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Characteristics of a Modern Ballet: The Adoption of Sonic Vocabulary and Textual Treatment in The Earth Without Water (2014)

Mark Luke Rheaume
Eastern Illinois University

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A MODERN BALLET:
THE ADOPTION OF SONIC VOCABULARY AND TEXTUAL TREATMENT IN THE EARTH WITHOUT WATER (2014)
(TITLE)

BY
MARK LUKE RHEAUME

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ABSTRACT

Characteristics of a Modern Ballet: The Adoption of Sonic Vocabulary and Textual Treatment in *The Earth Without Water* (2014)

Mark Rheaume

The modern ballet, as an orchestral genre, owes much of its status and value to composers of the early 20th century. Claude Debussy and Igor Stravinsky’s groundbreaking works, *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* and *Le Sacre du Printemps* respectively, revolutionized the sonic landscape of ballet and expanded the ideas of interaction with texts and scenarios. This paper demonstrates the continued use of these innovations in the author’s composition, *The Earth Without Water*. This analysis identifies three categories—harmonic vocabulary, rhythmic/formal organization, and textual treatment—by which *The Earth* derives content or technique from *Prélude* and *Le Sacre*. 
Many thanks to the following people for their insight and advice during my time as a graduate student:

Dr. Brad Decker, thesis advisor

Dr. Stefan Eckert, Dr. Kathryn Fenton, and Dr. Jemmie Robertson, committee members

Dr. Marilyn Coles, Graduate Coordinator
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INTRODUCTION

Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.¹

Ezra Pound’s advice to emerging Imagist poets provides ample wisdom to any artist. Naturally, the ideas and works studied by a pupil have the potential of influencing his or her product or process. These positive and negative reactions to the ideas of our predecessors drive much of art’s progress. This paper attempts to acknowledge my debt and to clarify my reaction with regards to the composition of my ballet, *The Earth Without Water* (2014).

*The Earth* owes much of its style and aesthetic to the study of two other ballets, *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (1894) by Claude Debussy and *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) by Igor Stravinsky.² On their own, these two works share an intricate relationship. Although Debussy completed *Prélude* nineteen years prior to *Le Sacre*, both works received theatrical premieres with Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Vaslav Nijinsky choreographed *Prélude* for the 1912 season and *Le Sacre* for the 1913 season.³ Diaghilev

---


³ Nijinsky’s choreography received dramatic responses from each composer, respectively. Debussy reportedly walked out of the dress rehearsal of *Prélude*’s premiere with only the
introduced Stravinsky to Debussy following the premiere of Stravinsky’s *L’oiseau de feu* (1910) and their relationship grew during the next three years. Stravinsky offered orchestration advice for the latter’s *Jeux* (1913), while Debussy volunteered his pianist skills to play Stravinsky’s four-hand reduction of *Le Sacre* with the composer just prior to the first orchestral rehearsals. The study of either ballet benefits from the study of its contemporary; the study of both pieces offers insight into the techniques and aesthetics employed at the height of ballet’s popularity and prestige.

This paper intends to examine specific techniques and vocabulary that might indicate *The Earth’s* lineage from *Prélude* and *Le Sacre*. Here it seems best to settle upon a use of certain terms. Truly, the word “lineage” fails to describe the relationship between my composition and Debussy and Stravinsky’s respective works. Further, to say that *The Earth* “imitates” *Prélude* and *Le Sacre* implies an artificial likeness, or else a blatant copy. “Imitation” also suggests a non-progressive emulation of an object, a particularly ironic notion when employed towards works whose innovations arguably revolutionized comment. “Disgusting.” See Melvin Maddocks, Liner Notes, *Great Men of Music: Claude Debussy*, New York: Time Life Records, 1976, vinyl. Stravinsky, on the other hand, held various views on Nijinsky’s contribution. He wrote that, “[Nijinsky’s] ignorance of the most elementary notions of music was flagrant. The poor boy knew nothing of music: he could neither read it nor play an instrument, and his reactions to music were expressed in banal phrases or the repetition of what he had heard others say.” Yet Stravinsky also “approved Nijinsky’s choreography on the spot” and declared, “Nijinsky is an admirable artist capable of revolutionizing ballet... His contribution to *Le Sacre du Printemps* was very important.” See Andre Boucourechliev, *Stravinsky* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987), 66-67.

much of modern art. Here too, “emulation” offers an all-too-positive emulation of a work, and I hope that *The Earth* is not only a simple disciple of Debussy and Stravinsky. “Adoption,” as used in the title of this thesis, seems to offer the most neutral connotation. It comes from the Latin *adoptare*, meaning, "to take by choice, choose for oneself, select." The word demonstrates a selection process that requires study, reason, and analysis.

Thus, I propose that the composition of *The Earth Without Water* involved the adoption of vocabulary and techniques revealed during study of *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. This paper organizes these techniques into three sections: (1) the adoption of harmonic vocabulary, (2) the adoption of rhythmic vocabulary, and (3) the implementation of text during the process of composition. In addition, a brief chronological overview of *The Earth Without Water* precedes these chapters.

---


CHAPTER 1: CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF *THE EARTH WITHOUT WATER*

*The Earth Without Water* is a 20-minute ballet for small orchestra written during the summer of 2014. A short poem that I wrote in the spring of 2014 provides the only explicit program for the *The Earth*. The piece is split into multiple sections: an introduction, six numbered scenes, and a brief coda. The six scenes are divided into two groups, with a pause between Scene 3 and Scene 4.

True to its genre, this ballet fosters significant thematic relationships, repetition, and episodic gestures. The composition of *The Earth* began with one primary motive, seen in Example 1-1. First introduced in the oboe, this motive provides much of the thematic content throughout the ballet. It consists of two leaps: \( G_b \) to \( B_b \) and then \( G_b \) to \( B^\# \). This oscillation from \( B^\# \) to \( B^\flat \) not only offers an emphasis on the major third and perfect fourth intervals, but also suggests a duality between the two whole-tone scales that include either pitch. This duality permeates throughout much of the work.

EXAMPLE 1-1: *The Earth*, primary motive

In addition, the major third and perfect fourth intervals appear in the macro-harmonic structure of *The Earth*. The first pitch of the introduction and each scene thereafter follow a progression of perfect fourths, namely \( A^b-D^b-F^\#-B-E-A-D \). Figure 1-1 demonstrates this cycle. The Coda, effectively a reprise of the Introduction’s end, returns to \( A^b \), highlighting the tritone relationship between the Introduction and Scene 6.

---

This poem, originally titled *Cracks*, is placed at the beginning of the score and was included in the premiere’s program. I designed the score and poem to explore the idea of multiplicity and the oddity of our existence as a collection of smaller things, yet both documents do so in different ways. The poem can be found in Appendix A.
(Ab to D). To span a tritone through the progression of scenes seemed to make sense with regards to the primary motive, since the interval of a tritone dominates much of the sound of a whole-tone scale mentioned above.

![Diagram of macro-harmonic progression of Scenes 1-6](image)

**FIGURE 1-1: The Earth**, macro-harmonic progression of Scenes 1-6

As stated, the Introduction begins with a lengthy oboe solo. This *arabesque* suggests some intervallic and rhythmic content that more fully matures in Scene 1. During this solo, the three remaining woodwinds enter, followed by coloristic interjections of the brass and string choirs. Following the first climax of the piece at m. 34, only the oboe remains for the final statement of the main theme (mm. 37-39).

Part One is split into three scenes, each defined by a unique tempo, motivic treatment, and harmonic palette. Scene 1 ($\bar{=}100$) contains the primary motive in the pizzicato strings and solo horn. The episode at m. 74 announces a new secondary theme, seen in Example 1-2. Scene 2 ($\bar{=}72$) inverts this theme as a recurring bass line, while its melodic line relies upon portions of the chromatic scale. A 5/8 episode embedded in Scene 2 offers a new ostinato constructed entirely of perfect fourths. The climax of Scene 2, reduced in Example 1-3, features three separate ideas superimposed on each other.

Scene 3 ($\bar{=}120$) provides contrast with a faster tempo, greater rhythmic dissonance, and more coloration from the percussion section, which consists of bass drum, tam-tam, and
two sets of tom-toms. Part One ends with a series of whole-tone clusters, a half-diminished rip in the trombone and horn, and a final strike of the bass drum.

EXAMPLE 1-2: The Earth, secondary theme, m.74

Part Two consists of three scenes. In Scene 4 (J=80), the solo bass drum and low strings drive a hypnotic ostinato. At faster speeds, this rhythmic pattern would create some kind of waltz or even a scherzo-like texture. Instead, the slow and constant pulse drives throughout several episodes and a canon consisting of yet another inversion of Scene 1’s secondary theme. Scene 5 (J=44) focuses upon the oscillation of two chords, Dm and Cm, the harmonies when they are stacked, and the possible melodies derived from their combined scales. This primarily results in a bitonal texture. Scene 6 (J=164) attempts a dramatic climax for the entire piece though the combination of previous themes and extreme stratification of both rhythmic and harmonic ideas. Example 1-4 illustrates some of this stratification, in which six separate layers stack on top of each other.
A brief coda consists of only a quote from the Introduction’s oboe solo, spelling the primary motive one final time. The description from the scenario reads, “Only the woman remains, barely mobile. She returns to the opening position. A single light overhead, and then darkness.”

---

8 See Appendix D.
The harmonic choices made in *The Earth* rely heavily upon the language developed at the beginning of the 20th century. *Prélude* and *Le Sacre*, among other works, did much to advance the techniques of vertical and linear sonorities. This is no secret to theoreticians, as both pieces are paradigms for early 20th century harmony. This chapter will examine four harmonic categories exemplified in either *Prélude* or *Le Sacre* and included in *The Earth*: (1) the sonority of the *arabesque*, (2) the intervallic alteration of motives, (3) tonal ambiguity, and (4) harmonic quotation. While an exhaustive list of harmonic examples extends beyond the scope of this paper, each category means to imply a trend of harmonic technique.

The term *arabesque* describes an ornamented melodic line, “without the dimension of chord progression to distract from [its] curve and contour.”9 *Arabesques* occur more often in Debussy’s orchestral works than those of Stravinsky, and are typically constructed of a mix of chromatic, pentatonic, and whole-tone scales.10 The openings of *Prélude*, *Le Sacre*, and *The Earth* present prominent *arabesques* that share similar harmonic content. In addition, each *arabesque* employs a similar instrumentation: a solo woodwind, eventually harmonized by other winds. *Prélude* features a flute, *Le Sacre* a bassoon, and *The Earth*, an oboe.

