



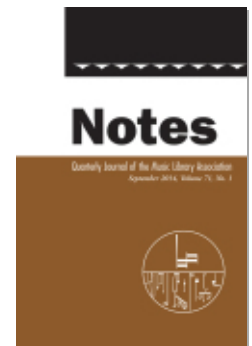
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DEBUSSY THE MAN, HIS MUSIC, AND HIS LEGACY: AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH

BY JANN PASLER



An inscrutable man, born in a working-class family and yet aristocratic in his tastes and values; a self-defining composer who both built on and went beyond the techniques and aesthetics of the times; and an emblem of France, at home and abroad, since his death in 1918—Claude Debussy (b. 1862) and his music have continued to fascinate and elude us. Remaining mysterious, after all, was a personal as well as musical ideal. Did he not once tell a critic, “When will people respect our mystery, even to ourselves?”¹ More than a hundred dissertations have been written, starting with Archibald T. Davison’s “The Harmonic Contributions of Claude Debussy” (Harvard, 1908). Recently, new histories have shed light on what French identity meant to Debussy and *Debussystes*; monographs, largely analytical, have focused on individual works, genres, and theoretical approaches; and three short books have been written for the general public.² But since François Lesure’s “critical biography” of 1994,³ there has been no new full-scale scholarly examination of the composer and his oeuvre.

The project to understand Debussy and his music—largely collective—began with *Numéro spécial consacré à la mémoire de Claude Debussy*, ed. André Suarès, *Revue musicale* 2 (1920). Then came the 1962 centenary, with the founding of the Debussy Museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, an exhibition at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, another special issue of *Revue musicale*, an international symposium, and performances in

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1. “Quand respectera-t-on notre mystère à nous?” in “M. Claude Debussy et la musique sacrée,” *Comœdia*, 18 May 1911; quoted by Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond, “‘Du côté de l’ombre’: Debussy symboliste,” in the exhibition catalog *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, ed. Guy Cogeval (Paris: Skira Flammarion, 2012), 57, and n. 2. See also Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Debussy et le mystère de l’instant*, *De la musique au silence*, 2 (Paris: Plon, 1976).

2. Victor Lederer, *Debussy, the Quiet Revolutionary*, Unlocking the Masters Series, 13 (New York: Amadeus, 2007), CD included. Paul Roberts, *Claude Debussy*, 20th-Century Composers (London; New York: Phaidon, 2008), David Code, *Debussy*, Critical Lives (London: Reaktion, 2010).

3. François Lesure, *Claude Debussy: Biographie critique* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994; Paris: Fayard, 2003).

Paris and abroad.⁴ Research on Debussy grew more international after an American, Margaret G. Cobb, founded the Centre de documentation Claude Debussy in Paris in 1972,⁵ Lesure created the *Cahiers Debussy* in 1974, publishing its articles in English and French, and American Musicological Society (AMS) sessions on the composer in 1982 and 1985 gave rise to a sense of community among Anglophone Debussy scholars. Since 1985, they have produced seven of the sixteen volumes of the new Debussy *Oeuvres complètes*, and edited seven multiauthored books on the composer⁶—fitting as the composer was quite the Anglophile.⁷ Moreover, Debussy has increasingly been a subject of discussion at American Musicological Society/Society for Music Theory meetings since 2004, where special sessions were devoted to him in 2010 and 2012.

So it should not be surprising that, 150 years after Debussy's birth, celebrations have also been collective, communal, and international: four conferences (their proceedings forthcoming), all accompanied by performances, as well as a major exhibition in Paris traveling to Tokyo.⁸

4. These are documented in *Claude Debussy: 1862–1962: Livre d'or, Revue musicale*, numéro special 258 (1964), along with Debussy letters, and articles by Maurice Emmanuel (career ambitions: "Les ambitions de Claude-Achille," 33–40), Françoise Gervais ("Structures Debussystes," 77–88), and Vladimir Jankélévitch ("L'immédiat chez Debussy," 89–97), among others. Contributors to *Debussy et l'évolution de la musique au XXe siècle, Paris, 24–31 octobre 1962*, ed. Edith Weber, Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Sciences humaines (Paris: CNRS, 1965), included Edward Lockspeiser ("Quelques problèmes de la psychologie de Debussy," 141–50), Stefan Jarocinski ("Quelques aspects de l'univers sonore de Debussy," 167–87), André Schaeffner ("Debussy et ses rapports avec la peinture," 151–66), Françoise Gervais ("Debussy et la tonalité," 97–107), Ernest Ansermet (phenomenology: "Le langage de Debussy," 33–45), Jean Barraqué ("Debussy ou l'approche d'une organization autonome de la composition," 83–95), François Lesure ("Debussy et Edgard Varèse," 333–38), Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt ("L'influence de Debussy: Autriche et Allemagne," 241–61), William Austin ("Quelques connaissances et opinions de Schoenberg et Webern sur Debussy," 319–31), and André Souris (Bachelard: "Poétique musicale de Debussy," 133–39), among others. Vladimir Jankélévitch lectured before two of the seven concerts organized by the *Revue musicale* for the centennial. Marcel Dietschy's *La passion de Claude Debussy* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière, 1962) was also published, later appearing in English as *A Portrait of Claude Debussy*, ed. and trans. William Ashbrook and Margaret Cobb (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990; reprint 1994).

