creator was compared to Shakespeare, acclaimed as one of the major
names in ‘Classic French drama’ and celebrated as the founder of French tragedy.386
These tributes alone may have attracted the composer, but it is likely that the nature

of Corneille’s heroes held specific appeal. According to Fortier, because Corneille aimed for ‘grandeur,’ this resulted in his protagonists being ‘greater than ordinary mortals.’ Dukas was irrevocably drawn towards such individuals and their elevated aspirations. Apart from Polyeucte, Maeterlinck’s Ariane can also be described as personifying these qualities. Indeed, Dukas’s real-life idols, too, notably Wagner, could also be characterised by their lofty philosophical ideals.

The superhuman possibility of immortality loomed large in *Polyeucte*, given the play’s focus on a Christian convert’s thirst for martyrdom. Dukas, it must be said, coming from a Jewish background and eschewing organised religion later in life, was unlikely to have related much to the zealous Polyeucte. However, he was interested in the artistic portrayal of what he termed ‘religious dignity,’ a sentiment that resonates at the end of the play. Three years after *Polyeucte*, Dukas maintained that the expression of spiritual transcendency was music’s ultimate purpose:

Music is, before all, an art of serious and sublime expression. Its first songs were directed towards the heavens. [...] In the supreme works of the great masters, one feels a reminiscence of music’s religious vocation. For music, more so than any other art, more vividly even than poetry, embodies aspirations towards infinity. Its persuasive language suffices to convince us by the force of emotion alone, and makes us recognize it as the same word of the Inexpressible.

‘Religious dignity,’ he believed, radiated in ‘dramatic works like *Parsifal* or *La Légende de Saint-Christophe*’ more so than in ‘many an oratorio or motet catalogued as “church-music.”’ It seems reasonable, then, to suggest that an evocation of the sublime was Dukas’s aim for this overture.

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387 Ibid., 197.
Polyeucte, in line with the classic French drama, was essentially a 'psychological study, and no complicated plot was required for the development of a passion, of a feeling.' This did not necessarily result in a diminished dramatic impact, however, as 'whatever [...] was lost in the interest of the plot was gained in conciseness and force.' Correspondingly, Dukas's work does not invoke the musical drama of the strict sonata form, but creates tension and builds to a climax by other means. The overture develops through the intensification and variation of two emotionally charged thematic groups, Faith (I) and Love (II). Rather than centring on cross-subject conflict, crisis arises primarily from within; the music charts the progression of this intra-thematic plot. When the two groups do meet, the effect produced is as much one of juxtaposition rather than opposition.

This bears a remarkable resemblance to the dramatic structure of Corneille's work, whereby 'juxtaposition persists throughout the play as the superimposition of one order upon the other without fusion.' Eventually, what occurs is this:

Superimposition in Polyeucte culminates with the hero's attainment of the desired saintly martyrdom and the subsequent conversions of Pauline and Felix, acts which unite the play in a paradigm of Christian devotion. Similarly, the overture's contrasting first and second subjects are unified in the final section—although whether Dukas intended to invoke 'a paradigm of Christian devotion' is open to debate. The composer remained more or less faithful to

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Fortier, 'Classic French Drama,' 198.

Ibid., 198.

The origins of these labels lie with Georges Favre and Bénédicte Palaux-Simonnet, as explained in chapter two. They will be discussed further below.


Ibid., 319.

Dukas's leanings towards Pantheism suggest that he intended to portray a sense of spirituality beyond the subject matter of the play. The composer seems to have been intrigued by religion: one of his abandoned operas from the 1890s, L'Arbre de science, was based on a Hindu legend. Dukas's beliefs in later life are discussed a little in Edouard Dujardin, 'En Marge de la Musique,' 57–60; and Stan Golestan, 'La Dernière Journée avec Paul Dukas,' 119–21 (both appear in La Revue musicale, 157, June 1936).
Corneille in substance and style: each of the protagonist’s two psychological states is depicted by unstable first and second themes and each is resolved within itself (and with the other) through juxtaposition. Dukas does a more than adequate job of recognising and reconciling the various types of drama presented by Corneille. One scholar condensed the play’s action thus:

In each act three things occur: (1) a confrontation within the pagan world, (2) a meeting between the pagan and the Christian worlds, and (3) a confrontation within the Christian world.396

Rather amazingly, the play’s dramatic core is very closely reproduced by Dukas, even to the point where the pagan and Christian worlds meet rather than confront one another.

Structural similarities between the play and overture

Much has been made of the fact that Corneille’s five-act play appears to find a structural equivalent in Dukas’s episodic, five-part overture. As Georges Favre and Bénédicte Palaux-Simonnet have rightly highlighted, the music may be roughly divided into five sections.397 These sections are signified by thematic and motivic material, time signature, tempo or key. Some are particularly characterised by the prominence of either one of the two main musical ideas. Ever since Favre identified the opening music as representing Polyeucte’s faith in Christianity and the second subject as indicative of the hero’s love for his wife Pauline, these labels (‘Faith’ and ‘Love’) have been widely accepted.398 Favre espoused a position, later supported by Palaux-Simonnet, which claims that the play’s five-act structure is paralleled in the overture. The music, he said, ‘can be subdivided into five clearly distinct parts,

398 Favre, L’œuvre, 29.
alternating between slow and fast sections. Ultimately, he classified the work as a dual rondo and variation form. My analysis contends that this reading, while partly valid, overlooks Dukas’s true formal priorities.

The five programmatic sections Favre identified are delineated by either of the two main themes or their combination. Thus, he heard the overture as an overview of the drama played out in Polyeucte’s conscience, which is divided between his ardent belief in Christianity and his passion for Pauline. ‘Two violently contrasted themes express this conflict musically and evoke the states of the martyr’s soul.’

Palaux-Simonnet agreed that ‘the musician did not aim to follow Corneille’s play step by step.’ Rather, she said, he sought to suggest in the music all its profound truth, human along with spiritual. Hence, the fairly free form in five sections which seems to reflect the five acts of the original tragedy; hence, equally, the presence of two strongly contrasted themes that express with clarity the young martyr’s interior conflict, torn between his love for the pagan Pauline and his burning belief in Christianity.

These converging readings carefully avoid a narrative reduction of Polyeucte, but are flawed in assigning the work a dramatic character characterised primarily by opposition rather than juxtaposition. As the introduction of a new melody approximately a third of the way through the overture illustrates, this oversimplifies Dukas’s response to Corneille. The two thematic groups plus the new melody are divided amongst the five sections as set out below in Fig. 3:

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399 Favre, *L’œuvre*, 29. ‘Elle peut se subdiviser en cinq parties nettement distinctes, avec alternance de mouvements lents et rapides.’


401 Palaux-Simonnet, *Paul Dukas*, 30. ‘D’où la forme, assez libre, en cinq sections qui semblent refléter les cinq actes de la tragédie originale; d’où également la présence de deux thèmes fortement contrastés qui expriment avec une claire évidence le conflit intérieur du jeune martyr, écartelé entre son amour pour la païenne Pauline et sa foi brûlante de néophyte chrétienne.’

Figure 3: Organisation of musical material in Polyeucte

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Section</strong></th>
<th><strong>Material</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (1—40)</td>
<td>Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second (41—130)</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third (131—185)</td>
<td>a. Faith (131) b. <strong>New melody</strong> derived from Love (142) c. <strong>New melody</strong> juxtaposed with Faith (171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth (186—295)</td>
<td>Love subject development; prominent Faith counter-idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transition</strong> (296—312)</td>
<td><strong>New melody</strong> with fragments of Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth (313—359)</td>
<td>‘Faith,’ then ‘Love,’ then combination of both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two observations may be made here: firstly, the Faith and Love themes are not dialectically opposed to one another, except briefly in the fourth section. Secondly, the new melody actually warrants its own episodes, which thereby lessens the potential for first- and second-subject conflict. Naturally, this has extra-musical ramifications. Favre called the new melody a ‘fragment’ where ‘we rediscover the theme of sensual love, which, transformed in its rhythm and expression, has become supremely calm.’

By providing a dual synopsis of the events in Corneille’s five acts and of the moods in Dukas’s five sections, we shall now speculate as to how a five-part musical interpretation of the play might be contrived:

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403 Favre, *L’œuvre*, 31. ‘Nous retrouvons dans ce fragment le thème de l’amour profane transformé dans son rythme et dans son expression, et devenu souverainement calme.’

404 This synopsis is based on a description of the play as found in John Cairncross (trans.) *Polyeuctus, The Liar, Nicomedes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980).
Act I: Pauline relays a nightmare in which her new husband, the Armenian nobleman Polyeucte, is killed by her father Felix. This proves especially upsetting because Severus, the man she previously loved but never married due to her father’s disapproval, is thought to have been killed in battle. Polyeucte’s secret conversion to Christianity by his friend Nearchus is revealed. The act concludes with Felix announcing the news that Severus is still alive. Felix fears that Severus may seek revenge for his ending of the relationship between Severus and Pauline, and so asks his daughter to use her influence to help him. Section 1: The Faith theme, sounding suitably foreboding in the relative F minor key, conveys the gravity of Polyeucte’s situation, but it could also be argued that it alludes to Pauline’s anxiety.

Act II: Severus is devastated when he realises that Pauline has married another man. However, he agrees not to disturb her happiness and to avoid seeing her again. Polyeucte and Severus plan to attend a sacrifice in the temple to celebrate the Roman Emperor’s recent victory. Pauline decides not to go. Nearchus tries to stop Polyeucte from going to the pagan temple, but Polyeucte suddenly announces that he intends to destroy what he regards as the false idols there. He convinces Nearchus to take part in the action. Section 2: Here, the second section’s Love music corresponds to the focus on Pauline’s relationships with her husband and her former lover. This, however, cannot be categorised as fully encompassing the turbulent mood brought about by Polyeucte’s reckless decision.

Act III: Felix condemns Nearchus to immediate death for his exploits in the temple and imprisons Polyeucte. Pauline begs for her husband’s freedom but Felix instead urges his daughter to convince Polyeucte to reject his faith. Felix, even if he wanted to release Polyeucte, is unable to do so because Severus is there to ensure that the emperor’s instructions to execute heretics are followed. Felix also knows that
Polyeucte's death would free Severus to pursue Pauline and that a resultant marriage may enhance his own status in the empire. The act ends with Polyeucte being brought into the palace where Pauline will attempt to reason with him. **Section 3:** Here, a new melody is introduced. It possesses a profile that starts with the chromaticism of the Love theme but then borrows the wide intervallic traits associated with the Faith theme. As the clashing demands of religion and romance press heavily on Polyeucte in the third act and urgently call for compromise, so too the music offers an episode that functions as a solution in musical form.

**Act IV:** Polyeucte expresses his desire for martyrdom in a monologue. He dismisses Pauline's pleas to reconsider his position and instead prays for her to convert too. When Severus arrives, Polyeucte advises him to marry Pauline after his death. Pauline rejects this proposition, describing it as impossible because Severus will be the one responsible for her husband's death. She beseeches Severus to save Polyeucte and he agrees to intercede. **Section 4:** Musical similarities between the second and fourth sections may be attributed to the presence of the Pauline, Polyeucte and Severus triangle in both corresponding acts. The formal development of the second subject arguably correlates to the expansion of the relationship subplot. However, it is equally likely that Dukas's tendency towards symmetrical structures triggered the return of the Love music here. The resurrection of the Faith theme as a counterpoint to this may be rationalised as evidence of Polyeucte's increasing commitment to his beliefs, despite the chaos it causes around him.

**Transition:** Given the disparity between the highly-strung atmosphere of section four and the otherworldly repose of the final section, this passage seems to bridge the drama between Severus's promises to help (act four) and the redundancy of his efforts: Polyeucte's death is reported anyway in act five. As such, the brief
resumption of the conciliatory episodic idea and the fragmentary treatment of the Faith theme promise nothing more than a temporary respite from conflict.

**Act V:** Polybeucte once more urges Pauline to live with Severus, or to die with her husband. He is sent away to be executed. Upon witnessing his death, Pauline and Felix convert to Christianity too, thus prompting Severus to reconsider his views and leading to a new age of acceptance and evangelism. **Section 5:** This is the point at which the music most obviously resonates with the mood of the play: the celestial harps evoke associations of paradise, while the calm recapitulations of the Faith and Love subjects finally suggest a peaceful (if nonetheless somewhat tragic) resolution.

As this exercise shows, Dukas's overture is conceivably derived from emotions and events in Corneille's *Polybeucte*. However, this is a superficial interpretation that can only make sense of the music from outside, looking in through the lens of another art form. It depends too much on 'literary reason,' which the composer specifically intended to avoid:

> In reserving his freedom and not letting himself be dominated exclusively by literary reason, the musician who gives a title to his compositions does not experience any perceptible loss.\(^{405}\)

In order to attain an understanding of the overture and its relation to the programme (for one certainly exists), formal and analytical methods are required.

**Formal analysis of *Polybeucte* as an overture**

*Polybeucte* is a typical concert overture in that its title suggests some degree of literary content.\(^{406}\) Nonetheless, as it is at less liberty to indulge in poetic license than the symphonic poem, it bears more formal resemblance to the first movement of a

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\(^{405}\) Paul Dukas, ‘*Le Faust* de Goethe et la musique,’ *Revue hebdomadaire*, January 1901 *Ecrits*, 521–9 (525). ‘En réservant sa liberté et en ne se laissant pas dominer exclusivement par la raison littéraire, le musicien n' éprouve aucune perte sensible à donner un titre à ses compositions.’

symphony. Adhering to the custom established by Beethoven and other composers in the early nineteenth century, *Polveucte* may be viewed as a typical Romantic overture by a composer who ‘set out to illustrate, in a general way’ the title given to the music.\(^{407}\) The ‘general’ signification was important to Dukas, who was keen to align his music with the symphony rather than the symphonic poem. In discussing Beethoven’s C Minor Symphony, for example, he admired the fact that its music could be ‘made to signify “this or everything else.”’ In this unlimited potential, he said, ‘the force of pure music resides.’\(^{408}\) The Lisztian prototype, he said, claims, on the contrary, to express ‘this and nothing else.’ This causes its weakness, despite the enrichments of detail and the penetrating accentuations which authorize the undertaking of the programme.\(^{409}\)

Dukas diverged from concert-overture and first-movement symphonic tradition through his choice of form. Instead of strict sonata he used a structure that combined a modified sonata-rondo with a variation set. Such flexible organisation may suggest that *Polveucte* is more suited to the symphonic poem rather than the overture model. However, the composer had no desire to depict in that piece the kind of detailed programme by which the two genres are chiefly differentiated.

A formal approach to the overture produces rather different results to those procured by a programmatically driven method. Favre, Schwartz and Palaux-Simonnet agree that Dukas renounced the sonata in favour of a ‘free form in five sections’ that ‘adheres simultaneously to the rondo and grand variation.’\(^{410}\) However, the assumption that the five sections may be compartmented into either a rondo or free variation set is problematic. In reality, *Polveucte* strays into the more complex

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\(^{407}\) Temperley, ‘Overture,’ 825.
\(^{408}\) ‘Goethe et la musique,’ 524. ‘Chacun est libre d’interpréter sa symphonie comme un drame individuel et de lui signifier “ceci ou tout autre chose.” C’est en cela qui réside la force de la musique pure.’
\(^{409}\) Ibid., 524. ‘La musique [de] Liszt […] prétend, au contraire, à exprimer “ceci et rien autre chose.” C’est ce qui cause en partie sa faiblesse, malgré les enrichissements de détail et les accentuations pénétrantes qu’autorise l’accomplissement du programme.’
\(^{410}\) Favre, *L’œuvre*, 29. ‘Elle tient à la fois du rondo et de la grande variation.’
territory of the sonata-rondo. I propose recasting the music as a tighter modified sonata-rondo as follows:

**Figure 4: *Polyeucte* as a modified sonata-rondo form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode/Variation</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 1—40</td>
<td>Main theme: more of an introduction than self-contained unit (ends on chord V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: 41—130</td>
<td>First episode: in tonic rather than dominant. Functions as sonata second group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1: 131—141</td>
<td>Refrain returns abbreviated, varied and harmonically remote from origins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: 142—185</td>
<td>Second episode (derived from B) in tonic. Becomes highly contrapuntal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1: 186—295</td>
<td>Dominant development of first-episode material rather than tonic recapitulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition: 296—312</td>
<td>Short variation of C theme. Also aids transition back through dominant to tonic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda: 313—359</td>
<td>Slight development of A and B but mostly a V—I cadential flourish.411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To some extent the overture may be formulated as a sonata-rondo: it possesses the necessary structural skeleton and is fleshed out by two subjects and a C episode. The main obstacle to *Polyeucte* operating as a fully fledged sonata-rondo form lies in the way that none of the themes really gains a foothold until the work has substantially progressed. This may be traced to a formal design implemented in A, which also happen to be the first of the programmatic five sections. Unlike a true

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sonata-rondo which treats A as ‘a self-contained unit with a cadence in the tonic,’ \textsuperscript{412} Polyeucte’s opening refrain functions almost as an introduction to the ensuing music. Its status as an independent section is called into question by a harmonic progression which ends on the chord of V. There is no resolution to I until the first episode/second section begins.

The effects of a deferred tonic are felt throughout the work. As a compensatory measure, the first episode (B) is explored in the tonic rather than the usual dominant. Therefore, the return of this material in the home key as is ordinarily the case for B1 would have been somewhat superfluous. Instead, Dukas takes this opportunity to rework the episode as a dominant development. B1 normally signals that the sonata-rondo finishing line is in sight, but as the music is in the major supertonic at the end of B1 this is not a realistic option. Hence, the transition’s purpose is to allow a motion from B flat to E flat, while the coda wraps everything up with a V–I cadential flourish. Here, the composer has devised a formal protocol that maintains musical integrity, regardless of a programme. Dukas’s critique of Schumann’s Faust two years later suggests that this strategy influenced his music-text theories. In the article he declared:

\begin{quote}
In coordinating the whole, one must link up the chosen episodes, make them conform to a certain plan—in brief, accept all the inconveniences of setting a work comprised of material borrowed from a poetic composition complete in itself in a musically-conceived form.\textsuperscript{413}
\end{quote}

It could be claimed that the plan to which Dukas made Polyeucte conform—modified sonata-rondo form—enables a greater degree of variation. For example, the transition acts not only as a means to close the gap between B flat major and A flat

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid., 653.

\textsuperscript{413} Paul Dukas, ‘Le Faust de Schumann,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, January 1894) Ecrits, 157–62 (157). \textquoteleft Faut-il en coordonner l’ensemble, relier entre eux les épisodes choisis, les conformer à un certain plan, bref accepter tous les inconvénients que comporte la mise en œuvre, dans une conception de forme musicale, de matériaux empruntés à une composition poétique complète en soi.’
major, but also as an opportunity to vary the second episode, C. Additionally, B1 reconstructed as a dominant development actually invites further transformation of the main theme refrain. The horn variant of the A material is crucial in building tension in this section. In concluding that *Poleuxte* modifies sonata-rondo form for the sake of flexible variation we are not conceding that the programme dictated the formal structure. The seven sections outlined above cannot correspond exactly to Corneille’s five acts. What emerges is that Dukas balances a form dependent upon musical coherence against one which leaves room for external input.

In a gesture that does support the five-part hypothesis, though, each imagined section is punctuated by pivotal cadences in the overture (the five-section structure refers to Fig. 3 above). The first perfect cadence overlaps the first and second sections. The second section and first part of the third section (3.a) are highly chromatic until a unison E flat sounds at the end of 3.a (b. 141) before cadencing on A flat (b. 142) for the second part of the third section (3.b). The latter half of the third section (from b. 164) moves towards the dominant key, with the applied dominant B flat entering towards the end of 3.c and resting on E flat when the fourth section starts (b. 186). This confirms a dominant prolongation, which is reinforced by a secondary dominant at the juncture between the transition and fifth section (b. 312–313). Finally, the fifth section is a broad V–Ic–I. The connective cadences in *Poleuxte* imagined as five sections may be summarised thus:

**Figure 5: Cadences on the sectional boundaries in *Poleuxte***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1—40</th>
<th>41—130</th>
<th>131—185</th>
<th>186—295</th>
<th>296—312</th>
<th>313—359</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V(141)</td>
<td>I(142)</td>
<td>V(164)</td>
<td>H(185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I(41)→</td>
<td>V(141)</td>
<td>I(142)</td>
<td>V(164)</td>
<td>H(185)</td>
<td>(295)H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>V(186)</td>
<td>H cont. →</td>
<td>V(313)I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
That the overture is predicated on a relationship between five sections does not, however, necessarily privilege the five-act programme in the musical structure. The five-part programmatic effect is a by-product of a formal construct that hinges on the concept of symmetry.414 Favre and Palaux-Simonnet ignored Dukas’s preoccupation with symmetry, but Everett Vernon Boyd has rightly acknowledged its role in Sorcier.415 Polyeucte may be considered a formal template for Sorcier, and Ariane too, in that both works express the essence of their texts within a proportionally arched framework.

Whether we consider this overture a sonata-rondo/variation structure or a faithful five-part exploration of the play, bars 1–40 and 313–359 are, by virtue of harmonic function, separate from the main action (see Fig. 5). Hence, the body of the overture is unsatisfactory from a programmatic perspective, containing only three sections and a transition. Formally, though, this same music acts as something akin to an allegro. We saw earlier that one way in which Dukas modified the sonata-rondo was by placing the first episode (B) in the tonic rather than dominant. Coming straight after a slow introduction and combined with an allegro tempo, it is tempting to tag b. 41 as the start of a pseudo-allegro that ends at b. 295. This neatly coincides with the end of the fourth programmatic section. Thus, the sonata-rondo/variation plan and five-section form coalesce like this:

Figure 6: *Polyeucte* as a combined sonata-rondo/variation plan and five-section form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>‘Allegro’</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1—40</td>
<td>41—295</td>
<td>296—312</td>
<td>313—359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends with V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Section 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Section 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Section 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. b. c.</td>
<td>transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This diagram shows how chord V (E flat) operates as a tool that systematically and symmetrically erects formal boundaries. Not only do the first and fifth sections share slow tempi and similar lengths, but they also bookend the pseudo-allegro with E flat chords.\(^4\)\(^1\)\(^6\) Furthermore, the first step towards a dominant prolongation occurs roughly halfway through the score (b. 164). And, if we isolate the pseudo-allegro of b. 41–295, the E flat modulation occurs even closer to the centre. This symmetrical landscape is highly conducive to understanding the work as a programmatic five-part creation, with part five functioning as its apotheosis. The middle third of the structure is divisible into three further parts, which, added to the outer two sections, totals five sections. Nonetheless, section three (act three, programmatically) is itself another tripartite structure, which corroborates the theory that abstract musical logic was the composer’s major concern in *Polyeucte*.

Even at a local level, symmetry manifests itself as an organising force early on. It shapes the chord progression at b. 23–26 that comprises Ib (see Ex. 5 below). These four bars alternate between root D flat major and F major seventh chords, which eventually leads to a B flat minor cadence. D flat’s displacement by B flat minor culminates in a design whereby the bass moves up a (major) third to F and

\(^4\)\(^1\)\(^6\) I describe the music as a pseudo-allegro because its hypothetical first and second subjects would consist of the second and third themes, which do not at all operate in conflict with one other.
down a (minor) third to B flat. This mediant movement is simultaneously magnified. Once b. 23–25 are reduced to D flat they become the axis around which the F of the 6-4 B flat minor at b. 12 and the root position B flat minor at b. 26 revolve.

**Intervallic symbolism**

In discussing Dukas’s depiction of Corneille’s tragedy, the five-act/five-part variation analogy can be helpful. However, the five-part trope is ingrained into *Polyeucte* at a deeper level. The concept permeates the substance of the subject groups. Opening with a unison viola and cello statement of the Faith theme (Ia), the first sound in the work is middle C falling to F, a perfect fifth interval.

**Example 1: Opening bars of Polyeucte (‘Faith,’ beginning of Ia)**

![Example 1: Opening bars of Polyeucte (‘Faith,’ beginning of Ia)](image)

The first allegro theme of *Sorcier* begins with the bassoon playing these exact pitches in reverse. Both works emphasise the fifth so deliberately that the phenomenon bears further examination. It appears that the perfect fifth is seen by Dukas as a kind of harmonic norm or centre-point and that its disruption (particularly by a semitone either side in the form of a minor sixth or tritone) corresponds to dissonance on the programmatic plane.

With regard to the material of the overture as a whole, we may speak of the Faith theme (I, especially Ia) as exhibiting perfect fifth consonance and the Love theme (II) as deviating from it. The latter is introduced at b. 41 (on A flat) and, following a bar’s rest, moves in an ascending trajectory towards F flat (b. 43). The opening of IIa from the Love theme is illustrated in Ex. 2:
Example 2: Opening of ‘Love,’ 11a

This minor sixth interval is encountered on several occasions during the exposition of the second subject and becomes a defining characteristic. Plainly intended to unsettle, 11a jars with the foregoing Faith theme owing to the change of time signature and the juxtaposition of an extended rest with rushed rhythmic activity.

Further layers of perfect-fifth stability/disturbance are diffused within both I and II too, thereby contradicting the easy assumption that the first represents transcendent joy and the second, sensual pleasures. For example, whereas the second theme’s ungainly introductory gesture differs to the elegant expression of the first theme’s opening bars, the minor sixth interval is common to both. Referring to Ex. 1, we see that while b. 1 establishes middle C and the subsequent perfect fifth, the second bar may be regarded as a corruption of this. A crescendo in the first bar reaches its peak with the opening note of b. 2, a D flat which falls back down to F, thus sounding the minor sixth—the first disruption of the perfect fifth. The music then climbs up to D natural in b. 3, but immediately sinks down to a tritonal A flat. A diminished seventh cadence follows (b. 7). Fundamentally, the first three bars of Polyeucte stretch out the fifth-centric shape in two linear directions: after the initial presentation, it expands to a minor sixth and then contracts to a tritone. The symmetrical proportions and the strategic location of the crescendi indicate that Dukas deliberately made the fifth a focal point of Ia.
In *Polyeucte*, the composer was primarily concerned with the horizontal permutations of the perfect fifth rather than with its vertical (harmonic) properties. Nonetheless, this linear dyad is still structurally significant. In his theory of the triad as ‘place and action’ Carl Schachter claims:

Any triad that is composed out has both a kinetic and a static aspect; when we hear it, we experience change occurring within a relatively stable field.\(^{417}\)

In this case, the triad is substituted with the perfect fifth. It is ‘composed out’ primarily through enharmonic augmentation or diminution. Schachter’s hypothesis also helps contextualise the more complex web of fifth, augmented and whole-tone relationships in *Sorcier*, where the dyad carries much meaning as ‘the stable field.’ In the 1897 work, the intervalllic experimentalism of *Polyeucte* would be broadened to encompass chords in their vertical form too.

The opening bars could also function as a comment on the programme. In the play, Polyeucte’s conversion to Christianity necessitates suffering and, crucially, the protagonist is not the only one affected. Pauline’s constant interventions to save her husband demonstrate a passion so unwavering that even the prospect of being reunited with her former lover Severus following Polyeucte’s death offers no consolation. In begging Pauline to either die with him or marry Severus, Polyeucte’s insatiable thirst for martyrdom strikes a strangely insensitive note to his wife’s compassion and selflessness. Hence, while the pure perfect-fifth opening may stand for the protagonist’s noble devotion to his beliefs, the fact that it is subsequently reshaped hints at the flawed nature of Polyeucte’s personality.

In its initial presentation, II also displays some of the ambiguities found in Ia. We have already remarked that IIA’s characteristic span of a minor sixth recurs

throughout its exposition. When the motif is played a second time (b. 45–47) its range extends to an octave.

**Example 3: First repeat of IIa**

![Example 3: First repeat of IIa](image)

The previous A flat is retained as a starting point while the chromatic pattern begins a minor third higher. This IIa fragment is also framed by one bar of silence at either end, as if to guard it from the adjacent discord. If the perfect fifth symbolises the state to which the Ia Faith theme aspires, the octave may be read as IIa’s counterpart. However, the latter outlines the contrast between consonant and dissonant states slightly differently. In Ia, the perfect fifth is the idealised model, and this holds true largely because of its pure, referential implication. Therefore, deviation from the norm occurs in the form of dissonance.

On the other hand, IIa of the Love music takes the minor sixth as its norm, because overall it represents the sensual distractions that obstruct Polyeucte’s path to transcendent joy (embodied by the perfect fifth). Consequently, its development into a consonant octave span functions as an internal disruption. This transformation of the motif is further stressed by the isolating bars of silences. The question as to what kind of disturbance the octave signifies now beckons. Just as the disruption of the perfect fifth in Ia alluded to flaws in Polyeucte’s religious devotion, the octave transformation of IIa (which also references the perfect fifth with E flat in b. 47) suggests a link with the overture’s opening interval. This, therefore, hints that the Love music is programmatically tied to the first bar. In other words, Dukas seems to
be suggesting that Pauline’s struggle to save her husband arguably stems from a love as legitimate as that which he professes for Christianity.

Having established the nature of the Faith and Love themes and their programmatic objectives, we now consider their development throughout the course of the overture.

**Thematic and motivic discourse**

Internal fissures in I and II appear almost immediately in their expositions. When the strings resume playing Ia at b. 9 they open with a minor sixth, which widens to a major sixth for the ensuing two bars. Immediately afterwards, the oboes reinstate the perfect fifth, then move to a minor sixth and finally guide the theme upwards into a resolution. Shortly, though, the notion of dissonance within Ia is forgotten as b. 20–22 sketch out each bar’s opening interval as a perfect fifth, an octave and another octave respectively.

**Example 4: b. 20–23**

This unusual moment of stability is complemented by the introduction of Ib at b. 23–26. This four-bar idea, played by horns and woodwind, then directly repeated a fifth lower in brass and strings, consists of a chord progression, the timbre of which anticipates that found in Dukas’s *La Péri* (1911). It moves in a mediant circle around D flat that resolves to B flat minor in b. 26 by means of a passing D flat-C-B flat motion.
Example 5: Chordal motion around D flat (‘Faith,’ Ib)

A similar device is used for b. 27–30, but this is not an identical repetition as these bars also incorporate Ia from b. 26–28.

We mentioned above that Ia has become notably consonant. However, during b. 26–28, its first perfect fifth is stifled by two sustained minor sixth chords (note the minim in b. 27–28). Drawn out for four bars at b. 30–34, the previous silencing of the perfect fifth is underscored by the absence of intervallic consonance until the boundary of b. 33–4 in the flutes. Two alternating transpositions of the tritone are the defining features of this transformation. Heard for the last time in this section from b. 34–37, the final two bars of this Ia transformation simply intone a perfect fifth interval, alluding to the home key of A flat for the first time.