---

10 Ibid, 159.
a. Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune:

b. Le Sacre du Printemps:

c. The Earth Without Water:

EXAMPLE 2-1: Arabesques of Prélude, Le Sacre, and The Earth
Evaluation of the pitch content of these arabesques reveals remarkable similarities. Table 2-1 illustrates the pitch content of these *arabesques*. As indicated, *Le Sacre* and *The Earth* share the same prime form for their *arabesque*, (0123568T), resulting in shared interval vectors. Further, the three *arabesques* also have same potential for major second and perfect fourth intervals, seen in Figure 2-1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pitch Content</th>
<th>Prime Form</th>
<th>Interval Vector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Prélude</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>(012345689)</td>
<td>&lt;767763&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Le Sacre</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0123568T)</td>
<td>&lt;465562&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Earth</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0123568T)</td>
<td>&lt;465562&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2-1: Pitch Content of Arabesques for *Prélude*, *Le Sacre*, and *The Earth*

In terms of melodic intervals, the three *arabesques* exhibit significant stepwise motion, of both whole and half steps. The *arabesques* also offer proportionally low amounts of unison, tritone, a perfect fifth motion. The consistency of stepwise motion speaks to the increased likelihood of fragmented octatonic, diatonic, and/or chromatic construction in the *arabesques* mentioned (See Table 2-2).
Further, each \textit{arabesque} suggests a certain center of tonality. \textit{Prélude} exhibits E major, which is affirmed by the first inversion E major triad in m. 3. Despite the tritone at the end of \textit{Le Sacre}'s excerpt, the bassoon's \textit{arabesque} heavily implies A minor. Finally, \textit{The Earth}'s \textit{arabesque} suggests A\textsubscript{b} minor—a conscious decision to humbly compose a double-reed \textit{arabesque} that rests one minor-second below that of Stravinsky.

Although repetition of these \textit{arabesques} and their motives provide consistency throughout their respective ballets, harmonic variations also occur. These alterations preserve the melodic contour, but compress or extend some of the intervallic relationships within the motive. \textit{Prélude}, which relies heavily upon the recurring flute theme first stated in the \textit{arabesque}, also adjusts this motive, particularly towards the end of the piece. Example 2-2 contains the motive from Example 2-1a, but this time the tritone relationship between the outer voices is reduced to a perfect fourth. Without the melodic tritone, this last section exhibits a clearer terminal trajectory, unlike the preceding content.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & \textbf{Unison} & \textbf{m2} & \textbf{M2} & \textbf{m3} & \textbf{M3} & \textbf{P4} & \textbf{T} & \textbf{P5} \\
\hline
\textbf{Prélude} & 20 & 18 & 16 & 14 & 12 & 10 & 8 & 6 \\
\textbf{Le Sacre} & 18 & 16 & 14 & 12 & 10 & 8 & 6 & 4 \\
\textbf{The Earth} & 16 & 14 & 12 & 10 & 8 & 6 & 4 & 2 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Melodic Intervals in the \textit{Arabesques} for \textit{Prélude}, \textit{Le Sacre}, and \textit{The Earth}}
\end{table}
Directly after this, the motive continues in the oboe. Harmonic differences include a new progression (illustrated in Example 2-3) and an extension of the motive via sequencing to include the pedal B before the E major resolution. One may still recognize the melodic anchoring around E in m.103, as well as the tritone relationship between the C 6/5 and F#m sonorities.

Lastly, Debussy offers a new harmony to the *arabesque* figure in the horns and second violins, seen in Example 2-4. This triadic treatment consists of chromatic passing tones, as opposed to outright functional harmony. The phrase begins on an E major

\[\text{C}_6 \quad \text{C}_5 \quad \text{F}^\#m \quad \text{D}_\#_5^6 \quad \text{A/B} \quad \text{F}^\#m/B \quad \text{B}^9 \quad \text{E}\]

\footnote{In favor of clarity and size considerations, many of the following examples will be taken from Debussy’s reduction of *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* for piano four-hands.}
chord, rests upon a C major chord on beats 7 through 10, and returns to an E major variant at the beginning of m. 108. Whereas the original melody of the *arabesque* spanned a tritone, this last version has compressed the melody in half, to a major third.

![EXAMPLE 2-4: Motivic Alteration in *Prélude*, mm. 107-108](image)

*Le Sacre*, on the other hand, does not rely as heavily upon a single motive. Its thematic content is more diverse, due in part to the increased length of the work and the several independent scenes involved. In addition, most of the scenes possess some kind of static harmony due to the employment of ostinato figures and repetition. Still, the opening *arabesque* endures a harmonic modulation beginning at m. 66, at the very end of the Introduction. One can compare this modulation with Example 2-1b.

![EXAMPLE 2-5: Motivic Alteration in *Le Sacre*, mm. 66-68](image)

In *The Earth Without Water*, several motives bridge the various scenes together. In Scene 1, the *pizzicato* violins iterate the main motive over an ostinato string section. This motive is then altered a few sections later in the horn, viola, and cello. In Example 2-6, the oscillation from B♭ to B♮ in the primary motive has been extended to a C, thereby altering the previous Ab minor harmony to a whole-tone sonority.
The secondary theme in Scene 1 (see Example 1-2) also receives new treatment in its later iterations. First, its inversion provides an ostinato for Scene 2, seen in Example 2-7a. Several bars later, this inversion’s retrograde appears in the bassoon solo in Example 2-7b. Finally, in Example 2-7c, the canon beginning in m. 300 from Scene 4 derives from the inversion (and enharmonic spelling) of 2-7b, as well as an extension of the outer upper voice.

EXAMPLE 2-7: Motivic Alteration in *The Earth*, mm. 162-163, 166, and 300-301

The previous section demonstrates how the *arabesque* and other motives provide content throughout the ballet form via repetition and alteration of harmonic content. Further analysis reveals that much of the harmonic language of *Prélude*, *Le Sacre*, and *The Earth* derives from bitonal, whole-tone, or octatonic construction. These techniques
often diffuse a tonic’s dominance over its surrounding sonorities, or else act without a specific tonic relationship, resulting in tonally ambiguous harmonies.

Bitonality provides a striking sound indicative of 20th century harmony. The Groves entry for bitonality describes the technique as “the simultaneous, superimposed presence of two distinct tonalities.”12 Le Sacre and The Earth display significant evidence of bitonality; yet, neither ballet dictates a strict hierarchal approach to a certain tonality. In this sense, ‘bitonality’ is not used to imply simultaneous tonalities, but rather as the most efficient means to describe certain sonorities that can be stacked into several thirds. This seems to be a better method than Allan Forte’s approach, which catalogues the harmonic information of Le Sacre into pitch class sets.13 I would argue that a bichord projects its distinctive sound due in part to the dissonance between registers of its separate triads or seventh chords—a phenomenon removed when exclusively relating to items as pitch classes. The bitonality discussed here is aptly defined as “…[the] passing effect within a harmonic language that is subtly balanced between traditional hierarchies and new symmetries.”14

*Le Sacre*’s most famous occurrence of bitonality appears in many music-theory textbooks’ introductions to bitonal techniques. The sonority itself bears many labels in academic literature: the *Augurs* chord, the *talchok* chord, and the “double-chord.”15 It first appears in measure 76, voiced as interlocked double-stops in the string section. Example

---

14 Whittall, "Bitonality."
2-8a shows the string section as it appears in the orchestral score, while Example 2-8b shows Stravinsky’s own piano reduction. The polychord consists of two harmonies separated into the lower and middle choirs of strings. The contrabass and violoncello spell out an F♭ Major triad, while the viola and second violins strike an E♭ dominant sonority. This dominant-seventh chord never resolves to its expected harmony (A♭), thus dissolving the illusion of either tonality. The dissonance results partially from the tessitura of low strings as well as intervallic seconds and sevenths.

This sonority remains the signature sound of Stravinsky’s ballet due in part to its exposed orchestration and repetition.\(^\text{16}\) Thus, the inclusion of similar sonorities in The Earth serves as both a mechanical process to devise interesting harmonies and as a way of acknowledging the lasting impression of Le Sacre. Example 2-9 shows one of the first examples of bitonality in The Earth. In this section, the woodwind and high strings voice out a progression of E♭ major, G♭ major, and A♭ major (first inversion). Meanwhile, the

\[^{16}\text{The sonority occurs “[…] some two hundred and eighty times in different forms, dispositions, instrumentations, and massing.” See Boucourechliev, Stravinsky, 81-82.}\]
high brass shift between whole-tone clusters. The section is the first fortissimo of an
otherwise fluid and quiet introduction. As with *Le Sacre*’s *talchok* chords, the presence of
the bichord sonority marks a section of increased intensity.

Additionally, bitonality defines much of the content in Scene 5 of *The Earth*. The
scene contains little melodic content apart from the oscillation of C minor and D minor
chords over a pedal A. Upon the repetition of the four-bar phrase, the strings then offset
the progression by an eighth note, resulting in brief bichordal harmonies during the
syncopation. The bitonal color is maintained through the use of orchestration, with the
rhythmic and harmonic dissonance appearing between the string and woodwind choirs.
The remaining part of the scene extrapolates melodies from this harmonic palette. In this
instance, bitonality offers the use of triads while thickening the texture and attempting a
moderate level of dissonance.
As an extension of this topic, *Le Sacre* and *The Earth* also utilize split-third chords, a subset of bichords. This particular tetrachord suggests both major and minor qualities by sounding the corresponding thirds along with the typical perfect fifth over the root. An example occurs at the outset of *Cercles Mysterieux Des Adolescentes*. In Example 2-11, a six-part viola section begins the section with simultaneous B major and B minor sonorities. Both the register of the viola and the harmony contribute to the exotic and somewhat unsettling mood of this scene.

In an entirely different style, *The Earth* uses a split-third chord to achieve a dramatic climax in Part 1. In Example 2-12, the conflict of the C and C# in the extreme ranges of the orchestra heightens the dissonance between the two choirs. The split-third chord of the first half of m. 272 infers a bitonal sonority. In the latter half the bass notes suggest a C minor harmony underneath the static A major triad, thus reinforcing the bitonality.

EXAMPLE 2-11: Split-third chord in *Le Sacre*, mm. 553-554

EXAMPLE 2-12: Split-third chord in *The Earth*, m. 272
The whole-tone scale is another example of harmonic vocabulary shared among the three ballets. It offers tonal instability while retaining some degree of consonance due to the intervallic regularity of major seconds. The scale “[...] divides the octave into six equal-tempered whole tones: C–D–E–F♯–G♯–B♭–C or its sole transposition, D♭–E♭–F–G–A–B–D♭.”