5. See the center's Web site: <http://www.debussy.fr> (accessed 21 August 2012). On the Centre Debussy's beginnings, see Roy Howat, "Afterword: The Origins of the *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy*," in *Berlioz and Debussy: Sources, Contexts and Legacies: Essays in Honour of François Lesure*, ed. Barbara L. Kelly and Kerry Murphy (Aldershot, Eng.; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 181–92.

6. See below, and Richard Langham Smith and Roger Nichols, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). *Debussy Studies*, ed. Richard Langham Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). *Debussy in Performance*, ed. James R. Briscoe (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). *Debussy and His World*, ed. Jane Fulcher, Bard Music Festival Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

7. Robert Orledge, "Debussy the Man," in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14–15.

8. For the program of the "Colloque international Claude Debussy (1862–1918)," Paris, 2–5 February 2012, see http://www.debussy.fr/cdf/centre/collo_appel.php (accessed 21 August 2012); for the program of the colloque international "L'héritage de Claude Debussy: Du rêve pour les générations futures," Université de Montréal, 29 February–3 March 2012, see <http://www.debussy.oicrm.org> (accessed 21 August 2012); "Bruxelles ou la convergence des arts," colloque international, Brussels, 24–26 November 2011; International Debussy Symposium, "Debussy Text and Idea," Gresham College, London, 12–13 April 2012; and the exhibition, *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris,

Colleagues from around the world have delivered over 150 papers (with few duplications). In the Paris *colloque*, dedicated to the memory of Lesure (hereinafter, Paris 2012), topics ranged from literary affinities, analysis, and historical performances, to politics, reception, and historiography; in Brussels (hereinafter, Brussels 2011) speakers focused on artistic and literary contexts; in Montreal (hereinafter, Montreal 2012) on Debussy's language and legacy; and in London (hereinafter, London 2012) on music and text. In addition, the 2011 meeting of the Congrès Européen d'Analyse Musicale (Rome) featured a Debussy session (hereinafter, Rome 2011).

This article reviews research over the past decade. Besides these conference papers, recently published are new editions of Debussy's correspondence and his music, related books and articles, and three essay collections: edited by Simon Trezise (2003), by Barbara Kelly and Kerry Murphy (2007), and by Elliott Antokoletz and Marianne Wheeldon (2011).⁹ *Cahiers Debussy*, the major European venue for Debussy scholarship, publishes annually not only articles, but also lists of performances and recordings, as well as of letters and scores selling through auction houses. Finally, the exhibition catalog, *Debussy: La musique et les arts* (see n. 1)—the fruit of fifteen years of preparation—features six essays, along with images of Debussy's friends, tastes, and influences.

As one might predict, much of this work emphasizes Debussy's exceptionalism, in terms of his style, his oeuvre, his way of handling outside influences, his manner of working in interdisciplinary contexts, and his impact on others. And when focused on Debussy the man, scholarship continues to build on the biographies of Edward Lockspeiser¹⁰ and François Lesure. At the same time, serious attention is now given to earlier biographies, such as by Charles Koechlin (1927) and Léon Vallas (1932), and the unique perspectives of Vladimir Jankélévitch and André Schaeffner. When it comes to his music, Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* still captures the greatest interest, but recently discovered scores and new editions of unfinished works are introducing us to music previously unavailable. As in 1962, scholars continue to investigate tonality, timbre, and time in Debussy's music, his aesthetic in the context of

22 February–11 June 2012; and Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo, 14 July–14 October 2012; exhibition catalog cited in n. 1.