At b. 41 the music reaches the tonic (the earlier A flat statement of the perfect fifth arises within the context of a passing 6-4 chord) and ushers in the Love subject’s IIa motif. The fragmentary initial presentation of IIa, in occasionally being delineated by moments of silence, has been touched upon. What also merits discussion is the inherently fragmented nature of this idea. The A flat and F flat that mark its minor sixth span are disjointed from one another. The motif is introduced by the strings: A flat sounds for a quaver beat, followed by rests for the remainder of that bar and the following one until the motif is resumed on B flat in the third bar of the phrase. The note is held by other instruments (to establish the tonic) but the effect of its brevity in the strings is discernible.
The same applies to the octave transformation of the motif directly after this (the latter part of IIa is pitched a minor third higher to end on A flat). After a rest at b. 48, there follows a frantic resurgence, with the rapid, rhythmic figure becoming very agitated. A close look at the supporting harmony illustrates that the previous octave transformation has become significant. At b. 49 the double bass F flat is matched by the same note in the second violins at the end of the bar and echoed yet again an octave higher by the first violins a bar later. Correspondingly, the bass F flat in b. 50 now appears an octave lower. Also, the E flat pedal from b. 57–60 is matched with the melodic high E flat in b. 60.

Letter D (b. 61) presents IIb of the Love subject. Here, neither the minor sixth nor octave is particularly important, as the music grows from the latter part of IIa.

Example 6: ‘Love,’ IIb

It can be seen, though, that IIb closes with a descending fifth interval (C flat to F flat in the cellos and basses, b. 64–65)—and its next presentation is marked by a C flat to G flat ending (b. 72–73). This indicates that the opening intervalllic concept has been retained. The stepwise ascending pattern prior to the interval also resembles part of Ia (b. 64). Further on, the transformation of IIa functions as a diminution of its original form in its tritone usage. In b. 73–74 the music spans A natural to E flat in one bar, repeated an octave higher in the next bar. This is the diminished fifth modification of material which, on first appearance and ranging across three bars,
covered the minor sixth distance of A flat to F flat. It is another example of how Dukas constantly circles the perfect fifth interval. In *Polyeucte* this ambivalence has programmatic ramifications.

Staying with b. 73–74, the symmetric effect of the two diminished fifths must also be mentioned. The ascent from A natural to E flat, the last note stressed twice, is accentuated by the fact that the next sound is the A natural a tritone above that emphasised E flat. This developmental pattern persists, with the fragment moving in an E natural-B flat-E natural direction from b. 79–80. B natural-F-B natural follows (b. 85–86), as does F sharp-C-F sharp (b. 87–88), but C-G flat resolves to G rather than returning to C (b. 89–90). That the outline of fifths in the above pattern (A-E-B-F sharp) is broken by a tritonal C works alongside the G flat-G resolution to signify the end of section D. Section E opens on a C minor 6-4 chord and, along with section F, is an impassioned continuation of IIb, which we shall now call IIc (ends at b. 130).

**Example 7: Continuation of ‘Love’ IIb into IIc (opening bars)**

Two strong statements of this music (in C minor at 93 and F minor at 103) confirm the growing presence of the second subject group; it is now less fleeting and more solidified. Nonetheless, the music alludes to its fragmentary IIa roots towards the end of F, just before the dramatically sustained horns conclude this section.
The exposition of the overture's two subjects reveal moments of discord within each.

Now, Dukas turns his attention to an exploration of I and II in combination.

**Juxtaposition, opposition and resolution**

What has been called the overture's third section arrives at b. 131, approximately a third of the way through *Polyeucte*. This third section continues until 185, whereupon a development of the second subject occurs. The fifty-five bars in the interim may be broken down into further subdivisions. The first of these consists of lettered section G (b. 131–41). Here, Ia is varied yet again, while the Ib chordal figure of b. 23–30 is also referenced. A rendition of Ia on the solo cor anglais incorporating the perfect fifth sounds more poignant than noble—and its support in the form of the romantically suggestive IIa hints at why that is (b. 132–33). The mediant bass motion of the original Ib is retained here (b. 131–2, b. 134–5). In keeping with the tonal, third-centric progression marked out in the bass, the woodwind part accents the perfect fifth at first, but with the erosion of this grounding, the importance of the fifth decreases. Step movement has altered Ia so that it is now less direct and more contemplative, more complex.

At b. 142 the second subdivision of the third section begins. The new melody (III), played by the first violins, is fundamentally an expansion of the Love music (specifically IIb), now calm and transformed, echoing Ia in its intervallic tranquillity.

**Example 8: b. 142–3 (opening of III, third-section melody)**

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By borrowing Ia's intervalllic concept and using this to lengthen the latter part of IIa, the melody is anchored to a chromatic opening but then allowed to roam across intervals ranging from a perfect fourth (b. 142) to a minor sixth (b. 146). From b. 158–171 greater prominence is given to Ia, with the relationship between the first two notes yet again singled out for special interest. Note the diminished fifth/perfect fifth/major sixth sequence at b. 164–6:

Example 9: Circling around the fifth, b. 164–6

![Example 9: Circling around the fifth, b. 164–6](image)

This also marks the introduction of a dominant prolongation into the piece: b. 164 sees the entry of E flat in the bass.

*Andante appassionato* from b. 171–85 indicates the final instalment of the third section. Its melody (III) is repeated in E flat major in a lengthened form in order to accommodate the expressive force demanded at this point (b. 177 is marked *animando sempre*). The music reaches a dramatic peak during these bars owing to the juxtaposition of III against a Ia Faith variant (beginning at b. 175). Yet another ingredient is added to the musical mixture here: the lower woodwind and brass instruments insistently echo the ascending triplet shape that characterises the Love IIa motif (see the horns from b. 171). Hence, the Faith theme does not dominate, despite appearances to the contrary.

In fact, the IIa triplet eventually assumes greater significance: b.178 sees it extended to four quaver beats, while b. 179 doubles the triplet figure. As such, it encompasses six notes that penetrate the musical texture and evolve into a brief but effective counterpart to the Faith theme (contrast the violins to the horns at b. 182).
The trumpet line at b. 183 emerges naturally from this IIa fragment transformation. It, the cor anglais and clarinet play in unison at this juncture but diverge for the last third of the bar. At this point, the woodwinds sustain F for a crotchet beat, but the trumpet alludes to the fragmentary origins of IIa with a triplet chromatic figure.

**Example 10: Interaction between oboe, cor anglais, clarinet and trumpet**

The role of the trumpet in this bar is meaningful for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it highlights the value of motivic transformation in the overture—one treatment of one part of IIa functions as a foil to a different transformation of the same fragment. Secondly, and moreover, the chameleon-like nature of IIa is depicted vividly by the trumpet part. Following the examples of the cor anglais and clarinet, this part emerges from III, but at the last moment (final three notes of b. 183) forges out an individual path. It is a chief example of Dukas’s late compositional adjustments, as revealed in Ms. 1033. This trumpet part was written into that manuscript in pencil after the work had been completed in virtually every other respect. It illustrates the intersection between composition and orchestration for Dukas. For example, the oboe also plays the trumpet’s dissenting last three notes, but this leads into another statement of III (oboe, b. 183–184), whereas the trumpet part primarily serves to accentuate some dimensions of the IIa fragment.
That combination of Ia, IIa plus III set up the premise for the fourth section. This is basically a development of the Love music, as encountered in the second section, in the dominant key. Twenty bars longer than the second section, the development adheres to its formal precedent in ordering the second subject group as follows: fragmentary IIa, repeated IIa figures, IIb (b. 218) and finally IIc (b. 258). However, subtle treatment of II and juxtaposition with Ia variants transform the material. We shall look at this section in chronological fashion starting with b. 186. Similar to IIa in its original form, E flat is played here, followed by a chromatic figure reaching to a minor sixth (to C flat). The immediate repetition of IIa soars from the same note to E flat two octaves higher. From b. 194 a series of tritonally-accented repetitions of the motif increases tension. The D natural-A flat interaction between the woodwind and upper strings (the clarinet starts on D natural and ends on A flat in b. 194; second violins take up the A flat in b. 195 and finish on D natural an octave higher, and so on) concludes in a diminished seventh chord at b. 198. This progression is new to the fourth section.

The chord also marks the first juxtaposition of a Ia variant with the second subject. Opening with a major sixth, the horns intercede with a variant six bars long. Given that IIa has thus far shown itself capable of expansion mostly in relation to Ia (as melody III proves), it is natural for the Faith theme to return during its development. Also, the disjointed quality of IIa desires a more fluent counterpart in order to evolve. The conclusion of the Ia variant for the second time (b. 216–17) is marked by a perfect fifth cadence. This interval is repeated next time the divided horns interject, b. 222–3. At b. 218, IIb from the Love subject returns. The divided horns briefly take over from the lower wind and strings at b. 222 before withdrawing
so that IIb regains the spotlight at b. 230. This eventually cedes to IIa, reinstated at b. 242.

With IIa at the centre of events once more from b. 242, it undergoes an internal development so that the perfect fifth is accentuated (note the span from F to C in b. 254). This paves the way for the most unified orchestral statement in *Polyeucte* yet. From b. 258–73, two rousing renditions of IIc are played, interspersed with IIa material for a few bars (b. 264–67). In the end, though, IIa in its dissonant guise is the driving force behind the last twenty-two bars of this section. It reaches b. 295 with accents on the tritone along the way. The following table (Fig. 7) condenses the contrasts between the second- and fourth-section treatments of the Love theme:

**Figure 7: Differences between Love theme treatment in sections two and four**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second section (b. 41–130)</th>
<th>Fourth section (b. 186–295)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41: IIa</td>
<td>186: IIa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194: IIa in D natural-A flat treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198–203: Horns play Ia variant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202–206: IIa in tritone pattern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206–217: Ia variant repeated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61: IIIb in strings accompanied by IIa</td>
<td>218: IIIb; accompanied from 222 with horn fifth interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230: IIIb resumes; horns enter at 234 with tritone interval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79–89: IIa in fifth and tritone pattern</td>
<td>242: IIa fragments start D, F, A, E flat, ending on B flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253 – 254: IIa fragment span F to C (another fifth)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93: IIc</td>
<td>258: IIc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99–102: IIa fragments</td>
<td>264–267: IIa fragments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second section (b. 41–130) | Fourth section (b. 186–295)
--- | ---
103: IIc repeated | 268: IIc repeated
109: IIa fragments close section | 274: IIa fragments emphasising tritone close section

That the Love theme’s development does little to change its original character suggests a programmatic reliance on the Faith theme in order to evolve.

In between the fourth section and the overture’s final section is a short transition (b. 296–312). This is based on the third-section melody, presented in turns by the oboe and cor anglais. However, III is never fully exposed because, as is Dukas’s style in *Polyeucte*, ideas are frequently presented only fragmentarily at first. Hence, in a passage of only seventeen bars, this melody can never truly develop.

After a bar and a half it is cut short by a descending figure spanning a minor sixth but stressing the perfect fifth (cor anglais, b. 297–303). Straight after this a transformation of Ia surfaces in the upper strings in a peculiar manner. First of all, the instruments are divided so that B flat and D sound together before descending to F. Dukas deliberately denies the perfect fifth trait of the original Faith theme by instructing the violins and violas to divide for these peripheral notes only (b. 303–5).

In another atypical gesture, the strings do not play the Ia variant in unison. Instead, the viola starts on the second beat of b. 303, followed a crotchet later by the second violin and finally one beat later again (b. 304) by the first violin playing an octave higher. This deflects attention away from III and towards the complexity of Ia.
At b. 305 III recommences and endures a little longer this time. However, the three-tiered Ia variant returns at b. 308, and III’s final attempt to break through these layers fades into nothing more than an accompanimental triplet and minim figure (clarinet and bass clarinet, b. 310).

The fifth and final section (b. 313–359), *Adagio tranquillo*, continues the E flat prolongation almost until the end. In terms of orchestration, the centrality of the harp is a feature that must be credited to programmatic influence. The serenely celestial, undulating and ever-present arpeggios surely allude to the eternal heavenly peace awaiting Polyeucte. Thematically speaking, the coda opens with a transformation of the chordal Ib. From b. 313–316 all instruments (apart from the strings that support the harp arpeggios) treat Ib such that the music moves in an E flat-G major-C major motion. Reprised at b. 319, it now progresses D flat-F major-B flat major. Returning once more in a less conspicuous setting (clarinets, bassoons and horns, b. 341–344) Ib plays a major role in creating the mood of the final section.
The coda explicitly emphasises the Ib chords. Therefore, the interjection of Ia at b. 316 is significant, owing to its potentially disruptive force. The calm mood is, however, maintained as the oboe sounds a perfect fifth from G to C, while b. 317’s major sixth interval (A to C) fits in with the underlying A minor harmony. The resumption of Ia at b. 322, overlapping with the end of the second Ib variant, is similarly structured. Once that phrase ends (b. 325), a transformation of III materialises. The original material from b. 171–2 is broadened out just like Ib, so that the melody now encompasses b. 325–8. Compressed in the next two bars, it closely resembles the IIb figure from which it first grew. From b. 331–4 solo woodwinds sketch out a fragment that can be traced back to IIc (see b. 103–4) and III (see b. 146–9). The second subject and third-section melody are so entwined with one another in melodic, rhythmic and expressive character that it is impossible to clarify their autonomous standing in this context.

We arrive at the peroration of the work, the final transformations of the Ia Faith theme. From b. 335–8 the intervals played by the oboe and cor anglais alternate between a tritone and perfect fifth. Aspiring towards a consonant goal, the violins then present Ia (b. 339) as a fifth—C descends to F, as happened in the very first bar—major sixth, and finally fifth of E flat-A flat, played twice for effect. Twenty bars from the end of the work, this is also the first occasion where the Ia perfect fifth materialises in the tonic context of A flat major.
That the ultimate tranquillity of *Polyeucte* depends upon the fifth shows the extent to which this dyad is imbued with extra-musical implication. As seen above, the counterpoint to this climax is a II variant played in the lower strings. This final gesture of juxtaposition indicates the resolution of the Faith and Love subjects with one another. In addition, the transformed IIa signals an intra-motivic concordance as it now spans the desired octave (b.339–40).

Afterwards (b. 348–54) a two-bar fragment of Ia is passed around the orchestra, timed so that the figure starts up in every bar. The solo horn and cellos open with a perfect fifth statement. Every other participating instrument, however, plays an octave, as first demonstrated by an oboe and violins (b. 349).
Example 13: Exchanges between the fifth and the octave

When the last octave has been sounded (b. 354) a few bars of the overture remain. These are filled by the harp’s arpeggios and an expressive figure derived from II and III. Nonetheless, it (starting at b. 356) links to the Faith theme through its birth in the octave transformation and in starting on C like Ia did.

Conclusion

The magnitude of the octave in *Polyeucte* cannot be denied. Earlier, I suggested that it may be viewed as the idealised state of IIa, judging by its treatment at the start of that subject’s exposition, and due to the perfect fifth fulfilling the same function for Ia. Moreover, the octave is actually linked to Ia too, as an early variant of that theme illustrates (Ex. 4). Fused together in the final section, the prospect that the octave is the true Ia ideal becomes real. The Faith and Love subjects eventually merge. Programmatically, that suggests underlying affinity rather than antagonism between the secular happiness Polyeucte rejects and the religious salvation he chooses. Certainly, the manner in which the play concludes—Pauline’s love for Polyeucte
eventually causes her to convert to Christianity—calls for this musical resolution. The bond between the musical representations of spiritual devotion and human passion is further signified by the fact that the Ia octave resolution occurs after IIa is subjected to the same process. The hypothesis that Dukas intended listeners to infer strong symbolic intent from the octave is supported by the use of similar intervallic procedures in *Sorcier* a few years later.

Apart from the role of the octave, the other notable aspect of the *Polyeucte* coda is that the concept of juxtaposition now pervades the music to its greatest extent. Unlike in the quasi-development of b. 186–295, the final counterpoint of the Faith and Love subjects are no longer opposed to but harmonious with one another. Joining the ideas of earthly love and heavenly faith to one another is a sense of universal spirituality not unlike that espoused by a Pantheistic philosophy. The transcendent mood, as portrayed by the harp and the chant-like Ib, is not disturbed by the arrival of the previously intrusive Love variants; this confirms that the two poetic ideas meet in union rather than resistance.

While it is possible to marshal evidence in support of a five-act, five-section musical and dramatic dichotomy in *Polyeucte*, it is more profitable to approach the music on its own formal and thematic terms. This has the benefit of revealing the modified sonata-rondo—which would become the formal blueprint for *Sorcier*—and the symmetrical structure—which would surface again in *Ariane*. Objective analysis, insofar as it is possible in the first place, is admittedly more difficult when it concerns musical material already justifiably identified as reflecting external concepts. However, it is possible to reconstruct the thematic and motivic interaction on purely musical terms, as one based on the opposition of consonance and dissonance, or stability and disruption. This permits us to trace, in the score alone,
the parameters of musical conflict, how they are played out and how they are eventually resolved.

In doing so, I have attempted to show that it is possible to analyse programme music with a method that reflects one of the main principles of Dukas’s music-text aesthetic. He summed up this issue in an article from 1897:

Music itself has to be its own goal, so that it does not lean on a text, or at least so that it only renders the private essence and general significance of a poetic idea, without becoming attached to transcribing all its details.418

Dukas adhered to his own philosophy in Polyeucte: the one instance where the music correlates closely to the text (the final section’s depiction of the afterlife) is actually reached as a consequence of purely musical developments. It does not ‘lean on a text’ in any sense. In striving to make the analysis of the overture’s ‘music itself’ the primary goal, we paradoxically learn a lot about Dukas’s music-text paradigm. By probing beneath the programmatic seams it emerges that there is cohesiveness to the composition which, although offering ample expression of Corneille’s dramatic idea, could only originate in the immutable laws of music.

Hence, while Polyeucte antedates the publication of Dukas’s first essay by several months, it is nonetheless a harbinger of the central concerns that would inform the composer’s approach to Sorcier and Ariane. Furthermore, the existence of the overture proffered concrete justification for the demands Dukas later placed upon other musicians: his rationale was founded upon personal experience. That Dukas stood to gain as much as anyone else from his prolonged philosophical engagement with music, text and drama is evidenced by the fact that Polyeucte’s successors advance the overture’s accomplishments. Sorcier, as the next chapter illustrates,
interlocks more specifically with the programme than the 1891 work to produce an amplified musical dramaturgy.
Chapter Five: Towards a Musical ‘Poem’: Formal, Tonal and Thematic Dramaturgy in \textit{L’Apprenti sorcier}

**Introduction**

Dukas’s most renowned work debuted when the composer conducted it on Tuesday, 19 May 1897 at the Salle du Nouveau Théâtre, Paris. ‘\textit{L’Apprenti Sorcier}, d’après une ballade de Goethe, \textit{Scherzo}’ was advertised as the eighth work in a concert of ten mostly text-based pieces, including a symphonic poem by Joseph Guy-Ropartz and the Introduction to d’Indy’s opera \textit{Fervaal}.\footnote{An advertisement for the concert and the programme notes for the event are bound together and held in Réserves F. 994B, Musique, BNF. See Appendix II for full details.} Regarded as an extremely evocative interpretation of Goethe’s 1797 ballad \textit{Der Zauberlehrling}, \textit{Sorcier} gained further fame in 1940 with a cinematic adaptation in the Disney animation film \textit{Fantasia}. In this chapter I aim to examine how it manifests Dukas’s theoretical tenet in which ‘the poem is conceived of musically.’\footnote{Paul Dukas, ‘Poèmes et Libretti,’ (\textit{Revue hebdomadaire}, September 1895) \textit{Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique} (Paris : SEFI, 1948), 282–6 (284). ‘Le principe est que le poème soit conçu musicalement.’} This is undertaken by analysing the formal, tonal and thematic aspects of the music; through probing the potential programmatic content in Goethe’s ballad; and ultimately by demonstrating how the composer transforms this to create new poetic music.

**Dukas and the symphonic poem**

The work is generally thought of as a symphonic poem in the Lisztian style. In light of Dukas’s ambiguity towards that composer’s \textit{Faust} Symphony (which he described as a symphonic poem), it is interesting to note that in reality \textit{Sorcier} resists any mention of the genre in its title. Having witnessed critics confuse symphonic poems with ‘wholly different descriptive music,’ Dukas endeavoured to protect his work...
from the same errors of judgement.\textsuperscript{421} As we mentioned with regard to \textit{Polyeucte}, the composer was uneasy with the ideological notion that Liszt’s music claimed to express ‘this and nothing else,’ as he preferred the unlimited expressive scope of Beethovenian symphonic music.\textsuperscript{422} Formally, he was also unconvinced that Liszt had gained anything in forsaking ‘the normal conditions of symphonic structure.’\textsuperscript{423} In practice, though, \textit{Sorcier} conforms to the Lisztian/Wagnerian tradition of systematically developing leading themes.

The structural liberty of the symphonic poem genre made it more suited to Dukas’s adventurous appropriation of Goethe’s ballad than the conventions of the overture, which had adequately served the composer for \textit{Polyeucte}. In labelling the work ‘Scherzo,’ though, the composer broadened the expressive potential of this symphonic poem: the term already creates associations of mood and feeling which do not automatically have to be tied to the accompanying programme. Composition of the piece may have been contemporaneous with the three-movement, scherzo-less Symphony in C Major (1896), in which case the abstract nature of the symphony could have influenced the ordered formal shape of \textit{Sorcier}.

Dukas’s overt reference to Goethe’s ‘ballad’ in the title of the work leads James Parakilas to speculate that the music is an orchestral ballade. He argues that orchestral ballades ‘make a distinct and coherent group within the repertory of symphonic poems,’ as they are based on sources which are ‘preeminently poems of

\textsuperscript{421} Paul Dukas, ‘Le Nouveau Lyrisme,’ \textit{(Revue hebdomadaire, 1903) Ecrits,} 578–89 (588). ‘Les résultats de cette sorte de symbolisme instrumental ont presque toujours mal jugé par la confusion qu’on a faite avec ceux, tout différents, de la musique descriptive,’

\textsuperscript{422} Paul Dukas, ‘Le Faust de Goethe et la Musique,’ \textit{(Revue hebdomadaire, January 1901) Ecrits,} 521–9 (524). ‘Chacun est libre d’interpréter sa symphonie [de Beethoven] comme un drame individuel et de lui faire signifier “ceci ou tout autre chose.” La musique [de] Liszt […] prétend, au contraire, à exprimer ceci et rien autre chose.”’

\textsuperscript{423} ‘Goethe et la musique,’ 526. ‘Je ne vois […] pas très nettement ce que [le \textit{Faust} de Liszt] a gagné à s’affranchir des conditions normales de la structure symphonique.’
action.424 Other French compositions of this category include Henri Duparc’s Lénore, after Bürger (1875), d’Indy’s La Forêt enchantée, based on Uhland (1878), and Franck’s Le Chausseur maudit, also after Bürger (1882). All these works, like Sorcier, are based on German literary ballads.425 While this tradition may have swayed Dukas’s choice of Goethe, there were also other factors which must be examined.

Parkilas’s study is just one of several musicological analyses devoted to the question of programmatic links between Goethe and Dukas. Other notable work in recent years includes Carolyn Abbate’s narrative view of the music and Carlo Caballero’s interpretation of it as representing the Freudian uncanny. Preceding these is Everett Vernon Boyd’s doctoral dissertation, which focuses on Sorcier’s formal, harmonic and thematic elements in an attempt to highlight its qualities as ‘pure’ music alongside its symbolic attributes. In this chapter, I shall attempt to explain how Sorcier embodies Dukas’s music-text aesthetic as set out in chapter two and how it advances the formal and programmatic procedures found in the Polyeucte Overture.

Favre argues that Goethe exerted a ‘strong influence on the development of [the composer’s] spiritual life.’426 We have explored Dukas’s familiarity with Faust, which may be seen in articles published in the years surrounding the composition of Sorcier. In Favre’s view, Dukas was attracted to Der Zauberlehrling owing to its potential as a canvas for musical elaboration in the form of a grand orchestral tableau.427 However, terms such as ‘elaboration’ and ‘tableau’ touch upon the ‘illustrative’ qualities of descriptive music which failed to impress the composer.

425 Ibid., 203
427 Ibid., 39. ‘Dukas trouve dans une ballade du grand poète allemand un canevas propice à l’élaboration d’un grand tableau orchestral.’
Dukas’s objective of raising programme music above ‘illustration’ and granting it formal autonomy means that such biased descriptions ought not to be applied to *Sorcier*.

That the piece’s architecture promotes organic thematic development prompts the question: to what extent is the work a reflection of its Goethe source? *Sorcier*’s symphonic plan highlights a strong preference for musical consistency over literary demands. However, the composer certainly did not regard musical integrity and programmatic input as mutually incompatible. The presence of three distinct themes linked to Goethe’s ballad has been used to validate narrative interpretations of the piece but I argue that with *Sorcier*, Dukas aspired to programme music as drama. As has been mentioned, the composer confusingly calls the three themes ‘motifs,’ which raises the prospect that he regarded the work as a Wagnerian, dramatic exercise.\(^{428}\)

In claiming that Dukas aspired to programme music as drama, I seek to establish common ground between the two main schools of thought regarding the work. The first extols *Sorcier*’s compositional coherence and refusal to bow to ‘the tyranny of the text.’\(^{429}\) Such was the standard reaction to the work’s debut. Another critic of this era, Pierre Lalo, singled out for particular praise the fact that ‘*[Sorcier]* was so well constructed as a symphonic work that one scarcely needed to know the program.’\(^{430}\) More typical of the late twentieth century, the second kind of response parses the piece into separate components, dwells on sectional analysis and investigates it under the umbrella of narrativity. Common to both opinions is a reluctance to admit the reality of a strong unifying thread running from the text through to the music. Nonetheless, this exists and is manifested through Dukas’s

\(^{428}\) See p. 34.


appropriation of Goethe’s literary form as one that embodies latent drama. This ‘dramatic’ approach to the poem is the composer’s major programmatic tactic.

**Formal architecture and symmetry**

*Sorcier* shares many of *Polyeucte*’s formal qualities: like the foregoing overture, it can be considered to some degree a combination of sonata and rondo form. Everett Vernon Boyd qualifies it as a modified sonata-rondo chiefly because ‘key relationships are appropriate for a conventional Rondo with Development.’[^431] He admits, however, that ‘assignment to a stereotypical formal category is difficult, for the program largely determines placement of structural elements.’[^432] Furthermore, ‘tonal ambiguity in some sections further obscures the conventional structural divisions.’[^433] In my view, the form gravitates more towards the sonata.

Notwithstanding the music’s hazy sectional boundaries and the programme’s role, *Sorcier* is still symphonically coherent. Therefore, my analysis here is predominantly concerned with uncovering how the formal constituents enable organic musical processes that leave room for programmatic input.

On a basic level, the work is structured around three themes and various tonal centres as follows:

**Figure 8: Thematic and tonal organisation in Sorcier**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Section</strong></th>
<th><strong>Bars</strong></th>
<th><strong>Main thematic events</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tonal centres</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1–41</td>
<td>Ia, Ib, II, III</td>
<td>A flat → C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>42–200</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>201–248</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>(A flat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondo return</td>
<td>249–93</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>F minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>294–362</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>(A flat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^431]: Ibid., 128.
[^432]: Ibid., 128.
[^433]: Ibid., 128.
As Fig. 8 illustrates, ambiguity occurs most often in relation to II. In addition to this, the presence of the whole-tone scale at the centre of the development clouds the tonal landscape, as does the brief spell of quartal harmony between b. 891 and 912. Keys are usually transient and certain tonal areas rely on pedals for clarification (bracketed in Fig. 8). The importance of these has been noted by Boyd, who points out that Dukas ‘supports much of the developmental process by a series of harmonic pedals which, though not necessarily true tonics, give a feeling of tonal progression.’\(^{434}\) Moreover, the composer’s tendency towards such anchors also allows him to introduce the whole-tone scale with relative ease in the development, because it functions in the context of these harmonic pedals.

The pedals generate some structural fluidity but a clear architecture is discernible and invites comparison to the symmetrical form of *Polyeucte*. In *Sorcièr* symmetry hinges on the development, which sharply differentiates itself from the surrounding music through a whole-tone context and the centrality of III. Dukas’s final theme, Boyd claims, ‘draws into relief other relationships which form a symmetrical structure.’\(^{435}\) In fact, III is just one way in which the development as a whole does so. Like the exposition and recapitulation, it may be observed that in the development, it is actually II that is at the centre of surrounding themes:

\(^{434}\) *Ibid.*, 134. See 134–8 for further discussion of harmonic and tonal aspects of the piece.
\(^{435}\) *Ibid.*, 132, Table II-3.

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It is also worth mentioning that II is not only placed at the heart of the development; it encompasses bar 470, the mid-point of the entire work. That the middle part of each sonata section corresponds to harmonic instability thus seems to have been deliberately calculated by the composer.

Moving outward from the development, we observe that III features nowhere in the exposition and only faintly in the recapitulation. Its episodic treatment may be understood in symmetrical terms:

**Figure 10: Symmetrical treatment of III**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I - II - III</td>
<td>I - II - I</td>
<td>III - I, II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>I - II - I</td>
<td>Recap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This division bears a resemblance to the five symmetrically organised sections that comprise *Polyeucte*. With *Sorcier* though, Dukas devised a more complex system through interpolating a third significant theme and its variants into the music at crucial junctures. The introduction and coda are important boundaries in the work; the composer himself described b. 42 (the beginning of the exposition) as the moment when the ‘scherzo proper’ is engendered. The coda exists to balance the introduction.

Subtracting these two sections from the structure creates a thematic and tonal arch in the main body of the work (bars 42–923) as follows:
Figure 11: Thematic and tonal arch in *Sorcier*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I – II – I (I)</td>
<td>Significant presence of III</td>
<td>I – II – I (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F minor</td>
<td>Tonal ambiguity</td>
<td>F minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This organisation operates at a local structural level too:

**Figure 12.a: Local symmetry in the Exposition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>42–200</th>
<th>201–48</th>
<th>249–93</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F minor</td>
<td>(A flat)</td>
<td>F minor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12.b: Local symmetry in the Recapitulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
<th>Bars 618–98</th>
<th>699–788</th>
<th>789–923</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>lb, 1a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F minor</td>
<td>(B flat minor)</td>
<td>F minor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the first part of the recapitulation the same pattern exists in a micro-form:

**Figure 12.c: Local symmetry in the first section of the Recapitulation**

\[
\begin{align*}
618 & \quad 630 & \quad 678 \\
F \text{ minor} & - B^b \text{ minor} & - F \text{ minor}
\end{align*}
\]

Additionally, the introduction’s A flat pedal is momentarily interrupted by the entrance of II which pivots on the neighbouring note of G before reinstating A flat.