In a 1910 article titled, “The Whole-Tone Scale and Its Practical Use,” the whole-tone’s function is described as being, “[...] confined to creating an artificial and exotic atmosphere,” but also that its potential for, “[...] modulatory and colour purposes are very considerable.” Thus, we find the whole-tone scale used as a vehicle of ambiguity and motion in the three ballets.

In Prélude, the whole-tone sonority appears in the opening statement of the arabesque. The outer-reaches of the flute’s theme, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, extend to the interval of a tritone (C♯–G). The tritone often suggests a whole-tone harmony, since the tritone results from the combination of three consecutive major-second intervals. A similar juxtaposition occurs in mm. 3–5, in which the flute spells an E major triad, which is answered in m. 5 with a B♭ dominant-seventh chord in the harp and horn.

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In *Le Sacre*, the whole-tone scale often lends its instability to sections of increased activity. In the example below, the whole-tone vamp in the lower voices spell a tritone in the beginning of each bar (F# to C). Meanwhile, its melody propels the section forward, despite the repetition of the upper voices. This transitional material embraces the whole-tone scale as a vehicle of instability.

Likewise, some transitions in *The Earth* utilize the whole-tone scale. Example 2-14 highlights the material that bridges two contrasting ostinato sections. Here the whole-tone scale serves to shift the harmonic center by a tritone without the use of typical chordal progression. The trumpet begins with an Fb, yet by the end of the excerpt the trombones have secured a B♭ center.
The whole-tone scale can also supply vertical and melodic content simultaneously. In Scene 4 of *The Earth*, a recurring melody from the previous scenes required a new coloration for contrast. The brass play the melody in a literal succession of whole-tone clusters, while the melody itself moves in major seconds exclusively. In this language and style, the triad offers too great a consonance. In addition, further extensions of a given triad insert an undesired function to the static and repetitive passage. Thus, the whole-tone scale provides sophistication and lends instability to an ostinato figure.

EXAMPLE 2-15: Whole-Tone Usage in *The Earth*, mm. 295

In addition to the whole-tone scale, the octatonic scale also finds its roots in early 20th century harmony. The octatonic scale is “[…] a succession of eight notes within the octave in which tones and semitones, or semitones and tones, alternate.”\(^{20}\) As Messiaen points out in *Technique de mon language musical*, the octatonic scale is a mode of limited transposition, used “transiently” by composers in the early 20th century.\(^{21}\) The octatonic scale has three possible versions, labeled in Example 2-16 as Octatonic (01),


(12), and (23). The scale itself resembles the grouping of two minor tetrachords (Do-Re-Me-Fa, then the same Do-Re-Me-Fa transposed up a tritone) or an octatonic collection can be seen as the combination of two unique diminished seventh chords. It is therefore a pattern that lends to passages of ambiguity or dissonance, occasionally implying either or both minor scale patterns.

![Octatonic Scales](image)

**EXAMPLE 2-16:** Possible Octatonic Scales

Allen Forte describes the opening of *Prélude* as deriving from octatonic origins. He writes, “Reducing out the direct chromatic unaccented passing notes, which are almost invariably ‘foreground’ decoration in Debussy’s music [...] reveals the melodic progression that underlies the opening flute solo: octatonic pentad 5-10.” Example 2-17 recreates Forte’s example, which employs a fragment of Octatonic (12).

![Example 2-17](image)

**EXAMPLE 2-17:** Allen Forte’s analysis of Octatonic Content in *Prélude*, m. 1

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23 Ibid, 141.
By 1913 and the writing of *Le Sacre*, awareness of octatonic techniques had grown, resulting in more intricate implementation of the scale and its harmonies. As Matthew McDonald points out, Stravinsky’s “Augurs of Spring” includes a prominent octatonic episode very early on.²⁴ Beginning in m. 84, this variant of the *talchok* chords combines an E♭ dominant sonority with C major, resulting in an octatonic harmony based on Octatonic (01).²⁵

![Example 2-18: Octatonic Harmony in *Le Sacre*](image)

In *The Earth*, octatonic harmonies appear most often in transitional or climactic segments. In Example 2-19, the three octatonic scales are sequenced together. The primary motive of the ballet appears fragmented in the bass voices, while the treble voices follow down the three octatonic scales in this order: (12), (01), (23).²⁷ Since the pattern of the octatonic sequence disrupts our expectations of major and minor scales, the sonority is an ideal candidate for transitional sequences such as Example 2-19.

²⁴ Matthew McDonald, “*Jeux de Nombres*: Automated Rhythm in *The Rite of Spring*,” *Journal of American Musicological Society* 63, no. 3 (Fall 2010), 500-501.
²⁶ In Example 2-18, the two parentheses mark the notes that are missing from the pitch set that would normally be in the Octatonic (01) scale.
²⁷ It should be noted that a single alteration to the last octatonic scale admits a G in the bass voice of m. 72.
EXAMPLE 2-19: Octatonic Usage in *The Earth*, mm. 70-73.

Several triads and seventh chords can also be derived from a single octatonic scale. In Example 2-20, measures 260 and 262-264 derive their harmonies solely from Octatonic (23): Fm7, Bm7, F7, A♭7, and D7.²⁸

EXAMPLE 2-20: Octatonic Usage in *The Earth*, mm. 260-264.

As a final point on harmony, I would like to address some of the quotations that occur in *The Earth*. In addition to an analysis such as this one, I felt it necessary and fruitful to include aural cues that help to illustrate the debt of my ballet to the study of *Prélude* and *Le Sacre*. These quotations function as homage to these masterpieces, as well as a commentary on how relevant Debussy and Stravinsky continue to be for modern composition.

One of the more evident quotes borrowed from *Prélude* occurs in mm. 35-37 in *The Earth*. This segment partially quotes two sections from Debussy: mm. 20-21, and mm. 48-50. All three examples have repetitions of scalar fragments that lead up to a restatement of the *arabesque* theme of their respective ballet. All three excerpts follow similar contour, and (a) and (c) end on the same pitch, C# (enharmonically spelled in *The Earth*).

²⁸ Here, two whole-tone clusters in m. 261 interrupt the octatonic content of the passage.
EXAMPLE 2-21: *Prélude*, mm.20-21, mm. 48-50 and *The Earth* mm. 35-37

*The Earth* has several harmonic quotations taken from *Le Sacre*. Example 2-22 illustrates the similarities between two trombone excerpts. Both use the same pitch material. However, slight variations in rhythm and rotation between the tenor and bass trombone in *The Earth* ensure that the passage is not directly copied. By using the same instrumentation, the quote hopes to appeal to trombonists who have studied Stravinsky’s orchestral excerpts.

Example 2-23 compares an ostinato rhythm from “Rondes Printanières” with the climax of *The Earth*’s first half. The bass line, juxtaposed with the repeated chords on top, occurs just once in *The Earth*. It uses the momentum of the C minor scale to lead into
the main motive one last time, whereas the figure in *Le Sacre* repeats as an ostinato figure.

 EXAMPLE 2-23: *Le Sacre* m. 321 vs. *The Earth* m. 272

A final example contrasts two climactic and vital parts of each ballet. In Nijinsky’s choreography, measure 611 marks the moment when the tribe has chosen the young woman to be sacrificed to the earth. The long and unaccented meter emphasizes the repetition, articulation, and harmony. *The Earth* reciprocates this idea, limiting the eleven-part repetition to five and detailing no specific choreography.

 EXAMPLE 2-24: *Le Sacre* m. 611 vs. *The Earth* mm. 306-307

Further, the harmonic structure in *The Earth*’s example is constructed in a more parallel manner. The intervallic structure among the lower voices and upper voices remain the same: a tritone with a perfect fourth, and then a perfect fourth with a tritone. The two sonorities mainly differentiate by the interval between the two voicings. Whereas Stravinsky interlocked the two choirs at an interval of a major second, m. 306 of *The Earth* separates them by a major seventh. Consequently, the intervals between all voices in this sonority consist of tritones, perfect fourths, major sevenths, and octaves.
exclusively (Figure 2-2). In addition, this spacing allows for an abnormally high number of major seventh intervals in *The Earth*’s harmony (Example 2-25).

a. tritone
   
   \[ \text{P4} \]
   
   \[ \text{M2} \]
   
   tritone

b. tritone

\[ \text{P4} \]

\[ \text{M7} \]

\[ \text{P4} \]

tritone

**FIGURE 2-2:** Intervallic symmetry in *Le Sacre*, m. 611 and *The Earth*, m. 306

**EXAMPLE 2-25:** *The Earth*, intervallic content, m. 306

To conclude, *The Earth Without Water* adopts several harmonic techniques that found success in *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. These include the interval and pitch set of the *arabesque*, harmonic augmentation and diminution of motives, bitonal, whole-tonal, and octatonic construction of melodies and harmonies, and lastly harmonic quotation of Debussy and Stravinsky.
CHAPTER 3: RHYTHMIC AND FORMAL ORGANIZATION

This chapter aims to examine the temporal proportions used in Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune, Le Sacre du Printemps, and The Earth Without Water. In ballets, rhythm fulfills a more important function than it might in other genres due to its involvement with spatial art—there are opportunities for fluid sections of expressive dance, and, in the most exaggerated of cases, opportunities for sections of rhythmic dissonance. This chapter identifies several rhythmic qualities shared among Prélude, Le Sacre, and The Earth: (1) the rhythm of the arabesque, (2) rhythmic alteration of motives, (3) rhythmic stratification, and (4) proportion of form.

From a rhythmic perspective, the arabesque offers the greatest contrast to the metric regularity that is typically asked for in a ballet. This is one reason that the arabesque typically occurs in the beginning—it either highlights a solo dancer, or occurs during the introduction with no dancing or choreography. Debussy and Stravinsky both utilize the arabesque to create a fluid and primal atmosphere at the beginning of their ballets. Example 3-1 shows the arabesques in their rhythmic form only:

a. Prélude

b. Le Sacre

c. The Earth

EXAMPLE 3-1: Rhythmic Characteristics of the Arabesque
The arabesque encourages rhythmic ambiguity in the following ways:

1. The fermata creates irregularity in tempo. When used in melodic situations (as opposed to cadential), the fermata encourages a freer interpretation of duration and thus, phrasing. The arabesques in Le Sacre and The Earth both contain several fermati.

2. Interjections of grace notes into solo melodies also contribute to metric irregularity. Notably, the grace notes in Le Sacre and The Earth occur before the same pitches. (C-B and A♭, respectively).