9. *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise (2003); *Berlioz and Debussy*, ed. Barbara L. Kelly and Kerry Murphy (2007); and *Rethinking Debussy*, ed. Elliott Antokoletz and Marianne Wheeldon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also *French Music since Berlioz*, ed. Richard Langham Smith and Carolyn Potter (Aldershot, Eng.; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), and Brian Hart's review of it in *Music & Letters* 89, no. 2 (2008): 266–70; and *French Music, Culture, and National Identity, 1870–1939*, ed. Barbara L. Kelly, *Eastman Studies in Music*, 54 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

10. Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy* (New York: Dutton; London: Dent, 1936, 1949, 1980).

painting and symbolist poetry, and reception of his music abroad. But interest is also turning to discontinuity and instability in his works, to using Schenker to study form, looking at gestural aspects, studying period recordings, and tracing Debussy's spirit as far as Japan, Brazil, and Mexico. As for his legacy, more than his influence on later avant-garde composers such as Messiaen and Boulez—a focus since the 1970s—it is now the uses and meanings ascribed to Debussy's music in the 1920s and 1940s, together with postmodern concerns like race and politics, that stimulate engagement. Certainly Debussy was a pioneer of modernism; he was also deeply rooted in his times, his reputation linked to the discourses that helped to construct it. Scholars seem to genuinely love Debussy's music, their work infused with passion and enthusiasm. From them, we learn better why Debussy emerged as so important in French culture—some have argued even more so after his death.

NEW DOCUMENTS AND NEW MUSIC

For its capacity to shed light on Debussy's life and lay a strong foundation for future research, there is no more important recent publication than the *Correspondance*: over 3,000 letters, mostly from Debussy and housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, plus contracts with his publishers.¹¹ Other letters continue to surface—Debussy's last ones to his daughter¹² and those frequently appearing in auction catalogs. We now know more about Debussy's ancestors since the seventeenth century¹³, but we are still missing Debussy's correspondence with his parents. Robert Orledge has commented on how Debussy's shame about his background may have been responsible for being “selfish, stand-offish, and insecure.” Given that he signed at first as “Achille de Bussy”—perhaps a result of being “snobbishly billed” as such at his first public concert¹⁴—and not definitively “Claude” until 1892, it would be fascinating to learn not only his reflections on the Vasnier family and the Villa Medici, but also how he negotiated his shift of class identification.

11. Claude Debussy, *Correspondance 1872–1918*, ed. François Lesure and Denis Herlin, with additional annotations by George Liébert (Paris: Gallimard, 2005). See also Arthur Hartmann, “*Claude Debussy As I Knew Him*” and *Other Writings of Arthur Hartmann*, ed. Samuel Hsu, Sidney Grolnic, and Mark Peters, Eastman Studies in Music, 24 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004). Readers can consult <http://www.archivegrid.org> (accessed 21 August 2012) for letters in U.S. public institutions.

12. José Eduardo Martins, “Les trois dernières lettres connues de Chouchou Debussy,” *Cahiers Debussy* 31 (2007): 77–81.

13. François Raymond, “Courcelles-sous-Grignon, berceau des ancêtres de Claude Debussy: Quelques précisions généalogiques,” *Cahiers Debussy* 33 (2009): 51–60.

14. Orledge, “Debussy the Man,” 10. The author also comments on some “sinister undercurrents” in Debussy's character, opinions, and relationships with others.

From the contracts, I was surprised that the first one with Durand in 1889 was for his two pianos/four hands arrangement of Saint-Saëns's *Introduction et rondo capriccioso*, op. 28¹⁵. For this "ADebussy" was paid 100 francs. A few pages later we learn that Debussy received the same amount to arrange Saint-Saëns's *Les airs de ballet d'Etienne Marcel*, 250 francs for his Second Symphony in 1890, and 150 francs for his *Caprice sur des airs de ballet d'Alceste de Gluck* in 1891. "It's tough, one's daily bread," he admitted to Robert Godet¹⁶ especially because during that same year the major publisher Choudens paid him only 200 francs for his own *Suite bergamasque*. Not wanting to teach, perform, or accept many commissions, unfortunately he died owing Durand 66,235 francs. Nonetheless, as analyzed by Denis Herlin¹⁷ these contracts, together with the archives at Société des auteurs, compositeurs, et éditeurs de musique (SACEM) and Durand, document that Debussy was eventually paid well for his music. His *Préludes*, book 2, and his *Études* each brought in 12,000 francs. Moreover, in addition to royalties on performances, he received almost as much, in installments, for his unfinished *Le diable dans le beffroi* (24,000 francs) and for *La chute de la maison Usher* (25,000) as he got for *Pelléas* (25,666). Herlin thus asks an important question: "What influence did the need for money exert on Debussy's artistic creation between 1909 and 1914?"¹⁸ We know that he would have preferred having a generous patron, someone like Wagner's Ludwig II, but *Jeux* would never have been written without Diaghilev's "persistence and money," and probably many of the other late works as well.¹⁹

Half this *Correspondance* covers 1907–18, with frequent letters to not only his wife Emma, but also such friends as André Caplet, Jacques Durand, Désire-Emile Inghelbrecht,²⁰ Robert Godet, Louis Laloy,²¹ Victor Segalen, and Igor Stravinsky. Scholars are now able to flesh out lesser-known relationships with Alfred Cortot (Paris 2012), Alfredo Casella (Montreal 2012), Paul Dukas,²² Francisco de Lacerda (Montreal

15. *Correspondance*, 69.