As if to emphasise the A flat – G – A flat sequence, however brief, the flute part in
b. 14 contains the pitch F sharp, while the next bar, already proceeding back towards A flat, spells this enharmonically as G flat.

This symphonic poem contains a more conventional musical architecture than its predecessor *Polyeucte*, even though that is in the traditional formal setting of an overture. Dukas viewed rigorous musical logic as essential when faced with the threat of literary reason. The predominance of the latter, he believed, encouraged a musician to repeat his ideas rather than to develop them; it incites him to the violation of all the laws on which sonorous architecture is normally built.436

Speaking about Liszt in 1901 he reminded composers about the importance of maintaining ‘the balance of tonalities which have to go hand in hand with the thematic work.’437 A ‘balance of tonalities’ alongside the thematic work is precisely what Dukas achieved in *Sorcier*. He adhered to the Beethovenian principle that Carl Dahlhaus perceived in the ‘few outstanding examples’ of the symphonic poem in the late nineteenth century: ‘that the outline of a form must accord with the thematic process at work within it.’438 We will now consider the role of the whole-tone scale in the tonal and thematic framework.

**Presence of the whole-tone scale**

Dukas’s use of the whole-tone scale grew from a few interrelated aspects of this work. Critically, the whole-tone presence is determined by the development of III. In its original form, this theme consists of a two-chord fanfare containing a minor third melodic interval. Vital to *Sorcier* in many ways, the interval becomes a major third

436 ‘Goethe et la musique,’ 523. ‘Une raison littéraire [...] entraîne le musicien à répéter ses idées plutôt qu’à les développer; elle l’incite à la violation de toutes les lois par lesquelles s’édifie normalement l’architecture sonore.’

437 Ibid., 523. ‘L’équilibre des tonalités qui doit marcher de pair avec le travail thématique.’

from bar 534 onwards. Just as III encompasses augmented and diminished chord collections, Ia alternates between these states throughout the work. The malleability of both themes is what enables them to assume whole-tone properties and it is why they drive the most tonally ambiguous section in Sorcier, b. 534–600 (approximately) of the development.

On each of the four occasions that it is played in this section, III undergoes an almost complete whole-tone transformation. This occurs by altering the minor third descending melodic interval to that of a major third. The whole-tone character of the combined two chords is illustrated in Example 14:

Example 14: Whole-tone combinations in Sorcier

As well as omitting a single note from the group each time, Dukas dilutes the whole-tone colour by introducing this passage with a harmonic pedal anchored on A flat. At bar 552 this changes to F. Instead of verifying the tonic, however, this establishes a contrasting whole-tone direction. Alongside the above collection, F, G, A and B of the contrasting whole-tone scale are clearly outlined in the bass up until bar 593. The impetus for this sequence is the appearance of Ia in the development (bar 552). Each presentation of Ia leads to the bass moving up a whole step, as shown here:
These separate instances of whole-tone work are cleverly integrated into one passage, whereby the Ia bass works to confirm each conclusion of III. This operates as follows:

Tension is built by the alternating whole-tone scales and by the semitone movement produced by their combination.

Dukas’s use of the whole-tone scale involves the same careful design we observed with major and minor tonalities across the work. Even though it primarily
fulfils an expressive effect (in leading up to the climactic moment at bar 605), the whole-tone course is derived from the floating augmented triads and incomplete diminished chords introduced from the beginning of the piece in I and III. In this sense, it blends in seamlessly with the character of Sorcier. Boyd’s comment that Dukas uses whole-tone elements ‘to cloud the tonality’ of the overall plan conveys the experimental quality present in the work.

As we know, the composer was reluctant to dispense with symphonic convention in programmatic situations. Hence, typically colouristic and non-functional devices such as the whole-tone scale were treated with caution. The same reserved attitude may be responsible for the way in which another detour from diatonicism evolves. Between b. 891 and 901 of the recapitulation Dukas introduces a pentatonic scale but soon modifies it such that it merely forms the basis for a variant of the Ia figure. Each bar from 891–6 is marked by a bass that moves upwards by a fourth, encompassing B flat, E flat, A flat, D flat, G flat and C flat. These pitches, which are only momentarily chromatically interrupted, are echoed on unison strings, woodwind and occasional brass. At b.897 the bass resumes its upwards trajectory starting on A flat. This time, though, the notes above it are harmonised to form the Ia augmented triad. The purpose of b. 896, anchored on C flat, is to link the upper-register melody by a fourth to the F flat at b.897 (supported by A flat and C below).

The purely pentatonic colour of b. 891–5 is not sustained or overtly perceptible anywhere else in the work. Indeed, by starting the second sequence on A flat, we are left with the distinct impression that the music has remained entrenched in that tonality all along. It is another example of Dukas’s vigilance in guarding
against anything that could be interpreted as destabilising the total tonal logic of his Scherzo.

Thematic structures: introducing the minor third/major third conflict

*Sorcière* is based on three themes (‘motifs’ in Dukas’s terminology), one of which is split into two distinct parts, and all of which originate in the work’s introduction. It is worth revisiting Dukas’s notes on their significance before we consider their treatment and role in the work. The first is titled *Motif des Sortilèges* (Sorcery Motif) and ‘comprises two thematic elements.’ The first (Ia) ‘remains almost unchanged throughout the piece,’ while the second (Ib) ‘engenders the (crossed-out words) Scherzo proper.’ Regarding Ia, the composer quoted the first three bars of the introduction in his notes—which means that Ia overlaps with Ib.

Example 15: Bars 2 and 3 (‘Sorcery,’ Ia)

![Example 15: Bars 2 and 3 (‘Sorcery,’ Ia)](image)

However, in the composer’s notes, Ib is sketched out not as its opening form but as the passage that constitute its first full appearance (b. 72–99). Commentators invariably describe this music by its programmatic tag: the Broom theme. An explanation for why Dukas refused to call the music by its programmatic label is provided in one of his criticisms of Liszt’s thematic methods:

> Without contest, it is to Liszt that the honour goes for having spawned the young generations. It is to him that we must attribute the merit of having created a music which, imprinting on each motif a definite meaning, replaces the purely musical development with a blend of themes whose

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metamorphosis must correspond to the associations of ideas more and more complicated and more and more precise. Therefore, avoiding verbal definition of the theme serves as a strategy to permit the music to progress according to its own, more ambiguous, laws.

**Example 16: Bars 72–99 (‘Sorcery,’ Ib)**

Dukas labelled the second theme of the work *Motif de l’Apprenti* (Apprentice Motif) without commenting further on it. Like Ib, the composer’s notes quote its first appearance in the exposition rather than the introduction. Notably, II alone stands for something tangible, unlike the elusive Sorcery and Conjuring concepts of I and III. From the outset the apprentice is in conflict with its surroundings.

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439 'Goethe et la musique,' 524. 'C’est à Liszt que revient, sans conteste, l’honneur de les avoir frayées aux jeunes générations. C’est à lui qu’il faut attribuer le mérite d’avoir crée une musique qui, imprimant à chaque motif un sens défini, remplace le développement purement musicale par un mélange de thèmes dont les métamorphoses doivent correspondre à des associations d'idées plus en plus compliquées et de plus en plus précises.'
Finally there is the Motif d’Évocation (Conjuring). The composer’s remark that this ‘is mixed in different combinations with the two principal themes,’ is important and will be discussed below.

Example 18: Bars 23–32 (‘Conjuring,’ III)

While Dukas’s commentary naturally invites programmatic speculation, we will begin by confining ourselves to the musical substance of the themes.

Ia is first characterised as a melodic diminished seventh, the final note of which coincides with the F-C dyad that opens Ib. The remainder of the introductory Ib, played by solo woodwind from b. 3–6, displaces the C to an octave below and moves stepwise back up to F. Dukas exemplifies his themes through intervals, as he did with Polyeucte’s themes and motifs. Boyd notes that Dukas ‘may well have been
consciously aware that he was basing his composition on simple intervallic relationships. Even the first thirteen bars of the introduction extend Ia and Ib through intervallic means. The repetition of Ia at bar 8 is modified such that the first three notes now span an augmented triad, whereas the return of Ib at bar 9 now occurs a minor third higher than before. From the start, the harmonic flexibility of these themes enables Dukas to pursue a tonally adventurous path.

At b. 14, II interrupts the mysterious atmosphere with a four-bar burst of the theme. Superficially, it seems to fit in with the enveloping A flat tonality, as its melody basically consists of a descending chromatic scale on that key. However, its supporting harmony alludes to G major. Also, in tempo, time signature and substance it diverges noticeably from both parts of the first theme. Its one appearance in the introduction is an aberration compared to what transpires in the scherzo: its subsequent manifestations are laced with figures borrowed from the Ib theme.

After this the previous mood and tonality returns for five bars (b. 18–22). While there is no suggestion of Ia, Ib is hinted at through the minor third melodic emphasis. A fragment of descending stepwise melody also refers to the fuller Ib of the exposition. The purpose of this interlude is to facilitate the entry of III at bar 23: a brass fanfare built around two chords, the first an augmented triad and the second, a diminished triad. The fanfare is typified by a descending melodic minor third (see example 5). Hence, despite sharing the tempo, time signature and tonal ambiguity of II, this pervasive interval indicates its deeper allegiance to both parts of I. The programmatic basis for this is significant.

The introduction’s towering emphasis on the third—whether in the minor mode of the Ia diminished melody, the Ib theme and the diminished chord of III; or

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in the major form of Ia’s augmented variation or III’s augmented chord—is ultimately accentuated by the pedal changing from A flat up to C. Thus, these forty-one bars present the basis for the thematic and programmatic developments of the subsequent Scherzo.

_Polyeucte_ illustrated Dukas’s use of the perfect fifth as a kind of harmonic axis, deviation from which signalled dissonance on a programmatic level. In _Sorcier_, the third serves this function, although whether in minor or major form is not immediately clear. Once again we refer to Schachter’s triadic theory. He states that:

>A prolonged tonic chord, projected from the tonic note as root, will normally abide through the ever-changing tonal content of a whole piece._

The tonic note of F is superseded by the A flat that performs this role in _Sorcier_. The A flat persists through the tonal flux (with Fig. 14 demonstrating its unwavering presence in III’s whole-tone variation). Consequently, this suggests that, in spite of the augmented and whole-tone progressions, it is the minor third F-A flat dyad that forms what Schachter calls the ‘stable field’ in this work.

Interestingly, _Sorcier_ appears to reference _Polyeucte_ in a few ways. The earlier work is in F minor’s relative major of A flat, which has the effect of making intervallic relationships between the two pieces particularly obvious. Dukas opens that overture with a dramatically suggestive unison middle C falling to F a fifth below; the main theme of _Sorcier_ begins with the bassoon playing identical pitches in reverse (b. 72). Whereas _Polyeucte_ constantly hovers around the fifth, this interval is less prominent in the scherzo. The last bar of _Sorcier_ even omits the fifth degree of the scale—thus leaving the minor third F-A flat dyad. Carlo Caballero hears this ending as programmatically suggestive:

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I believe Dukas recognized that the ordinary nature of his rising tetrachord might weaken its potential for meaning, and that he therefore added, or rather subtracted, another piece of syntax to make the significance clear. [...] The omission of the fifth, in defiance of the triad, had to be a conscious decision in a twenty-three-staff score by a master orchestrator like Dukas. Significantly, this C is also missing from the very start of the broom-music. [...] The final recurrence of the broom’s theme is cut short, but the act of cutting it short itself suggests unstoppability.\textsuperscript{442}

Beyond its extra-musical meaning, the dyad is intrinsically interesting as a trope in dialogue with another; this is similar to what is seen in \textit{Polyeucte}. In the overture the Faith theme’s characteristic perfect fifth interacts with the Love music’s minor sixth and diminished fifth traits. In \textit{Sorcier} the minor third dyad, assisted by the perfect fifth, counteracts the major third/augmented/whole-tone leanings in the work. That the music ends on a minor third dyad, then, might not be as disruptive as Caballero finds it. Instead, the last bar is plausibly a compromise between the (major) third-oriented demands of the whole-tone scale and the tonal resolution required in the overall F minor context of the work. The opposition between major and minor third has been played out from the start, thus underscoring the polarisation of tonality and the whole-tone field that later emerges.

Boyd has pointed out that the three themes undergo ‘relatively little change in the course of the piece.’\textsuperscript{443} Subtle intervallic alteration plays perhaps the main role in their development. Concerning Ib, Boyd observes that the tritone first encountered at b. 85–6 is altered on several occasions such that the result is a ‘progression which assumes the character of a micro-cosmic arch form between tritones,’ which, he also notes, accords with the work’s large-scale symmetrical action.\textsuperscript{444} Boyd further detects three distinct motivic ideas in Ib which are individually developed, explaining the reasons for this phenomenon. I see the unique interval property of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{442} Carlo Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo: A Response to “What the Sorcerer Said”,’ \textit{19\textsuperscript{th}-Century Music}, XXVIII/2 (November 2004), 160–82 (164).
\textsuperscript{443} Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ 109.
\textsuperscript{444} \textit{Ibid.}, 119.
\end{flushright}
each—a perfect fifth, a minor third and a tritone—as central to its fragmentary treatment. Before looking at how the themes evolve, though, we will consider the programmatic influences on the music and how others have interpreted these.

**Goethe and *Der Zauberlehrling***

*Der Zauberlehrling*, a ballad written by Goethe in 1797, first appeared in Schiller’s *Musenalmanach für das Jahr* 1798. An apparently slapstick tale of an apprentice, commentators have noted its underlying strongly moralistic tone. Briefly, the ballad is about an apprentice who, having watched his master conjure magic, takes advantage of his absence to perform his own spell. Shortly after bringing a broom to life, disaster unfolds with the apprentice losing control of his invention. As a last resort, he smashes it into two but instead of ending events, both halves spring to life in a frightening gesture that evokes Freud’s notion of the uncanny: ‘something repressed which recurs.’ *Der Zauberlehrling* is based on a dialogue by the Greek philosopher Lucian which, given Dukas’s scholarly interest in Greek culture, leads Boyd to speculate about the composer’s familiarity with the poem’s source. However, the 1843 Henri Blaze French translation of *Der Zauberlehrling* was affixed to the work and used as a programme note at the premiere, so we may assume that the music is rooted in the text.

Dukas’s *Faust* essays suggest a deep knowledge of Goethe’s work, and we can deduce that the two artists shared a similar artistic philosophy. In particular, tracing what both said about the union of music and literature demonstrates that Dukas’s creative approach concurred with Goethe’s, thus already reducing the risk

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446 Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 162.

447 See Appendix III for Blaze’s translation of the ballad.
that his musical adaptation would distort the textual meaning. Unlike Berlioz's

*Damnation de Faust*, Dukas’s interpretation of a Goethe text was unlikely to end up ‘diametrically opposed’ to the poet’s intentions.\(^{448}\)

It was shown in chapter three that the composer endorsed the figure of the sincere, individual creator: Goethe did likewise. Johann Peter Eckermann quotes the writer as having asked:

> Where do we now meet an original nature? Where is the man with strength to be true and to show himself as he is?\(^{449}\)

The urgency of these questions lies in Goethe’s insistence that the poet ‘must find all within himself.’ Like Dukas, Goethe affirmed that the autonomous route was difficult, but essential. He claimed that:

> I know well that it is difficult; but apprehension and representation of the individual is the very life of art. Besides, while you content yourself with generalities, everybody can imitate you; but in the particular, none can.\(^{450}\)

The above statement shows that Dukas’s aesthetic of sincerity was highly sympathetic to Goethe’s earlier position.

Concomitant with the composer’s belief in expression as an indicator of creative genius is the German writer’s avowal that the poet requires two qualities for success:

> ‘What need of much definition?’ said Goethe. ‘Lively feeling of situations, and power to express them, make the poet.’\(^{451}\)

Goethe was greatly concerned with the concept of original expression. In an essay from 1789 titled ‘Simple Imitation, Manner, Style,’ he outlined the benefit of cultivating a unique artistic idiom:

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\(^{448}\) ‘Goethe et la Musique,’ 521. ‘Berlioz en arrive à donner à son opéra de concert une conclusion diamétralement opposée à celle du poème de Goethe.’


\(^{450}\) *Ibid.*, 16

[The artist] invents his own method, creates his own language to express in his own way what he has grasped with his soul. [...] Now his art has become a language that expresses his spirit directly and characteristically. And just as anyone who thinks for himself will order and formulate his ideas on moral issues differently from others, so any such artist will see, apprehend and imitate the world differently.\(^{452}\)

The parameters of this argument equate to those utilised by Dukas in his discussions of Wagner’s musical language as emanating from his individual personality. Over three decades later, in an essay called ‘Further Advice for Young Poets’ (1832), Goethe reiterated this point. Now couched in similar terms to Dukas’s later claim about the artistic need ‘to affirm [...] one’s own nature,’ the poet contends that:

> The artist must express his own self by revealing—no matter how he does it—only his own specific individuality.\(^{453}\)

Art as a solo enterprise comes to the fore again in Goethe’s summation of Mozart’s *Don Juan* in an appraisal that would surely have met with Dukas’s approval:

> It is a spiritual creation, in which the details, as well as the whole, are pervaded by one spirit.\(^{454}\)

This singleness of spirit is perceived as a binding force between the music and libretto of *Don Juan*. Elsewhere, Goethe’s opinions on the fusion of music and literature are in broad agreement with the composer’s outlook. In 1820 Goethe conveyed his view on the effect of the music-text combination: it is coded in strikingly similar terms to those found in Dukas’s essay ‘Poems and Libretti.’ He said:

> A deep emotional involvement in any poetic production cannot be expressed any better than when the musician absorbs himself in it, breathes life into it and individualizes it through his own personality. Through this a new poem emerges which takes the poet himself by surprise.\(^{455}\)


Dukas’s perspective on artistic authority led to him to conclude that:

The essential thing is that at the desired moment the \textit{poem} appears and separates itself from the musical emotion that engendered it.\textsuperscript{456}

While Goethe’s musical observations usually refer to song settings of his poetry, they hold wider relevance. Thus, we should consider the implications of this comment for \textit{Sorcier}:

It gives rise to interesting reflections when one sees how the composer, when he makes the song his own and brings it to life in his own way, gives the poetry a certain many-sidedness which it can in no way have of itself.\textsuperscript{457}

Two ideas are evident: firstly, Goethe expected the composer to appropriate a text on his own terms; secondly, he sanctioned adaptations that enlivened the inner meaning of the poem, rather than those that strove for a musical translation of the literary surface structure. In setting \textit{Zauberlehrling}, Dukas engaged with its central dramatic event—the conflict between the apprentice and the broom—on a decidedly subjective level, instead of speaking in a distant narrative voice. Exactly how this is executed is shown below in the thematic-dramatic analysis.

It is unclear why Dukas was particularly attracted to \textit{Zauberlehrling}, which had already been made into a vocal setting by Carl Loewe in 1832. Its centenary in 1897 might have heightened the composer’s awareness of the poem. Also, the special place of the ballads in Goethe’s poetry may have held some fascination, and Dukas is bound to have known Schubert’s version of another ballad, \textit{Erlkönig}. That poem belongs to Goethe’s earlier output; nonetheless, the ‘eerie atmosphere of the early ballads’ survives in ‘the overt use of magic and in a dream-like element of

\textsuperscript{456} Paul Dukas, ‘Poems and Libretti,’ \textit{(Revue hebdomadaire, 1895) Ecrits}, 282–7 (287), ‘L’essentiel est qu’au moment voulu le \textit{poème} apparaisse et se dégage de l’émotion musicale qui l’a engendré.’

frighteningly compulsive repetition' in the 1797 texts. The later examples of the genre 'not only display a sophisticated formal structure; they are also more extended, more sententious and more didactic than the earlier ballads. An important formal feature unites Der Zauberlehrling with another 1797 text, Der Schatzgräber: the partitioning of the final stanza from the body of the ballad by means of quotation marks. This signifier of the 'other' is central to Carolyn Abbate’s narrative interpretation of the Sorcier; however, its presence in Goethe’s other poetry is a cautionary indication that the quotation marks need to be considered for their structural, as well as their substantive, meaning.

As for the message of Der Zauberlehrling, it is a lesson in the dangers of unleashing forces beyond one’s control. While not suffering a horrific fate such as that which befalls the protagonists in Erlkönig, the apprentice’s ‘disrespect for the natural law of life’ still forces him ‘into opposition with the daemonic forces in life.’ The machinations of the daemonic take centre stage in Der Schatzgräber with Goethe presenting it as a ‘supra-creative’ and ‘meaningful operative’ force. Inner turmoil, however, is often disguised beneath the measured exterior of Der Zauberlehrling, which is notable for the ‘vitality of the verse’ and ‘the movement obtained by the regular interchanging of long and short lines.’ Together, the literary frame and poetic material of this ballad form the basis of Dukas’s symphonic poem.

460 Byrne, Schubert, 227.
461 Ibid., 236.
Narrative readings of *Sorcier*

The narrative debate surrounding *Sorcier* has raised significant and controversial issues. Abbate contends that the music’s slow epilogue is analogous to the ‘single instance of narrating’ indicated by the quotation marks in the final stanza of the Goethe ballad.\(^463\) Jean-Jacques Nattiez has reported the results of a narrativity experiment he performed using *Sorcerer*, with the results that the final bars just beyond the epilogue were ‘made the object of a clear semantic interpretation in a fair number of cases.’\(^464\) Parakilas acknowledges the ambiguity of Dukas’s ‘response to the first-person narration’ as presented in Goethe’s text.\(^465\) He further embeds the work within the tropes of narrativity in viewing the brass fanfare (III) as a strong semantic signpost. In 2004 Caballero returned to the challenge posed by the music’s ending, specifically the last two bars. These chords are interpreted by him as unlocking the key to the expressive germ of the work, which he regards as a ‘commentary on the uncanny nature of narrative itself.’\(^466\)

Undoubtedly, it is Abbate’s work that has most influenced (post)modern interpretations of *Sorcier*. Her reading, however, is problematic for a few reasons, some of which Caballero has highlighted. The main issue is her idea of the ‘narrating voice’ in the piece. This voice is imperative to her narrative theory of *Sorcier*, for she claims that:

The signs of narrative in music include not merely an event-sequence and a way of reading, but a voice with a characteristic way of speaking.\(^467\)

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\(^465\) Parakilas, *Ballads*, 220.
\(^466\) Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 161.
In order to identify when this characteristic voice enters, Abbate turns to the Goethe text. Noting that the Sorcerer’s words in the final stanza are given in quotation marks she argues that:

A third voice enters the poem at the site of the quotation marks, and speaks a silent ‘*he said*’ after the Sorcerer’s words.\(^{468}\)

I will shortly offer another explanation for the necessity of the quotation marks, but we must delve into Abbate’s reading of Goethe a little further:

Dukas’s scherzo does not conclude with the Sorcerer’s words (the chord after the *motif d’invocation*), though they are the last thing that happens in Goethe’s Apprentice drama.\(^{469}\)

The Sorcerer’s words are the last spoken in the poem; however, they are not the final *event* of the poem. What has escaped Abbate is the *action* demanded by these words. The Sorcerer orders the broom back to its place: as the ultimate act in the poem, the object obediently responds to its master. Thus reads the last stanza:

> ‘In the corner,  
> Broom! broom! quickly  
> As a stick lie!  
> Spirits all, you  
> Hear your wizard and your warner—  
> Never come until I call you!’\(^{470}\)

My straightforward reading of the ballad is matched by Dukas’s equally direct reaction to the sorcerer’s instruction and the broom’s movement: a coda comprised primarily of I\(_a\) (part of the Sorcery theme) and a variant of I\(_b\) (the Broom theme) in the last two bars.

This understanding of the ballad also departs from Caballero’s and conflicts with his hypothesis about why the Broom theme’s resurgence signifies the uncanny:

> While the final strophe of Goethe’s poem does not exclude the possibility of reanimation, neither does it suggest it. Only Dukas stirs the broom again.\(^{471}\)

\(\text{\(^{468}\) Ibid., 57.}\)
\(\text{\(^{469}\) Ibid., 58.}\)
\(\text{\(^{470}\) Johann von Goethe, *Der Zauberlehrling*, 1797, trans. William Gibson, 1886.}\)
\(\text{\(^{471}\) Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 177.}\)
Caballero denies the prospect of the broom’s movement as representative of continuation—the explanation he offers is that the object has, ‘in spite of master and apprentice, disobediently stirred on its own.’\textsuperscript{472} As such, he hears the Freudian ‘the return of the repressed’ in the music (as do I but not at the end of the work). The evidence for this rests on two points: when Ib returns ‘the pitches and rhythm [...] tell us, “That’s the beginning!”’ and these pitches and rhythm unfold within a closing dyad characterised by ‘the omission of the fifth.’\textsuperscript{473} But, the harmonisation of the pitches distinguishes this variant of Ib from its original form, while the minor third ending has already been rationalised in the context of the tonal and whole-tone opposition that permeates the work. Nonetheless, while Caballero refutes the intrusion of Abbate’s mysterious ‘third man,’ he maintains that these final bars ‘are much more like a “narrating voice” than is the epilogue as a whole.’\textsuperscript{474} His intriguing theory regarding the owner of this voice will be duly revealed.

According to Abbate, the disjunction between the poem’s conclusion (the Sorcerer’s words) and the music’s ending (the mysterious epilogue) jars because \textit{Sorcier} is ‘a depiction of events, happening as we listen.’\textsuperscript{475} Hence, the musical ending seems to sacrifice dramatic truth:

The slow epilogue seems to have no bearing on the drama, for it lies outside Dukas’s musical representation of spells spoken, brooms in motion, water, and axes.\textsuperscript{476}

Two points demand attention here: the musical substance of the epilogue and its related poetic content. Abbate describes the epilogue as comprising the music’s ‘last

\textsuperscript{472} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{473} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{474} Ibid., 164.
\textsuperscript{475} Abbate, \textit{Unsung Voices}, 57.
\textsuperscript{476} Ibid., 58.
ten measures’—the lively last two bars of the piece are completely overlooked.477 In reality, the formal coda constitutes the final seventeen bars, and its visible separation from the rest of the work has a specific dramatic purpose. Poetically speaking, analysis of the piece will show a clear thematic-dramatic correlation between the slow part of the coda and the rest of the scherzo. This last section indisputably alludes to Ia (sorcery, or ‘spells spoken’), Ib (‘brooms in motion’) and II (the apprentice, or indirectly, ‘axes’).

From these unreliable readings of both Goethe and Dukas, Abbate forms a theory of the ‘narrating voice’ which does not withstand thematic or formal analysis. Arguing that the poem’s narrator (as indicated by the quotation marks) locates the drama in the past, she claims that Dukas musically simulates the past tense:

[The epilogue] is a trace of what is constituted by the quotation marks in Goethe’s poem [...] The last ten measures pass over to the other world, speaking in the past tense of what has happened, in an orchestral ‘he said.’478 The last ten measures actually revert to the opening world of Sorcery, the Apprentice and the biddable broom—and the corresponding musical world of the introduction. A fixation with the final, quoted, stanza distracts from Abbate’s earlier vital points about the concept of drama in Sorcier. She rightly acknowledges that the piece has long been recognised as ‘enacting mimetically the actions of Goethe’s Apprentice.’479 Believing this position to be undermined by the quotation marks, though, she identifies these as leading to a moment of poetic and musical narration: ‘the silent ‘he said’ [...] puts all that we have heard performed (the broom drama) into the past.’480

477 Ibid., 60.
478 Ibid., 60.
479 Ibid., 32.
480 Ibid., 57.
However, the dramatic interpretation of the piece is arguably the more accurate—and Caballero harks back to it in unveiling his theory about the uncanny voice in the last two bars. ‘What theme do we recall when we think of The Sorcerer’s Apprentice?’ he asks. The answer—‘not the Apprentice’s theme, but precisely the one that Dukas dared not to name in his notes’—leads to the gripping realisation that the ‘the true protagonist of the symphonic scherzo is the broom.’ His conviction is supported by Parakilas’s comment that the work’s mocking humour implies a narrating persona—‘a persona distinct from, and not altogether sympathetic to, the viewpoint of the poor apprentice.’ While agreeing that the broom personality is imperative to the scherzo, I depart from Parakilas and Caballero by disputing the existence of such a narrative voice in the work, because this presence would have weakened Dukas’s dramatic objectives. Parakilas’s enlightening formal-programmatic analysis interprets the musical ‘continuity of the story’ as ‘key to the narrative method;’ I am more inclined to perceive it as a dramatic tactic.

In referring to authorial aim, I also clash with Caballero’s declaration that he is unwilling ‘to accept [Dukas’s] specific intentions as definitive.’ In viewing the composer’s act of defining themes and motifs as ‘an invitation to open-ended speculation,’ Caballero seems to subscribe to a postmodernist position. Roland Barthes’s ‘The Death of the Author’ essay objects to the premise that ‘the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it.’ However, the postmodernist rejection of ‘the Author-God,’ as Helen Julia Minors observes, exists ‘in stark contrast to Dukas, who [in “Music and Originality”]

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481 Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 178.
482 Ibid., 221.
483 Ibid., 222, emphasis mine.
summarises an intimate link that exists between creator and the created item."485 We have also seen in chapter three the many connections the composer made between art and artist. Therefore, a reading of Sorcier is justified in privileging what the composer said, as part of an attempt to analyse the programmatic strategy. Another reason for highlighting Dukas’s comments on his scherzo is the discovery of a document in which the composer makes a pithy remark about Sorcier—about the last two bars in fact.486 Hence, my thematic-dramatic analysis of Sorcier refers generously to the Dukas sources; in doing so, it also largely discards the possibility of a narrative reading in favour of a dramatic one.

The methodological basis for this strategy rests on a few key points. First of all, the most persuasive account of the piece as narrative (Abbate’s) is buttressed by musical judgments found to be lacking at times. To some extent, the analyses of Parakilas and Caballero inherit her concept. Abbate’s construal of Dukas’s Goethe appropriation continues to receive less critical scrutiny than it merits. As recently as 2006 Timothy Jones unhesitatingly accepted the moment of narration purported to exist in the last ten bars:

She takes the work’s ten-bar epilogue to lie outside the enacted drama of the sorcerer’s apprentice, and interprets its radical change of style as a metaphor for the narrative formula where inverted commas encapsulate reported speech.487 Again, this claim is neither probed nor supported by any musical evidence.