3. The arabesque rhythm relies heavily upon tied notes, particularly at the beginning of phrases. This delays the introduction of subdivisions, warps the proportion of notes within the measure, and dissolves the emphasis of strong and weak beats.

4. The arabesques contain a mixture of metric subdivisions, including duple, triple, and quintal subdivisions. This lends to the illusion of improvisatory

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or “Dionysian” influence in the *arabesque*.\textsuperscript{29} 

5. Last, the *arabesques* prominently feature metrically displaced phrase repetitions. By noting these rhythmic similarities, we see that all three *arabesques* suggest metric ambiguity. In *Prélude*, the *arabesque* recurs throughout the piece and also offers its rhythmic qualities to developmental and secondary themes. In *Le Sacre*, the bassoon solo acts as a lyrical contrast to the metrically complex content to follow. Similarly, *The Earth*’s arabesque serves as the most metrically free of the ballet’s phrases, while also suggesting rhythmic motives upon which the remaining ballet is based.

Chapter 2 examined the alteration of motivic harmonies in the ballets. These motives also experience rhythmic expansions and compressions. Truly, this separation of harmony and rhythm is an artificial one; in order to note harmonic alterations of a particular motive, the rhythm involved must remain intact to a certain degree. Similarly, the preservation of melody/harmony in the motives examined here remains an important part of determining their rhythmic variations. Thus, the following examples of rhythmic alteration include some pitch information as well.

Rhythmic alterations of motives in *Prélude* can be traced to two main ideas. First, we can trace how the main motive, introduced in the flute *arabesque* shown in Example 2-1a (page 9), endures several rhythmic alterations. One example occurs in m. 102, previously discussed in Example 2-2 (page 11). The second motive has two main variants, united by a clear derivation from the flute *arabesque*. Example 3-2a shows the beginning of *Prélude*, the first micro-phrase of the *arabesque*. This first measure ends

\textsuperscript{29} This “Dionysian” influence is discussed briefly on pages 37-38 and at greater length on pages 49-50.
with ascending stepwise motion, and this scalar motion and its duple rhythm are embedded in the same metric location in its rhythmic variants. Matthew Brown labels the first of these variants as the “syncopated motive.” It is repeated and/or altered in mm. 39-41, 51-54, 67, 69, 74, 83-84, and 95. This example shows the syncopated motive in its most common form (a), and also in one of its augmented forms (b).

![EXAMPLE 3-2: Rhythmic Alteration in Prélude, Syncopated Motive, m. 1, 95](image)

The second motive, which Brown labels as a “flowing motive,” is marked with a triple subdivision followed by the same scalar idea from the *arabesque*. Example 3-3 displays four rhythmic variations of this flowing motive. We can see that Debussy explores a fair amount of rhythmic extension and compression with his main motives. He also highlights the duality of these two rhythmic motives by oscillating between them at one of the climaxes of *Prélude*, mm. 67-74.

![EXAMPLE 3-3: Rhythmic Alteration in Prélude, Flowing Motive](image)

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EXAMPLE 3-3: Rhythmic Alteration in *Prélude*, Flowing Motive, mm. 28, 61-62, 68, 96

Since *Le Sacre* relies less heavily upon a single motive, as *Prélude* does, we can instead locate isolated motives that endure several alterations within one scene. For example, mm. 346-356 act as a climax for “Rondes Printanières,” and a part of this function is aided by constant alteration to the main melody. In Example 3-4 shows seven possible phrase structures. The motivic idea consists of two parts: the first is a series of repeated quarter notes, while the second can be described as ascending scalar eighth notes. For the former part of the motive, we see different combinations of repeated quarters: 3, 2, 3, 6, 3, 3, and 2. The combination of three quarters (as seen in phrase 1) is the “prime” form of the motive—it repeats some thirteen times prior to the climax at R53. For the latter part, the descending quarters in m. 347 never recur in this section—as if the following phrases are continually interrupted before finishing the motive. The rhythmic alterations, then, act as a point of contrast for the scene: a contrast that does not rely upon a new motive or a truly new rhythmic idea.

EXAMPLE 3-4: Rhythmic Alteration in *Le Sacre*, mm. 346-356, phrase markings added
Some of *The Earth* utilizes rhythmic alterations in similar ways to *Prélude*, in order to prevent the weariness of a repeated motive, but also to encourage an economical quantity of motives. The first measure, seen in Example 3-5a, for instance, contains a small motivic cell. It unfolds in 3-5b and reappears as an even larger augmentation in 3-5c. A similar technique adapts a motive from Scene 1 for a developmental section in Scene 3 (Example 3-6).

![Example 3-5: Rhythmic Alteration in *The Earth*, m. 1, 59-61, and 119-125](image)

On the other hand, parts of *The Earth* more closely resemble the rhythmic alteration in *Le Sacre*. Some rhythmic alterations occur within a single section, with the alterations directly following each other. The simple motive from Scene 6 in measure 363 starts as five groups of two sixteenth notes, punctuated by a measure of eight. However,
as the scene progresses, this idea expands and contracts, leading to an unpredictable phrase structure vacant of normal melodic connection. Due to the length of this example, please see the attached score (mm. 363-382).\(^\text{32}\)

The three ballets each employ rhythmic dissonance via stratification. During the most dramatic sections, Debussy and Stravinsky make extensive use of polyrhythms—some layers are repetitive, some melodic, and some use dissonant subdivisions.

In *Prélude*, we see the greatest degree of stratification at the golden section of the work.\(^\text{33}\) During this proportional and dynamic climax, several layers of duple and triple rhythms exist simultaneously. The main theme, discussed earlier in this chapter and seen in the 4\(^{th}\) line of Example 3-7, cycles between triple and duple meter. The effect is a disillusionment of pulse and forward propulsion.

\[\text{EXAMPLE 3-7: Rhythmic Stratification in *Prélude*, mm. 63-71}\]

\(^{32}\) See Appendix F.

\(^{33}\) This “golden section” is discussed further on pages 38-39.
Next, in *Le Sacre*, Stravinsky increases the level of dissonance with direct conflicts of grace notes, syncopations, constant sixteenth notes spread among voices, bowed tremelo, quintuplets, sextuplets, and septuplets. This passage occurs at the very end of “Augurs” and is therefore the first real climax of *Le Sacre*.

*The Earth* uses stratification in a similar way. In this example, triplet eighth notes and triplet quarter notes occur alongside a rising scale fragment in duple meter. Notably, the rhythms line up with unison sixteenth notes in beat 3 of m. 256 and beat 3 of m. 258. This rhythmic consonance offers a point of release after the building of rhythmic layers prior to it.
Another example occurs at the beginning of Scene 4, in which separate choirs layer rather disjunct lines over an ostinato bass. These interpolations might surprise an audience due to their volume, extreme range, and rhythmic dissonance (Example 3-10).

EXAMPLE 3-10: Rhythmic Dissonance in *The Earth*, mm. 282-286

In addition to rhythmic variation, the ballets also reveal a conscious construction of form that adheres to certain proportional or balanced ideas. Debussy’s use of proportion and the golden section are well documented in many analyses. Roy Howat writes that, “Of all Debussy’s works up to 1894 […] *L’apres-midi* evidently contains the most sophisticated proportional organization.” Formal sections, dynamic accumulation, and appropriations of “metric units” indicate formal balance as well as the golden section at the climax of the work. Howat describes the analytical method of deriving metric units

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34 Roy Howat’s *Debussy in Proportion* not only provides background information on proportional structure and the Golden Section, but also examines Debussy’s early works, *L’isle joyeuse*, and has a very large section dedicated to *La Mer*. See Roy Howat, *Debussy in Proportion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

in his second chapter (pages 15-21). His technique uses the greatest common
denominator of any metric modulations in order to find a metric unit. In *Prélude*, the
metric unit is primarily the eighth note, except during certain metric modulations.\(^{36}\)

Howat describes *Prélude* as an arch form: **A A’ B A” A**. The italicized A sections
enjoy a relatively free relationship with A, whereas **A** states a firmer recapitulation of
the opening subject. The B section indicates the central climax of the work. He writes,
“The main climax is prepared by an earlier undulating dynamic sequence,” shown in
Figure 3-1 as a crescendo towards bar 70, followed by a decrescendo. Figure 3-1 also
reveals several proportional features. First, note the balance among the many sections that
last for 72 metric units. The entirety of the work lasts 817 metric units. The golden
section of 817 is 505 units, meaning the climax is extremely close to this proportional
ideal. Further, in the piano version, Debussy indicates two *forte* peaks in place of the
*fortissimo*. In this variation, the first peak occurs in m. 68, the golden section of *Prélude*’s
110 measures.

**FIGURE 3-1: Proportion in *Prélude*, from R. Howat**\(^{37}\)

While *Prélude*’s shorter duration and arch form are quite conducive to procuring
golden sections, *Le Sacre* still emits formal balance without such ideals. Rhythmic
proportion leads to a greater understanding of the mathematical aspects of *Le Sacre*,

\(^{36}\) This is discussed at length at the beginning of Howat’s analysis of *Prélude*. See Ibid,
149-150.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 151.
which is too often seen as a purely Dionysian work. Rather, Stravinsky uses proportion for formal balance of linear sections and sections of recurring ostinati.

Edward T. Cone demonstrates that three main sections can be found in “Augurs” and that they behave within proportional boundaries of each other (See Figure 3-2). Thus, we see a formal balance between the two large sections, with a seamless transition into “Dances des Adolescents” occurring midway through the second ostinato section. Table 3-1 reveals further balance when comparing the kinds of ostinati and their duration. Note that the duration of each ostinato is a multiple of 19—this being an arbitrary number in sense of proportion aside from emitting a formal balance among the ostinati.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ostinatos</th>
<th>pause</th>
<th>Ostinatos</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3-2: Proportion in *Le Sacre*, from Edward T. Cone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Duration [in measures]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talchok chords</td>
<td>57 [3x19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Eb fifths”</td>
<td>38 [2x19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Violin Trill</td>
<td>38 [2x19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Everything Else”</td>
<td>38 [2x19]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3-1: Duration of Ostinati in *Le Sacre*, “Augurs of Spring”

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In determining the formal balance in *The Earth*, I find the use of a quarter note as a metric unit offers the use of mostly whole numbers and renders the best distinction of duration. This works especially well since tempo remains consistent throughout each scene. Figure 3-3 notes two main ideas of proportion in *The Earth*. First, there seems to be some formal balance in the interior scenes, namely 2, 3, and 4 that last for 227.5, 228, and 225 metric units, respectively. Second, the golden section of the work (with relation to metric units) occurs near the beginning of Scene 4. Just like *Prélude*, the golden section is only marginally off from a meaningful place in the work. It is two measures, or 14 metric units, from having the golden proportion at the dramatic break between Part 1 and Part 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>METRIC UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 1</td>
<td>305.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2</td>
<td>227.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 5</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 6</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 5</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To conclude, this chapter has examined the various rhythmic techniques that help *The Earth Without Water* to possibly sound like *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. In both fluid and striated sections, rhythmic vocabulary allows for variation, consistency, or even dissonance. The rhythm of the *arabesque*, rhythmic alteration of motives, rhythmic stratification, and proportion of form each help shape the signature sound of these three ballets.
As seen in the previous chapters, from a sonic standpoint, a ballet is no different than any symphonic work. The score consists of various structural phenomena that would be typical of other forms, including a particular vocabulary of harmonic and rhythmic devices. Sonic ideas are therefore a necessary creative force during a ballet’s composition. Yet, a ballet also possesses additional creative forces: namely a text, such as poetry, a narrative, or a scenario, that often acts as a more direct indication of the action on stage. An analysis of a ballet would benefit from including the origin of said forms, as well as the causalities and hierarchies resulting from their implementation.