16. *Ibid.*, 79.

17. "An Artist High and Low, or, Debussy and Money," trans. Vincent Giroud, in *Rethinking Debussy*, 149–202.

18. *Ibid.*, 166.

19. *Ibid.*, 168. See also Robert Orledge, "Debussy, Durand et Cie: A French Composer and his Publisher (1884–1917)," in *The Business of Music*, ed. Michael Talbot, 121–51, Liverpool Music Symposium, 2 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002).

20. See also Margaret Cobb, *Debussy's Letters to Inghelbrecht: The Story of a Friendship*, annotated by Margaret Cobb, trans. Richard Miller, Eastman Studies in Music, 30 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005): letters included in the Lesure/Herlin/Liébert edition, but here in a dual-text version.

21. *Louis Laloy (1874–1944) on Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky*, trans. and ed. Deborah Priest (Aldershot, Eng.: Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1999).

22. Simon-Pierre Perret, "Debussy et Dukas: Une amitié méconnue," *Cahiers Debussy* 34 (2010): 5–52.

2012), and his Belgian friends (Brussels 2011).²³ Interestingly, given all the hype some have given to their differences, Debussy seems not to have been preoccupied with Saint-Saëns. His name appears only once more in this 2,350-page tome, in discussion with Jacques Durand about Saint-Saëns's pedaling of Chopin's music. Debussy remarks, "with all due respects to his advanced age . . . Saint-Saëns seems to have forgotten that pianists are bad musicians, for the most part, and cut music up into unequal parts, like a chicken."²⁴

Besides facsimile editions of the *Images pour piano, 2e série* (Centre de documentation Claude Debussy, 2008) and *Chansons: Recueil de mélodies dédiées à Marie-Blanche Vasnier* (Centre Debussy, 2011), particularly significant are new volumes of the Debussy collected edition, especially Eiko Kasaba's edition (with Pierre Boulez) of *Le martyr de saint Sébastien* (*Oeuvres complètes*, sér. VI, vol. 4 [2009])—the symphonic fragments due out later this year—and David Grayson's piano-vocal edition of *Pelléas et Mélisande* (sér. VI, vol. 2 [2010]), the full score announced for 2015.²⁵ Kasaba has been working on *Le martyr* for three decades.²⁶ The new edition could not come at a better time, given recent scholarly interest in the work by Denis Herlin, Ralph P. Locke and Peter Lamothe.²⁷ Christophe Grabowski's volume of piano pieces (sér. I, vol. 4 [2004]) presents three unknown piano works—a cabaret-style waltz, contrapuntal piece, and "Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon," a refrain from Baudelaire's "Le balcon," which Debussy set to song; Marianne Wheeldon comments on these "private occasional pieces."²⁸ We also now have Richard Langham Smith's realization of *Rodrigue et Chimène* (sér. VI, vol. 1 [2003]), a duo performed in Montreal (Montreal 2012), and Orledge's edition of unfinished stage works by Debussy: *Le roi Lear, Le*

23. A frequent footnote in the early letters, Edmond Bailly—owner of the Librairie indépendante, publisher of *La damoiselle élue*, and composer of his own settings of "Apparition" and *Chansons de Charles d'Orléans*—is the subject of fascinating studies by Denis Herlin ("Le cercle de l'Art indépendante," in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 76–89), and at Brussels 2011.

24. *Correspondance*, 1927.

25. The other works-in-progress in the *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy*, published by Durand, are another volume of works for two pianos/four hands, ed. Noël Lee and Edmond Lemaître (2012); orchestration, ed. Robert Orledge (2013); the String Trio and Quartet, ed. Roy Howat and Peter Bloom (2013); and two volumes of *mélodies*, ed. Denis Herlin and Marie Rolf (2014). My thanks to Denis Herlin for this update.

26. See, for example, Eiko Kasaba, "Le martyr de saint Sébastien: Étude sur sa genèse," *Cahiers Debussy* n.s. 4–5 (1980–81): 19–37.

27. Denis Herlin, "Le martyr de saint Sébastien: Du paganisme au sentiment religieux ou les arcanes d'un scandale," in *Opéra et religion sous la IIIe république*, ed. Jean-Christophe Branger and Alban Ramaut, *Cahiers de l'esplanade*, 4 (Saint-Étienne: Presses de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006) 201–26., Ralph P. Locke, "Unacknowledged Exoticism in Debussy: The Incidental Music for *Le martyr de saint Sébastien* (1911)," *Musical Quarterly* 90, no. 3–4 (2008): 371–415. Peter Lamothe (AMS 2006) on *Le martyr* in the context of other French incidental music.

28. Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy's Late Style, Musical Meaning and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 36–43.

diable dans le beffroi, and *La chute de la maison Usher* (sér. VI, vol. 3 [2006]), these analyzed by David Grayson²⁹ along with Debussy's other stage works. Richard Langham Smith,³⁰ Roy Howat,³¹ and Grayson (London 2012) have explained their working methods—not obvious given that Debussy left some works incomplete. What does one do when an editor has text but no music, or a piano score with minimal indications of orchestration? Orledge has written extensively on the problems of reconstruction³² and supervised a remarkable 2006 staged performance of *La chute* in Austin, apparently not heard since reconstructions by Carolyn Abbate (Yale, 1977) and Juan-Allende Blin (Paris, Berlin, 1979). Although he admits to appearing “responsible for slightly more than half the music” and uses the English translation in his piano-vocal score, Orledge has claimed to have based his edition on “the Debussyan origins of virtually every bar” even if Debussy left so few indications about the orchestration. Albeit with its “different tonal and structural plan,” what we hear makes numerous sonorous allusions to *Pelléas*—Orledge has justified this by pointing to the importance of destiny in both librettos. At the same time, while arguing against any move to the neoclassical style of the late sonatas, he has reproduced passages of bitonality.³³

In their enthusiasm to hear and make available as much of Debussy's music as possible, Debussy scholars have begun to study minor unfinished works as well. Wheeldon (AMS 2009) has examined the layers librettists and critics added to his *Ode à la France* after he died.³⁴ Unfortunately I was not able to compare Orledge's realization of *Diane au bois*, performed in Montreal,³⁵ with Smith's in London. To me, Orledge's version of Debussy's *Poème pour violon et orchestre* (1910–14) planned for an American tour with the violinist Arthur Hartmann—excerpts of it shared in Paris (Paris 2012)—was more than a “reconstruction” and less convincing than *La chute*. The *Première suite* (1889), recently analyzed by Jean-Christophe Branger,³⁶ was premiered in a version for four hands in

29. “Debussy on Stage,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 61–83.

30. “Taming Two Spanish Women: Reflections on Editing Opera,” in *Berlioz and Debussy*, 83–102.

31. “Afterword: The Origins of the *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy*,” *Berlioz and Debussy*, 181–192; *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009) and Montreal 2012.

32. “‘Destiny Should Allow Me to Finish It’: The Problems Involved in the Reconstruction and Orchestration of *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1908–1917),” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 203–22; and London 2012.

33. “Destiny Should Allow Me,” 211, 215–217.

34. See also her “Debussy's Legacy: The Controversy over the *Ode à la France*,” *Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 304–41; Peter Burkholder's approach to the work (AMS conference 2010); and James R. Noyes, “Debussy's *Rapsodie pour orchestra* revisited,” *Musical Quarterly* 90, no. 3–4 (2008): 416–45.

35. My thanks to Jim Briscoe for his note to me on the Montreal papers and performances.

36. “Une oeuvre de jeunesse inédite de Debussy: *La Première suite d'orchestre*,” *Cahiers Debussy* 32 (2008): 5–25.

Paris in 2008, and in a version orchestrated and completed by Philippe Manoury at the Paris conference 2012. This collaboration suggested why Debussy's music still appeals to contemporary composers. (In contrast, at the Paris conference, a concert of works explicitly written in response to Debussy's preludes produced, for the most part, less satisfying results.) Also hearing in Paris the 1909 revision of the *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra (1890), not published until 1920 and recently analyzed by Mark DeVoto,³⁷ helped me understand why, after writing *Faun*, Debussy might want to rethink this work. The most exciting performance in Paris was Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's *Jeux* for solo piano, which allowed listeners to hear not only what the dancers rehearsed to, but also how Debussy thought orchestrally, even at the keyboard.

Intriguing newly discovered sketches and drafts are stimulating reflection on how Debussy worked. Paolo Dal Molin has studied Debussy sketches found on a train stub³⁸ and, with Jean-Louis Leleu, sketches for settings of Mallarmé poems, purchased by the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 2005, excerpts from it beautifully reproduced in *Cahiers Debussy* 35 (2011). Matthew Brown has devoted most of his book *Debussy's Iberia*³⁹ to showing how sketch studies reveal both Debussy's working methods as a form of problem-solving and his compositional strategies related to continuity and closure. Along with the five early songs discussed at the 2012 AMS/SMT conference and at Paris 2012, Herlin spoke about forgotten songs dispersed in collections from Washington, DC to Stockholm, including a *Rondel chinois* (1881), comparing them with those written for Mme Vasnier; Marie Rolf analyzed (and, with a colleague, performed) an early draft of "Colloque sentimental," never published, showing "Debussy's decisions as he refined his original vision." At the London conference 2012, she revisited this song in the context of the *Fêtes galantes* in which it was published, tracing the move away from Wagner and the emergence of a new compositional direction.