Secondly, Dukas extols the dramatic in music, while his Faust articles accentuate his grave dissatisfaction with programme music conditioned by ‘literary reason’—and what could be more ‘literary’ than narrative? Narrative, as H. Porter

486 This document was kindly brought to my attention by Chris Collins (University of Bangor) at the Royal Musical Association Research Students Conference in Leeds, January 2006.
Abbot informs us, is ‘the representation of an event or a series of events.’\[^{488}\] Now, while Goethe’s text conforms to this model, this does not hold true for Dukas. ‘Representation’ is the key differentiating factor because it precisely signifies ‘stories that are told or written.’\[^{489}\] Presentation, on the other hand, is a term designating ‘stories that are acted.’\[^{490}\] To ‘speak’ lucidly in the manner of storytelling depends upon the presence of a human voice. Having deduced that the musical embodiment of the broom rather than the apprentice governs the piece, we thus cannot accept that Dukas’s work is at all narrative. Instead, the music is more aptly described as presenting Goethe’s story to us because it acts out the dramatic conflict.

Finally, we have recourse to David J Code’s compelling analysis of a work fairly contemporaneous with Sorcier, Debussy’s Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune (1894), after Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98). Code explores aspects of Mallarmé’s text that are traditionally neglected in favour of what he calls ‘the whole array of twentieth-century literary theoretical tropes’ surrounding the poem.\[^{491}\] He describes his attempt to become attuned to ‘the simpler powers once attributed to poetic expression’ as corresponding to how Debussy’s would have interpreted the text. Similarly, Dukas’s setting of Der Zauberlehrling strives, through direct dramatic means, to capture the ballad’s poetic essence.

**A thematic-dramatic analysis of Sorcier**

Reactions to Sorcier from a narrative perspective, as we have seen, contend that while the music is congruent with the ballad, as a symphonic poem the music-text relationship is necessarily distant. Code, however, contests this assumption about at

least one symphonic poem by proposing a ‘deliberately naive’ interpretation of
Debussy’s Prélude, whereby the poetry and music correspond closely across a wide
span.492 Justifying this tactic is the argument that it reflects how Debussy would have
read the poet. Code thus uncovers in the Debussy work what he calls ‘a finely
formed equivalent to Mallarmé’s composed conflict between vocal expression and
written artifice.’493 This pursuit of the ‘equivalent’ has never been undertaken with
regard to Dukas and Goethe. Caballero, for example, cautiously delineates Dukas’s
work from Goethe’s poem by referring to it as a ‘commentary’ and a ‘musical
analogue to an archetypal literary structure.’494 In doing so, he adheres to Abbate’s
dictum that ‘music makes distinctive sounds when it is speaking (singing) in a
narrative mode, but we do not know what it narrates.’495 Code, nevertheless,
recognizes that music may translate a text in a mode that transcends narration. It is
this approach that I seek to apply to Dukas and Goethe.

In so doing, we must revisit the last strophe of Goethe’s poem. Would it be
made more amenable to analysis by considering its surrounding quotation marks?
How do they matter? In the case of Mallarmé’s lengthy Faune poem, sections in
italics and quotations marks are, according to Code, ‘carefully deployed to highlight
the internal, symmetrical, and proportional relationships of the entire text.’496 Such a
measure might seem redundant in Goethe’s shorter ballad. However, Code adds that:

Through a surfeit of visual information, Mallarmé ensures that the encounter
with the printed poem will be shadowed with the knowledge that the speaker
cannot speak the poem’s complete written message.497

492 Ibid., 496
493 Ibid., 496
494 Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 176.
495 Abbate, Unsung Voices, 27.
496 Code, ‘Hearing Debussy,’ 500.
497 Ibid., 500.
Mallarmé intended his poem to be realized on stage. There is no evidence that Goethe wanted this for *Der Zauberlehrling* but, as Abbate points out: 'the poem is like the music [...] in being a performable drama, in the form of the Apprentice’s monologue.'

In this context, the quotation marks function as a disruption of the apprentice’s monologue. By this token, their primary purpose must be to divulge to the reader that somebody else finally tamed the broom. Abbate, though, perceives these marks as chiefly narrative, not dramatic, in origin. She insists that ‘to be quoted signals another, the person quoting. The third man is [...] known by the mysterious marks.’ Parakilas objects here that the ‘third person’ is ‘something Goethe’s narrative structure does not allow.’ I believe that the inverted commas function in a similar manner to Mallarmé’s typographical directions, in calling for performance. Goethe scholar James Boyd alludes to this possibility by describing the ballad as throbbing with movement and dramatic tenseness. [...] Almost immediately, we lose the consciousness that it is a tale that is told, and step by step we see the action unfold itself before us.

This would enable the quotation marks to be read as a kind of stage direction calling for the sorcerer’s entrance into the drama. In any case, as we noted above, *Der Zauberlehrling* is not the only Goethe ballad from 1797 to isolate its last stanza in inverted commas: this appears to have been a well-honed device to bring about dramatic denouement.

Whatever Goethe intended to be glimpsed about the dramatic potential in these lines of text, Dukas’s programmatic goal was always to mould literary sources to music so that a new musico-dramatic ‘poem’ emerged. That the composer would

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498 Abbaté, *Unsung Voices*, 57.
499 Ibid., 60.
500 Parakilas, *Ballads*, 220.
willingly let himself be ‘dominated by the conventions of written poetry,’ something for which he had occasionally chastised Wagner, was unthinkable.\textsuperscript{502} He firmly believed that the dramatic kernel of a literary source had to be exposed in a music-text setting. As he asserted to Edouard Dujardin:

> You have to have drama, true, complete, and organic, so that the music may become an integral part of it; otherwise the work is a juxtaposition [of music to text] or transposition [of spoken text to sung text] that transforms the little story in a hit or miss kind of way. And it isn’t drama.\textsuperscript{503}

Dukas’s repudiation of ‘juxtaposition’ and ‘transposition,’ as opposed to his attachment to ‘transformation,’ serve as a reminder of his commitment to organic musical forms. Arguably, in refuting the technique of ‘juxtaposition’ (on which \textit{Polyeucte} is built) he also established the boundaries between acceptable practice in the overture and the more complex symphonic poem. His demeaning of the literary programme as ‘the little story’ contrasts utterly to his philosophical concept of drama (‘true, complete, and organic’). In this light, it seems ludicrous to imagine that fidelity to a textual narrative could ever have been a priority for the composer.

Based on this and Dukas’s general preoccupation with music’s evocative and emotional potency, I suspect that Dukas read Goethe’s poem with the aim of eliciting its dramatic content. After all, as Edward T. Cone has observed, ‘a program [...] gives a composition a conceptual, not a verbal, context.’\textsuperscript{504} Dukas aspired to an organic work built on Classical principles, transcending the original programme and enabling the emergence of a new musical ‘poem.’ \textit{Sorcier} dissociates itself from programme music as narratology through constructing a detailed and deliberate dramatic synergy between ballad and music. It functions neither as a musical

\textsuperscript{502} Paul Dukas, ‘La Musique et la littérature,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, September 1895) Ecrits, 51–8 (57). ‘Les instants de ses drames où il laisse fléchir son essor sont précisément ceux dans lesquels il se laisse momentanément dominer par les conventions de la poésie écrite.’

\textsuperscript{503} William Angus Moore, ‘Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,’ 318 (his translation).

\textsuperscript{504} Edward T. Cone, The Composer’s Voice (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1974), 168.
analogue to a literary *structure* nor as a work of ‘music alone’ separable from its programmatic source. Although the composition’s genre-concept is determined by the printed presence of the poem, the musical content is derived from the quasi-theatrical action contained within that necessary artifice of written commentary.

So where did Dukas perceive the main element of drama? As Parakilas and Caballero note, the broom idea is far more prominent in the music than in Goethe. That the object dominates the music by means of theme Ib is interpreted by the foregoing writers as a sinister, unsettling, and purely *musical* invention. However, a contemplation of how Goethe’s ballad might be *staged* for performance, rather than simply read, shows that this decision betrays Dukas’s disarmingly straightforward, not deliberately subversive, programmatic method.

The apprentice sets the scene and, as Abbate points out, his use of the plural imperative implores observers to watch: ‘an audience is requested to “look there”—“seht!”’505 What develops before us, though, is fascinating: about a third of the way through the poem, the powerless apprentice is demoted to one of the spectators. He has become little more than a passive witness, transfixed by the broom’s transformation. Despite ordering the stick to ‘be up and trudging’ in the second stanza, he now watches it helplessly, with us, in the third: ‘see, towards the shore he rushes.’506 The character now acting out the drama is the broom, a nightmarish machine-like creature that has relegated the hapless apprentice to the wings, as nothing more than a stagehand for its schemes. In this context, the ironic and mordant laughter of the disembodied narrator that Parakilas heard in the music makes perfect sense. For not only is the broom the protagonist in the scherzo, as Caballero tells us: it also upstages the human protagonist of Goethe’s dormant

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505 Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 54.
drama. The drama coalesces with Dukas’s attentive transposition of this idea to form a new musical ‘poem.’

The composer tracks Goethe’s battle between the human and the daemonic in the ideal form of a sonata, with rondo modifications. Inevitably involving the Broom theme, the rondo returns are commensurate with the work’s formal integrity. This pinpoints Dukas’s deviation from Lisztian formal models in favour of stricter symphonic logic. The central scherzo (b. 42–923) is framed by an introduction and coda. This tripartite shape roughly resembles the overall symmetry of the printed ballad, whereby the first and final stanzas refer to the sorcerer and spirits, as well as to the apprentice and animated broom. Contained within the central section is the sonata-like structure which treats I (Sorcery), II (Apprentice) and III (Conjuring) to varying degrees.

That Dukas intended a definite hierarchy of these themes has generally gone unrecognized, but on Ms. 1037 he writes that III merely ‘mingles with the two principal themes in different combinations.’ Demoting this to a subsidiary role frees the ‘two principle themes’ to engage in a sonata-like discourse, although he treats the tonal procedures of this form with flexibility. Within these themes, the Sorcery theme (I) is further divisible into two parts: Ia ‘remains almost unchanged throughout the course of the piece,’ whereas Ib ‘engenders the Scherzo proper.’ The latter is explicitly outlined as driving the work, with the dialogue between it and II forming the hub of the musical action. Although Dukas never labelled Ib the Broom theme, the resonances between it and the bassoon (and later, the clarinet) that represent it are plain to see. As Caballero mentions, the bassoon suggests ‘if not

507 Mss. 1037–1039, Musique, BNF. ‘Le premier demeure presque immuable au cours du morceau’; ‘Cet appel des instruments de cuivre se mêle aux différentes combinaisons des deux thèmes principaux.’
exactly a broken broomstick, at least one doubled over on itself. The respective primary and secondary designation of the Broom and Apprentice themes makes clear that the musical drama is directed by the bewitched object, not the bewildered novice.

Setting the scene: the introduction

The introduction of Sorcier establishes how the three themes relate to each another; the thematic paradigm will now be considered on a programmatic level. While Ib stands for the Broom, II the Apprentice and III Conjuring, it remains to suggest what the Ia part of the Sorcery theme symbolises. Some suggest that the descending diminished seventh represents water—but owing to its abstract label, and its magnitude in the introduction, latter development and coda, I see it as embodying the supernatural ‘Spirits’ (‘Geister’) invoked by the sorcerer and mentioned in Goethe’s opening and closing stanzas. Hence, it and the stirring of the broom are connected through the overlap in bar 3. On the other hand, the incompatibility of the Sorcery and Apprentice themes anticipates the scherzo’s conflict. Meanwhile, the perfunctory similarities between the Apprentice and Conjuring themes (tempo, time signature, ambiguous tonality) seem to highlight the apprentice’s shallow grasp of the unfolding situation. The deeper intervallic connections between the Conjuring and Sorcery themes indicate the spell’s true connection to the mysterious Spirits. Although the Conjuring fanfare is subordinate to the other themes, it has a major programmatic role. It cues the main musical action which, when drawing to a close,

508 Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 166.
509 Caballero (170) describes the central section of the scherzo as a ‘broom-drama.’
510 Abbate, Unsung Voices, 58.
also depends upon the theme’s reappearance before the curtain falls. In saying that the fanfare expressed ‘the idea of Mastery,’ Dukas accords unusual weight to it.511

The introduction also acts as the ‘exposition’ of Gustav Freytag’s pyramid of dramatic structure.512 Freytag divides drama into five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement.

**Figure 15: Freytag’s pyramid**

The symmetry is comparable to Dukas’s five-section structure in *Sorcier*: the ‘rising action’ corresponds to the musical exposition, the ‘climax’ to the musical apex of the development, the ‘falling action’ to the recapitulation, and the ‘denouement’ to the coda. Each of these musical-dramatic sections will be further explored below. In fact, we might even perceive a trace of this dramatic paradigm in the organisation of *Polyeucte*, but it is undertaken more meticulously in *Sorcier*.

**Goethe in action: a thematic depiction of events**

As Dukas’s notes describe b. 72 as the moment that begins Ib and begets the scherzo, the exposition’s preceding thirty bars act as a thematic preface. The harmonic basis

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511 Ms. 1037, BNF. ‘Il exprime, à la fin, l’idée de Maîtrise en apparaissent, élargi dans le Postlude qui ramène le mouvement calme du début de l’Introduction.’
512 Gustav Freytag (1816–95) first introduced this model in his book *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863).
of Ib is underlined with F minor chords. Specifically, these exploit the minor third relationship central to this theme; the fifth is not added until bar 54. Whereas the introduction plays on the trope of the third, this section introduces the icon of the double. This pre-empts the unnerving, uncanny replication Caballero particularly perceives in the recapitulation. The initial doubling is undertaken in a symmetrical fashion, as the following diagram shows:

**Figure 16: Symmetrical doubling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bars Played</th>
<th>Bars of Rest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(42) 1</td>
<td>5 (43–47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(48) 1</td>
<td>5 (49–53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Addition of C*

| (54–55) 2 | 4 (56–59) |
| (60–61) 2 | 4 (62–65) |

(66–71; **no rests**) 6

*(Leads straight into bar 72)*

Repetition in *Sorcier* has extra-musical intent, but the deliberate chordal and symmetrical basis here indicates Dukas’s unrelenting concern with making the ‘music itself’ sufficiently logical. Programmatically, the hesitant gestures may be attributed to the broom’s tentative movements. Rapidly acquiring a robust rhythmic profile, however, the Ib theme seems to mimic its external source in staking out its presence in the score, as though announcing its entrance in Dukas’s ‘poem.’ Any lingering belief that the musical enactment of Goethe’s drama lies with the apprentice is dispelled by a summary of thematic activity in the scherzo. As may be

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514 Caballero (170) argues that Dukas employs ‘something like bitonality to convey the doubling of the magical demon’ and cites the passage beginning at b. 618 as being simultaneously in B flat minor and D flat.
seen, there is never an occasion when the apprentice (II) acts independently of the broom (Ib):

**Figure 17: The Ib-II relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar numbers</th>
<th>Main theme</th>
<th>Subsidiary theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Ia, Ib, II, Ib (minor third idea), III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-71</td>
<td>Ib (minor third chords)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-200</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>Ia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-48</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Ib (rhythm, third intervals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249-93</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>294-362</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>363-398</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Ib (rhythm, third intervals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>399-533</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>II (influenced by Ib)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>534-605</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Ia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>606-16 Climax</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>617-98</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>699-788</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Ib (head motif)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>789-842</td>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>II, III (unharmonised)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>843-923</td>
<td>Ia</td>
<td>Ib (minor third; head motif)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>924-40</td>
<td>Coda: III, Ia (Ib and II), Ib (minor third), Ib (ascending figure)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At bar 72, a resemblance between the opening of Ib and Polyvexit's first theme may be observed. Both make significant use of a perfect fifth pitched on the same notes. In Sorcier, the two-bar span of the F-C dyad gives it twice the authority of the subsequent minor third and tritone. However, just as Polyvexit’s goal towards the fifth is constantly delayed by the formation of neighbouring intervals, the Sorcier dyad vanishes almost immediately, defeated by a profusion of F-A flat intervals, a few tritones and the descending part of the Broom theme. In an uncanny twist, the theme repeats the enigmatic C seven times, stressing it with a *poco cresc* at b. 90–92, before sliding into a downward trajectory. Even more unsettling is the fact that when
this stepwise figure is poised to reach the corresponding F (bar 94), it repositions itself a minor third higher from G to B flat, and Ib concludes with an emphasis on E flat instead of the opening dyad. With Ib, the broom is decisively established as the protagonist of the musical drama. Moreover, by locating the compulsive corruption of the F-C dyad within a diatonic context Dukas creates a musical warning signal about the broom’s capacity for duplicity.

The remainder of this section treats Ib fragmentarily. The minor third interval is the focus from bar 110, but it alters to a major third at bar 120 in response to the arrival of the augmented Ia figure at bar 117.

**Example 19: b 117–20**

Swayed by the presence of Ia until bar 144, Ib maintains the major third interval. When Ia subsides at bar 145 it precipitates harmonic change leading to a dominant chord at bar 153. Thus, the first part of the Sorcery theme enjoys only a nominal presence in the exposition. Nonetheless, its augmented colouring exerts an influence over the Broom theme such that an effect like the major third modification is discernible. In contrast, the Apprentice theme fails to make a dent in Ib. F minor’s return at bar 159 is marked by a preponderance of minor thirds. The Broom music finally ends with another allusion to the desired F-C concordance. The repetition of C from bar 189 in the flute part is harmonically supported by G flat, G natural and
finally E flat. Once again, F is neatly sidestepped—with Dukas’s musical choreography reiterating the nimble movement of the animated broom.

The Apprentice theme enters at b. 201 (see Fig. 17). It is instantly obvious that the impish spirit of this character’s introductory music has been reined in and restricted by the steadfast Broom theme, as there is no disruption of time signature or tempo. The delicate detached articulation of this passage contrasts with the strident legato expression of its repeat at b. 213–28. Importantly, the expansion of the theme is connected to the rediscovery of an A flat-centric tonality, triumphantly sounded in the upper woodwind from b. 219–27 in particular. This signifier of the Sorcery theme already gives an inkling that the apprentice is not operating entirely of his own volition.

What began as an exposition of the Apprentice theme mutates into a conflation of it and the Broom music. Note how the woodwind arpeggios of b. 211–12 have been transformed into a stepwise figure at b. 218–19 with the result that they resemble bars 90–91 of Ib. Prior to this b. 215 already incorporates the G-A flat-B flat pattern, although in the following bar it falls back down to A flat. Nonetheless, this indicates that the immediate growth of the Apprentice theme is conditioned by Ib, the broom. The events of b. 228–48 confirms that the apprentice’s risky experiments with the broom have cost him his autonomy, with his theme’s distinctive leaps now assuming the shape of an extended Ib figure. The two-bar bursts that begin with b. 230–31 are acutely similar to the broom’s music (b. 73–4) in rhythmic and melodic direction. As such, the rondo-like return of Ib at b. 249 is not unexpected.

Bars 249–93 revisit the tonic for a thickly orchestrated rendition of the Broom theme. Dukas’s ending of the exposition with a return to this theme may be interpreted as a gesture towards formal and programmatic unity. In light of the
foregoing dramatic activity, where the Apprentice theme is stealthily consumed by the broom’s music, this conclusion seems the most natural musical solution. Before we consider the development, it is worth pausing to note the thematic-dramatic hierarchy produced by the events of the exposition: the apprentice is subordinate to the broom, while the spirits wield an effect on the broom. Later on, Dukas’s development of the Apprentice theme will imply that it too is subtly influenced by the ethereal Spirits music.

An *a tempo* marking at b. 294 distinguishes the exposition from the development, as does a persistent A flat pedal at the start of the new section. First up is the Broom theme, with intervallic alteration the main means of variation. The short ascending upbeat of the theme is largely dispensed with, Dukas preferring to concentrate on reshaping the third interval and subsequent three-note descent. At b. 327, the change of the fifth dyad to a minor sixth and the return of the three-note upbeat herald the most interesting part of the development yet. Although the broom’s motions become rather static at bar 330, the apprentice interrupts at this moment. Sounding an A flat, his part is out of synchronisation with the bass which has already switched to a B flat pedal. Struggling for tonal stability, the theme slides down a descending scale before swooping upwards at b. 340 in an E flat arpeggio and acquiring a vestige of harmonic concordance. However, the G is immediately manipulated to support a reprise of the Broom theme centred again on the minor sixth. Initially paralysed by the machinations of the broom, the apprentice resumes his participatory efforts at bar 345 with, eventually, a little success. The Apprentice theme recommences a minor third higher (beginning on C flat), which again clashes with the D flat bass. Only after several bars does it manoeuvre itself towards a tenuous G flat resolution. Arpeggiated figures, undisturbed by Ib, now become the
basis for b. 356–62, yet the rhythmic associations of Ib and the chromatic alterations of Ia cannot be discarded. Nonetheless, this transition launches the development of the Apprentice music.

True development of II begins at b. 363 and is still discernible until 533, despite its insidious disintegration and intermittent combination with Ib fragments. Unlike the staccato articulation and slurred legato phrases that feature in the exposition, the developed ff II theme is decidedly lacking in such expressive terms. The second rendition of the theme in this section (b. 375–87) represents its climax. Centred on a transient E flat key, the melody begins on G and rejects leisurely octave-long descents in favour of ascending aspirations. Thus, the lowest note of this transformation only touches on B natural beneath G, with most of the theme dancing around the major third of the upper G and E flat. At the peak of its arc it reaches A flat a semitone above G. This treatment of the Apprentice music is almost ecstatic in its effect. The mood, however, is accomplished only by invoking the Broom theme’s repetitive stepwise patterns—and the major-third shape of the Spirits figure.
Theme II is simply unable to disentangle itself from the Sorcery fragments weaving in and around it. The dissolution of the apprentice’s role begins in earnest at b.399. Whatever was left intact of the original Apprentice theme in the aforementioned passage is lost in the ensuing lengthy transition. While the woodwind and strings of phrases like those at b. 398–404 resemble the tail end of that music in b. 381–7, they also closely relate to b. 75–9 of the Broom theme. Additionally, b. 399 witnesses the diatonic resurgence of the Ib upbeat, now in D flat. This fragment alternates with the ambiguous idea above until b. 432. A solo trumpet line erupts at this point as though to counteract the encroaching repeated notes and entreaties of the Broom theme. This contrasting voice belongs to the apprentice, as we know from the distinctive léger et très détaché articulation and Dukas’s later reliance on brass instruments to produce what Caballero calls ‘the
distorted “vocality” of the Apprentice’s cry. But, the music (b. 432–6) is actually a transposition a minor third upwards of the Broom fragment first heard in b. 81–5, and the part itself consists of little more than minor third movement, perhaps suggesting speech-like mutterings.

Example 21: b. 432–6

The speaker of Goethe’s monologue, the supposed leader of events, is now a mere puppet possessed by the daemonic force of the broom. The Apprentice theme surrenders to a dominant development of the Broom theme at b. 456. From b. 474 a severely abridged fragment resurfaces as an accompaniment to the rest of the orchestra. With desperate intensity it is heard on four occasions, a major or minor third higher each time. Thus, the tonal development of Sorcier culminates in the broom fully displacing the apprentice as the key player in the drama.

A repeated note figure begins at b. 486, connecting the remainder of the development’s tonal passage to the whole-tone axis around which the music revolves from b. 534. The sequence grows from the third-interval fragment of the Broom theme.

The tonally remote latter part of the development frames the transformation of the Conjuring fanfare, as noted in the whole-tone discussion. Simultaneously, the repeated-note figure anchored around A flat continues. The main features are the development of the Conjuring and Spirits figures through whole-tone means, as already outlined. To this we add that the sequential alternation of III and Ia as thematic materials, not simply contrasting manifestations of the whole-tone scale,

515 Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 175.
supplies much of the excitement. Also, III endures approximately three times longer than the first part of the Sorcery theme, which illustrates a reversal of the thematic hierarchy so that the ancillary brass theme temporarily rules. The music now parallels the most frenzied moment in the ballad: the apprentice frantically repeating an incantation in an attempt to subdue the daemonic spirits goading the broom. Conceding defeat by supernatural means, he reaches for an axe.

It is widely accepted that the musical climax, like the poetic one, coincides with the destruction of the broom. Coming after the development's non-tonal excursion, these events are portrayed in b. 606–17. The Conjuring fanfare is amplified as a violent progression in which two chords are each played twice. Dramatically impressive, this moment is also open to formal interpretation because, as Boyd remarks, it helps to 'build towards the climactic return of the tonic in measure 618.' Additionally, the structural doubling of the chords resonates with the binary trope that permeates the work. In between these outbursts, the quasi-Apprentice trumpet part is temporarily revived—yet the abundance of melodic and harmonic minor thirds amongst its excitable staccato murmuring confirms that it is still being tricked by the broom. Bars 614–15 seem intent on proving this point, with the trumpet chords propping up a chromatic variant of the Broom theme's step movement. Finally resolving with a tonic minor third dyad at b. 617, the horns set the stage for the recapitulation.

The first third of this is devoted to the Broom theme. Like the exposition, an introduction of approximately thirty bars precedes the main section. Bars 617–50 differ to the corresponding exposition passage in stressing a stepwise ascending figure as well as the minor third. The sparse tonic octaves from b. 618–28 are fleshed out with D flat at b. 631 (following the bassoon’s pause on B flat). In this
subdominant area the bassoon begins the true recapitulation. The tonal answer of the clarinets at b. 675 (the musical proof of the replicating broken broom) provides a quasi-fugal moment, but the bassoon line rapidly disintegrates into an accompanying part. F minor reappears around this time.

The return of the Apprentice at b. 699 coincides with Dukas recalling the area of B flat minor, albeit rather obscurely. Pedals spell out an enharmonic B flat minor arpeggio (B flat at b. 699, C sharp at b. 711, F at b. 723) leading to an instance of tonal clarity at b. 723. Importantly, these pedals mark a fresh recurrence of the theme each time. The first two occasions do little to dispel the harmonic instability we have come to associate with II. The G flat that begins the melody at b. 699 concludes a minor third higher on A natural. This note then opens the repeat of II at b. 711 before ending a major third higher on C sharp. In the next bar (723) this C sharp is rewritten as D flat and forms the upper pitch of a second-inversion B flat minor chord. The first two versions of II (at b. 699 and b. 711) are each twelve bars long, like the initial exposition theme. However, with tonal confirmation at 723 it is compressed into a four-bar phrase spanning D flat to B flat a minor third below. After a two-bar gap an identical repetition follows; at b. 744 an even more compact segment of three bars materialises and is played three times.

Even the resurgence of the apprentice cannot silence the ubiquitous brooms. The thematic opening wide leap and subsequent four-note ascending figure permeate the foregoing passage—and the strengthening of the Apprentice theme with the non-tonicized B flat minor resolution at b. 723 actually invites extension of the Broom fragment:
This is succeeded by an unharmonised variant of III whose fall from A flat to F (b. 776–85) encapsulates the critical interval of Ib. Immediately after this, over a dominant bass, the apprentice wails his most abrupt and abbreviated utterance yet (b. 786–8). Having infiltrated the Apprentice theme at its most disciplined and subsequently warped the musical formula of the character’s spell to accommodate its own needs, the Broom theme demonstrates the devious will of the literary creation it represents.

The rondo return of Ib in F minor at b. 789 is better described as revisiting the Sorcery theme in its entirety. The reminiscence of the Spirits idea matches the ballad’s reference to Geister just before the sorcerer speaks (and the Conjuring fanfare of the coda). The Broom passage continues until b. 843; during it, the three-bar Apprentice fragments briefly recur (b. 791–809). At 843, the first part of the Sorcery theme is recapitulated in its opening diminished form. Alternating with a Ib fragment, Ia rises by a tone on each occasion. For the third repetition the Ib
counterpart is discarded—this leaves the Ia rhythm free to unify the pentatonic and quartal bass passages that begin at b. 891. Ending at b. 902, the A flat allusions of the preceding section are reinforced with the resurgence of the Ib head motif at b. 903, indicated by an A flat-E flat dyad. This spurs on an increasingly agitated transition that rushes the recapitulation to a close. At b. 924 the coda begins.

*The curtain falls: concluding Dukas’s drama*

The postlude, as the composer called it, is often cited as mirroring the introduction. Although only seventeen bars long compared to the opening section’s forty-one, it still references the three themes. The order of the introduction is reversed, with the Conjuring fanfare now appearing first—inevitable, given that it symbolises the sorcerer’s restorative feat in rescuing the apprentice and regaining control. Dukas said that the ‘enlarged’ appearance of the theme here ‘brings back the calm mood at the start of the introduction,’ thus matching its opening cue to a concluding dramatic function. The fanfare’s melodic fall is modified to that of a major third and anchored on D major, which acts as a neighbouring chord to C (b. 928). This leads to an augmented reiteration of the Spirits idea, thus sustaining the tendency towards the major third. Simultaneous, fragmented restatements of the Broom and Apprentice themes interrupt (b. 932).

While the latter resembles its recapitulatory guise (note its minor third span), the Broom theme is now recast with an octave opening. Concordantly nestled between the Sorcery augmented chords, this octave also obliges with the diatonic pull of the Apprentice theme. These thematic links are compressed into b. 931–4:
By favouring the octave over the perfect fifth, the musical embodiment of the real protagonist of Goethe’s latent drama (the broom) has by the end of Dukas’s creation reconciled the tonal conflict between the musical representation of the supernatural powers and the apprentice antagonist. Having done so, the Broom theme resumes its minor-third seesawing as originally seen in b. 18. Immediately after this the flutes delicately present the perfect fifth, move inwards into a perfect fourth, and in the last two bars every instrument bar the harp and glockenspiel brashly declaim the four-note ascending I b figure. Under duress of the Sorcerer’s orders, the broom scurries into a corner and the music ends with the protagonist’s characteristic F- A flat minor third dyad.
One last remark about the final two bars: the composer actually ascribed narrative associations of a very definite kind to this memorable ending. Almost unknown amongst Dukas scholars is the existence of a letter he penned to Manuel de Falla in November 1934. Along with this document he enclosed a piece of manuscript with the last four chords of *Sorcier* sketched out, and transcribed underneath them a syllabic ‘Et puis voilà!!!’ Translated as ‘and then that’s it!!!’ Dukas’s quip may be interpreted as sincere or ironic—the exaggerated exclamation marks could be seen as compromising the finality of the words and bearing a trace of the uncanny repetition that saturates the piece. However, it seems to me that the self-conscious act of commenting on his own music, and the knowing manner in which he does so, unmistakeably locates the poetic authority of the piece with Dukas. It is the composer rather than Goethe who eventually brings the curtain down on this drama.