The role of text differs greatly among the ballets in question. Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* borrows its plot and scaffolds much of its form after Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem, *L’après-midi d’un faune*.40 Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps*, on the other hand, follows a scenario whose content and style underwent several edits and changes during the production of the ballet.41 Finally, *The Earth Without Water* borrows from both: a poem I wrote in 2013 and a scenario that illustrates more specific activity during each scene, written in 2014.42

This chapter, then, is concerned with the role and function of the text during composition. In particular, special interest is given to the interrelated or hierarchal relationships drawn between the text and the score itself. As Elizabeth McCombie writes,

> There are obvious problems with placing music and poetry on the starting blocks together without considering the asymmetrical semiotic relationship between them. In music meaning is non-predicative: connotations are displaced and

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40 See Appendix A.
41 See Appendix B.
42 See Appendix C and D, respectively.
unlocalized. Tacit connotations, such as the stability, disruption, and restabilization implicit in the traditional sonata form, rest on explicit combinatorial structures, which can be charged with expectancy and tension by the progression of keys. In poetry this balance is inverted.43

With that said, and with caution towards insisting on too literal a connection between text and sound, we can recognize the temporal qualities of each art. McCombie continues,

The distinctive joint feature of music and poetry is that the formal apparatus of each is based on the rhythmic apprehension of time, and on the periodic division of or resistance to temporal continuity.44

This chapter will begin with a discussion of poetry and score. Thus, Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune and The Earth will both be compared to their respective poetry.

Debussy and Mallarmé met in the autumn of 1890, planning a collaboration on Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune to be performed in February 1891. Mallarmé cancelled this initial project for unknown reasons, before Debussy had begun composition. Barbara Kelly writes that, “Just as Mallarmé was seeking to capture the qualities of music through poetry, which may explain his desire to withdraw from the collaboration, Debussy was seeking his own distinctly musical ends, with ideas clearly derived from Baudelaire and the Symbolists.”45 Debussy played his score for Mallarmé anyway in 1894, and Mallarmé is recorded as having received it positively.46

How closely is Prélude related to its namesake poem? The answer requires an aesthetic and formal inspection. Julie Mcquinn suggests that “Both Mallarmé’s poem and Debussy’s music dwell in the hazy spaces where sexual fantasies are born, between

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43 For the purposes of this thesis, “poetry” may refer to text in general, meaning either poetry or scenario text. See Elizabeth McCombie, Mallarme and Debussy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 6.

44 Ibid, 7.


46 Wenk, Claude Debussy and the Poets, 149.
dream and memory, the conscious and the unconscious, reverie and reality, sleep and wakefulness, and desire and music making. The ambiguous, erotic images and intangible language of the poem are mirrored in the music where tonalities are only suggested and rarely confirmed, where themes remain undeveloped [...] Debussy’s self-referential, circular music is a musical exploration of the inner workings of the depths of the erotic mind.” Debussy himself explains part of the poem’s relationship with his piece in this letter to Henri Gauther-Villars, dated 1896:

The Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune, cher Monsieur, is it perhaps the dream left over at the bottom of the faun’s flute? To be more precise, it is the general impression of the poem. If the music were to follow it more closely it would run out of breath [...] It also demonstrates a disdain for the ‘constructional knowhow’ which is a burden upon our finest intellectuals. Then again, it has no respect for tonality! Rather, it’s in a mode which is intended to contain all the nuances [...] All the same it follows the ascending shape of the poem as well as the scenery so marvelously described in the text, together with the humanity brought to it by thirty-two violinists who have got up too early! As for the ending, it’s a prolongation of the last line: Couple farewell, I go to see what you became.

Beyond these personal sentiments, we can also draw clear analytical correlations between the poem and the score. Similarly, we can search for the same connections between *The Earth* and *Cracks*, its corresponding poem. These connections take shape in five ways:


The form of *L’après-midi* resembles the arch-form of Debussy’s *Prélude* discussed on page 34. Three sections of text, offset by italics, quotation marks, and tense,

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interrupt the titular faun’s narrative as he recalls an erotic dream of two nymphs. Two elements suggest an arch-form. First, the symmetry of the first and last lines creates a circular direction typical of an arch-form. Second, Mallarmé balances the four parts of the first section against four parts of the final section. Here is Wenk’s diagram of *L’après-midi*’s form, compared with Wenk’s diagram of *Prélude*:

![Diagram of L'après-midi](image1)

![Diagram of Prélude](image2)

Literal correlations of duration further the connection between poetry and score. While the poem has 110 lines of verse, Debussy composed exactly 110 measures. The proportion of sections are not quite the same, however. The middle section of Mallarmé’s poem, for example, consists of twenty lines. Debussy’s middle section lasts for forty-two measures. Wenk suggests that this must mean that Debussy has increased the importance

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50 Ibid, 162.
of this middle section, that which corresponds with the faun and his erotic melody.\footnote{Ibid, 167.} It seems more likely, however, that Debussy’s altered proportion scheme was designed for a closer match of the golden section, as discussed on page 33-34. David Code also offers a particularly strong connection between the first typographical episode (lines 26-32) and mm. 37-43.\footnote{David J. Code, “Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music après Wagner in the \textit{Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune},” \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 54, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 525-526. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jams.2001.54.3.493.} This 7:7 relationship is highlighted with the line “[…] one who seeks there the \textit{natural A}.” Here, the principal flute plays two literal A’s on what Wenk calls rhythmically strong beats.\footnote{It should be noted that this “A” connection occurs in line 34 and measure 44, uniting the 7-line/bar episode prior to them, as a form of punctuation perhaps, as opposed to occurring during them.}

\textit{Cracks}, the poem on which \textit{The Earth} is based, predates the composition by several months. The poem is a short monologue towards an unnamed “you.” The poem is considerably shorter than \textit{L’après-midi}, consisting of only 28 lines. The monologue itself is framed with a randomized sequence of the letters G, C, A, and T that resemble the code for genetic material. This frame, while not intended to be read aloud, ornaments the text it surrounds. The read text consists of only 4 complete sentences:

1. If I take your hand in mine, [your left in mine], and if I hold it close between us, we’ll see all of the cracks and each part of skin etching a crust across each finger.

2. And if we look closer, we would see that the cracks are [and must be] made of many more: a burrowing, a reaching, a rip.

3. And I’d say that you and I are [and must be] nothing more than a collection of tectonic wrinkles.
4. When we nest or marry or when I make you sit by me at the piano and you are drinking a white wine, if you look close, it’s all cracking up and down, rooted and split: the earth without water, the wine glass on the floor.

The ballet, then, takes its title from this last sentence. This ending itself echoes some of *L’après-midi*’s ending:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>L’après-midi</em></th>
<th><em>The Earth</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With no more ado, forgetting blasphemy, I</td>
<td>If you look close, it’s all cracking up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must sleep, lying on the thirsty sand, and as I</td>
<td>and down: the earth without water, the wine glass on the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love, open my mouth to wine’s true constellation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poem’s form appears in six parts when based on sentence structure (with two sections of the “DNA” frame), seen in Figure 4-3. In this figure, I have labeled each sentence with its own unique letter, since the relationships among the sentences’ content is primarily linear. Note that sections B and D also have a small cadence mark; the poem is split into two by use of the semi-colon, just as *The Earth* has a Part 1 and Part 2, separated by silence. In this way, the ballet reciprocates the pause of the poem during the semi-colons with silence. *The Earth*, as seen in Figure 4-4, possesses an 8-part form, consisting of 6 scenes, an Introduction, and a Coda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[frame]</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B [:]</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D [:]</th>
<th>[frame]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 4-3: Cracks, Sentence Structure Form**

**FIGURE 4-4: The Earth, Scene form**

Repetition has already been noted as a common element between *Prélude* and *The Earth* in the previous chapters about harmony, rhythm, and form. Naturally, repetition
also plays an important role in their respective texts. In particular, both poems share a
fixation on liquid, or the lack thereof. *L’après-midi,* for example, mentions at least 17
separate instances of liquid. Due to its shorter duration, *Cracks* clearly has less examples
of liquid, but a plentiful proportion of the poem focuses on the desire for liquid and the
effects of no water. Is the liquid in *L’après-midi* as literal as in *Cracks?* Perhaps not, and
here we must try to reconcile with stylistic differences—the eternal chore for anyone
attempting to bridge works separated by the 20th century. We can certainly note the
shared imagery, even if Mallarmé’s “[...] drinking the secret terrors of flesh [...]”
suggests an entirely different idea than *Cracks’* “[...] you are drinking a white wine.”

The poems also share typographical variation, which is reflected in the scores as
episodic material. On *L’après-midi,* Wenk writes, “The most prominent element of form
in Mallarmé’s poem is the variation in typography [...] These lines are written in the past
tense and relate, with a good deal of clarity, what has taken place during the afternoon as
the faun remembers it.”54 David Code writes that these passages of italicized text “[...] are carefully deployed to highlight the internal, symmetrical, and proportional
relationships of the entire text.”55 Code likens this typographical shift to the contrast of
“harp-brightened whole-tone ‘shores’” and the “modal oboe solo” in mm. 35-37.56

In *Cracks,* the typographical outlier is the silent DNA frame. Written in a light-
grey font, compared with the black text of the poem itself, it acts as an element of visual
effect while reading the poem, not a sonic or necessarily cognitive element. I consider the
small episodes in *The Earth* to be a sonic equivalent of the DNA frame. Scene 4

54 Wenk, *Claude Debussy and the Poets,* 153.
55 Code, “Hearing Debussy Reading Mallarmé: Music après Wagner in the Prélude à
l’après-midi d’un faune,” 500.
56 Ibid, 520.
showcases these interpolations in a notable way, with insertions of rhythmically and harmonically disjunct phrases in measures 283, 285, 288, 290, 292, 295, 296, and 297.