ANALYSIS

When it comes to the works, *Pelléas et Mélisande* dominates current research: the subject of a monograph, recent publication of an analysis by Charles Koechlin,⁴⁰ more than five essays in the collected volumes cited herein, six conference papers, and a new collective study: *Pelléas et*

37. Mark DeVoto, *Debussy and the Veil of Tonality: Essays on His Music*, Dimension & Diversity, 4 (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2004), 8–19.

38. "Une note de service des chemins de fer couverte d'esquisses musicales: Étude de F-Pn, Mus. N.L.a. 32bis [9]," *Cahiers Debussy* 33 (2009): 61–79.

39. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

40. "Étude sur *Pelléas et Mélisande*," *Cahiers Debussy* 27–28 (2003–4): 29–123.

Mélisande: Cent ans après: Études et documents, ed. Branger, Herlin, and Sylvie Douche (forthcoming from Symétrie). Some have expanded on previous research, such as Barbara Kelly on *Pelléas* reception,⁴¹ Rolf on symbolism as “compositional agent,”⁴² and Gianmario Borio on music and drama (Paris 2012), the latter and Richard Langham Smith⁴³ now emphasizing the influence of Maeterlinck rather than Wagner. From Maeterlinck’s comment in *Le trésor des humbles*, “True life is made of silences” and “silence is the refuge of our souls,” I have suggested we revisit silences in the opera⁴⁴ for, as Debussy wrote to Pierre Louÿs on 17 July 1895, “Silence is a beautiful thing and, God knows, the blank measures in *Pelléas* are evidence of my love for this kind of emotion.”⁴⁵ New perspectives abound on the meaning of the main characters, their voices, and the original singers. While I compared *Mélisande* to *Mignon* and *Ophélie*, rooting the work in French tradition (“*Mélisande*’s Charm”), Annegret Fauser suggested what she shared with Javanese dancers at the 1889 Exhibition.⁴⁶ Particularly original is Elliott Antokoletz’s psychoanalytical portrait of these characters in his book written in collaboration with his wife, a psychologist,⁴⁷ and his related article.⁴⁸ Here Antokoletz explored how the pentatonic-whole-tone conflict in the score mirrors *Mélisande*’s existential state, and how the transformational function of music both reflects the unconscious and enacts its fate. Like Antokoletz’s focus on trauma, Brown (Paris 2012) has analyzed how the music creates “both terror and suspense.” Underlining the impact of performance on meaning, Charles Timbrell⁴⁹ referred to Debussy’s desire for singer-actors, and David Grayson⁵⁰ looked at the casting choices for *Pelléas* over the years, and the problem of a role clearly conceived for a tenor but whose notes were often lowered. Likewise, Michela Niccolai (London 2012) in analyzing the original

41. Barbara Kelly, “Debussy and the Making of a *musicien français: Pelléas*, the Press, and World War I,” in *French Music, Culture, and National Identity*, 58–76.

42. “Symbolism as Compositional Agent in Act IV, Scene 4 of Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*,” in *Berlioz and Debussy*, 117–48.

43. “‘Aimer ainsi’: Rekindling the Lamp in *Pelléas*,” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 76–95.

44. “*Mélisande*’s Charm and the Truth in Her Music,” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 55–75.

45. “Le silence est une belle chose et Dieu sait que les mesures blanches de *Pelléas* témoignent de mon amour de ce genre d’émotion. . . .” in Debussy, *Correspondance*, 262.

46. Annegret Fauser, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair*, Eastman Studies in Music, 32 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 203–5. On *Mélisande*’s voice, see also Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera*, Princeton Studies in Opera (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 171–81.

47. Elliott Antokoletz, with Juana Canabal Antokoletz, *Musical Symbolism in the Operas of Debussy and Bartók: Trauma, Gender, and the Unfolding of the Unconscious* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

48. “Music as Encoder of the Unconscious in *Pelléas et Mélisande*,” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 123–45.

49. “Debussy in Performance,” *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 259–77.

50. “Debussy’s Ideal *Pelléas* and the Limits of Authorial Intent,” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 96–122.

production, Guy Cogeval⁵¹ in reviewing productions since 1902, and Richard Langham Smith⁵² in pointing to recent performances of the play that stressed the characters' symbolic nature, have argued that performers and producers too have advanced our understanding of Debussy's opera.

