

# A level MUSIC—Area of study 5: Fusions



## ESTAMPES

### Claude Debussy (1903)



#### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The French style and Impressionism
- 20thC features
- The Far East and Exoticism- Gamelan
- How he broke away from German Romantic tradition

#### NOS. 1 AND 2 ('PAGODES' AND 'LA SOIRÉE DANS GRENADE')

#### STRUCTURE:

- Short pieces in comparison to long German structures
- Pagodes:
  - Loose ternary form
  - Central section has elements from the first one
  - All 3 sections have subsections.
- La soirée dans Grenade: Introduction, habanera

#### CONTEXT:

- Debussy: Works marked a break from 19thC Romantic tradition. Described as impressionist in style although he was reluctant to be classified in this way. Include French directions in music.
- Like painters of the time, fascinated with nature, art coming from the Far East (Javanese Gamelan) and exoticism in general, eg looking to Spain (Le Soiree dans Grenade)
- Estampes: 3 piano pieces exploring main elements of Impressionist style:
  - Brevity: short melodies and structure,
  - Descriptive music: titles give starting point for interpretation of listener
  - Pentatonic and modal melodies- Eastern and Western folk elements.
  - Unconventional tonal schemes.
  - More diatonic than other early 20thC music.
  - Parallel chords.
  - Sustaining pedal on the piano to produce misty, watery effects.

#### SONORITY:

- Sustain pedal. cross hand technique
- Pagodes: playing in octaves, contrary motion, slow trills,
- La soirée dans Grenade: Rapid staccato spread chords at the ends of phrases emulating flamenco guitar, acciaccatura ornaments, extreme ranges of piano explored

#### HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Avoids sense of tonic and dominant chords and traditional modulation.
- More diatonic than 20thC contemporaries.
- Parallel chords
- Pagodes: opening- gong like open 5ths, Chords feature added notes, recreating gamelan harmonies. Uses black notes of the piano for pentatonic sound. B is a tonal centre rather than a key, flattened seventh
- La soirée dans Grenade: parallel 7th chords, Added note chords, chords based on 4ths and 5ths, some music tonal in character: Central melody in A major.

#### RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Pagodes: Varying speeds as typical in Gamelan music, triplets, rippling demisemiquaver ideas, cross rhythms, 'slow trills', syncopated chords
- La soirée dans Grenade: habanera rhythm (Cuban dance that spread to Spain in 19thC), simple duple time, dotted quaver, semiquaver and two quavers rhythm, improvisatory rhythm typical of flamenco, frequent tempo changes eg. rubato, tempo giusto, free time,

#### TEXTURE:

- Pagodes: 'Gong' sounds act as pedal, Left hand of bar 11 returns in octaves at the top of the texture, trill accompaniment, accompaniment in high tessitura.
- La soirée dans Grenade: inverted pedal

#### MELODY:

- Pentatonic melodies
- Modal melodies
- Pagodes: Javanese slendro scale, 4 note ostinato, undulating scalic countermelody, whole tone scale,
- La soirée dans Grenade: Moorish lament like melody, dissonance, distinctive flamenco augmented 2nd, conjunct melody, whole tone scale,

# ESTAMPES



NOS. 1 AND 2 ('PAGODES' AND 'LA SOIRÉE DANS GRENADE')

Composer: Claude Debussy

Date: 1903

## WIDER LISTENING PIECES

### SAINT SAENS

- La Princesse Jaune: Influenced by Japonism movement in Paris in the late 19th century.
- Orientalism seen in multiple works, eg., Samson et Dalila, where she is depicted with music from the East for its sensual appeal. Modal scales and deep percussion sounds give the Middle Eastern sound.

### LEOPOLD GODOWSKY- JAVA SUITE

- Attempted to emulate Javanese music after he visited Java.
- Avoids chromaticism.
- 1. Gong-like left hand with a hypnotising, pulsating effect.
- Pieces feature Perfect 4ths and 5ths, parallel movement,, repetitive pentatonic melodies.
- Tonally ambiguous, cadences avoided in traditional sense.
- Polyrhythms, syncopation and triplet figures extensively used.