In the context of composition, the poems offer motivic ideas with the images they suggest. Wenk writes, “Mallarmé’s poem may be regarded as a series of digressions upon the opening line, ‘Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer,’ which carry the faun through memory, imagination, supposition, artistic transformation, and finally resignation to dream. Debussy’s Prélude likewise emanates entirely from the opening flute solo.”57 The flute arabesque itself, too, finds footing in the poem’s content, with lines like, “Through the swoon, heavy and motionless / stifling with heat the cool morning’s struggles / no water, but that which my flute pours, murmurs / to the grove sprinkled with melodies.”58

The poem, Cracks, offers two main motives from its content. The first of these, a loose palindrome, provides for some of The Earth’s harmonic content. A palindrome can be a sequence that can be read the same forwards as backwards. In this case, the palindrome is a sequence in which the sonic qualities of specific words, namely consonants, are mirrored across a single pivot point. This palindrome occurs during lines 7-9, reading, “and each part of skin etching a / crust across / each finger. And if we look closer […]” Under other circumstances, we might simply mention the alliteration of “etching a crust across each.” While this is a pleasurable device, it also reveals the sonic palindrome, illustrated in Figure 4-7. The Earth also contains palindromes, albeit vertical, or intervallic palindromes. The palindrome in mind, previously discussed on page 27

57 Wenk, Claude Debussy and the Poets, 163.
58 Here, the poems share an interesting coincidence with Cracks. Mallarmé mentions the flute by name, and Debussy responds in kind with the opening flute solo. Cracks, on the other hand, mentions the piano by name, a nod not to the instruments involved in the ballet, but rather to the instrument on which it was written.
consists of intervals mirrored across a pivot point—in this case, across choirs as well.

Figure 4-8 revisits the palindrome from Example 2-25, now shown intervallically.

![Etching a crust across each](image)

**FIGURE 4-5: Cracks, palindrome**

![Tritone perfect 4th major 7th perfect 4th tritone](image)

**FIGURE 4-6: The Earth, intervallic palindrome**

A second way in which the content of *Cracks* helped to guide the composition of *The Earth* occurs at their dramatic climaxes. In the middle of the poem, and at the end of Part 1, the audience experiences a temporal diminution with a simultaneous cognitive augmentation. This is shown most literally in *Cracks*, during lines 13-15: “a burrowing, / a reaching, / a rip.” The temporal diminution occurs as the actual condensation of syllables: 4, 3, then 2. The meaning, however, increases with each noun; a rip is greater than a reaching, which is greater than a burrowing. This is cognitive augmentation, highlighted by the constant stream of increasing meaning and isolation from other text.59

Further, the elements of augmentation are linked with sonic repetitions.

![A rip](image)

**FIGURE 4-7: Cracks, diminution**

This focal point of diminution and augmentation occurs at a similar formal point in *The Earth*. In Scene 3, a low brass motive echoes the temporal diminution as the

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59 “A rip” (line 15) is the shortest line in the entire poem.
collapsing of intervals in halves. The octave becomes the tritone, which becomes a minor third, which finally dissolves into an octatonicaly-driven cluster of continued diminution. The process of comparing this to Cracks’ ‘cognitive augmentation’ requires a certain interpretation of dissonance. I would claim that the anguish related in “reaching” and “rip” might signal a certain level of cognitive dissonance. In Example 4-1, the implied dissonance increases as the interval collapses towards a minor second.

![Example 4-1: The Earth, Intervallic Diminution, mm. 255-259.](image)

A final element shared among L'après-midi, Prélude, Cracks, and The Earth has been hovering about during the preceding points. I find in these works a dedicated concentration towards elements of contrast, or duality, perhaps best qualified as the discussion between Apollo and Dionysus. Friedrich Nietzsche defines and details Apollonian and Dionysian values in his book *The Birth of Tragedy From the Spirit of Music* (1872), writing:

> These names [Apollonian and Dionysian] we borrow from the Greeks, who disclose to the intelligent observer the profound mysteries of their view of art, not connection with Apollo and Dionysus, the two art-deities of the Greeks, that we earn that there existed in the Grecian world an antithesis, in origin and aims, between the art of the shaper, the Apollonian, and the non-plastic art of music, that of Dionysus: both these so heterogeneous tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly in variance, and continually inciting each other to new and more powerful births, to perpetuate in the strife of this antithesis, which is but seemingly bridged over by their mutual term “Art”; till at last, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic will, they appear paired with each other, and through this pairing eventually generate the equally Dionysian and Apollonian art-work of Attic tragedy.⁶⁰

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These Apollonian and Dionysian values, while never explicitly mentioned in these poems beyond their association with Greek Mythology, find footing in the various dualities in the poems and scores discussed. In *L'après-midi*, the typographical variation from earlier in this chapter defines realms of reality and imagination. Both *L'après-midi* and *Cracks* depend upon imagery of opposing forces like earth and water. The subject of *L'après-midi*, a faun, is torn between the carnal desires of his mind and the physical state of reality. Debussy offers the duality of triple and duple meters, even superimposing them during the climax of *Prélude*. On a formal level, *Cracks* navigates passages of the hypothetical and then reality. *The Earth* fosters contrast via sections of fluid rhythms and then sections of striated rigidity or rhythms and pulse. Code even offers timbral distinctions as points of contrast:

The “dream” of the flute stands opposed to the “humanity of the violins: a cerebral solo wind instrument, let us say, contrasts with a more sensuous string section […] Debussy paints the contrast between the two nymphs with a contrast between winds and strings (mm. 17-18) […] This shift from winds to violins […] is Debussy’s equivalent to Mallarmé’s first contrast between seeing and feeling.61

Another source, this one from Laurence Berman, suggests that the duality might exist between the poem and the score. He writes, “Debussy’s prelude remains an Apollonian lyric, while Mallarmé’s eclogue has become a Dionysian comedy.”62 Thus, these works are in many ways defined by the contrast of ideals, operating in a circular fashion to define each other’s extremes.

*Le Sacre* and *The Earth*, on the other hand, do not share a poem as textual scaffolding. Instead, a scenario guided the original version of *Le Sacre*. This scenario

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survives in several versions, three of which are included in the appendices of this thesis. The authorship of these specific scenarios remains a point of conflict for Stravinskian scholars, as both Stravinsky and Nicholas Roerich contributed to its writing. The Earth’s scenario derives solely from its composer.

The scenario functions as choreographic instructions and as brief program notes. Because of this, the scenario’s style differs greatly from the poetry discussed earlier in this chapter. The scenario is not necessarily an artistic statement, and so discussion of form, or even imagery, betrays its role in the preparation of a ballet’s performance. Because of this, the shared elements may vary greatly from the characteristics found between the poems. I find four main elements adopted from Le Sacre’s scenario: (1) style, (2) narrative arc, (3) detailed setting, and (4) characterization themes.

The style of Le Sacre’s scenario can be described as sparse, concise, and almost minimalistic. Many of the sentences appear as fragments, grouped under the various titles for Le Sacre’s two halves. The descriptions are not necessarily proportionate to the segment to which they are assigned. The introduction, for example, claims a large portion of each scenario, whereas “Rondes Printaniers” bears only the fragment, “The spring Khorovod.” Only some of the language describes dance itself, with vague details such as, “The people stamp on the earth with great gladness.”

The Earth’s scenario reciprocates much of this style. The syntax often appears in fragments, or as very simple statements: “The first magnification […] The merging of

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63 See Appendix B.1, B.2, B.3.
64 See Peter Hill, Stravinsky, the Rite of Spring (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 113-117.
65 The term khorovod comes from khor, a choral song and vodit, to lead. See Boucourechliev, Stravinsky, 74.
parts [...] A vast organism." This scenario differs from *Le Sacre*’s in that each scene receives mostly equal treatment of text, with anywhere from two to five sentences per section, of which there are eight. The descriptions of specific dance, however, remains similar to that of *Le Sacre*, with no official choreographic terms used; instead, the scenario offers considerably vague ideas, like “A short and intimate dance with a single partner [...] They split off and churn [...] The dancers are linked by hands and feet.”

Stravinsky first envisioned the narrative arc detailed in *Le Sacre*’s scenario in 1910. He writes,

One day I had a fleeting vision which came to me as a complete surprise, my mind at the moment being full of other things. I saw in my imagination a solemn pagan rite—sage elders, seated in a circle, watched a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring. Such was the theme of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.66

Nevertheless, Stravinsky constantly stated that *Le Sacre* had no plot. Boucharechliev writes, “Stravinsky was right to insist, for a distinction must be made between plot, or story, and choreographic theme [...] the ‘theme’ plays an essentially structural part, its ‘content’ being of secondary importance, or at least reduced to a few basic ideas.”67 This choreographic theme carries on the innovative plot presentation of *L’oiseau de feu*, with a continuous progression of scenes.68 *The Earth*’s scenario continues this tradition, saying, “The Introduction and subsequent scenes flow smoothly to the next, with an optional break after Scene 3 and before Scene 4, provided a curtain is available.” This removes the

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66 Ibid, 60.
68 Humphrey Searle writes, “In contrast to the majority of earlier ballets, the music [of *L’oiseau*] is intended to be played without a break, though it still falls into a number of short scenes and dances in the normal ballet tradition; but its continuity has set an example to many modern one-act ballets.” For more on early 20th century ballets, see Humphrey Searle, *Ballet Music—An Introduction* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 87-137.
interruption of applause and likens the performance atmosphere to that of a symphony or other multi-movement work.

Setting appears as one of the main elements of each scenario. *Le Sacre*’s scenario dedicates significant detail to the setting of both parts. The descriptions include, “The spring celebration. It takes place in the hills […] The earth starts to bloom—a golden blooming […] They pick flowers and bow to the red sun […] Spring. The earth is covered with flowers. The earth is covered with grass […] After the day, after midnight. On the hills are the sacred stones […].” These parts of the scenario instruct the ballet’s set, as well as its lighting and color schemes.