**Conclusion**

This study has sought to examine Dukas’s programmatic strategy for *L’Apprenti sorcier* in the context of the theories expressed in his music criticism from the 1890s and early 1900s. As the three articles concerning Goethe’s *Faust* show (two written before the composition of *Sorcier* and one after it), the composer had a deep-seated interest in the German writer and in apt musical settings of his output. In this sense, Dukas viewed Goethe as he did Shakespeare: no musician was capable of rendering completely all the details of their respective masterpieces. All the same, his enduring passion for the fusion of poetry and music led him to pick one of Goethe’s more manageable ballads for musical consumption.

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516 Letter from Paul Dukas to Manuel de Falla, 1156 [1], Archivo Manuel de Falla, Granada.
A recurrent feature of the composer’s published essays is his preoccupation with the evolution of the Lisztian symphonic poem, seen by many as the ideal means of combining literature and music. Dukas’s reaction to the genre was somewhat circumspect: although far from a formalist and a great admirer of Liszt’s thematic innovations, he wished to temper that composer’s poetic tendencies with a balanced, symphonic structure. As such, Sorcier inherits Polyeucte’s symmetrical leanings and adapts them to a sonata-like form. This architecture proved ideal for the dramatic discourse played out in the music, which itself arose from Dukas’s unique concept of programme music.

There is an abundance of articles dedicated to the composer’s concept of the music-text relationship. Its idealised version took the form of Wagnerian music-drama where the creation of the poetic idea hinged on the music. Music that could only be categorised as narrative or illustrative was less highly regarded because its impetus was literary instead of musical. Therefore, evoking Der Zauberlehrling provided the composer with a particular challenge. Unable to make the text his own, as he would with Maeterlinck’s Ariane et Barbe-Bleue for his 1907 music-drama, Dukas was forced to peel back the textual surface and probe the dramatic movement pulsing beneath. It is this inner life that the composer sought to transform musically. Caballero argues that Sorcerer functions as an uncanny commentary on the nature of narrative itself and that the ending of this ‘Dukasian fiction [...] exceeds its own literary model.’ I would appropriate his words for a different purpose. The composer’s aesthetic of all worthy music-text interaction as fundamentally dramatic actually leads him to ‘exceed’ Goethe’s ‘literary model’ by casting off the shackles of its structure in search of the deeper possibilities.

517 Carlo Caballero, ‘Silence, Echo,’ 177.
Resolutely committed to the vitality of live drama, Dukas used the creation of *L’Apprenti Sorcier* as an opportunity to fulfil some of the aesthetic theories advocated in his criticism which had thus far eluded practical manifestation owing to the composer’s lack of success in the domain of music-drama. In setting about this task of producing a ‘poem’ in the music-dramatic manner, *Sorcier* may be perceived as laying the groundwork for the more arduous process that would be demanded by the composition of *Ariane*. Dukas’s encounter with Goethe opened a world in which the music-text relationship was not conceived of in a traditional musical setting, as in the *Polyeucte* Overture. Instead, it was exposed to the boundless possibilities of a dramatic context.
Chapter Six: Poetic Summation of Dukas’s Music-Text Aesthetic in

Ariane et Barbe-Bleue

'It’s a theatrical work, it should be left there.'

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the single biggest manifestation of Dukas’s music-text aesthetic, the opera Ariane et Barbe-Bleue. The effects of the music-text exchange in such a work are not confined to the score. Therefore, this study will proceed differently from my investigations of Polyeucte and Sorcier; I shall attempt to analyse the integrated musico-dramatic events of the work. These are situated within a few different contexts, each of which relates to Dukas’s critical aesthetic. As a result, Ariane will be examined against the application of a selection of the composer’s theories to ascertain the validity of his aesthetic position.

I examine how his writings on music-drama during the composition of Ariane prepare an aesthetic foundation for the work. Specifically, I revisit the 1902 review of Pelléas et Mélisande and dissect ‘The New Lyricism,’ a treatise from 1903. In doing so, the findings of the chapter two sources studies on Ariane are contextualised. Following this, I explore the practical issues leading up to the premiere of the opera 1907. The major issues surrounding its critical reception—the symphonic construction, Maeterlinck’s libretto and the starring performance by Georgette Leblanc (1875–1941)—are then assessed. Next, I analye the poetic workings of Ariane’s score to illustrate that the total agency over this theatrical creation rested with Dukas, who managed to manoeuvre the playwright out of the scene. One significant threat, however, to the perception of the composer as an

autonomous artist was the presence of the actress Leblanc (Maeterlinck’s mistress), whose interpretation of the lead role was motivated by a personal agenda.

Nonetheless, despite her (and Maeterlinck’s) presence in *Ariane*, I argue that Dukas’s transformation of the libretto, his creation of potent music-drama and his reflections on the work post-1907 all clarify his standing as the main author of the musical ‘poem’ *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*.

**A literary foundation: Charles Perrault and Maurice Maeterlinck**

*Ariane*, to an even greater degree than *L’Apprenti sorcier*, is a multi-layered work. The 1897 symphonic poem had been inspired by Goethe’s *Der Zauberlehrling*, which in turn was based on an old philosophical source. Dukas’s setting of Maeterlinck’s play, meanwhile, absorbs ancient myth, historical legend and a seventeenth-century retelling of a fairytale into his ‘poem.’ Aspects of the tale may be traced to *Genesis*, stories of the Arabian Nights, as well as Greek mythology.519

Bearing in mind the subject matter of the early *Air de Clytemnestre* and the incomplete *Sang de Méduse*, it comes as little surprise to learn that Dukas was well acquainted with the last of these sources and that it may have influenced his work.520

More important than these fables from antiquity, though, was the earliest published version of the Bluebeard saga. Written by Charles Perrault (1628–1703), this appeared in 1697 as one of the *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*. The plot concerns the arrival of Bluebeard’s newest wife into his castle. She is given a selection of keys to the surrounding doors and permitted to use all but one. However, it is in the forbidden chamber that Bluebeard’s secrets lie and when this is finally

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520 The character of Ariane, as Boyd (162, n. 14) explains, ‘seems to be a derivative of Ariadne, who led Theseus out of the labyrinth and was subsequently abandoned by him on the island of Naxos.’ This was the setting for Richard Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912). Massenet’s little-known opera *Ariane* (premiered on 31 October 1906 at the Palais Garnier, Paris) provided another interpretation of this mythological subject.
penetrated, it is discovered that he has killed his previous wives. The woman in Perrault’s tale is saved from this fate only because her brothers invade the scene, killing her tormentor and rescuing her. In the end, Perrault’s *Bluebeard* is a cautionary lesson to women about the dangers of curiosity.

Maeterlinck, whose drama *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* is the basis for Dukas’s work, was a Belgian Symbolist philosopher and playwright. Three of his plays from the 1890s (*Pelléas et Mélisande, Monna Vanna* and *Ariane*) were set to music by contemporary French composers.\(^{521}\) They typically dealt with the workings of destiny, and in this respect *Ariane* is unusual. Unlike his archetypal female leads, Ariane exudes autonomy. The contradistinction between her and his previous characters is drawn into even sharper relief when they appear as the passive, previous wives of Bluebeard. This is just one way in which Maeterlinck’s drama altered Perrault’s account of events. Furthermore, when Ariane discovers the trapped women they are still alive (despite the villagers warning her that they had been murdered) and, thanks to the women who actually decide to save him, Bluebeard does not die in the end. Moreover, the relationship between Ariane and her tormentor is far less antagonistic than Perrault allows.

In conventional Symbolist fashion, the play aims to hint at the deeper truth of the situation through indirect suggestion, which has little need for action. The static quality enables Maeterlinck to emphasise the metaphors of light and darkness that respectively refer to freedom and oppression, truth and ignorance. The unearthing of the jewels by Ariane and her Nurse in Act I alludes to an artificial brightness; the shattering of a window in the vault in the second act exposes the frightened wives to the natural radiance of the sun; in the end, however, they (Alladine, Séllysette,  

\(^{521}\) *Monna Vanna* was set by Henri Février (1875–1957) and staged in 1909.
Bellangère, Ygraine and, significantly, Mélisande) choose not to venture into the light of the outside world. The only character to embrace the light of freedom, as it were, is Bluebeard who, now rendered helpless, no longer poses any threat to the women and sadly watches Ariane walk away. The symbolism of the passive, almost mute man—he speaks only in the first act, and then only a handful of lines—also prompted the charge of Ariane as a feminist treatise, but the wives’ subservient choice to remain bound to Bluebeard blurs this issue.522

As well as composing through the lens of this literature, Dukas may have considered prior musical incarnations of Bluebeard. In France alone, four operas connected to the subject materialised before 1907. (Bartók’s opera Bluebeard’s Castle dates from 1911.) Works such as André Ernest Modeste Grétry’s Raoul Barbe-Bleue (1789) and Jacques Offenbach’s Barbe-Bleue (1866), though, have few commonalities with the early modern aesthetic of both Maeterlinck’s text and Dukas’s tonally-expanded vocabulary.523 In fact, the composer tellingly chose to locate Ariane along the continuum of twentieth-century French music-drama by quoting the ‘Mélisande’ motif from Pelléas. That Dukas used his own work in this manner is testament to both his historicising tendencies and his debt to Debussy: Pelléas proved to be the philosophical link between Wagnerian opera and Ariane.

An aesthetic basis for Ariane

A key reason for Dukas’s ardent praise of Pelléas et Mélisande is contained in this remark:

522 Martin Cooper, French Music: From the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 120. He maintains that ‘it is impossible to ignore the basic idea of the play: that women in general prefer marriage and security, even on the most degrading terms, to freedom.’
523 Richard Aldrich, ‘Operagoers Don’t Take Kindly to Paul Dukas’s Ariane et Barbe-Bleue, a Modern French Product,’ New York Times, 4 February 1912. Aldrich noted that Ariane seemed ‘to have absolutely nothing in common with that which produced the French “opéra comique” of half a century ago.’
A capital fact, and one which is too little insisted upon, it seems to me, is the wholly particular character of the collaboration between Mr Maeterlinck and Mr Debussy. What matters here is not in the least the world of the libretto and that of the score, but the musical transformation of a drama conceived independently.\textsuperscript{524}

The \textit{Pelléas} premier occurred in 1902 as Dukas was in the midst of writing \textit{Ariane}. Much of what he said about the Maeterlinck-Debussy relationship was invested in preparing a foundation for the reception of his own work a few years later.\textsuperscript{525}

At the heart of this review is an insistence that score and libretto of this music-drama \textit{cannot} be separated from one another. Even acting in a professional critical capacity Dukas was uneasy about being required ‘to speak of this music as a distinct art,’ the undertaking of which necessitated ‘breaking the perfect image that it offers in being united to the poem.’\textsuperscript{526} Although very comfortable with acknowledging the novelty of Debussy’s musical vocabulary, ‘notably, the harmony,’\textsuperscript{527} Dukas reiterated that endeavours to understand the score in isolation from the play were fundamentally flawed:

To perceive fully and without effort the beauty of the musician’s work, one must contemplate it not in the shadows […] but in the light through which the poem shines. From this perspective everything becomes animated and is brought to life.\textsuperscript{528}

Likewise, any study of \textit{Ariane} must recognise, at every step, the intimate bond between music and text. To use a Dukasian turn of phrase, the composer engendered

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{524} Paul Dukas, ‘Pelléas et Mélisande,’ (\textit{Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité, Mai 1902}) \textit{Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique}, 571–6 (572–3). ‘Un fait capital, et sur lequel on a trop peu insisté, ce me semble, c’est ce caractère tout particulier de la collaboration de M. Maeterlinck et de M. Debussy. Ce n’est pas le moins du monde de livret et de partition qu’il s’agit ici, mais de la transformation musicale d’un drame conçu indépendamment d’une adaptation lyrique possible.’
\item \textsuperscript{525} Dukas’s article could be seen as politically motivated in a few ways: it was certainly in his interest to praise Maeterlinck’s play and to congratulate Albert Carré, director of the Opéra-Comique (where \textit{Ariane} would be staged), for producing ‘this marvellous spectacle.’
\item \textsuperscript{526} \textit{Ibid.}, 574. ‘Il faut bien, cependant, puisque tel est l’objet des présentes chroniques, parler de cette musique comme art distinct, ce que l’on ne peut faire qu’en brisant l’image parfaite qu’elle offre unie au poème.’
\item \textsuperscript{527} \textit{Ibid.}, 575. ‘Ce sont les siennes, l’harmonie notamment.’
\item \textsuperscript{528} \textit{Ibid.}, 575. ‘Pour percevoir pleinement et sans effort la beauté de musicien, il suffit de la contempler non pas du côté de l’ombre […] mais du côté de la lumière dont l’éclaire le poème. De là tout s’anime et prend vie.’
\end{itemize}
the poem; therefore, although he did not invent the work’s libretto, his score breathed dramatic energy into it and sustained it.

Dukas’s review of Pelléas set out his desired parameters of reception for Ariane: he wanted it recognised that the ideal music-text relationship in modern music-drama was one in which the composer exerted the ultimate poetic authority. While he was not quite so blunt in the 1902 review, perhaps fearing Maeterlinck’s reaction to such a statement, he published a more forthright piece on lyric drama the following year. ‘The New Lyricism’ chronicles musicians’ changing responses to society through the ages; in particular, it identifies a progression from sacred to secular expression. Since religious music was characterised by chant, Dukas contrasted this vocal genre with the secular equivalent, sung drama, and found that whereas the former has ‘already accomplished its complete evolution, [...] sung theatre has hardly stammered. The status of lyric theatre was at the forefront of the composer’s mind during the time he worked on Ariane. A study of the 1903 essay, therefore, proves highly relevant to an analysis of Dukas’s work. It contextualises the content of the modified libretto, the subsequent music-text relationship and locates his fundamental aesthetic in a history of lyric expression.

The nature of Dukas’s modifications to Maeterlinck’s libretto was grounded in an artistic philosophy that regarded opera as possessing authentic, human significance, and not just existing as a means of entertainment. Subscribing to this artistic position, it must be noted, was not something the composer conceived of as a mere choice. His historical narrative of the lyric genre traced the growth of opera up until the arrival of Wagner’s ‘Art-Religion’—and its scope for ‘metaphysical

529 Paul Dukas, ‘Le nouveau lyrisme,’ (Minerva, February 1903) Ecrits, 578–89 (580). ‘La musique dramatique est loin d’atteindre [...] à la perfection de la musique religieuse qui a déjà accompli son évolution complète [...] le théâtre chanté balbutie à peine.’

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lyricism’ meant that a retreat into its simpler forms was not an option for Dukas.\textsuperscript{530} As such, while his revisions of the Sapphic undertones in the dramatist’s play have been deemed the product of his reserved personality (he is either regarded as prudish or unwilling to become embroiled in a censorship row), it is more likely that he was reluctant to taint the exalted aims of his art with anything that might reduce it to a voyeuristic spectacle. Excising the erotically suggestive scenes, as was demonstrated in chapter two, enabled the composer to alter the heroine’s character and her relationship with the other women so that the theme of personal autonomy shone even brighter in the operatic \textit{Ariane}.

Other changes to the text were commensurate with this goal. Communicating this message of personal independence and action was vitally important, as we see from Dukas’s description of opera in previous eras. The early Renaissance variety of the genre, in his opinion, was nothing more than a type of ‘sentimental gala’ in which ‘the ceremonial pomp’ limited ‘the range of simply human action.’\textsuperscript{531} In Rameau’s time, Dukas complained, only two requirements were indispensable to lyric drama: ‘to dazzle the eyes and charm the ears.’\textsuperscript{532} Finally detecting signs of progress, the appearance of Gluck was praised because with him ‘the predominance of the drama over the spectacle and over the purely musical pleasure was established in what one could call a definitive manner.’\textsuperscript{533} Dukas went on to tailor the hierarchy of the drama over the spectacle even more in \textit{Ariane} through centring his work on the chief character’s internal crisis and relegating more overtly visual moments to the peripheries.

\textsuperscript{530}Ibid., 583. ‘Le drame wagnérien replace la création musicale sue le terrain du lyrisme métaphysique des âges de foi.’
\textsuperscript{531}Ibid., 580. ‘Le cérémonial pompeux auquel […] restreint la portée de son action simplement humaine.’
\textsuperscript{532}Ibid., 580. ‘Deux choses comme indispensables: éblouir les yeux et charmer les oreilles.’
\textsuperscript{533}Ibid., 581: ‘Avec [Gluck] la prédominance du drame sur le spectacle et sur le plaisir purement musical s’établit d’une manière qu’on pourrait croire définitive.’
At the top of the composer’s operatic paradigm was music rather than drama. Once again, this is the result of a historically-influenced aesthetic. Following Gluck, Dukas charted Mozart’s innovations, which primarily consisted of

a wholly different theatre in which the musical language, possessed of a degree of flexibility and richness unknown until then, supplied the base and the principle.534

In Dukas’s eyes, Mozart spurred the growth of instrumental music to the point that with Beethoven it transcended the limits of the Classical tradition. As such, the social function of art became religious, ‘in the freest sense of the word.’535 Clinging to the notion of music as sublimely elevated expression, Dukas venerated Wagner for having it guided it to its apex by penetrating the dramatic and musical tradition of Gluck and Mozart in the transcendent light of Beethoven’s output, colouring it in the picturesque romance of Weber, and transferring to it a poetic dignity that renders it apt to express the most mysterious conflicts of the soul and of the human destiny.536

Wagner’s reforms, as the French composer understood them, meant that aspiring towards anything less than profound, spiritual expression was a betrayal of music’s status. And, as the music was at the root of the lyric drama’s poetic conception, Dukas felt that it deserved a literary theme that equalled its depth. Hence, again, his general rejection of Maeterlinck’s women’s playful talk in the Ariane play in favour of words more suited to musical eloquence.

The appropriate fusion of music and external ideas was a subject to which Dukas devoted serious thought. It seems to have forced his hand on the Maeterlinck issue, because in 1903 he wrote:

534 Ibid., 581. ‘Un théâtre tout différent, dont la langue musicale portée à un degré de flexibilité et de richesse inconnu jusque là.’
535 Ibid., 582. ‘Avec Beethoven, […] sa fonction sociale redevient religieuse au sens le plus libre de mot.’
536 Ibid., 583: ‘En pénétrant la tradition dramatique et musicale de Gluck et de Mozart de la lumière transcendante de l’œuvre de Beethoven, en la colorant du pittoresque romanticisme de Weber, en lui transférant une dignité poétique qui la rend apte à l’expression des conflits les plus mystérieux de l’âme et de la destinée humaine.’
It is [...] through the application of musical language to particular and more complex feelings that musicians will open new ways. All modern music, with the exception of works in the neo-classical style, is built on the principle of association of ideas.\(^{537}\)

Ultimately, the music-text dichotomy yielded (though not totally) to Dukas’s symphonically-dominated mode. This followed Wagner’s example, whose works, Dukas believed, were ‘less like dramas commented on symphonically than symphonies commented on dramatically.’\(^{538}\) In more detail, it is explained that:

‘Absolute’ music, to use Wagner’s expression, had attained such a degree of autonomy with Beethoven that when allied to drama, it became fatally unable to incorporate it into the music, so instead the weight of expression was transferred to the most powerful medium, his own. From this point of view, one cannot have the fusion of poetry and music, but rather the absorption of the first by the second.\(^{539}\)

Dukas subsumed Maeterlinck’s voice into his own through modifying the libretto and through its musical transformation; thus he emancipated Ariane’s lyric expression from the conflicting demands of its original dramatist. In distinction to Wagner, though, Dukas advocated a model of ‘transformation’ to combat the poetic authority of another. In doing so, he boldly established his allegiance to Debussy and bravely distanced himself from his previous idol by consigning him to a history of lyric drama, rather than its future. Thus, Dukas enabled Ariane to be located at the forefront of works produced by the ‘new musicians’ mentioned at the start of ‘The New Lyricism.’

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\(^{537}\) Ibid., 582, emphasis mine. ‘C’est par l’application du langage musicale à des sentiments particuliers et plus complexes que les musiciens tenteront de s’ouvrir des voies nouvelles. Toute la musique moderne, à l’exception des œuvres de tendances néo-classiques, est basée sur le principe de l’association des idées.’

\(^{538}\) Ibid., 586. ‘Les ouvrages de Wagner semblent moins des drames commentés par une symphonie que des symphonies commentées par le drame.’

\(^{539}\) Ibid., 586. ‘La musique “absolue,” pour employer l’expression de Wagner, était parvenue avec Beethoven à un tel degré d’autonomie, qu’alliée au drame elle devait fatalement non pas s’y incorporer, mais en déplacer l’équilibre au profit du mode d’expression le plus puissant, le sien. À ce point de vue, il ne pouvait y avoir fusion de la poésie et de la musique, mais, bien plutôt, absorption de la première par le seconde.’
Towards the first performance

Exactly how anxious Dukas was about the need to stamp his authority on the text was evident from October 1901. Having received a letter from Maeterlinck informing him that *Ariane* would be published and subsequently staged as a play the following year, his reply was less than ecstatic:

I would be exaggerating in saying to you that reading your letter filled me with joy, and I must admit to you that, on the contrary, it made me completely distressed! I’ve so much desired that Ariane be mine alone, while I lived through your poem and when little by little I see it become awakened to a musical life! Now it seems to me that the whole world will be witness to this mystery and that it will critique me in advance, in judging you! Pardon me this weakness. [...] I am dreading above all the moment [the play] appears in the bookshops...when I will have the feeling of composing in a public place.\(^{540}\)

At the same time, he was not so tormented by insecurity that it stopped him from venturing an idea to the writer as to how *Ariane* might be improved for an operatic setting. It vividly depicts the formation of the composer’s own theatrical plan:

It goes without saying, does it not, that we remain free to modify that which suits us in the text? Thus, these last few days I was wondering if the first words of Ariane: ‘they are not dead’ are really appropriate. Would it not be better to leave the spectator in doubt up until the moment where she sees the other women after having heard them sing?\(^{541}\)

As it happened, Maeterlinck turned out to be less of a frustration to Dukas’s stage vision than the person responsible for its production.

*Ariane* did not reach the theatre until approximately two years later than it was originally hoped for. Unusually, it was not Dukas’s perfectionism and last-minute cuts which were to blame for the delay. Maxime Benoît-Jeannin reports that the director of the Opéra-Comique, Albert Carré, was the only obstacle to a 1905 production of *Ariane*. On 10 February 1905, the *Ariane* contract had been signed by the three main parties involved: Dukas, Maeterlinck and publisher Jacques


Three years after the bitter dispute about *Pelléas*, in which Mary Garden won the part of Mélișande originally promised to Leblanc, Carré was still unwilling to accommodate Maeterlinck and his partner. The ongoing animosity between these parties affected *Ariane*, with the director procrastinated over the opera for a further two years. Carré’s professional concerns may also have impeded its production. Having blamed the poor initial reception of *Pelléas* on the text, he may have feared that *Ariane* would be subject to similar treatment. In any case, a letter dating from 13 April 1906 sent by Carré to Dukas refers to the difficulties of setting a date for *Ariane* to be performed. Although specific reasons are not given, it may have had something to do with the director’s reluctance to hire Leblanc. Once it had been decided that she would play the heroine (17 April), things progressed more rapidly. Five days later, Dukas and Carré had moved on to consider who would play the Nurse. Eventually, it was agreed that the work would be staged at the end of February 1907.

At some point between April and June 1906 Leblanc started learning the part of Ariane. Despite scheduling *Ariane* for the end of February, rehearsals did not commence until the start of that month, which pushed back the date of the first

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542 Carnet W50 (44), Musique, BNF.
544 Carré appears to have had a genuine interest in Dukas’s opera. When *Ariane* was revived at the Opéra-Comique in 1922, he was happy to correspond with the composer about the production. In one letter he discussed (yet again) who should play the lead role. See *Carnet W50* (21).
546 Carnet W50 (2), BNF.
547 Carnet W50 (4), BNF.
548 Benoît-Jeannin, *Leblanc*, 260. ‘La création pourrait avoir lieu à la fin de février 1907.’ Carnet W50 (8) is a letter which refers to Dukas attending rehearsals on the 26 January, so this seems to have been a firm decision at the time.
549 Benoît-Jeannin (258) writes that she started studying the score in April: ‘Dès le mois d’avril, elle étudiait avec son enthousiasme si personnel la partition d’Ariane.’ François Lesure believes that she waited until June: ‘Leblanc […] [a] pris connaissance d’*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* en juin 1906.’ (Lesure, ‘Notes et Documents: Deux lettres de Georgette Leblanc à Paul Dukas,’ *Revue de Musicologie*, 51/1 (1965): 93–7 (93))
performance until mid-April.\textsuperscript{550} Around this time, however, the singer developed throat problems and lost her voice. It was subsequently reported in \textit{Le Courrier musical} that the opera would debut at lunchtime on Saturday, 4 May, but this never materialised.\textsuperscript{551} Dukas, according to Durand, was unperturbed by these setbacks. He remained calm throughout rehearsals and when faced with the news that Leblanc’s illness would delay production of the opera.\textsuperscript{552} Nor is there any record of the composer’s dissatisfaction with Carré’s less than lavish production values.\textsuperscript{553} Even more surprising is the fact that by the eve of Ariane’s debut, Carré and Maeterlinck appear to have been on good terms with one another. That day, the director confided to Dukas that the dramatist had written him a ‘delicious’ letter.\textsuperscript{554}

**General critical reception**

Finally presented at the Opéra-Comique on 10 May 1907, Ariane generated a host of musical and cultural debates. It is immediately clear that most commentators paid scant attention to the composer’s plea in the \textit{Pelléas} article to examine the work as a singular musical-dramatic entity. (Composer-critics proved the main exception.) Instead, writers variously expounded on the substance of Dukas’s music, the libretto, the quality of Leblanc’s performance and what the work signified for the French operatic tradition, especially in light of \textit{Pelléas}. The parameters of discussion extended beyond art to encompass the respective social and political subjects of feminism and nationalism. Interest in the work was not confined to France. Three

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\textsuperscript{550} Benoit-Jeannin, \textit{Leblanc}, 260. ‘Les répétitions ne commencèrent pas avant février 1907, ce qui repoussait la date de la première représentation à la mi-avril.’

\textsuperscript{551} \textit{Ibid.}, 261.

\textsuperscript{552} Jacques Durand, \textit{Quelques souvenirs d’un Éditeur de musique} (Paris: Durand, 1924), 128. ‘Une très fâcheuse grippe vint atteindre la principale interprète et obligea la direction à remettre à plusieurs semaines la première [...]. Je me souviens du calme avec lequel Paul Dukas apprit la nouvelle de la remise.’

\textsuperscript{553} Richard Aldrich, ‘Paul Dukas’s New Opera,’ \textit{New York Times}, 26 May 1907. ‘The scenic outfit, while it has features of beauty, is by no means so brilliant and perfectly co-ordinated as much that M. Carré […] has given to other operas of less substantial quality.’

\textsuperscript{554} Carnet W50 (11), BNF. Carré wrote to Dukas on 9 May 1907: ‘Maeterlinck m’a écrit une lettre délicieuse (sic).’
months after the premiere, it was reported in the United States that *tout Paris*, ‘which prides itself on its intelligence and progressiveness’ was discussing the new work and its playwright’s ‘idea of women.’ The nationalist perspective sprung from the contemporaneous Paris debut of Richard Strauss’ *Salome*, at the Théâtre du Châtelet, 8 May 1907. As Raoul Aubry pointed out, some critics could only celebrate the merits of a French composer by diminishing those of a German musician. Victor Debay was an example of such a critic who chose to underscore nationalist associations, aligning Dukas with the more ‘beautiful, sincere and noble music’ of the two operas.

The majority of critics enthusiastically applauded Dukas’s music, if not the entire opera. Catherine Lorent puts it succinctly:

> If the work did not meet with total unanimity in the press, it was essentially down to Maeterlinck’s libretto, because the musical score, orchestral execution and stage sets won practically everybody’s approval.

The score was particularly praised for contributing to the emerging French operatic canon. As Julie McQuinn illustrates, critics proclaimed *Ariane* ‘a victory for French music’ and a ‘deliverance’ from Wagner. Having identified nationalist content within the music itself, deemed to be reminiscent of elegant French classicism, it seems that observers were less inclined to scrutinise the substance of the underlying text. Instead, key terms in Maeterlinck’s original play such as ‘deliverance’ and ‘victory’ were exploited by the press to extend the perceived patriotic reach of the composition.

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557 Catherine Lorent, ‘Echos de la presse après la création’, *L’Avant-scène opéra*, 1992, 149/50, 70-73. ‘Si l’ouvrage n’a pas fait totalement de la presse, il faut essentiellement mettre en cause le livret de Maeterlinck, car la partition musicale, l’exécution orchestrale et la mise en scène rallièrent pratiquement tous les suffrages.’ (70)
558 Julie McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses of Gender and Sexuality at the Opéra-Comique during the Belle Epoque,’ (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2003) 304.
In contrast, the rest of the libretto was judged by many as unsuitable for the stage. Albert Blavinhac complained that the subject was 'without dramatic action' and that the performance completely lacked 'scenic interest.'^559 Similarly, Jean Marnold pounced on weaknesses in character depiction:

One experiences neither emotion, terror, nor even any captivating interest in the spectacle or in the adventures of characters as little alive as possible.^560

Georges Servières, meanwhile, wondered at Dukas's ability to triumph despite 'so thankless a subject.'^561 At the opposite end of the critical spectrum, Fauré's eager and substantial investigation of the libretto in his 1907 review appears to be the only one of its kind. Of course, Maeterlinck's play also proved a convenient means of connecting *Ariane* to *Pelléas*, but most writers were alert to the differences between Debussy's speech-oriented opera and Dukas's more Germanic work.^562

For many people, the libretto—even when sung—was considered secondary to the symphonic range of the opera. A trace of resentment that it was allowed to participate at all in this display of serious, vital French classicism may be detected. In fairness to those who hypothesized a model of nationalist music based upon Dukas's formal approach, the accompanying text with its subtleties, passive personalities (apart from Ariane) and shadowy inconsistencies may well have seemed incongruent with the potency of the music. Moreover, commentators such as Henry de Busne and Louis Laloy protested that much of what the main character said was irrelevant, not just to the above agenda, but to any idea. De Busne intimated that he might be more favourably disposed towards the heroine 'if she spoke a little less,' and 'did not

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559 Albert Blavinhac, *Le National* and *La République française*, 11 May 1907. (Quoted in Lorent)
560 Jean Marnold, *Le Mercure de France*, 15 June 1907. (Quoted in Lorent)
561 Georges Servières, *La Revue de Paris*, 1 June 1907. (Quoted in Lorent)
churn out insipid phrases to her companions, such as “where do you hide your divine arms?”.