Debussy's vocal music has also attracted significant scholarly attention. There were seven papers on songs in Paris, six in London (three on text-into-song, three on text-into-performance), six in Montreal, and one in Brussels. Besides Roger Nichols's look at how Debussy set free verse and prose to music,⁵³ Adrien Bruschini (Paris 2012) and Paul Dworak (Montreal 2012) have examined the *Proses lyriques*. Jonathan Dunsby (Paris 2012) theorized vocality. Recordings, in particular, were studied for their tempos, rhythms, diction, and musical expression.⁵⁴ Mylène Dubiau-Feuillerac (Paris 2012) compared Mary Garden's renditions of the *Ariettes oubliées* with readings of the poems, and Howat (Paris 2012), like Charles Timbrell ("Debussy in Performance"), compared recordings of Debussy's songs by Maggie Teyte, accompanied by Cortot, with those of Jane Bathori, who condensed and expanded rhythms as she accompanied herself on the piano—singers also studied by Bergeron.⁵⁵ Herlin, Steven Huebner, France Lechleiter, and myself have contributed to two volumes on Debussy's large vocal works written for the Prix de Rome competitions, the 2009 essays accompanied by two compact discs;⁵⁶ Rolf⁵⁷ showed how three of these prepared later masterpieces.

As for Debussy's instrumental music, Nigel Simeone,⁵⁸ in studying his expression marks and performance instructions, suggested what nature meant to the composer, a subject to which Carolyn Potter returned in this same volume drawing a parallel between Debussy's belief in "the freedom of nature and an idealized free music."⁵⁹ In a recent article and his book, *Debussy and the Veil of Tonality*, Mark DeVoto took on "the

51. "Looking for Pelléas: Le chef-d'oeuvre de Debussy, aux risqué de la scène, entretien avec Stéphane Guegan," in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 107–17.

52. "Aimer ainsi," and London 2012.

53. "The Prosaic Debussy," in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 84–100.

54. In Montreal, Jocelyn Ho examined Debussy's piano rolls (1913), while others looked at recordings by Debussy interpreters.

55. Katherine Bergeron, *Voice Lessons: French mélodie in the Belle Époque*, New Cultural History of Music (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

56. *Claude Debussy et le prix de Rome*, Flemish Radio Choir/Brussels Philharmonic/various soloists/cond. Hervé Niquet, with essays ed. Denis Herlin and Alexandre Dratwicky, *Glossa* GCD922206, ISBN 9788461347148 (2009), 2 CDs.; see also the essays by these authors in *Le concours du prix de Rome de musique (1803–1968)*, ed. Julie Lu and Alexandre Dratwicky (Lyon: Symétrie, 2011).

57. "Debussy's Rites of Spring," in *Rethinking Debussy*, 3–30.

58. "Debussy and Expression," in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 101–16.

59. "Debussy and Nature," 137–151; 137.

Debussy sound”—what makes his music distinctive—focusing particularly on “Debussy’s heterophonic orchestra.”⁶⁰ The composer Hugues Dufourt concurred, elaborating thus: “Emancipated from symphonic principles, the Debussyan orchestra turned to a succession of primitive impressions . . . instrumental colors, at once radiant and raucous, seem suspended by the slipperiness of the chords”⁶¹ This “simultaneous plurality” reached a culmination in *Jeux*, on which papers were presented at both Montreal 2012 and Rome 2011. Studies of Debussy’s chamber music have remained minimal, except for his String Quartet. Michael Strasser⁶² has shown the influence of Grieg on it; David Code (AMS conference 2004, and his 2007 article⁶³) has argued that the quartet blends “ironic traditionalism and radical innovation”; Wheeldon has unpacked Franck’s influence on the quartet’s cyclic design.⁶⁴ In *The Art of French Piano Music*, the fruit of “more than thirty years of playing, editing, teaching, and talking” about it,⁶⁵ Howat goes well beyond Marguerite Long’s *Au piano avec Debussy*.⁶⁶ He has not only given suggestions for interpretation, but also shown Debussy’s indebtedness to various influences, such as Chopin, Spanish and Russian composers.⁶⁷ Generously illustrated with music examples, Debussy’s pianistic writing is compared to that of his contemporaries in terms of structure, rhythmic games, tempo, and humor.

Debussy’s music continues to stimulate theoretical analysis. Some seek to understand tonality in Debussy’s music: Boyd Pomeroy,⁶⁸ DeVoto (*Debussy and the Veil of Tonality*), Michael Oravitz (AMS 2008), Brown (Rome 2011), and Vasilis Kallis (Rome 2011). DeVoto (Montreal 2012) has argued that the flexibility of the tonal language allows for complex relationships and quick modulations. Theorists have also been studying modality (Domenico Giannetta, Rome 2011), pentatonicism (Jeremy Day-O’Connell, AMS 2006, and 2009 article), scale networks (Dmitri Tymoczko), and aggregate formations (Mark McFarland, SMT 2004, and

60. “The Debussy Sound: Colour, Texture, Gesture,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 179–96; 179, 181.