The setting in *The Earth*’s scenario mainly concerns itself with lighting. “The stage is dark, with a single light over the center. The walls are black […] The stage is fully lit, although still focused towards the center […] Many lights overhead drift […] The lights splinter […] The lights pulse with the bass drum […] The lights constantly shift and circle around […] A single light overhead, and then darkness.” The language about the setting itself is purposively vague, as the choreographic theme of *The Earth* does not pursue the historical accuracies that Stravinsky’s pagan rites hoped to attain.

Lastly, the scenarios of both ballets spend language detailing the characters involved in the choreography. The costumes and color schemes differ greatly between the two ballets. *Le Sacre* asks for colorful costumes—the premiere’s costumes ranged from bright yellow dresses to giant fur hats. *The Earth* seeks the opposite: “The costumes are very simple, with black, white or grey elements only. The protagonist, a woman, wears a simple white dress. Perhaps this costume choice offers *The Earth* as a visual antithesis to *Le Sacre*’s original performance.”
As for the character themselves, Le Sacre introduces many people of the village or tribe, including pipers, and old woman, “young girls with painted faces,” a “very wise, very old man,” the maidens, the Chosen Victim, the Old Sage, and Yarilo. The Earth shares a similar protagonist, labeled as “a woman” or “the girl.” The role of gender in both works remains an interesting avenue of study. Le Sacre, in particular, demonstrates a complex progression of gender dominance, with the male tribe members relying upon the sacrifice of a female in order to benefit from the earth, a traditionally female character. The Earth, in a less concrete way, explores a narrative arc in which the woman encounters foreign bodies, merging into a larger organism, before splitting and returning to a singular self. This topic exceeds both my expertise and the scope of this thesis, but nevertheless seeks additional research.

To conclude, the text that accompanies these ballets provide for a fuller understanding of form and performance. Whether poetry, scenario, or both, the text can supply plot, themes, proportion, or compositional ideas to the score. Similarly, the score itself can offer new ways to interpret the text that it accompanies. Both Debussy and Stravinsky used text as formal scaffolding and sought to unite the style of the text with the score they wrote. The Earth, which employs both poetry and scenario, enjoys benefits from both texts.

69 Yarilo, who never actually appears in Nijinsky’s original choreography, is the Slavic god of fertility, who works alongside Dazh’bog, the god of the harvest and the sun god. Yarilo made the earth and all creatures fruitful, and his name is connected to the words for spring, ripeness, and sexual vigor. See Andrei Sinyavsky, Ivan the Fool Russian Folk Belief A Cultural History (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 103-104.
CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated several techniques that *The Earth Without Water* shares with *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Each chapter identified specific traits or characteristics of harmony, rhythm, or textual treatment, and then exhibited evidence of these techniques in *Prélude*, *Le Sacre*, and *The Earth*. This thesis, on a basic level, verifies that *The Earth*’s composition resulted and benefited from the study of its predecessor ballets. There are several implications of this kind of research, and these will be briefly discussed in this conclusion.

First, the process of analysis outlined in this thesis possesses potential as a pedagogical tool for young composers. Students who are as interested in specific pieces as I was in *Prélude* and *Le Sacre* might be able to apply the outline of this thesis to their own study. A teacher can encourage the student to examine harmonic, rhythmic, or other salient features of a given piece (such as textual treatment), and then task the student with adopting these techniques in their own work. This kind of imitation can result in well-informed compositions, greater understanding of core literature, and encourages a kind of aesthetic discussion among pieces that span generations.

This thesis also fosters opportunity for more research. From a personal perspective, I hope to further the analysis of my own works, like *Symphony no. 1*, by framing their dissection in a similar way to *The Earth*. In such a case, an analysis might compare my symphony with Brahms' *Symphony no. 1*, examining quotation and the adaptability of symphonic form.

Additionally, this specific analysis with *Prélude* and *Le Sacre* could be expanded to include other ballets or other pieces of the same era. Aaron Copland’s *First Symphony*,...
for example, could further the dialogue of this thesis by serving as an example of an immediate successor to Debussy and Stravinsky and as an exemplary piece to today’s composers. A study of this kind would search for more harmonic and rhythmic similarities among the pieces, including quotation. Such research serves to construct a continuum among pieces, dissolving the stale view of art’s confinement to a specific historical era.
Appendix A

L’APRES-MIDI D’UN FAUNE

THE FAUN

These nymphs, I would perpetuate them.

So bright

Their crimson flesh that hovers there, light

In the air drowsy with dense slumbers.

Did I love a dream?

My doubt, mass of ancient night, ends extreme

In many a subtle branch, that remaining the true

Woods themselves, prove, alas, that I too

Offered myself, alone, as triumph, the false ideal of roses.

Let’s see....

or if those women you note

Reflect your fabulous senses’ desire!

Faun, illusion escapes from the blue eye,

Cold, like a fount of tears, of the most chaste:

But the other, she, all sighs, contrasts you say

Like a breeze of day warm on your fleece?

No! Through the swoon, heavy and motionless

Stifling with heat the cool morning’s struggles

No water, but that which my flute pours,

murmurs

To the grove sprinkled with melodies: and the sole breeze

Out of the twin pipes, quick to breathe

Before it scatters the sound in an arid rain,

Is unstirred by any wrinkle of the horizon,

The visible breath, artificial and serene,

Of inspiration returning to heights unseen.

O Sicilian shores of a marshy calm

My vanity plunders vying with the sun,

Silent beneath scintillating flowers, RELATE

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L’APRES-MIDI D’ UN FAUNE

ECLOGUE

THE FAUNE

Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.

Si clair,

Leur incarnat léger qu’il voltige dans l’air

Assoupi de sommeils touffus.

Aimai-je un rêve?

Mon doute, amas de nuit ancienne, s’achève

En maint rameau subtil, qui, demeuré les vrais

Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas ! que bien seul je m’offrais

Pour triomphe la faute idéale de roses.

Réfléchissons..

ou si les femmes dont tu gloses

Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux !

Faune, l’illusion s’échappe des yeux bleus

Et froids, comme une source en pleurs, de la plus chaste:

Mais, l’autre tout soupirs, dis-tu qu’elle contraste

Comme brise du jour chaude dans ta toison !

Que non ! par l’immobile et lasse pâmoison

Suffoquant de chaleurs le matin frais s’il lutte,

Ne murmure point d’eau que ne verse ma flûte

Au bosquet arrosé d’accords ; et le seul vent

Hors des deux tuyaux prompt à s’exhaler avant

Qu’il disperse le son dans une pluie aride,

C’est, à l’horizon pas remu d’une ride,

Le visible et serein souffle artificiel

De l’inspiration, qui regagne le ciel.

O bords siciliens d’un calme marécage

Qu’à l’envi des soleils ma vanité saccage, Tacite

sous les fleurs d’étincelles, CONTEZ

---


‘That I was cutting hollow reeds here tamed
By talent: when, on the green gold of distant
Verdure offering its vine to the fountains,
An animal whiteness undulates to rest:
And as a slow prelude in which the pipes exist
This flight of swans, no, of Naiads cower
Or plunge…”

Inert, all things burn in the tawny hour
Not seeing by what art there fled away together
Too much of hymen desired by one who seeks there
The natural A: then I’ll wake to the primal fever
Erect, alone, beneath the ancient flood, light’s power,
Lily! And the one among you all for artlessness.

Other than this sweet nothing shown by their lip, the kiss
That softly gives assurance of treachery,
My breast, virgin of proof, reveals the mystery
Of the bite from some illustrious tooth planted;
Let that go! Such the arcane chose for confidant,
The great twin reed we play under the azure ceiling,
That turning towards itself the cheek’s quivering,
Dreams, in a long solo, so we might amuse
The beauties round about by false notes that confuse
Between itself and our credulous singing;
And create as far as love can, modulating,
The vanishing, from the common dream of pure flank
Or back followed by my shuttered glances,
Of a sonorous, empty and monotonous line.

Try then, instrument of flights, O malign
Syrinx by the lake where you await me, to flower again!
I, proud of my murmur, intend to speak at length
Of goddesses: and with idolatrous paintings
Remove again from shadow their waists’ bindings:
So that when I’ve sucked the grapes’ brightness
To banish a regret done away with by my pretence,
Laughing, I raise the emptied stem to the

“Que je coupais ici les creux roseaux domptés
Par le talent; quand, sur l’or glauque de
Lointaines
Verdures dédiant leur vigne à des fontaines,
Ondoe une blancheur animale au repos:
Et qu’au prélude lent où naissent les pipeaux,
Ce vol de cygnes, non! de naïades se sauve
Ou plonge.”

Inerte, tout brûle dans l’heure fauve
Sans marquer par quel art ensemble détala
Trop d’hymen souhaité de qui cherche le la:
Alors m’éveillerai-je à la ferveur première,
Droit et seul, sous un flot antique de lumière,
Lys ! et l’un de vous tous pour l’ingénuité.

Autre que ce doux rien par leur lèvre ébruité,
Le baiser, qui tout bas des perfides assure,
Mon sein, vierge de preuve, atteste une morsure
Mystérieuse, due à quelque auguste dent;
Mais, bast! arcane tel élut pour confidant
Le Jonc vaste et jumeau dont sous l’azur on joue:
Qui, détournant à soi le trouble de la joue
Rêve, dans un solo long que nous amusions
La beauté d’alentour par des confusions
Fausses entre elle-même et notre chant crédule;
Et de faire aussi haut que l’amour se module
Évanour du songe ordinaire de dos
Ou de flanc pur suivis avec mes regards clos,
Une sonore, vase et monotone ligne.

Tâche donc, instrument des fuites, ô maligne
Syrinx, de refleurer aux lairs où tu m’attends!
Moi, de ma rumeur fier, je vais parler longtemps
Des déesses; et, par d’idolâtres peintures,
A leur ombre enlever encore des ceintures:
Ainsi, quand des raisins j’ai sucé la clarté,
Pour bannir un regret par ma feinte écarté,
Rieur, j’élève au ciel d’été la grappe vide
Et, soufflant dans ses peaux lumineuses, avide
D’ivresse, jusqu’au soir je regarde au travers.
summer’s sky
And breathing into those luminous skins, then
I,
Desiring drunkenness, gaze through them till
evening.

O nymphs, let’s rise again with many
memories.
‘My eye, piercing the reeds, speared each
immortal
Neck that drowns its burning in the water
With a cry of rage towards the forest sky;
And the splendid bath of hair slipped by
In brightness and shuddering, O jewels!
I rush there: when, at my feet, entwine (bruised
By the languor tasted in their being - two’s evil)
Girls sleeping in each other’s arms’ sole peril:
I seize them without untangling them and run
To this bank of roses wasting in the sun
All perfume, hated by the frivolous shade
Where our frolic should be like a vanished
day.’