The ambivalent response to the text was not restricted to its printed form. A point of contention arose regarding Leblanc’s account of the heroine. Lesure notes that ‘nearly all the critics underlined the insufficiency of [her] voice.’ However, those who otherwise enjoyed the opera overcame this problem in one of two ways. Some chose to overlook the libretto altogether and to venerate the composer as a symphonist, while others latched on to Leblanc’s undisputed acting talent as sufficient to portray the character of Ariane. In any case, both scenarios meant splitting the opera into its musical matter and literary substance, with many writers feeling no obligation to unite the two. This was hardly the kind of critical consensus helpful to Dukas’s agenda of creating a unified artwork.

Nonetheless, Ariane garnered much praise from fellow musicians. In Paris, Alfred Bruneau and Fauré published enthusiastic reviews on 11 May, while the latter also published a contemplative reassessment of the work following its revival in 1921. Bruneau observed that the score’s ‘extreme subtlety of melody and harmony’ was necessitated by Maeterlinck’s subject and offered Dukas his ‘frank admiration.’ Fauré, much taken with the image of light in the work (as was Messiaen in his critique from 1936), claimed that the music provided

part of the light that makes the physiognomies of the characters better known to us, part of the emotion that unites us closely to their actions and makes their words more vibrant, more alive.

564 Lesure, ‘Notes et Documents,’ 93. ‘Toutes ou presque soulignent l’insuffisance de la voix de Georgette Leblanc.’
566 Fauré, Opinions musicales, 40.
Profoundly impressed, he also acclaimed ‘the noble sentiment, the generous, human thought that animates the entire score.’ As for the opinions of musicians further afield, following the opera’s Viennese debut in 1908 a congratulatory telegram was dispatched to Dukas from members of Schoenberg’s circle—and traces of Ariane’s variation and cyclic structures would later be detected in Berg’s Wozzeck.

Thirteen years after its first performance, d’Indy declared Ariane ‘the most potent manifestation of dramatic music since Wagner’ and blamed the public’s inability to appreciate ‘true beauty’ as the reason for its rare appearances on the stage. As we shall see, though, some critics were also unable to grasp the aesthetic essence of the work because they preferred to cling to the musical architecture alone.

**The symphonic view**

Previous doctoral dissertations have produced rich musical analyses of Ariane. Everett Vernon Boyd, like most commentators, takes the score’s symphonic construction as his departure point and, therefore, aspects such as formal, contrapuntal and thematic structures receive much attention. He also probes the dramatic symbolism of motifs, key relationships and tonal states. The subterranean chant scene towards the end of Act I is made the subject of specific focus due to discernible signs of carefully planned Symbolic intent during one of the opera’s more musically conservative moments.

While the score takes precedence for Boyd, William Angus Moore delves further into ‘the relationship of text to music and Dukas’s symphonic approach to

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568 For the full text of the telegram, see Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ 179.
composition.\footnote{Moore, 'Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,' 203.} Situating the work in a Wagnerian context, he shows that Ariane's main symphonic quality is 'the motivic-developmental process that is present throughout the work' and that continuous thematic evolution reveals 'the inner truth' of the drama.\footnote{Ibid., 238–9.} Moore traces the progression of the central motif, which he labels 'Freedom,' yet reminds us that Dukas's goal was not 'to compose a work based solely on a series of leitmotifs' but 'to create meaningful drama through musical inspiration and active symphonic development.'\footnote{Ibid., 258.}

His analysis of the libretto illustrates that the drama also hinges on the composer's appropriation of Maeterlinck's text. As we see in chapter one, some of Dukas's modifications are indeed sourced in what might be termed 'musical inspiration' as they serve to amplify the vocal lyricism. Others are of symphonic structural importance, such as the third-act interpolations which establish correspondences between the opening and closing acts. These changes are dramatically essential too, though, as they reflect how Dukas's Ariane character differs from Maeterlinck's heroine—something set out by the composer early in Act I.

As befits an analysis devoted to the music-text relationship, Moore considers the setting of the opera's vocal parts first of all. For the most part, Ariane is set in 'a strictly syllabic and declamatory manner' that imitates the inflection of speech.\footnote{Ibid., 223.} The one exception occurs in the subterranean chant scene, when Bluebeard's other wives sing 'Les cinq filles d'Orlamonde,' which is performed as a set-piece within the opera. The general relationship of the libretto to the vocal and orchestral parts is summed up as follows:

\footnote{Moore, 'Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,' 203.}
\footnote{Ibid., 238–9.}
\footnote{Ibid., 258.}
\footnote{Ibid., 223.}
The immediate subject matter is conveyed by the voices, whereas the orchestra is charged with portrayal of the emotional meaning and unspoken associations. [...] The vocal line is an added melodic element superimposed on the motivic material that is reserved for the instruments.  

His conclusion that Dukas conceived of opera ‘as symphony’ is problematic. Moore, though, is far from unique here: Boyd alludes to this position, while Grout openly subscribes to it.

The earliest reviewers of Ariane describe its composer as a ‘symphonist’ (Octave Maus) and its text as ‘superfluous’ (Laloy). Dukas was extolled for his ‘unoperatic operatic style.’ What did it mean in for French critics in 1907 to appropriate symphonic rhetoric to discuss an opera or music-drama? In order to answer this we must first consider what the symphony stood for in French musical circles at this time. Vincent d’Indy, whom Dukas deeply admired, was at the forefront of the revival of the symphony in France in the 1890s, and, well into the 1920s, his immense contribution to the revitalised genre was lauded by contemporary French musicians. His history of the symphony, as presented to the students of the Schola Cantorum and in his writings, endorsed Beethoven, Wagner and Franck as its mainstays. Apart from the inclusion of Franck, this view was virtually identical to Dukas’s. Brian Hart accounts for d’Indy’s interest in Franck as follows:

[He] brought the [Wagnerian] leitmotiv into musique pure through the medium of the cyclic symphony, a work founded upon a lucid tonal plan (Beethoven’s legacy).

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574 Ibid., 226.
575 Ibid., 238.
576 Moore quotes Grout, A Short History of Opera (503) on 238 in support of this view. Grout: Ariane is ‘less an opera than a huge symphony with the addition of choruses (essential to the drama, not mere embellishments) and solo voices.’
577 Octave Maus, L’Art moderne, 12 May 1907; Louis Laloy, La Chronique des Arts, 18 May 1907.
578 McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses,’ 305.
580 Ibid., 242.
Since Franck had reconstructed the symphony as pure music, d'Indy defined the genre thus:

‘The Symphony...consists of an exclusively orchestral composition in which each instrument, according to its nature, plays a role of importance equal to that of the others. Being exclusively orchestral, the Symphony is thereby opposed to any notion of literary or poetic programme, scenic or mimed representation, [and] the delivery or declamation of any speech; it represents the musical form most totally opposed to that of the Drama.’

The very last claim certainly contradicted Dukas’s attitude but the idealism of d’Indy’s symphonic utopia, as evidenced by this element of the Ariane reception, was enthusiastically welcomed in musical circles.

Part of the reason for this undeniably stemmed from the fact that a substantial number of critics were motivated by nationalist objectives. In vaunting Ariane as a symphony, its clear, ordered, proportional architecture could be celebrated—and patriotically linked to older French classicists, such as Rameau. All the same, the composer was drawn anyway to logical, balanced and symmetrical forms (as encountered in Polyeucte and L’Apprenti Sorcier). That this was commented on may be innocently construed as an acknowledgment of his musical methods. The remarkable consistency of his structural approach is evidenced by the fact that the quasi sonata-rondo plans of the aforementioned programmatic pieces survive in Ariane. Mary Joanne Renner Heath has produced a formal analysis of the work whereby Act I is the exposition, Act II and the beginning of Act III the development, with the remainder of Act III functioning as a recapitulation. However, the extent to which writers in 1907 sought solace in the ‘purity’ of a symphonic structure

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581 Vincent d’Indy, ‘La Symphonie proprement dite,’ in Cours de composition musicale, ii/2, 100, quoted in Hart, ‘D’Indy,’ 242 (emphases in original text).
582 Hart (244) writes that ‘d’Indy’s blueprint for the symphony poorly reflected actual practice.’
583 See McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourse,’ 305–6, for more on the ‘Classical’ critiques of Ariane.
indicates more than anything, it seems, a desire to minimise discussion of the libretto.

Laloy posited the intriguing idea that rather than resembling a symphony, *Ariane* was ‘comparable to a symphonic poem, embellished with songs.’ In permitting the work a vestige of poetic significance but in stripping it of its verbal authority, he succeeded in silencing its characters—specifically, the heroine Ariane. The ideologically charged tactic of dismissing the textual details while advocating its themes of freedom and autonomy freed the critic from engaging with the feminist undertones in the text, an aspect of *Ariane* that perplexed some commentators at the time of its premiere. Moore, while not adopting the same stance, argues that the work is basically symphonic and hence deprives the voices of musical agency. One might expect that his investigation into Dukas’s modified libretto could undermine this position, as the very action brings the sung drama into the spotlight. However, he interprets his main findings (the third-act interpolations) primarily in a structural, rather than literary, context.

*Ariane*, Robert Orledge writes, is ‘wrongly seen as a successor [to *Pelléas*], as its symphonic development in the orchestra is of a more solid and Germanic nature.’ The orchestral music is rightly characterised as symphonic; to describe the opera as a whole in this way, though, is to overlook the vital role of the text in accomplishing dramatic effect. Recent studies of the work have addressed this fact, notably Anya Suschitzky’s essay ‘Dukas, the Light and the Well.’ In evoking the women’s ‘lonely wandering’ she demonstrates that the subterranean song (one of Laloy’s ‘embellishments’) actually ‘encapsulates a situation the larger operatic plot

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585 Laloy, ‘Ariane et Barbe-Bleue,’ *Chronique des Arts*.
586 Moore, ‘Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,’ 222.
attempts to resolve.\textsuperscript{589} The confinement of pivotal musical moments to those within the symphonic frame leads to the neglect of other important occasions.

Elsewhere, Suschitzky notes that the protagonist ‘speaks in images of power [...] while her vocal line [...] strides confidently to the top of her range.’ In other words, ‘both music and words emphasise that Ariane will not wait in helpless resignation.’\textsuperscript{590} The text-music exchange is further evident in Act II, when one of the wives is identified as Mélisande, thus presaging Dukas’s quotation of Debussy’s ‘Mélisande motif’ in the orchestra.\textsuperscript{591} Thus, to some extent the text cues musical action, as occurs in \textit{L’Apprenti Sorcier}, but typically the libretto enjoys a more pervasive presence in the work. It is, therefore, misleading to categorise the opera as a kind of elaborate symphony.

A similar concern was voiced by Fauré when he revisited \textit{Ariane} in 1921. Quoting the writer Catulle Mendès, he endorsed his view that:

‘Paul Dukas’s concert success must not prevent it being noticed that this work [\textit{Ariane}] is absolutely vocal, and theatrical in the noblest sense of the word.’\textsuperscript{592}

Fauré lamented that a public ‘inclined towards classification’ was reluctant to embrace the symphonist ‘who takes it into his head to write for the theatre.’\textsuperscript{593} From the foregoing critiques it may be observed that this attitude affected the reception of \textit{Ariane}. This is especially regrettable in light of the composer’s intense contemplation of the music in tandem with the text.

\textsuperscript{589} Ibid., 134.
\textsuperscript{590} Ibid., 134 (emphasis mine).
\textsuperscript{591} Ibid., 135.
\textsuperscript{592} Fauré, 4 May 1921, \textit{Opinions musicales}, 42.
\textsuperscript{593} Ibid.
Analysis of drama in the music of *Ariane*

For all its intricate involvement with the text, the musical structure of *Ariane*, like that of *Polyeucte* and *Sorcier*, is predicated on a tonal plan to ensure unity. As Boyd points out, the plan is basically as follows.\(^{594}\)

**Figure 18: Basic tonal plan of *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act I</th>
<th>Act II</th>
<th>Act III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F sharp minor – F sharp major</td>
<td>E flat (D sharp) minor – B major * F sharp major*</td>
<td>F sharp minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each section, there is huge scope for experimentation. Rather like *Sorcier*, the central panel of the work is the most unstable: it open in E flat minor and closes on B major. F sharp major, however, becomes a focal point as a result of its dramatic correspondences. The change of key signature here coincides with Ariane’s reference to a ‘halo of light’ around Mélisande’s hair.\(^{595}\) Both the opening and closing measures of the music-drama consist of tonally obscure fifths in F sharp. Moore offers a summary of relationships between key and event in *Ariane*: F sharp minor represents the ‘Castle, Darkness, the world of Bluebeard’; F sharp major symbolises ‘Diamonds, light’; C major is also associated with light; B major suggests ‘Freedom’; but D sharp minor/E flat minor depict the trapped wives.\(^{596}\) Boyd explicates the key-idea interaction further: the numerous changes of key signature in acts one and two are linked to the attendant textual cues.\(^{597}\) He rightly recognises that in the first act the discovery of each type of jewel is indicated by a different key, while in the second act, alternate keys signify different kinds of light. In contrast, Act III stays within an F sharp minor key signature for the duration.

\(^{594}\) Boyd, 186–7.
\(^{595}\) Ibid., 186.
\(^{596}\) Moore, 267.
\(^{597}\) Boyd, 186.
It is clear that the key scheme is one of the main methods by which the music procures drama from what was once an extremely static play, largely devoid of action. The systematic development and variation of very few themes, as is the case with *Polyeucte* and *Sorcier*, contained within a fairly conservative tonal system would simply have been inadequate to convey the depth of the symbolic associations present in the Dukas-Maeterlinck libretto. Furthermore, the conflicts presented in this music-drama are much more nuanced that is the case in either of the previous programmatic pieces. Hence, the composer required a palette of musical colours to convey a range of subtle ideas. Symbolic expression extends beyond keys and key signatures to incorporate several motifs. All introduced in the first act, they are treated symphonically throughout. These and the key schemes shall be chronologically examined in order to ascertain the progress of the *Ariane* music-drama.

The work opens with a short prelude that encapsulates three motifs. The first is widely agreed to stand for the fearful world of Orlamonde (Fear); the second, Freedom (and Ariane by association); and the third, Bluebeard.\(^{598}\)

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\(^{598}\) Georges Favre, *L'œuvre de Paul Dukas* (Paris: Durand, 1969) (62–3) categorises the motifs as follows: 'Le premier [...] semble évoquer le mystère de ce massif et somptueux château de Barbe-Bleue. [...] Le second [...] est lié vraisemblablement à la pure figure d’Ariane. [...] La stature imposante de Barbe-Bleue se reflète dans le troisième motif, d’une énergie pesante.'
Example 24: ‘Fear’

Example 25: ‘Freedom’
After this (piano score, p. 5) Dukas uses the first appearance of text—the peasants' shouts to Ariane and her Nurse as they travel to Bluebeard’s castle—to confirm F sharp minor and to indicate the nature of vocal and instrumental interaction. The orchestra is advised to regulate its role in accordance with the movement and expression of the choir. In aligning the two so closely together, he gradually draws the text into the instrumental realm of expression. This culminates in virtually none of the opera’s motifs being presented vocally, with the one important exception to this rule, the wives’ song ‘Les cinq filles d’Orlamonde,’ arising out of extra-musical circumstances.

The entrance of Ariane and the Nurse is marked by a new motif. Just before the Nurse asks ‘where are we?’ (p.27) a whole-tone motif, similar to a fragment on p.

599 Paul Dukas, Ariane et Barbe-Bleue, piano and vocal score (Paris: Durand, 1907), 5. ‘La progression se règlera sur elle du mouvement et de l’expression du chœur’.
16, is heard (p. 26). As it is played, the peasants continue to warn the women of impending danger: ‘à mort!’

**Example 27: ‘Danger’**

![Example 27: ‘Danger’](image)

It permeates the next two pages.

Just as the Nurse tells Ariane ‘I told you so, he is mad, it’s death,’ (p. 30) a motif that will come to be identified as part of the wives’ Orlamonde song is heard. Immediately after this, the Nurse sings ‘he has killed five women’ in a moment of unaccompanied recitative. The recitative continues as Ariane says her first words: ‘they are not dead’ (‘elles ne sont pas mortes’). On ‘mortes’ (p. 31) the music calmly recommences a new chordal motif that is associated with Ariane, but shares intervallic, tritonal resemblances with the Bluebeard motif.

**Example 28: ‘Ariane’**

![Example 28: ‘Ariane’](image)

This is the first hint of what Dukas termed in 1910 the couple’s ‘particularly interesting’ relationship. Unsurprisingly, it reappears on the next page (p. 32) to accompany Ariane’s statement: ‘He loves me, I am beautiful.’ When she chastises

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600 Paul Dukas, ‘*Ariane et Barbe-Bleue: Moralité à la façon des contes de Perrault,*’ (1910) *Ecrits,* 623–7 (624). ‘Ce rapport d’Ariane et de Barbe-Bleue est particulièrement intéressant.’
the other women for having made a mistake, for hesitating in their attempt to escape, she aligns herself with Bluebeard’s mentality rather than the women’s plight through the reappearance of the music (p. 32). The first entrance of the Freedom motif in relation to Ariane occurs as she sings: ‘we are now in the gallery next to the room where his love awaits me.’ This motif becomes amplified as she goes on to mention that he has handed her six silver keys and one gold key—and that it is only the final one that interests her. Proclaiming that she will ‘throw away the six others and guard only this one,’ the music sounds a new idea on ‘celle-ci.’

Example 29: ‘Celle-ci’

As we saw in chapter two, Dukas changed the word ‘dernière’ to ‘celle-ci,’ presumably thinking it more dramatic. In any case, the musical importance of what Ariane has just announced is justly stressed (it continues pp. 36–7).

The symbolism of Ariane’s words is thrown into relief against the Nurse’s ordinary use of ‘celle-ci’ (p. 38). Attempting to find the key that will unlock the first door, permutations of the Freedom motif materialise. The doors slide back to reveal amethysts, and ‘Freedom’ assumes an expanded form for this and the remainder of the jewel scene. The new motivic variant coincides with a key signature change to G sharp minor (p. 40). The second door reveals sapphires and A flat major (p. 46). The key of C represents the pearls that lie behind the third door (p. 50).
Immediately prior to this is one of Dukas’s important first-act changes: ‘the time to *act* is rare and fleeting’ (‘l’heure où l’on peut *agir* et rarer et fugitive’), p. 49. Paired with the symbolic purity of the pearls and the C key, the composer moulds Maeterlinck’s Ariane to his vision of a ‘supernaturally good’ being, as he described her in 1910. In addition, the crucial term *agir* is deliberately underlined with a brief variant of the foreboding ‘Fear’ motif, which is almost immediately subsumed into the light of the C major occasion. Dukas’s musical imagery grows with the opening of the fourth door. Unleashing a flood of emeralds (and the key of D), the pure green brilliance of the jewels is pre-empted by a simple V-shaped pattern in the score, with the parts moving naturally, in scale-like contrary motion (p. 51). The proximity of D to C also suggests that women are approaching the tantalising ‘true’ light of knowledge, as Ariane sees it. The nurse’s exclamation: ‘Oh! These are greener than spring,’ with its emphasis on the effects of nature and light confirms this.

A different effect is achieved by the treasures behind the fifth door. Now in the key of B flat, the orchestra is charged with depicting ‘a tragic cascade of rubies,’ which the Nurse refuses to touch (pp. 55–6). The cascade of rubies is likened to blood, but Ariane is not deterred by this. She reassures her Nurse that the appearance of this ‘menace’ means that they are approaching ‘the goal.’ To know is to take risks, it is clarified, and this is where Ariane’s companions hesitate: they are unwilling to leave that which is safe and familiar.

Now anxious about what the final permitted door will yield, the Nurse’s comments are accompanied (p. 57) by the bare fifths of the prelude that suggest the fearful unknown. Finally this gives way to the dazzling contrast of F sharp major that signifies the penetrating clarity of the diamonds spilling from the opened door. Even Ariane is impressed, as is signified by her outburst: ‘Oh! My clear diamonds!’
Notably, the word 'clair' is sustained for almost a bar of white-note music (p. 60). This creates an unusual concordance between the tritonally-separated keys of F sharp and C, as they represent the glowing lustre of the diamonds and pearls. Throughout this section Ariane describes the diamonds as light and pure, and likens them to stars and flames that 'penetrate all.' The radiant reflection of the diamonds is poetically suggested through the fusion of text and notes (p. 62). Ariane is elated that the diamonds 'illuminate her arms,' and as she rests on the word 'bras' the lower instruments play a mirrored sequence. A recurrence of the white-note music coincides with a repeat of the word 'clair' (p. 62, third system). Towards the end of this part (p. 65, last system, p. 66, first system), Ariane's line briefly doubles the chromatic melodic movement in the orchestra. This rare moment of the voice and text cutting through the density of the amassed instrumental sound symbolises on another level that which is already separately expressed in Maeterlinck's words 'penetrate all.'

The key/door relationship continues, with the diamonds illuminating the seventh, forbidden portal. Thus, F sharp gives way to C (p. 68). The softer glow of the pearls, also in C, and the path lit by the reflected, illusory light of the diamonds stands diametrically opposed to the inextinguishable brightness of those jewels represented by F sharp. The nurse is reluctant to explore the forbidden chamber, so Ariane advises her to stay behind, explaining that she 'wishes to go alone anyway.' The message of autonomy in the text resonates in Ariane's unaccompanied recitative (p. 70).

The introduction to the appearance of the five trapped women is compellingly based on the prelude to the entire opera. Parallel fifths reference the mysterious, otherworldly atmosphere of the beginning, suggesting that Ariane has not travelled
far in her quest for truth but has simply sunk further into the depths of Bluebeard’s realm. This point coincides with the drama delving into Maeterlinck’s previous œuvre, with the entrance of Mélisande, Séllysette, Bellangère, Ygraine and Alladine. They begin ‘Les cinq filles d’Orlamonde’ quietly in D sharp minor, in the shadows of the F sharp radiance. Ariane’s separation from this world is emphasised through the performative nature of their chant, which includes melismatic writing (p. 72, first system). Their song consists of motifs I and II which both recur separately in the work. It is hardly a coincidence that along with Polyeucte and Sorcier, Dukas makes one of the work’s most dramatic statements using the now-familiar interval of a fifth (Ex. 30). It is possible that the composer’s tendency to cling tenaciously to music’s historical roots in his critiques instilled in him a similar approach to his own output.

**Example 30: ‘Orlamonde,’ I**

![Example 30: ‘Orlamonde,’ I](image)

(page 72, first system)

**Example 31: ‘Orlamonde,’ II**

![Example 31: ‘Orlamonde,’ II](image)

(page 73, second and third systems)

Unable to see the other women when their song begins, Ariane and the Nurse continue their conversation in their speech-like style. Once more, the individual autonomy of Ariane is thrown into relief. Like the villagers earlier, the women sing together, bleakly, of their helplessness. In fact, the very act of singing signifies their passivity. It is notable that Ariane only bursts into what could really be classified as song when she is overwhelmed—by the diamonds, for example. We cannot overlook
Dukas’s use of the voice as an instrument of clarity, of diction and ultimately of dramatic direction. As the song increases in volume, the Nurse admonishes Ariane to close the door of the vault. Here, the heroine (as we saw in chapter two) insists that she does not want to (p.73, last system). In Maeterlinck’s text, Ariane was unable to (‘je ne peux pas’), but Dukas’s protagonist is more outspoken. All this time the chant continues, and eventually draws Bluebeard to the room.

A variant of the Bluebeard motif first played in the orchestral prelude returns leitmotivically for the character’s appearance. Like Ariane, Bluebeard sings his first words ‘vous aussi?’ (‘you too?’) unaccompanied. A variant of ‘Freedom’ anticipates Ariane’s response: ‘moi surtout’ (‘especially me’). Later, the foreboding parallel fifths of the opera’s first bars coincide with Ariane’s comment to Bluebeard that only one of the women who had suffered under his regime for so long deserved it—a complicated, uneasy suggestion that the pair enjoy a ‘tacit complicity,’ as Dukas put it in 1910.601 Back in F sharp major, Bluebeard explains to Ariane that she can be happy if she relinquishes her wish to know. Her reaction, ‘happiness...the happiness that I want cannot live in the shadows,’ begins unaccompanied, but on ‘veux’ (p. 79), the chordal motif belonging to her very first word, ‘mortes,’ returns. Ariane appears to internalise her reaction to Bluebeard as hinging on a juxtaposition of death and happiness, which surely refers to what the composer called her ‘interior drama.’

Following a brief reprise of the peasants’ chorus (p. 81)—a Dukas invention which balances the act nicely—an unaccompanied Ariane tells the crowd that they are not needed, as Bluebeard has not hurt her (p. 83). A gentle reminiscence of the Orlamonde song and the parallel fifths from the prelude close the act—in F sharp major (p. 85).

601 ‘Moralité,’ 625, ‘une sorte de complicité tacite.’
The Act II prelude, in E flat minor, continues the polarisation of autonomous-collective and powerful-passive through alternating the Orlamonde chant with one that is best described as a composite of the Ariane chordal motif and Bluebeard’s motif. Whereas the Freedom motif is ubiquitous in the first act, now the Orlamonde song dominates. Wandering through a hall, Ariane eventually discovers the other women. The music changes to C sharp minor (p. 93). A new motif, described by Moore as ‘resignation,’ arrives with one of the composer’s text changes (p. 97, first system). However, this is opposed to the composer’s interpolated text for Ariane that it supports: ‘What life has suddenly sprung from the shadows! Here are the sparkles in your eyes and your breath on my hands!’ Alongside Orlamonde II, this new idea is also central to Act II.

Ariane’s entreaties to the wives remain in C sharp minor. When Séllysette tentatively responds, though, the music reverts back to E flat minor, enharmonically D sharp minor, the key associated with the women’s captivity (p. 105). Having reassured Séllysette and Ygraine about the possibility of escape, Ariane is distracted by the sight of a different woman, ‘who peers at her through her flames of hair’ and the music modulates to F sharp major (p. 109). A further change to E major and a quotation from Debussy’s Pelléas anticipates Séllysette’s confirmation that this person is Mélisande. Bellangère is uneventfully introduced. With Ariane’s word ‘la pauvre’ to describe the mute, exotic Alladine, the Resignation motif returns (p. 111).

Having become acquainted with the women, Ariane announces to the group that she alone has brought ‘good news,’ which musically heralds B major (p. 114, second system). She speaks of the light of day, nature, and birdsong—the latter is suitably imitated through a permutation of the Freedom motif (p. 115). The

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monologue is interrupted when a drop of water extinguishes Ariane’s lamp and plunges the room into darkness—and the music into E flat minor (p. 119). Separating these tonal centres is the protagonist’s unaccompanied ‘where are you?’ Soon Ariane spots a growing glimmer of light, and the next two bars present a figure rooted in the orchestral bass (but not too deeply) that ascends over two and a half octaves. This figure is revisited (p. 123) when Dukas modifies Ariane’s text with a declaration that she has reached the top of the vault. When prised open ‘a pale light’ illuminates the immediate area, but Ariane insists that ‘this is not yet the true light.’ Just as the pearls and the reflected radiance on the heroine’s arms were in the first act suggested by C major, this is too (p. 127). The other bolts and windows are finally forced open; natural light floods the chamber and a permutation of ‘Freedom’ presages a return to B major. Now able to see their surroundings, the wives heed Ariane’s example and go outside. The act climaxes with a glorious, triumphant rendition of the Orlamonde chant. A symphonic postlude loosely based on ‘Freedom’ concludes the act in B major.

The prelude to Act III (starting p. 157) is characterised by the measured opening of the Orlamonde chant and an inverted, ascending-fifth variant of the chordal Ariane motif. Sélysette explains that Bluebeard had bewitched the castle to prevent their escape. That they are now unsure of the tyrant’s whereabouts is pointedly indicated by Mélisande’s unaccompanied question (p. 164) ‘Where did he go?’ In his absence, they chat. Ariane suggests that Bluebeard has gone to punish the guards who have rebelled against him, ‘unless his conscience or some other force has spoken’ (p. 166). On those slightly altered words of Dukas’s, a variant of the heroine’s chordal motif appears. Ariane reassures the women that she will not abandon them, but this music alludes to her inner turmoil (and, ultimately, she does
leave the women). Dukas’s own text (p. 168), ‘we are going to be free,’ places a particular accent on ‘libres,’ with the orchestral accompaniment echoing the melodic shape of the Freedom motif in that bar. More important than this is the permutation that manifests on the word ‘même’ (‘self’) as part of Ariane’s remark to Ygraine about Méliande’s hair (p. 171). Describing this natural beauty as ‘coming from herself,’ Ariane relates physical beauty to spiritual reawakening. Méliande’s resplendent hair is seen as a sign of personal rebirth. The motif is thus echoed (p.171) when Ariane questions Ygraine ‘But you yourself, what have you done?’ This is a clear indication that Dukas associated freedom with a higher calling, personal autonomy.

The major textual modifications occupy pp. 176–84 of the piano score. Dukas reverts to Maeterlinck’s ‘Truly, my young sisters...’ on p. 185. The changes call for a reprise of the music from the first act’s jewel scene, as much of the new conversation centres on Ariane sharing out the treasures amongst her friends. Before this begins on (p. 180), the composer explores the themes of nature and beauty encountered in the second act. With Méliande unable to tame the flowers so that they sit prettily in her hair, Dukas’s Ariane asks (p. 176): ‘You are beautiful and the flowers will not obey?’ They symbolise unyielding natural power—and ‘natural power’ is a quality Dukas attributed to Bluebeard in 1910. The music resembles the earlier birdsong motif and is perhaps intended to suggest the flowers. When Ariane then refers to Alladine’s exotic origins, her ‘island of fire,’ the woman’s alienation from the group is briefly underscored by pentatonic activity (p. 177). As soon as she says ‘ici’ the tonal realm is reinstated, and with the word ‘oiseaux’ a reminiscence of the birdsong figure sounds. The flower motif receives further repetition when
Dukas’s revised text explains that women must follow nature because ‘she translates for them the colours of the sun’ (p. 179).