### POULENC- CONCERTO FOR 2 PIANOS

- Encountered Balinese Gamelan at an exposition in Paris in 1931 and used modal inflected figurations inspired in these pentatonic scales.
- Coda of 1st movement is a hypnotic, moto perpetuo section.
- Parallel movement: 4ths 5ths and octaves.

### MANUEL DE FALLA NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF SPAIN

- Spanish composer who moved to Paris in 1905 and incorporated Debussy's impressionist style into this piece for piano and orchestra, paying homage to Andalusia.
- Music not descriptive, but expressive of places and sensations evoked by the titles of each movement. 'Symphonic impressions'.
- 'En el Generalife' Rippling demisemiquaver and triplet piano ostinatos blended with orchestra
- In the Gardens of the Sierra de Cordoba' Strumming effects on strings, highly rhythmic section drawing on Gypsy and Flamenco influence.

### RAVEL

- Javanese Gamelan had been heard at the Paris World Exhibition in 1889 and influenced many French Impressionist composers, including Debussy and Ravel.
- 'La vallee des cloches': Explores piano sympathetic resonances, pentatonic ostinato patterns reminiscent of 'Pagodes.'
- 'Ma Mere l'Oye': Used a tuned percussion section in the orchestra to capture Gamelan sonorities, celeste plays on low end of register to emulate bells.
- Explored Spanish music styles in accordance with his Spanish heritage. Wrote a habanera in 1895 which was included in his later work 'Rapsodie espagnole', rich with Spanish character.



## BREATHING UNDER WATER

Anoushka Shankar (2007)



### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Indian Classical influence
- Western pop/rock influence
- Contrasting combinations fused together.

### 'BURN', 'BREATHING UNDER WATER' AND 'EASY'

#### TEXTURE:

- 3 textural elements in Indian Classical music seen in 3 pieces: Melody, rhythm, drone. Latter not in Breathing under Water. Predominantly homophonic.
- Burn: Tonic pedal, polyphonic, contrapuntal, dialogue, homophonic.
- Breathing under water: Homorhythm, polyphonic dialogue, descant.
- Easy: Complex textures, dialogue

#### CONTEXT:

- Daughter of famous sitar player Ravi Shankar. Brought up in London, Delhi and California.
- Started giving concerts in sitar and tampura at young age.
- Breathing Under Water: 2nd original Classical Indian/Western fusion album
- Main collaborator was Utkarsha (Karsh) Kale, an Indian musician and composer and co-founder of Tabla Beat Science. as well as guest artists.
- Album grew out of improvisation sessions.

#### SONORITY:

- Indian instruments/voices: Sitar, tabla, sarangi, vocals, percussion, bansuri, veena, sarod
- Western instruments/voices: String orchestra, solo cello, programmed/sampled drum patterns, piano, pop/R&B style vocals, bass guitar, guitar, keyboard 'pad' sounds.
- Indian melodic instruments have solo roles, or are in dialogue with vocals.
- Indian percussion is integrated into overall rhythmic texture.
- Western rhythm section instruments not used prominently on the set tracks.

#### MELODY

- Complex and ornate sitar lines, raga ornamental figures
- Western vocal style.
- Burn: Opening sitar solo like improvised alap section of a Classical raga. Begins in lower register (mandra saphak), and explores the notes of the scale, passage of thirds, rising sixth figure, slides, trills and grace notes. Lead vocals sung by NY singer Noa Lembersky. Verse features a descending sequential idea. Syncopated string idea developed into 1-bar countermelody in final chorus.
- Breathing under water: The sitar line is a melodic paraphrase of 'Sea Dreamer' by Sting, very ornamented with slides, shakes, mordents, trills. Stepwise movement, repeated anacrusic phrases. Mainly stepwise vocal line with occasional ornaments.
- Easy: Ornate sitar lines with relaxed vocal style. Sitar opens with a four-bar descending melody, repeated with slight variations. Restricted vocal range with major 2nds, pentatonic shapes, minor 3rds. Middle 8 vocal line descends with 8ve range phrases.

#### RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Western rhythmic style. 4/4 metre.
- Burn: Triplets, syncopations, strong rhythmic drive set up in drums and manjira (snare backbeat) in verse, demisemiquaver hi-hat in chorus, syncopation and counterpoint in chorus, anticipations and lombardic rhythms.
- Breathing under water: Rhythmically flexible sitar line, triplets and quintuplets, anacrusic, semibreve and minim accompaniments.
- Easy: Syncopation, flexible, complex sitar line.

#### STRUCTURE:

- Was brought up with 'open-ended' structures of Indian Classical music, but embraces Western song structures: eg. verse/chorus, bridge, instrumental, intro and coda.
- Repeated chord sequences.

#### HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Asian-inflected form of non-functional tonality, modally inflected in choice of chords and progressions.
- Burn: Most closely resembles C# minor, with strong bass line anchoring key. Coda moves through A minor and F major chords to finish on an open D5 chord. Added notes, extension chords, 4 note chords, static harmony effect, unconventionally prepared and resolved dissonances, raga-like effect with all notes heard against drone, strong feeling of imperfect cadences but not in Western classical sense.
- Breathing under water: Mostly in D $\flat$  major, tertiary modulation D $\flat$  to Lydian-inflected A major., added notes, slash chords, maj 7th chords, diminished chords, repeated IVm-I progressions in the closing bars.
- Easy: Transposed Mixolydian mode on Db or Indian equivalent: Rag Khamaj. Harmony avoids primary chord progressions and cadences. Song is dominated by a three-chord progression: sus2/B $\flat$ -C, sus2-D, sus4, inversions, flattened leading note chord ( $\flat$ VII) acts as a substitute dominant. Dissonant sus4 chords with 3rds at the same times. The song ends on an unresolved D $\flat$ sus4 chord.

# BREATHING UNDER WATER

'BURN', 'BREATHING UNDER WATER' AND 'EASY'



Composer: Anoushka Shankar

Date: 2007

## WIDER LISTENING PIECES

### INDIAN OCEAN

- One of the first Indian fusion bands formed in the 90s. Indo-rock fusion with jazz influenced rhythms.
- Mix of Indian and Western instrumental forces: bass guitar, indian vocals, tabla, electric guitar.
- Electric guitar plays modal riffs infused with rag and pitch bending.

### THE BEATLES- ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

- Collaborated with Ravi Shankar (Anoushka's father) in the late 60s and incorporated Eastern practices and musical styles into Western popular music.
- Track was taped with acoustic guitar, percussion and tambura, it also featured an overdubbed sitar.
- Transcendental Meditation: mantra "Jai guru deva om" included in the piece.

### SUSHEELA RAMAN- SALT RAIN

- Western influences: Western chord structures, jazz extended chords, low 'whispered' vocal tessitura in the style of jazz, use of guitar.
- Most of the songs on the album are ancient Indian devotional songs in Sanskrit, Hindi, or Tamil.
- "Ganapati" features a percussive tabla section, blues guitar riffs and cello melodies with pitch bending (meend).

### R. RAHMAN

- Bollywood composer. Fuses Western popular and Indian styles for film.
- 'Jai Ho': Uses exaggerated tuning effect on long notes in the chorus through technological means, emulating microtonal singing.
- Combination of Hindi, Urdu, Punjab and Spanish lyrics.
- Achieved more global success when a version was recorded with The Pussy Cat Dolls.
- 'Million Dollar Arm': Punjabi elements and Iggy Azalea rapping over a tabla beat.

### TALVIN SINGH- TOGETHER

- Collaboration between London based Tabla player and electronic musician Talvin Singh and virtuoso sitar player Niladri Kumar, who modified the instrument for a rock music audience, creating the 'zitar'.
- Indian influence: Long intro 'alap' like section. Tabla plays rhythm section.
- Western influence: Functional harmony, use of strings.
- 'River': Uses electro backbeat, where Kumar plays expressive melodies with pitch bending.