I adore you, wrath of virgins, O shy
Delight of the nude sacred burden that glides
Away to flee my fiery lip, drinking
The secret terrors of the flesh like quivering
Lightning: from the feet of the heartless one
To the heart of the timid, in a moment
abandoned
By innocence wet with wild tears or less sad
vapours.
‘Happy at conquering these treacherous fears
My crime’s to have parted the dishevelled
tangle
Of kisses that the gods kept so well mingled:
For I’d scarcely begun to hide an ardent laugh
In one girl’s happy depths (holding back
With only a finger, so that her feathery candour
Might be tinted by the passion of her burning
sister,
The little one, naïve and not even blushing)
Than from my arms, undone by vague dying,
This prey, forever ungrateful, frees itself and is
gone,
Not pitying the sob with which I was still
drunk.’

No matter! Others will lead me towards
happiness
By the horns on my brow knotted with many a

O nymphes, regonflons des SOUVENIRS divers.
“Mon œil, trouant les joncs, dardait chaque
encolure
Immortelle, qui noie en l’onde sa brûlure
Avec un cri de rage au ciel de la forêt:
Et le splendide bain de cheveux disparait
Dans les clartés et les frissons, ô pierrières!
J’accours : quand, à mes pieds, s’entrejoignent
(meurtrires
De la langueur goûtée à ce mal d’être deux)
Des dormeuses parmi leurs seuls bras hasardeux;
Je les ravis, sans les désenlacer, et vole
A ce massif, haï par l’ombrage frivole,
De roses tarissant tout parfum au soleil,
Où notre ébat au jour consumé soit pareil.

Je t’adore, courroux des vierges, ô délice
Farouche du sacré fardeau nu qui se glisse,
Pour fuir ma lèvre en feu buvant, comme un éclair
Tressaille ! la frayeur secrète de la chair:
Des pieds de l’inhumaine au cœur de la timide
Que délaissa à la fois une innocence, humide
De larmes folles ou de moins tristes vapeurs.
“Mon crime, c’est d’avoir, gai de vaincre ces
peurs
Traîtres, divisé la touffe échevelée
De baisers que les dieux gardaient si bien mêlée:
Car, à peine j’allais cacher un rire ardent
Sous les replis heureux d’une seule (gardant
Par un doigt simple, afin que sa candeur de
plume
Se teignît à l’émot de sa sœur qui s’allume,
La petite, naïve et ne rougissant pas)
Que de mes bras, défaits par de vagues trépas,
Cette proie, à jamais ingrate, se délivre
Sans pitié du sanglot dont j’étais encore ivre.”

Tant pis ! vers le bonheur d’autres m’entraîneront
Par leur tresse nouée aux cornes de mon front:
Tu sais, ma passion, que, pourpre et déjà mûre,
tress:
You know, my passion, how ripe and purple already
Every pomegranate bursts, murmuring with the bees:
And our blood, enamoured of what will seize it,
Flows for all the eternal swarm of desire yet.
At the hour when this wood with gold and ashes heaves
A feast’s excited among the extinguished leaves:
Etna! It’s on your slopes, visited by Venus
Setting in your lava her heels so artless,
When a sad slumber thunders where the flame burns low.

I hold the queen!

O certain punishment…
No, but

the soul
Void of words, and this heavy body,
Succumb to noon’s proud silence slowly:
With no more ado, forgetting blasphemy, I
Must sleep, lying on the thirsty sand, and as I
Love, open my mouth to wine’s true constellation!

Farewell to you, both: I go to see the shadow you have become.

Chaque grenade éclate et d’abeilles murmure;
Et notre sang, épris de qui le va saisir.
Coule pour tout l’essaim éternel du dé
A l’heure où ce bois d’or et de cendres se teinte.
Une fête s’exalte en la feuillée éteinte:
Etna! c’est parmi toi visité de Vénus
Sur ta lave posant ses talons ingénus,
Quand tonne un somme triste ou s’épuise la flamme.

Je tiens la reine!
O sûr châtiment..
Non, mais

l’âmé
De paroles vacante et ce corps alourdi
Tard succombent au fier silence de midi:
Sans plus il faut dormir en l’oubli du blasphème,
Sur le sable altéré gisant et comme j’aime
Ouvrir ma bouche à l’astre efficace des vins!

Couple, adieu: je vais voir l’ombre que tu devins.
Appendix B

1. 1910-1911 version

First Part: The Kissing of the Earth
The spring celebration. It takes place in the hills. The pipers pipe and the young men tell fortunes. The old woman enters. She knows the mystery of nature and how to predict the future. Young girls with painted faces come in from the river in single file. They dance the spring dance. Games start. The spring Khorovod. The people divide into two groups opposing each other. The holy procession of the very wise, very old man interrupts the spring games, which comes to a stop. The people pause trembling before the great action. The old man blesses the spring earth. The kissing of the Earth. The people dance passionately on the earth, sanctifying it and becoming one with it.

Second Part: The Great Sacrifice
The maidens carry on secret games, forming circles. One of them is the promised sacrifice. The lot will fall to the one who is twice caught in the closed circle. The maidens exalt the chosen victim in a martial dance. Ancestors are invoked. The Chosen Victim is entrusted to the Old Sage. In their presence she performs the great sacred dance—The Great Sacrifice.

2. 1912 version

I. The Kiss of the Earth
Yarilo begins his adoration of the earth
The earth starts to bloom—a golden blooming
Divination with twigs
The people dance for joy
They pick flowers and bow to the red sun
The oldest and wisest is led to kiss the rich soil
the people stamp on the earth with great gladness

II. The Great Sacrifice
Day and night the stones are always in the hills. The maidens hold secret games there. They glorify the victim. They call the oldest and wisest as witness to the victim. They give the victim to the beautiful Yarilo.

3. 1913 version

Scene 1: The Adoration of the Earth
Spring. The earth is covered with flowers. The earth is covered with grass. A great joy reigns over the earth. The men abandon themselves to dancing and question the future according to the rites. The Ancestor of all the sages himself takes part in the glorification of Spring. He is brought in to be
united with the abounding and magnificent earth. Each man stamps the earth in ecstasy.

*Scene 2: The Sacrifice*

After the day, after midnight. On the hills are the sacred stones. The girls play mythical games and seek the great way. The one who has been chosen to be delivered to the gods is exalted and acclaimed. The Ancestors are invoked as venerable witnesses. And the wise ancestors of man watch the sacrifice. It is thus that the sacrifice is made to Yarilo, the magnificent one, the flaming one.\(^{72}\)

Appendix C

Cracks

Written by Mark Rheaume

If I take your hand in mine, [your left in mine] and if
I hold it close between

and each part of skin etching a

crust across

each finger. And if we look closer,

we would see

that the cracks are [and must be]

made of many more: a burrowing,
a reaching,
a rip.

And I'd say that you [and must be] nothing more than

a collection of tectonic wrinkles. When we nest

or marry

or when I make you sit by me at the

piano and you are drinking a white wine,

if you look close,

it's all cracking up

and down, rooted and split:

the earth without water,

the wine glass on the floor.
Appendix D

*The Earth Without Water*

A Ballet for Small Orchestra

Written by Mark Rheaume

**Scenario:** The stage is dark, with a single light over the center. The walls are black. The Introduction and subsequent scenes flow smoothly to the next, with an optional break after Scene 3 and before Scene 4, provided a curtain is available.

The costumes are very simple, with black, white, or grey elements only. The protagonist, a woman, wears a simple white dress. The other dancers, whose number should be no less than 4, may shed layers of costumes between or during scenes. They wear white masks, and may be of either gender. The progression of scenes does not demonstrate a new setting or location so much as it notates a greater magnification upon the previous scene—as though we have zoomed in towards the preceding material.

The audience's program consists of only the poem featured at the beginning of the score, along with any details of the performers. The program will not feature the following choreographic themes.

**Introduction:** A girl stands in the center of the stage, gradually growing mobile and fluid. The girl always remains on stage.

**Scene 1:** The first magnification. A sudden contortion and assault from the dancers. Aggressive, dangerous, and relentless. The stage is fully lit, although still focused towards the center.

**Scene 2:** Many foreign bodies pull the girl. Many lights over head drift. A short and intimate dance with a single partner.

**Scene 3:** The merging of parts. A great magnetism among the dancers. The lights splinter. The bodies merge in a large mass.

**Scene 4:** A vast organism. Its appendages are made of many dancers. They split off and churn. The lights pulse with the bass drum.

**Scene 5:** Hypnotic waves filtering slowly. The dancers are linked by hands and feet. The lights constantly shift and circle around.

**Scene 6:** The pulse loosens the bodies. They peel off. The gestures are fragmented and stunted. A great flurry as all dancers, save the woman, exit.

**Coda:** Only the woman remains, barely mobile. She returns to the opening position. A single light overhead, and then darkness.
Appendix E
Graduate Recital Poster

The Eastern Illinois University Music Department presents

The Eastern Illinois New Music Ensemble
Sunday, April 12, 2015, Dvorak Concert Hall
The Doudna Fine Arts Center at Eastern Illinois University
3:00 pm
Free Admission

Featuring three new compositions by Mark Ramahe

Fanfare for Brass, Percussion, and Organ
The Earth Without Water
Symphony No. 1
Appendix F

The Earth Without Water [2014]

Full Score
THE EARTH WITHOUT WATER
A Ballet for Small Orchestra

M. Rheaume

PART ONE.
INTRODUCTION.
\( \text{J}=60 \)

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in B♭

Bassoon

Horn in F

Trumpet in C

Tenor Trombone

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Bass Drum

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

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SCENE 1.

with two explosions

1. irith

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

C Tpt.

Tn. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

perc. 1

perc. 2

B. D.
Picc.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

C Tpt.

Tn. Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Via.

Vc.

Db.

Flute
SCENE 2.

SCE NE 2.

J= n

Solo

Vibraphone

To Perc. 2

20

J= 54

Euphonium (optional)

bucket grid

21

Solo

B. Tbn.

20

Vin. 1
SCENE 3.

\( \text{\textit{Scene 3.}} \)

\( \text{\textit{Scene 3.}} \)
Meno mosso
PART TWO.
SCENE 4.
CODA.

\( J=50 \)

\( \text{Solo ad lib.} \)


Berman, Laurence D. “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun and Jeux: Debussy’s Summer Rites.” 19th-Century Music 3, no. 3 (March 1980): 225-238.