The jewel scene reprise is brought about by Sélysette asking ‘what rings shall I choose?’ Ygraine is handed pearls and the music briefly changes to the corresponding key of C (although this is not indicated in the key signature). Mélisande’s sapphires are suggested not by the earlier related A flat, but by the relevant motif’s reappearance. Sélysette rejects Ariane’s offer of rubies in favour of emeralds, with the music responding to the latter (p. 183). Reminding us of the poetic symbolism of the emeralds, which the Nurse associated with the vitality of nature, Dukas’s Ariane cries that Sélysette’s choice pleases her because ‘life is returning.’ Bellangère wears the amethysts. Less literally repetitive of the related original jewel scene, her music is more motivically developed (p. 184). Unlike any of the other jewel reprises, the amethyst music simultaneously incorporates a variant of the slow Freedom motif. Now that the women have beautified themselves, Dukas’s Ariane believes that they are ready for the promised freedom (see ‘libres,’ p. 168). She speaks of their time in the darkness—‘Il n’avait que vos ombres’—; in the past tense (p. 186), just before the musically unaccompanied Nurse bursts in through the door warning of Bluebeard’s imminent return.

The tumultuous events outside the castle are rapidly described with minimal orchestral interference. Only when the plot has been clarified does the music resume its motivic trajectory. As the women rush to watch what happens to Bluebeard a portentous variant of the Freedom motif develops (p. 189, last system). The arrival of the antagonistic crowd is marked by an extended variant of the Fear motif first heard in the first-act prelude (p. 194). A different manifestation of this is presented (p. 200, last system) to coincide with the peasants’ violent attack on Bluebeard. Eventually
the shocked Nurse shouts out (p. 209) ‘Oh! They’re going to throw him in the moat!’

When the music resumes (p. 210) it is comparable to the peasants’ Act I opening chorus. Like that section, it involves the group crying out as a whole and develops into a satire on collective ineptitude of similar proportions. Although Dukas played down the possibility of satire in the music in 1910 because it would make it unintelligible, it is evident that it is present to a small degree. The women fear for Bluebeard’s life and value it more than their own freedom. Ironically, the villagers who try to break into the castle to save the women are an unwelcome interruption to their discussion about how they will save their tormentor.

Finally, Ariane decisively declares that she will ‘open the door’ to the crowd. This provides us with the final permutation of the Freedom motif, presented for the only time by a voice: Ariane’s voice (p. 216). One of the villagers greets Ariane with the news that they have brought the ‘assassin’ (Dukas’s word). As they set the now mute tyrant down, the bare fifths of the first-act prelude are played (p. 222, last system). As if to accentuate the fact that the character no longer poses a threat, Dukas adds: ‘There you go. He will not budge’ (p. 223, last system). Their conversation is unburdened with musical detail, but a combination of the Bluebeard and Fear motifs separate Ariane’s words of reassurance from the peasant’s advice to be careful (p. 224, last system). After the peasant leaves Ariane turns around to see the women tending to Bluebeard at the end of the hall. At this point, the music plays calm octaves, reminiscent of Bluebeard’s now defunct menacing motif, but the triad in the lower part has now been filled in and the bars are associated with Ariane (p. 227, last system).

Kneeling beside Bluebeard, Sélysette says ‘he has opened his eyes’ (p. 230). On the final word, the musical embodiment of the women’s imprisonment, the
Orlamonde song, is resurgent. A motif derived from the second act’s postlude complements this and grows in stature (pp. 230–2). Added to this is a short variant of the static Resignation motif to accompany Sélysette’s words (p. 233). The urgency of the second-act postlude music makes it a fitting accompaniment to Ariane’s attempts to untie Bluebeard. When she ‘cuts through the last of the cords’ (p. 237), an inverted version of the Fear motif suitably sounds. Ariane bids her former captor farewell and a variant of the resignation motif reappears. The undulating, non-directional quality of this music is maintained as the heroine implores, to no avail, the other wives to follow her (pp. 239–43). Alladine’s emotional reaction to Ariane’s exit is characterised slightly differently to the Orlamonde music (p. 244). ‘Orlamonde’ also underlines the protagonist’s very last words, ‘soyez heureuses’ (p. 246). The equation of this theme and the key of darkness, F sharp minor, with the other wives’ happiness at the end of the drama can only be regarded as highly disturbing.

We also hear the orchestral postlude as gloomy confirmation that the women have chosen the darkness of the unknown over the light of freedom; that, in fact, there has been no change in their outlook. The music resembles the first-act prelude in drawing on the melodic octave pattern and in omitting the third degree of the scale. The penultimate chord omits the third degree of the scale; the final sound is a bare octave. In this Dukas alludes to two worlds: the portentous, doomed terrain signified by F sharp minor and the realm of radiant freedom suggested by F sharp major. This is unlike Polyeucte, which clearly juxtaposes two possibilities at the end, or Sorcier, which resolves tonal conflict between the fifth and the third-centric leanings of the whole-tone scale with a minor third dyad. It is revealed that Ariane, in accordance with the complex symbolism of the drama, offers no straightforward
solution in musical terms, preferring the simultaneous barrenness and completeness of the octave.

The libretto and Leblanc

As my above analysis demonstrates, *Ariane* is a firmly integrated music-text entity, with both aspects of the work strongly interrelated to one another. Hence, it is encouraging that the one-sided symphonic approach has been remedied in recent years, with Suschitzky and McQuinn making the libretto a focal point of discussion. However, study of the work still denies its integrated music-text potency. Suschitzky, for example, prioritises the political and social values that were mapped onto the work above Dukas’s reaction to the text. McQuinn takes a radically different approach. Intently focused on the libretto and its potentially subversive feminist message, she conducts a reading of the opera which postulates Leblanc as the liberator Ariane, as the living embodiment of the character. I shall discuss Leblanc a little to explore the extent to which this is true. Ultimately, though, I demonstrate that her creative agency is subdued by the composer’s authorial voice, which speaks simultaneously through the music and text.

Not only was Leblanc Maeterlinck’s partner, but she also inspired the character of Ariane and played the lead role in the opera—the latter seems to have been a condition stipulated by the playwright. Leblanc was also a talented writer and a huge influence on Maeterlinck’s output; she was far more involved with the playwright’s œuvre than his limited, abstract acknowledgment suggests. The couple shared an intimate artistic bond. In 1912, for example, Leblanc claimed to have completed a drama five years earlier about a woman in a similar situation to Ariane:

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603 For a translation of a Maeterlinck dedication to Leblanc in 1906, see McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses,’ 318.
It concerns a woman who feels much bigger than the things around her, and does not succeed in conquering what she set out to conquer. She is rather trampled on. It is a big subject. It rather conquered me.  

Predictably, she felt a close affinity for *Ariane*. In January 1912, just prior to making her Mélisande operatic debut, in Boston, Leblanc declared:

> For its philosophy, I admire [*Ariane*] above all of the other of my husband’s plays. It is magnificently philosophical and poetic.

As we saw above, De Busne’s censure of the libretto targeted a conversation Ariane has with the other women, where she encourages them to be beautiful. Such frivolous, feminine banter apparently had no place in Dukas’s opera or in a play by as feted a figure as Maeterlinck. On that basis, Louis Laloy attacked phrases of dialogue such as the following:

> Oh! your big eyes hesitate as though they’ve seen death [...] And your small, bare arms tremble so sadly in waiting for love.

Decrying this output as ‘hardly worthy’ of as subtle a poet as Maeterlinck, the implications of this statement deserve consideration. Laloy seems to have sensed the inspiration of somebody else here—and ‘Madame Leblanc-Maeterlinck,’ as he referred to her, was surely the person he had in mind. Her ‘most disagreeable’ performance offended him as much as the quoted text, and, therefore, was another step in the identification of character with interpreter.

This personal connection was an explicit objective of Maeterlinck’s when he penned *Ariane*. Benoît-Jeannin comments that while Aglavaine from the play *Aglavaine et Sélysette* was a ‘failed homage’ to his lover, the playwright ‘fulfilled his
goal’ upon finishing Ariane.\textsuperscript{607} (Elsewhere Leblanc’s biographer likens Maeterlinck to Bluebeard in terms of his possessive attitude towards his partner.)\textsuperscript{608} Encompassed in the updated symbolist adaptation of the Bluebeard fairytale is an aspect of Leblanc’s personality that Maeterlinck greatly admired: her devotion to rescuing, or attempting to rescue, women in need. A complete chapter of Leblanc’s own memoirs recalls her experiences in this area.\textsuperscript{609} Thus, given the mounting evidence of Maeterlinck’s play as exemplifying Leblanc’s life experience, narrated at least partially in her own words, McQuinn concludes that Leblanc’s final step in claiming authorship of \textit{Ariane et Barbe-Bleue} was to perform the role, ‘to personally deliver a message to Paris.’\textsuperscript{610}

Aware that her musical shortcomings might hinder this goal, Leblanc beseeched Dukas for advice. (Following the premiere she wrote to him about her pleasure in performing the part.)\textsuperscript{611} Whatever the truth about Maeterlinck capturing the essence of Leblanc in the libretto alone, Dukas’s reinvention of it resonated with the singer so deeply that she became thoroughly absorbed in the role. Writing in April 1906 about her preparation for the performances, she described her total engrossment in the character:

I sing her, she draws herself to my eyes and I am dazzled [...] One cannot dream of a more luminous music, it’s wild, it’s blinding [...] I believe myself to be in front of an enormous mountain, up which I have to make myself climb slowly, wisely, with a thousand precautions.\textsuperscript{612}

She later told Dukas her method of learning the part: by comparing it to sculpture, something she had previously studied:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{607} Benoît-Jeannin, \textit{Leblanc}, 184.
\item \textsuperscript{608} Ibid., 185.
\item \textsuperscript{609} McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses,’ 321.
\item \textsuperscript{610} Ibid., 325.
\item \textsuperscript{611} See Lesure, ‘Notes et Documents.’
\item \textsuperscript{612} Benoît-Jeannin, \textit{Leblanc}, 258. ‘Je la chante, elle se dessine à mes yeux et je suis éblouie [...] On ne peut pas rêver une musique plus lumineuse, c’est fou, c’est aveuglant [...] Je crois être devant une énorme montagne qu’il me faut gravir lentement, sagement, avec mille précautions.’
\end{itemize}
To work on Ariane like one erects a statue, her marvellous logic does not at all permit one to become attached to the head without having at least constructed the body; and I would not dare to forget myself in her great wings if I did not have the right knowledge of the ground where she firmly lands her audacious feet. This is very symbolic language, but I see in it the very exact image of the particular work that is imposed upon me by the only great difficulty that I have with Ariane. This difficulty is for the voice in the tessitura parts of the role. They were inevitable; they are the voice of Ariane. It’s up to me to recognize this unity. It is necessary that the work mixes and merges without cease that which is, in sum, only separated by imagination [...] Don’t you believe this, as I do?613

Leblanc made no secret of her grand ambitions for Ariane, nor that she was troubled by her vocal weaknesses. That she was so mindful of her musical duty points to a stiff determination on her behalf not to surrender to the indulgent belief that, as Maeterlinck had designed the character for her, Ariane would come alive on stage with only a cursory consideration of the musical requirements. Like Dukas, she aspired to communicate a sense of musical and dramatic cohesiveness. Her awareness of the ‘inevitable’—that Ariane would never be enlivened except through music, and through the specific manner in which the composer rendered her—reveals an aesthetic remarkably similar to that espoused in the composer’s essays.614 Regardless of her input into Maeterlinck’s initial project, Leblanc was not naive about Dukas’s claim to the overall production.

In the aftermath of Ariane’s premiere, Henri de Curzon offered what we might regard as one of the most thoughtful assessments of Leblanc’s performance, given that a month prior to the opera he had published an analysis of the libretto on its own in the Guide musical. He summarised the singer’s contribution as follows:

613 Ibid. ‘[T]ravailler Ariane comme on élève une statue, sa logique merveilleuse ne permet point que l’on s’attache à la tête sans avoir au moins construit le corps et je n’oserai m’oublier en ses grandes ailes si je n’avais la juste connaissance du sol où se posent fermement ses pieds audacieux. Voilà une langage bien symbolique, mais j’y vois l’image bien exacte du travail une peu particulier que m’est imposé par la seule grande difficulté que je vois en Ariane. Cette difficulté est pour la voix dans les tessitures du rôle. Elles étaient inévitables, elles sont la voix d’Ariane. C’est à la mienne de retrouver l’unité. Il faut que le travail mêle et fonde sans cesse ce qui n’est en somme séparé que par l’imagination [...] Ne le croyez-vous pas comme moi?’

614 Dukas’s words on Pelléas above also suggest that the drama in the text is activated by the music.
[She] is the incarnation itself of her character, such that one cannot conceive
of it without her; and the weaknesses of her voice [...] are often compensated
for by diction of poetry and an articulation that leaves nothing to lose...not to
mention the harmony of the gesture and grace of her style.615

Another reviewer for Le Courrier musical expressed similar sentiments, overlooking
Leblanc’s musical deficiencies in praise of her evocation of ‘the generosity, the
pride, the joy of Ariane’s liberating mission, and also the sadness of her solitary
departure.’616 McQuinn concludes that ‘for an interpreter at the Opéra-Comique to
win over an audience of critics without singing for their admiration’ was an
extraordinary accomplishment. To Leblanc’s credit, she was unrelenting in her
dedication to the music. She organised a day-long salon dedicated to the opera,
which was not attended by the composer.617

Leblanc confided in Dukas six days after the premiere of Ariane her worry
that everything she felt able to offer this work of ‘total beauty’ would still be of
insufficient merit. Tactful as ever, Dukas graciously encouraged the actress, although
Benoit-Jeannin’s claim that gradually ‘he no longer heard or viewed Ariane except
through the voice and actions of Maeterlinck’s companion’ is doubtful.618 The truth
is that while the composer respected Leblanc’s cerebral approach to the role, he
quietly harboured reservations about her characterisation of it. François Lesure
recounts some of Dukas’s correspondence to this effect. After a production of Ariane
at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1909 the composer disclosed to Robert
Brussel that:

615 Henri de Curzon, Le Guide musical, 1907, quoted in Benoit-Jeannin, Leblanc, 264. ‘Elle est
l’incarnation même de son personnage qu’on ne peut concevoir sans elle; et les défaillances de sa
voie [...] sont souvent rachetées par une diction plein de poésie et une articulation qui ne laisse rien
perdre...sans parler de l’harmonie du geste et de la grâce à jeu’,

616 Benoit-Jeannin, Leblanc, 265: ‘la générosité, l’orgueil, la joie de sa mission libératrice et aussi la
tristesse de son départ solitaire.’ For further reviews, see Catherine Lorent, ‘Echos de la presse,’
71–2.

617 Leblanc, Souvenirs, 177. This is also mentioned in Katherine Worth, Theatre in Focus:
Maeterlinck’s Plays in Performance (UK: Chadwyck-Healey, 1985), 44.

618 Benoit-Jeannin, Leblanc, 260. ‘Il n’entendait et ne voyait plus Ariane que par la voix et sous les
traits de la compagne de Maeterlinck.’
We did not have the multiple intelligent intentions of Georgette here, but we did get to hear the character at last, a character that until now was reduced to a few sublime gestures and to a few less sublime hiccups.619

Unlike Maeterlinck and his partner, Dukas had never merged Leblanc’s personality with that of Ariane.

That Dukas differentiated his musical Ariane from the Maeterlinck-Leblanc text that inspired forms a substantial part of his claim to the work’s poetic authority. Therefore, I disagree with McQuinn’s claims about the extent of ‘the presence of Leblanc’s voice in Ariane et Barbe-Bleue.’ She states:

[Leblanc] claimed not only the role, but the entire work as hers and hers alone. She warned Dukas (via a third party) that Maeterlinck ‘isn’t touching and will never touch the text of Ariane. The musician will be free to accept the thing just as it is or to refuse it.’

McQuinn conveys the impression that the composer accepted Maeterlinck’s text wholesale for his musical setting, but this is not the case.622

Further conflating the Maeterlinck-Leblanc text with the Dukas Ariane, she continues:

The message of Ariane resonated with a freedom like no [Maeterlinck] work before it. […] In incorporating the characters from his previous plays, Maeterlinck places Ariane within the philosophical arena of the rest of this work. […] He thus emphasise the opera’s corrective nature.623

Ironically, McQuinn’s emphasis on the presence of Leblanc in Ariane leads her to the same verdict as those less informed about the woman’s connection with the work: that the opera text is indistinguishable from the libretto; that the original play is the sole bearer of dramatic symbolism in the opera.

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619 Lesure, ‘Notes et Documents,’ 93. “Nous n’avons pas eu les multiples intentions si intelligentes de Georgette, mais nous avons entendu enfin le personnage, réduit jusqu’ici à quelques gestes sublimes et à des hoquets moins sublimes.”

620 McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourse,’ 325.

621 Ibid., 323.

622 See chapter two of this thesis for analysis of Dukas’s changes to the libretto.

623 McQuinn, ‘Unofficial Discourses,’ 324–5, emphasis mine.
Certainly, Leblanc considered Maeterlinck's heroine the epitome of the modern woman, 'the daughter of the present.' Fascinatingly, Dukas's textual changes, far from interfering with a feminist aim, instead serve to enhance it. Chapter two clarified the nature of the composer's changes. It emerged that several of the alterations enhance the autonomy and standing of Ariane: she becomes more independent than Maeterlinck's text permits and recognises more than superficial beauty in her frightened companions—she sees the spark of life inside the women. These were precisely the qualities Leblanc yearned to see in other women. In an interview in 1912 she said:

There are, of course, two classes of women. There is the frivolous woman who thinks only of her clothes or society, and there is the woman of ideas. The truth of the matter is that Dukas's transformation of the libretto made Ariane more than a 'woman of ideas'; she became a woman of self-determination to a degree not at all explicit in Maeterlinck's text.

Authorial reflection after 1907

Dukas's essay, 'Ariane et Barbe-Bleue (Moralité à la façon des contes de Perrault),' was written for Robert Brussel in 1910 and published posthumously in La Revue musicale in 1936. It is uniquely valuable. Dukas never discussed his work in such detail anywhere else. The essay testifies to the composer's deep attachment to the opera: after all, it was not produced as an explanatory note in time for Ariane's debut or a similar occasion. These thoughts were recorded after the composer had time to reflect upon the opera, after its performance, after the attempted composition of other music-dramas. Thoroughly absorbed in the poetic creation of Ariane, Dukas devoted

626 See Appendix IV for my full translation of the article.
almost the entire essay to discussing dramatic aspects, only dwelling on the music to reiterate that it must relate to the staged action. The main areas he highlighted were: Ariane’s internal drama as brought about by her desire to liberate others; the polarity between the autonomous, active protagonist and the collective passivity of the wives; the ‘tacit complicity’ between Ariane and Bluebeard; the importance of structural symbiosis between the acts; and the poem’s satirical side. These will be considered below. As we saw above, critics initially responded to the theme of freedom in the opera, but Dukas marked this as a secondary issue: liberation in this drama is contingent upon each wife assertively rejecting Bluebeard—and ultimately they fail in this mission.

The composer’s first step towards rebuffing the notion that his operatic entity existed only in symphonic form and towards consolidating his poetic authority is indicated in the essay title. Choosing to ignore the Belgian writer’s ‘useless deliverance’ subtitle, as he did in the score, Dukas sourced his work in Perrault’s original Bluebeard fable. In emphasising the fairytale basis, he attempted to retrieve *Ariane* from the terrain of contemporary political readings. Suschitzky rightly argues that the social interpretation Dukas seemed most averse to was revealed when he insisted that the heroine does not ‘act out of feminist conviction.’ This is not because Dukas opposed female emancipation: rather, he perceived his opera as having an enduring, universal resonance, in much the same way that fairytales can. Soprano Geraldine Farrar was keenly aware of the feminist-fairytale dichotomy within *Ariane*.

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627 See Suschitzky and Catherine Lorent on the symbols of truth, light and freedom, which proved potent for French society in light of the Dreyfus Affair.

628 ‘Moralité,’ 624. ‘Ce n’est pas en vertu d’une conviction féministe qu’elle s’agit’; see also Suschitzky, ‘Dukas,’ 146.
Learning the main role for the opera’s American debut in 1911 she commented that ‘there are two ways of regarding Ariane’: 629

One can take every sentence, every action, to have a symbolic meaning, and the work becomes an allegorical satire on the feminist question. It isn’t exactly a suffragette matter. It is larger than that. The question is whether women […] should not be allowed to think for themselves, to know the truth, and to proceed logically from it. […] The other way of looking at it is simply to consider the drama as a fairy story, and a very pretty one at that, with forbidden doors, and cascades of jewels, all of the action taking place in a faraway castle in a faraway land. 630

It was Farrar’s plan to lean on the fairytale reading. ‘I have no intention of making Ariane a forcible woman,’ she said. 631 Her study of the music and her close working relationship with Dukas steered her in this direction.

Dukas assisted Farrar in 1910, the same year that he set forth the message of Ariane. The opera had been brought to the singer’s attention that summer in Salzburg. Having already heard the work, Toscanini enthusiastically encouraged Farrar to study it. Her mastery of the part, however, depended upon the composer’s advice. Remarking on the extreme difficulty of the role, she exclaimed:

The intervals are like nothing any one has invented before. Most of the music lies very low for a soprano, but there are passages in which the tessitura is very high. 632

The taxing vocal part was doubly problematic because she saw Ariane as a music-drama in which ‘it is all important that the words be understood.’ Her solution to the problem was to ‘half speak, half sing the notes.’ 633 She recalled Dukas’s reaction:

I laid this plan before Mr Dukas who had come to Salzburg to see me. I told him of the vast size of the Metropolitan, a very different theatre from the Opéra-Comique in Paris, […] and I asked him if he objected to my method of

629 Ariane et Barbe-Bleue had its transatlantic premiere at the New York Metropolitan Opera House in 1911, conducted by Arturo Toscanini and starring Geraldine Farrar. The feminist aspects of the opera registered substantial interest in the US, even before it was played, with several articles appearing on this topic in the New York Times between 1907 and 1912.


631 Ibid.

632 Ibid.

633 Ibid.
dealing with the music. He told me that he was delighted with it and when I went to Paris he came every night to see me, and we worked together for hours, going over the score many times together.\textsuperscript{634}

To improve Farrar's performance, Dukas marked her score 'most carefully' with the accents he desired and 'changed a few notes.'\textsuperscript{635} The singer concluded that she would 'place the essential emphasis on the diction,' repeating that 'every word of this play must be understood.'\textsuperscript{636}

Her account provides a useful contrast to Leblanc's, offering more accurate musical insights. The composer's active engagement with the interpreters of Ariane demonstrates the supreme value the vocal aspect of the lyric drama held for him. More precisely, Dukas's willingness to accommodate the various sopranos who struggled with the part seems to have sprung from a desire to produce the most dynamic music-text combination. A 1910 revival in Paris also incorporated some vocal rearrangements, which consisted 'mostly in changing a few notes to the third below. Dukas suggested Farrar follow these guidelines.'\textsuperscript{637} Contrastingly, he showed far less interest in the orchestral appropriation of his work. (Farrar mentions that Dukas declined an invitation from the Metropolitan to attend its rehearsals.)

The composer's fixation with the expression of the text appears to sit oddly with his claim in 1910 that conveying the 'interior drama' of Ariane rests on the music doing so with such intensity that one becomes 'indifferent' to the words spoken. However, as we saw with Dukas's adaptation of Goethe, the text and its meaning are not the same. In parts of \textit{Ariane}, the text-setting is prosaic and makes less impact than the orchestra, but at important junctures—those where we are put in the presence of the protagonist's 'internal drama'—it acquires a significant musical

\textsuperscript{634} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{635} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{636} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{637} Ibid.
profile. Dukas showed this when he wrote about it in 1910. He defined dramatic areas that correspond to strikingly clear musical developments. They indicate the composer’s unity of vision in constructing the music-drama.

Much of Dukas’s essay centres on events as seen from Ariane’s perspective. In a similar vein, many have identified Ariane’s selfless desire for herself and others to free themselves so that they may discover ‘light,’ or truth. Adolphe Boschot noted that while the wives choose to remain in the shadows of subservience, Ariane’s self-confidence means she remains untamed by ordeals and marches towards her destiny. Fauré acknowledged how Ariane’s actions are motivated by desire for knowledge of this destiny: she must ‘disobey to “discover”’. Undeterred by the dangerous consequences such disregard for authority might have, Ariane, as Gustave Samazeuilh observed, ‘struggles against the enslavement and feebleness of humanity, and endeavours to educate towards a higher consciousness those souls which are not yet sufficiently developed to understand its significance’.

Some scholars have expanded upon the idea of enlightenment towards a higher consciousness, with Boyd calling the heroine ‘a Messiah-like figure’. Messiaen sensed that Dukas’s personal spirituality had informed the work. He pontificated:

Why did Dukas choose Ariane? Because she represented for him the Light, the light of all religions, of all philosophies, of all aesthetics, of all

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641 Boyd, ‘Paul Dukas and the Impressionist Milieu,’ 166.
civilisations that have been and are yet to come! ... Ariane is the Light of Truth.  

Commensurate with this is Moore’s comment that Ariane is ultimately devoted to ‘freedom and belief in the autonomy of the human spirit.’ Messiaen’s imagery of Ariane as the singular guiding beacon in a dark, ignorant world continues thus:

Bluebeard stands for the world. The peasants represent humanity revolting against the suffering of the world. The women: they embody humanity numbed to exterior sensations, numbed to the mysteries that it cannot and will not peer into.

The most enduring analyses of the opera tend to address the individuality of Ariane’s actions. Dukas prioritised this element in 1910.

One of the major changes Dukas made to Maeterlinck’s libretto was the individualisation of each of Bluebeard’s wives. In doing so, he amplified the aesthetic of autonomy that permeates this work—and his overall artistic philosophy. An explanation for why Dukas felt compelled to redefine the women in this manner may be found upon consulting his criticism. ‘Music and Originality’ called for creative courage, claiming that this ‘begins with the conviction that there is no such thing as collective originality’ and that to procure an impression on a listener, art must ‘follow on from some private necessity.’ Although artistic originality is not the topic at hand in Ariane, nonetheless, the inability of the women in Ariane to contrive an escape from Bluebeard’s castle is inextricably connected to their utter reliance on one another.


643 Moore, ‘Paul Dukas and Edouard Dujardin,’ 213.


645 Dukas, ‘La Musique et l’Originalité,’ (Revue hebdomadaire, September 1895) Écrits, 287–94 (289). ‘[I]l est bien certain que, pour procurer une [...] impression à l’auditeur, l’ingéniosité des combinaisons demeurent impusissants s’ils ne découlent pas d’une nécessité intime’.  

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With his greatest work, the fundamental tenet of Dukas’s aesthetic—his abhorrence of an unoriginal, individually insincere, group mentality—seeped through his critical pores and onto the pages of his score. As such, I believe it is very meaningful that he chose to evoke two possible outcomes of Ariane’s quest for personal agency through the device of two whole-tone melodic motifs (‘Freedom’ and ‘Danger,’ Exx. 25 and 27). The complete equality of each scale degree stands in absolute opposition to the controlled tonal system that characterises the wives’ song and symbolises their prison. In the ‘Music and Originality’ article, the composer’s condemnation of those musicians satisfied with reproducing mediocre imitations of masterpieces is echoed when he says that the trapped wives ‘have no need for heroic devotion, and that their mediocre lives are satisfied with a mediocre solution.’

Dukas was careful to clarify Ariane’s attitude towards her antagonist, stating that ‘she doesn’t hate Bluebeard at all; on the contrary, she likes him, just as she likes all natural power.’ He then explained that she only disobeys him ‘because it is in her nature to take an immediate decision and act on it.’ The power to act connects the couple. (Their complicated relationship, the composer advised, ‘has to be indicated with a lot of delicacy if one wants to clearly link the dénouement of the piece to its exposition.’) Power is precisely what Ariane desperately craves for the women. Passivity has sustained their predicament, and it has arisen from the ineffectual co-dependent outlook they share. In order for the wives to liberate themselves, they must first locate their personal selves. Hence, Dukas’s motivic emphasis on the word ‘mêmes’ (‘self’) that we observed in the analysis above. If not, they risk becoming—just like those mediocre musicians fearful of new pastures whom Dukas railed

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646 ‘Moralité,’ 623. ‘Il suffit aux médiocres d’une solution médiocre.’
647 Ibid., 624. ‘Elle ne hait point Barbe-Blune; elle l’aime au contraire comme elle aime toute puissance naturelle.’
648 Ibid., ‘Ce […] doit être indiqué avec beaucoup de délicatesse.’
against in 1895—'slaves to the individuality of another'. Even that metaphorical language of 'Music and Originality' is echoed in the *Ariane* essay of 1910. Acknowledging the wives' willing subjugation to their captor, the composer recognises that 'man (and woman) always prefers “familiar” slavery to this formidable uncertainty that is the weight of freedom.' Furthermore, he claims that Ariane's companions are 'are slaves born of desire for their opulent torturer.'

Another aspect of the work underlined in the 1910 essay was the play's satirical side. Dukas puts it thus:

> As soon as Ariane drags the women from their cave, they release her—their liberator—for their jewellery box (a handsome young man elsewhere), because it suits them better! It is there that the 'comic' side of the piece exists, at least in the poem, a satirical side which the music cannot recount without making the work completely unintelligible.

The composer modestly discredits his triumphant achievement. My foregoing analysis indicates that through his depiction of the timid wives and the bumbling heroism of the incompetent crowd of villagers, Dukas successfully satirises sheep-like adherence to an ineffective, collective course of action. Both choruses sing loudly and frequently in unison. These displays of musical strength, however, are overshadowed by the occasional over-reaching demands of the vocal parts. The ostentatious but hollow group statements lack the conviction of the more restrained yet profound depth of Ariane’s character.

Commenting on structural accord between the three acts, Dukas noted that:

> The first and second acts are the easiest, but the expression of the third will depend on the manner in which these two are played.

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649 Dukas, 'La Musique et l'Originalité,' 291. '[I]ls se rendent esclaves de l'individualité d'autrui.'
650 'Moralité,' 623. 'L'homme (et la femme) préférera toujours un esclavage “familier” à cette incertitude redoutable qui fait tout le poids du “fardeau de la liberté.”'
651 *Ibid.*, 625, 'esclaves nées du désir de leur opulent tortionnaire.'
652 *Ibid.*, 623, 'Dès qu'on a tiré ces dames de leur cave, elles lâchent leur libératrice pour leur bijoutier-bourreau (beau garçon d’ailleurs) comme il convenait!’
653 *Ibid.*, 624, 'Le premier et le deuxième acte sont les plus faciles, mais toutes l’expression du troisième dépendra de la manière dont ses deux actes seront joués.'
Through the composer’s decision to create a formal parallel between Acts I and III with the interpolated women-jewel scene in the latter section, a further degree of unity is created in *Ariane* that was not present in Maeterlinck’s play. At a local level, Dukas has further recourse to a symmetrical, arched model: the first act is framed by the peasants’ chorus; again, their second appearance is down to the musician, not the playwright. Despite all these architectural measures, though, Dukas concentrates on their correct expression as the focal point. Thus, the drama contained within what might be discerned as a symphonic structure mattered most. This is further confirmed in correspondence the composer sent to the conductor Guy-Ropartz in 1927 concerning an impending production of *Ariane*. ‘A general rule: conduct to the movement of the dramatic diction of the words,’ he insisted. There, once more, the text and drama of *Ariane* come to the fore. To reinforce the point, Dukas also mentioned in the letter that the positioning of the crowd of villagers was of crucial consideration. Although it was preferable to have them situated so that they would not be too loud, he noted that this was better than the voices not being heard at all.

**Conclusion**

In this final chapter I have presented a few vital aspects of *Ariane* and its discourses. The aim has been to signal how a network of music, texts and performances have all shaped the composer’s conception of the work, its critical reception, and the conflicting dialogues that surrounded it. Therefore, I sought to untangle the music-drama from this ideological web of the French opera after Wagner (Debussy), the symphony, and feminism; at the core I wished to examine how *Ariane* achieves its dramatic effect and how this indicates the presence of poetic authority on behalf of

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Dukas. Finally, I intended to quantify how the work compares to the composer’s theoretical music-text aesthetic.

As we have seen in chapter three, Dukas’s view of the functional music-drama may be gleaned from study of his criticism. Recognition of this is the first step to situating Dukas’s Ariane in a relevant context. Aligning her to Leblanc or Maeterlinck proves unsatisfactory, as their personal agendas coloured their reactions to the opera. There is a chance that the composer never intended the heroine as a metaphor for anything else, but this seems remote given the manner of Dukas’s dedicated quest to modify the text, and its consequences for the main musical ideas. In terms of an idealistic vision of agency and autonomy, it is certainly possible to conflate Ariane with the composer. Dukas frequently extolled the virtues of inherently unique art, of music which could be influenced by others to some extent, but which essentially arose from a sincere belief that the resultant work produced ‘an auditory impression not yet felt’. Divergence from the common school of thought was an absolute necessity for this. Likewise, in Ariane, the heroine believes she will be richly rewarded for pursuing an individual path, eschewing conventional wisdom in favour of self-discovery. She departs from the castle, not exactly shunned by the other women, but disappointed that they refuse to renounce their ties to Bluebeard. However, she is entitled to take comfort in the fact that her independent bravery has shown others the path to deliverance. Likewise, Dukas mourned those unable and unwilling to appreciate the artistic ‘truth’ of Debussy’s actions with Pelléas in 1902. Nonetheless, he conceded that Debussy had signalled a new direction for lyric drama, for those willing to pursue it. The creator-creation mutuality even goes

656 Ibid., 288–9, ‘la résultante d’une impression auditive non encore ressentie.’
beyond this; it clearly feeds into and is fundamentally derived from the longstanding critic-composer link.

Dukas’s passion for individuality, as we saw in chapter three, was tempered by a serious devotion to the past and its traditions. Hence, the conclusion of _Ariane_ sees the heroine liberate herself, while accepting the other women’s choice to remain attached to their former tyrant: in other words, to their past. While the women are happy to remain in their old predicament, the power Bluebeard held in the past has abandoned him. If Ariane represents the realm of individualism, and the wives the opposite, then Bluebeard acts as the common link. He binds the wives together emotionally, and to himself, but forges no more than a respectful but distant relationship with Ariane. Here, the wives may be perceived as a metaphor for the ‘schools’ of musicians that Dukas frequently disparaged. The composer’s criticism documents precisely how disconcerted he was by the abundance of musicians who subdued their own personalities in deference to leaders of other ‘schools,’ but particularly Wagner.

His dream of the liberated individual actually stretched beyond the character of Ariane and his veneration of Wagner. It was of huge importance to him and, as such, had a strong political and social resonance. It has been remarked that in France, around the time of the work’s creation, ‘the idea of “emancipating” the individual and destroying traditional subserviences constantly recurred.’657 Through the substance of _Ariane_ itself and by regularly authoring essays that denigrated the notion of acquiescing to a conservative hierarchy in which composers aspired to be no more than disciples of the biggest musical names, Dukas captured the mood of his époque. Additionally, the opera implies something made explicit in the articles—that

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even when offered a viable alternative to collective (in)action, one must possesses a
degree of autonomy and independence of thought to avail of this. As such, it is fitting
that Dukas chose to impart such a personal message in a work that powerfully and
cleverly defied easy classification.
Conclusion: From Music-Text to the Stage

The purpose of this dissertation was to define Dukas's music-text aesthetic through a study of its sources, theory and practice. The rationale for the investigation hinged upon the serious neglect of the composer's text-based work (with the exception of L'Apprenti sorcier and, to some extent, Ariane). The influences on, and the commonalities between, Polyeucte, Sorcier and Ariane have long gone unrecognised—each is typically assigned to a different category and regarded as having a different meaning in Dukas's œuvre. While it is true that each work has a distinct significance, they nonetheless still fit into a broader aesthetic plan. Therefore, each needed to be considered from a few perspectives in order to demonstrate the links on a larger scale. The works selected for consideration encompassed Dukas's first published score, then the piece that brought him his greatest renown, and finally the work rightly deemed his towering achievement.

Further motivation for this project stemmed from the remarkable indifference displayed by modern scholars to the composer's vital work as a music critic. Most have not studied the specific ideas espoused in the writings, nor how they evolved over the years. Therefore, Dukas's artistic philosophy has long been misunderstood at best, or wilfully ignored at worst. With respect to the text-based musical works, a re-evaluation of the essays is absolutely essential to decoding the impetus behind the composer's choice of programmatic literature and establishing the procedures used in his musical appropriations. Hence, it was argued in the foregoing chapters that a simultaneous, sustained enquiry into the above-mentioned music and the relevant critical writings yields the revelation that there are crucial correspondences between the two. These insights appreciably deepen our knowledge of the composer and his aims.
A cursory glance at the biographical details of the composer’s early life, which was marked by a cultured upbringing and the influence of his learned, literary father, hinted that his musical personality would be at least partly conditioned by these factors. Indeed, we saw that his family, notably his brother Adrien, took a serious interest in the development of Dukas as a critic. In addition to this, their father Jules Dukas became a trusted advisor to Paul’s pursuit of the music-text artwork, specifically with regard to the preparation of the Tempête libretto.

Despite his overt interest in the evocation of literary works through music, certain factors conspired to diminish its central role in the reception of the composer. One of these was partly of Dukas’s own making: his explicit rejection of literary Wagnerism in the articles written around the turn of the last century seems to have had the unfortunate effect of contributing to critics undermining the magnitude of the libretto in his opera Ariane et Barbe-Bleue. This, consequently, led to a distorted understanding of what he set out to accomplish in the work. The symphonic logic of the music was read as its chief achievement and the work was exploited by ardently nationalist French musicians to propagate the notion that the abstract symphonic work was music’s finest form. However, as is seen time and again in Dukas’s numerous essays, his refined understanding of the music and text relationship certainly did not preclude a profound engagement with the expression of an external idea. Instead, the composer simply stressed that expression of the external idea must submit to what he perceived as music’s intrinsic laws. Evidence that the composer practised this philosophy himself was uncovered in chapter two.

The findings produced in chapter two are vital to the clarification of his music-text aesthetic. Through much original research of primary sources, it was revealed that the tenets of Dukas’s music-text theories had been utilised by the
composer as early as 1888, in the student cantata *Velléda*. This manuscript pinpointed Dukas’s acute awareness that aligning text to music in a particular manner could procure effective drama. The autograph score of *Polyeucte*, meanwhile, illustrated that by 1891 the composer’s sense of drama had evolved such that the absence of textual annotation in the score in no way prevented the poetic expression of the conflicts and inner crises in Corneille’s play. His careful revision of the musical instances containing the greatest element of signification—the first and second subject groups, and the peroration—indicates a desire to communicate the ideas of the text by wholly musical means. This nascent interest in the dramatic implications of the music-text relationship matured a stage further with *Sorcier*, as its extant sources reveal.

Dukas’s notes signal that this work was created with a greater aim in mind than the transference of a verbal text to a musical setting. Here, the goal was actually to use the accompanying ballad to map a new dramatic plot onto a symphonic scherzo. The terms used by the composer to denote the thematic events of his work clarify the essentially dramatic, independent parameters in which they operate. An increased concern with authorial autonomy was evident in the investigation into the surviving *Ariane* sources. These documented, first of all, the composer’s preoccupation with the adaptation of Maeterlinck’s libretto. Secondly, we observe a fixation with the key orchestral signifiers in the work, similar to the process that unfolded in the *Polyeucte* manuscript. Finally, the exploration of the *Tempête* translation demonstrated that Dukas’s modification of Maeterlinck’s libretto was not confined to one occasion. That he had worked on *The Tempest* in 1899—possibly prior to his adaptation of *Ariane*—in fact suggests that its alterations acted as a template for those which were implemented in the 1907 opera.
The biggest forum for Dukas to flesh out his idea on the intersection of music, text and drama was undoubtedly the Parisian press. His regular contributions to this discourse alternated between theoretical treatises on aspects of this artistic trilogy, such as libretti, programmes and the state of lyric theatre; and reviews of works and performances which epitomised these matters. The guiding principles of the composer’s music-text aesthetic were shown to be rooted in an overall philosophy that extolled artistic originality and sincerity, and was sensitive to the gradual evolution of music over the previous centuries. In that respect, his views were in accordance with the general French critical consensus and also garnered him the respect of every calibre of musician.

With particular reference to the music-text aesthetic, Dukas’s demand was quite straightforward. Simply, he asked that in interpreting a text, the composer think of it in musical terms so as to create concordances in the finished product. He adhered to this by reducing *Polyeucte* to two principal ideas which could be expressed clearly in a symphonic setting. *Sorcier*, meanwhile, was imagined as a drama in action, rather than a contained text, which unleashed a profusion of musical possibilities. Maeterlinck’s *Ariane*, finally, was rearranged so that its textual surface was made more conducive to lyric declamation. Moreover, the message of its libretto, in being changed to emphasise the spiritual idealism of Ariane’s quest, was rendered more amenable to Dukas’s concept of music finding ultimate fulfilment in expression of the sublime.

Whether this music-text aesthetic was an entirely viable proposition, though, is by no means certain. As has been observed in chapters five and six, the reception of *Sorcier* and *Ariane* focused overwhelmingly on the musical aspects of the equation, at times to the exclusion of the textual element. It was all too often
assumed that, as a composer, Dukas naturally aimed at a symphonic conception of his text-based, mostly orchestral, works. However, it is clear that he had more complicated expressive precepts in mind. Hence, the critics’ neglect of the textual role challenges the compatibility of his artistic outlook with the musical milieu in which he worked.

Nor was the difficulty of this music-text position something that became pronounced only when confronted with the uninformed opinions of others. In the composer’s own work, the aesthetic became untenable at times. The failure of *La Tempête*, it should be remembered, almost definitely arose because Dukas could not conceive of the play in a musical fashion. The very fact of this illustrates that the composer quite rigidly obeyed his idealised principles. Furthermore, this reality offers a plausible explanation as to why the composer sought to move beyond the music-text model shortly afterwards.

With *Ariane*, Dukas began to exhibit a strong predilection for the theatrical potential of music; his interpolation of original stage directions into the score stands as one example of this. As was mentioned in chapter two, Favre dates *Tempête* to between the years 1910 and 1912. *La Péri* was first performed in 1912 and, soon afterwards, work began on *Le Sang de Méduse*. To all intents and purposes, then, the composer abandoned opera for the medium of ballet—a form in which the textual component was reduced to a scenario in the overall staged musical production. And, throughout the next two decades his input into performances of *Ariane*, as chapter six demonstrates, was very much of the dramatic kind. Working with various sopranos and one or two conductors, he strove to enhance the opera’s scope for communication. Thus, he approved of Farrar’s plan to half-speak, half-sing the text, while seventeen years later, he counselled Guy-Ropartz on the dramatic diction of
the soloists and choruses in *Ariane*. Gradually, then, the music-text aesthetic altered so as to prioritise the end effect—drama—rather than the procedures by which it was initially accomplished.

Eventually, Dukas’s aesthetic became suppler and more able to accommodate transformations to his original, fixed, musical idea. In this sense, it began to reflect part of the true essence of *Polyeucte, Sorcier* and *Ariane*, particularly the latter two: it acknowledged that these works do not exist purely as original, fixed, musical conceptions. They consist of multiple textual layers which the composer manipulated to suit his purposes. We can note, for instance, his selective use of Maeterlinck and the manner in which he invoked the older Perrault source to support his hypothesis of *Ariane* functioning as a fairytale. The intertextuality of Dukas’s music, both in its composition and in the way that it was later co-opted during the middle of the twentieth century, has been awarded little consideration. Its presence, however, is an irrefutable fact in the complexities of Dukas’s compositions, their performances and their later reinventions.

Intertextuality, as Julia Kristeva defines it, consists of

the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position.658

With *Polyeucte*, the composer articulated Corneille’s drama anew; in *Sorcier*, the music transposed Goethe’s ballad, which was already a reconstruction of Lucien’s tale. *Ariane* absorbed three definite systems of verbal signifiers—Perrault’s fable, Maeterlinck’s play, Dukas’s modified libretto—as well as the Greek mythology which had inspired all three. *Ariane* owes its intertextuality to more than this, though. The composer willingly interpolated Debussy’s ‘Mélisande’ motif into the second

act, as a gesture of intent—in recognition, perhaps, that Ariane’s musico-dramatic conception was a by-product of recent musical history. Beyond this, as an opera, Ariane’s musical signs are inevitably subjected to the theatrical setting in which it reaches its fullest realisation. In arranging the work, Toscanini, too, destabilised the original system of musical signs. One might also posit that Sorcier’s distorted relocation to the visual world of Disney’s Fantasia added another layer to the already existent intertextuality of the Scherzo.

That Dukas endeavoured to maintain control over his intertextual creations, by advising on the dramatic issues in Ariane, for example, is testament to his desire to exert authorial autonomy over his art. The composer’s unremitting urge to be regarded as the individual behind Ariane resonates not only with an artistic philosophy, but with a wider social and political movement. More than this, though, Dukas (consciously or not) explicitly connected the three different works (or ‘texts’) of Polyeucte, Sorcier and Ariane through his musico-textual procedures. Each contains a distinctive opening interval (the imposing fifth in Polyeucte, the evocative diminished melody of Sorcier and the portentous octave of Ariane) which proves to be a powerful omen of drama. Even more specifically, Dukas gravitates towards the fifth at the decisive moment in each composition (the opening turmoil and closing reconciliation of Polyeucte are marked with the fifth; the broom springs to life in Sorcier with the F-C dyad; and Bluebeard’s wives are found in Ariane thanks to their Orlamonde song, which opens with a leap from F sharp to C sharp). The theatrical impulse that lies behind the text-based music written between 1891 and 1907 is apparent. Thus, the three works may have external associations beyond Dukas but, in unifying them so characteristically, the composer created a unique, resonant authorial voice.
In projecting this voice so dramatically, one cannot help but feel that the composer should have been destined to create many more works for the theatre (apart from the single *La Péri*). Essentially, the music-text aesthetic matters not so much for the rules that dictated it but because of the effect it produced. The composer’s critical writings theorised a music-text aesthetic but the music bestowed upon it a dramatic effect. That Dukas failed to produce much for the theatre after *Ariane*, and that his later works were very miniature, suggests that there is much scope for future research into what hindered the progress of this aesthetic and practice. In light of the aesthetic sources, theory and practice we have examined, out of all the unanswered questions that surround Dukas and his destroyed music, the one pertaining to the theatrical silence of the later years is perhaps the most pressing.
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---------- *Fugue; Hymne au Soleil; Velléda, scène lyrique*, Ms. 1035.


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----- (3): Letter from Carré to Dukas, 17 April 1906. It is agreed that Georgette Leblanc will play role of Ariane.

----- (4): Letter from Carré to Dukas, 22 April 1906. This discusses who will play the part of the Nurse in *Ariane*.

----- (8): Letter from Carré to Dukas, date unknown. It refers to Dukas attending rehearsals of *Ariane* around 26 January 1907.

---659 The bibliography contains the major, specific sources utilised throughout this research: some texts of a more general nature have been omitted from this list.
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**Webography**


**Discography**


**Videography**

*Fantasia*, dir. Walt Disney, Leopold Stokowski (conductor), RKO Radio Pictures Inc., 1940.
Appendix I

*L’Apprenti sorcier*: Cuts made to Dukas’s Scherzo for *Fantasia* (1940)

<table>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Bar nos.</th>
<th>Cuts</th>
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<td>Omission of the first bar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>618–51</td>
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<td>Omission of 729–34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>924–940</td>
<td>INTACT</td>
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Appendix II

Description of Réserve F. 994 B (advertisement and programme notes for concert at which L’Apprenti Sorcier was first performed)

*Advertisement for concert:*

‘L’Orchestre, sous la direction de M. Vincent d’Indy et des Auteurs.’

*Front cover of programme note:*

Salle du Nouveau Théâtre,
15, Rue Blanche, 15.
262ème Concert,
Mardi, 19 Mai, 1897, ‘à 9 heures précis’

*Contents of advertised programme:*

2. *Élégie* for cello and orchestra by Fauré.
3. *Élévation* (based on Baudelaire) by A. Savard; sung by Mme Louise Homer (premiere).
4. *Variations Symphoniques* for piano and orchestra by César Franck; played by Risler.

*Intermission*
7. *Invitation au voyage* (based on Baudelaire) by H Duparc (premiere). Sung by M. Bagès.

8. *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, d'après une ballade de Goethe, *Scherzo* by P. Dukas (premiere)


   B: *Les Morts* (based on Richepin) by Ernest Chausson; performed by Mlle Thérèse Roger (premiere).

   C: *La Nuit* (based on Théodore de Banville) by Ernest Chausson; performed by Mlles E. Blanc and Th. Roger (premiere)

10. *Pêcheurs d'Islande*, Musique pour le drame de MM Loti et Tiercelin, by J. Guy Ropartz:

    I: La Mer d'Islande

    II: Scène d'amour

    III: Les Danses

The programme notes consist only of the associated texts for each work (Henri Blaze translation of *Der Zauberlehrling* for *L'Apprenti sorcier*).
Appendix III

Henri Blaze translation of Goethe’s *Der Zauberlehrling* as featured on concert programme for premiere of *L’Apprenti sorcier*, 1897.

Enfin, il s’est donc absenté, le vieux maître sorcier! Et maintenant c’est à moi aussi de commander à ses Esprits; j’ai observé ses paroles et ses œuvres, j’ai retenu sa formule, et, avec de la force d’esprit, moi aussi je ferai des miracles.

Que pour l’œuvre l’eau bouillonne et ruisselle, et s’épanche en bain à large seau!

Et maintenant, approche, viens, viens, balai! prends-moi ces mauvaises guenilles; tu as été domestique assez longtemps; aujourd’hui songe à remplir ma volonté! Debout sur deux jambes, une tête en haut, cours vite et te dépêche de m’aller puiser de l’eau!

Que pour l’œuvre l’eau bouillonne et ruisselle, et s’épanche en bain à large seau!

Bravo! Il descend un rivage; en vérité, il est déjà au fleuve, et plus prompt que l’éclair, le voilà ici de retour avec un flot rapide. Déjà une seconde fois! Comme chaque cuve s’enflé! Comme chaque vase s’emplit jusqu’au bord!

Arrête, arrête! car nous avons assez de tes services.

—Ah! je m’en aperçois!— Malheur! Malheur! j’ai oublié le mot!

Ah! la parole qui le rendra enfin ce qu’il était tout à l’heure? Il court et se démêne!

Fusses-tu donc le vieux balai! Toujours de nouveaux seaux qu’il apporte! Ah! et cent fleuves se précipitent sur moi.

Non! Je ne puis le souffrir plus longtemps; il faut que je l’empoigne! C’est trop de malice! Ah! mon angoisse augmente! Quelle mine! quel regard!

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Engeance de l’enfer! Faut-il que la maison entière soit engloutie? Je vois sur chaque seuil courir déjà des torrents d’eau. Un damné balai qui ne veut rien entendre! Bûche que tu étais tiens-toi donc tranquille!

Si tu n’en finis pas, prends garde que je ne t’empoigne et ne fende ton vieux bois au tranchant de la hache!

Oui-da! le voilà qui se traine encore par ici! Attends que je t’attrape! Un moment, Kobold, et tu seras par terre. Le tranchant poli de la hache l’atteint. Il craque! bravo, vraiment fort bien touché! Voyez, il est en deux! Et maintenant j’espère et je respire!

Malheur! malheur! deux morceaux s’agitent maintenant et s’empressent comme des valets debout pour le service! A mon aide, puissances supérieures!

Comme ils courent! De plus en plus l’eau gagne la salle et les degrés; quelle effroyable inondation! Seigneur et Maître! entends ma voix! — Ah! voici venir le maître! Maître, le péril est grand; les Esprits que j’ai envoqués, je ne peux plus m’en débarrasser.

“Dans le coin, balai! balai! que cela finisse, car le vieux maître ne vous anime que pour vous faire servir à ses dessins.”
Appendix IV

Paul Dukas (1910), ‘Ariane and Bluebeard (Morality in the style of Perrault’s fairytales),’ Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique, 623–6, trans. Laura Watson.660

Nobody wants to be liberated. Liberation costs dearly because it is unknown, and man (and woman) always prefers ‘familiar’ slavery to this formidable uncertainty that is the price of freedom. And the truth is that nobody can deliver anybody else; it is much better to want to deliver one’s own self. Not only is this much better, but it is the only way possible. These wives show this well (and very kindly) to this poor Ariane who ignored it...and who believed that the world has a thirst for liberty, so much so that it only aspires to this for its wellbeing: however, as soon as Ariane drags the women from their cave, they release her—their liberator—for their jewellery box (a handsome young man elsewhere), because it suits them better! It is there that the ‘comic’ side of the piece exists, at least in the poem, a satirical side which the music cannot recount without making the work completely unintelligible.

But seen from Ariane’s perspective and leaving aside the puppets that act as foils, this refusal to embrace liberty takes on a pathetic character, as it happens that a superior being, who believes herself indispensable, discovers that these women have no need for heroic devotion, and that their mediocre lives are satisfied with a mediocre solution.

It is therefore essential that any interpretation of Ariane makes the audience sensitive to the interior drama of the heroine, with the music expressing this so intensely that the words spoken become indifferent to this, even unnecessary.

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660 All italics, parentheses, etc. printed here are present in Dukas’s original text.
The first and second acts are the easiest, but the expression of the third depends on the manner in which these two are played. The first with calm assurance at the start, and a cheerful heartiness which, immediately, disarms Bluebeard (what would you like...he hasn’t done me any wrong). Ariane is sure of her fate. She knows that the women are alive. She believes that she is their much-anticipated, desired liberator. And she immediately dominates the situation. Bluebeard doesn’t inspire any fear in her, nor does his attempted seduction through the jewels affect her, though the nurse was astonished by the gems’ beauty: *That which I like is more beautiful than the prettiest stones.* Straight away, Ariane disobeys him because it is in her nature to take an immediate decision and act on it. So, she looks for the forbidden door and only stops at the diamonds because they symbolise the passion for clarity ‘that has penetrated everything, does not rest and has nothing to overcome but itself,’ and because their magnificent brightness and light is carried over the other jewels. Fundamentally, one senses in her words revolt against the conception of tyrannical, egotistical and *primitive* love represented by Bluebeard and his enchanted castle, with its splendid room of jewels hidden in a dungeon full of shadows: ‘You too’—‘Me especially’—‘The happiness that I want cannot live in the darkness.’ But her rebellion has nothing to do with reason, or with theory. It is not through virtue of feminist conviction that she acts, but through the expansion of a superior nature, supernaturally good and active, and because she believes the others to be similar to her. She doesn’t hate Bluebeard at all; on the contrary, she likes him, just as she likes all natural power. But she imposes power to its limit, which is freedom, equally naturally for her, on those who wish to be subjugated. This relationship between Ariane and Bluebeard is particularly interesting and has to be indicated with a lot of delicacy if one wants to clearly link the dénouement of the piece to its exposition.
Bluebeard is defeated at the end of the first act—but he ignores this—by the intervention of Ariane, who wards off the peasants. And a sort of tacit complicity is established between him and Ariane, which resembles on his part a passionate veneration for that which resists him in saving him; in such a way that his love—wild and ‘trembling nonetheless’—is elevated at the end (when Ariane lets him be nursed by his terrified slaves and finally frees him) to a mute adoration which resembles in a small way true love, ‘unless his conscience or some other force has spoken.’

Bluebeard felt, confusedly, that in letting Ariane go, he had liberated himself from the chain of instinct. And maybe he is the only one who manages to really liberate himself. Also, he awakens in himself a new way of regarding Ariane, a way charged with grateful passion, and sadness when she says goodbye, feeling that this deliverance can only be accomplished by their separation. He alone follows her sorrowful eyes; while on the other hand, ‘his wives’ turn themselves away from Ariane and towards Bluebeard. In having this dénouement present in the spirit of the first act, so that Ariane returns voluntarily to Bluebeard, one expresses very clearly in the third act the situation of the two characters in relation to each other.

The relation of Ariane to the Nurse requires no comment: the phrases of their dialogue suffice to underline it.

As for Ariane’s relationship with Bluebeard’s wives, it is completely clear if one wants to contemplate that it rests on a radical opposition, and that the whole subject is based on the confusion that makes Ariane need liberty in love, and the little need that her companions feel for this; they are slaves born of desire for their opulent torturer.

Nonetheless, this opposition is only emphasized first of all by indirect traits—the women’s incapacity to act, the impossibility of them coming to an ordinary
resolution, waiting terrorised by the unknown (_we prayed, we sung, we cried and then we waited...still..._), servile submission to events (_we cannot flee and it’s forbidden_), terror of all daring, etc. This does not hinder Ariane’s enthusiastic surge, and, in spite of everything, she believes in the force of example: she breaks the window that imprisons the light of deliverance and believes by this gesture to have accomplished deliverance for the women. She would have accomplished this maybe if the castle (’so beautiful that I had lamented it’ says Sélysette) had not retained them prisoners, and if Ariane’s morally symbolic act had been matched by material deliverance. But when the material deliverance manifests itself, thanks to the peasants bursting forth, the moral deliverance became impossible, _by the sole presence of Bluebeard_. It is there that the opposition between Ariane and her companions became pathetic by the unwinding of the dream of liberty that she had for all of them. First of all there is great joy in adorning themselves, in revealing to themselves their own beauty, whose power they had ignored. Ariane does not realise that they are only beautifying themselves for a _new slavery_. During the battle the conflict is accentuated, and the drama truly begins. Ariane discovers, with sorrowful astonishment, by her companions’ exclamations that they _like_ Bluebeard, not the transformed Bluebeard that she has subdued at the end of the first act, but the Bluebeard from _before her arrival_, the man spoken of like a murderer, the executioner amongst the precious stones. And her instinctive movement is to do for them this that they don’t dare to do themselves before the peasants kill him: _‘I’m going to open the doors of the room.’_ And she opens them, knowing from this moment that the women will keep to Bluebeard, yet _hoping still_. She wards off the peasants, approaches the injured man, whose adoring wives, on their knees, don’t dare to even look at, and whose passivity would leave him to die there. The women
are reassured and show that they are. At this moment Ariane judges them incurable, and knows already that they will not follow her. She doesn’t hope any more, but she continues to act. She makes the gesture that her ‘sisters’ wait for. She unchains Bluebeard, knowing that his soul is transformed and that from now on his actions are without peril for his companions; and his goodbye to her informs Ariane that she can, without danger, ask the women to choose between him and the world ‘awash with hope’ that she shows them...over there, and which she knows so well. They all refuse in turn, with diverse nuances of feeling that indicate the degree of sensitivity and tenderness they experience for Ariane (the most tender, Selysette, the most touching, Alladine). The heroine no longer has a deliverance to accomplish, like the diamonds, emblems of ‘this passion for clarity that has nothing else to overcome but itself.’ She has delivered herself, she as well has triumphed over the pity that her ‘poor sisters’ inspired in her and left the castle on this victory, very calmly, very sadly, as it is fitting after such victories.\textsuperscript{661}

\textsuperscript{661} Paul Dukas, ‘Ariane et Barbe-Bleue (Moralité à la façon des contes de Perrault),’ 1910, \textit{Les Ecrits de Paul Dukas sur la Musique}, 623–6 (emphasis as in original text).
### Appendix V

#### Unpublished, published and abandoned text-based works by Paul Dukas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ouverture du Roi Lear</em>, orchestra</td>
<td><em>King Lear</em>, play (William Shakespeare)</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ouverture du Goetz de Berlichingen</em>, orchestra</td>
<td><em>Goetz de Berlichingen</em>, play (Johann von Goethe)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Chanson de Barberine</em>, song for soprano and piano</td>
<td><em>Chanson de Barberine</em>, poem (Alfred de Musset)</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Les Caresses</em>, piano</td>
<td><em>Les Caresses</em>, poem (Jean Richepin)</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>La Fleur</em>, song for chorus and orchestra</td>
<td><em>La Fleur</em>, poem (Charles Hubert Millevoye)</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Hymne au Soleil</em>, cantata for three voices and orchestra</td>
<td>Excerpt from <em>Le Paria</em>, I: v (Casimir Delavigne)</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Velléda</em>, cantata for three voices and orchestra</td>
<td><em>Velléda</em> (Fernand Beissier)</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sémélé</em>, cantata for three voices and orchestra</td>
<td><em>Sémélé</em> (Eugène Adenis)</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Polyeucte: Ouverture pour la tragédie de Corneille</em></td>
<td><em>Polyeucte</em>, play (Pierre Corneille)</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Published</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Horn et Rimenhild</em>, opera</td>
<td>Libretto by Dukas</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>L’Apprenti Sorcier: Scherzo d’après une ballade de Goethe</em>, orchestra</td>
<td><em>Der Zauberlehrling</em>, ballad (Goethe)</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Published</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>L’Arbre de Science</em>, opera</td>
<td>Libretto by Dukas</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Ariane et Barbe-Bleue</em>,</td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>Published</td>
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<tr>
<td>opera</td>
<td>Maurice Maeterlinck</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Le Nouveau Monde</em>, opera</td>
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<td><em>La Péri</em>, poème dansé</td>
<td>Scenario by Dukas</td>
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<td><em>La Tempête</em>, opera</td>
<td><em>The Tempest</em>, play</td>
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<td>(Shakespeare) trans.</td>
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<td><em>Sonnet de Ronsard</em>, song for</td>
<td><em>L’Amours</em>, Premier</td>
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<td>voice and piano</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Pierre de Ronsard)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1924</td>
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