61. Hugues Dufourt, “L’insaisissable point de coloris,” in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 158–63; 159.

62. “Grieg, the Société nationale, and the origins of Debussy’s String Quartet,” in *Berlioz and Debussy*, 103–16.

63. David J. Code, “Debussy’s String Quartet in the Brussels Salon of ‘La Libre Esthétique,’” *19th-Century Music* 30, no. 3 (2007): 257–87.

64. Marianne Wheeldon, “Debussy and *La Sonate cyclique*,” *Journal of Musicology* 22, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 644–79, reprinted in her *Debussy’s Late Style*, 80–113.

65. *The Art of French Piano Music*, xiv.

66. Paris: Juilliard, 1960; English trans. by Olive Senior-Ellis, London: Dent, 1972.

67. See also his “Russian Imprints in Debussy’s Piano Music,” in *Rethinking Debussy*, 31–51.

68. Boyd Pomeroy, “Tales of Two Tonics: Directional Tonality in Debussy’s Orchestral Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 87–118.

2004 article).⁶⁹ Others have been focused on cyclicity and repetition—especially Sylveline Bourion (Montreal 2012, and her new book, *Le style de Debussy*⁷⁰)—narrative form (Richard Hoffman and Avo Somer),⁷¹ pacing (Richard Parks)⁷² time and meaning (Simon Trezise;⁷³ Jessie Fillerup, AMS 2010; and Michel Imberty, Rome 2011). Jean-Jacques Nattiez (Montreal conference 2012) presented a study of “poetic/aesthetic discrepancy” in *La cathédrale engloutie*. Of particular interest is work on the arabesque—a subject harking back to both Poe and Mallarmé—by Caroline Potter,⁷⁴ Linda Cummins, Gurminder Bhogal, Ralph Locke, and myself.⁷⁵ Still others are taking inspiration from such theorists as Kurth (Jean-Louis Leleu, Paris 2012), Schenker (James McGowan, Montreal 2012), Roland Barthes (Jean-Claire Vançon), Bergson on how memory is formed (Brian Hyer, AMS 2010) and Deleuze/Guattari on chaos and ecstasy (Michael Klein, AMS 2006 and 2007 article).⁷⁶ Julie McQuinn⁷⁷ and Code (AMS 2010) have explored seduction and eroticism in Debussy’s music, the problematics of male desire and female subjects.

As the dust jacket of *Rethinking Debussy* puts it, “the Debussy idiom exemplifies the ways in which various disciplines—musical, literary, artistic, philosophical, and psychological—can be incorporated into a single, highly integrated artistic conception.” But for decades, scholars have disagreed about whether Debussy was more influenced by symbolism, particularly through poetry, or impressionism, through painting. Lesure and

69. Jeremy Day-O’Connell, “Debussy, Pentatonicism and the Tonal Tradition,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 225–61; Dmitri Tymoczko, “Scale Networks and Debussy,” *Journal of Music Theory* 48, no. 2 (2004): 219–94; Mark McFarland, “Debussy: The Origins of a Method,” *Journal of Music Theory* 48, no. 2 (2004): 295–324.

70. Sylveline Bourion, *Le style de Debussy: Duplication, répétition et dualité dans les stratégies de composition* (Paris: Vrin, 2011). See also Bourion’s essays in *Musique et modernité en France, 1900–1945*, ed. Sylvain Caron, Michel Duchesneau, and François de Médicis (Montreal: Presses de l’Université de Montreal, 2006); and her “Pour une grammaire générative de la duplication dans les derniers cycles de mélodies pour voix et piano de Debussy,” *Musurgia: Analyse et pratiques musicales* 11, no. 4 (2004): 7–30.

71. Richard Hoffman, “Debussy’s *Canope* as Narrative Form,” *College Music Symposium* 42 (2002): 103–17; Avo Somer, “Musical Syntax in the Sonatas of Debussy: Phrase Structure and Formal Function,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 67–96.

72. Richard Parks, “Music’s Inner Dance: Debussy’s Form, Pacing, and Complexity,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 197–231.

73. Simon Trezise, “Debussy’s ‘Rhythmicised Time,’” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 232–55.

74. “Debussy and Nature,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 137–51.

75. Linda Cummins, *Debussy and the Fragment*, Chiasma, 18 (New York: Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006; originally presented as the author’s Louisiana State University Ph.D. diss., 2001). Gurminder Bhogal, “Debussy’s *Arabesque* and Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912),” *Twentieth-Century Music* 3, no. 2 (2007): 171–99; see also her forthcoming book on the subject. Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 217–22. Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 533–37.

76. Jean-Claire Vançon, “La Rhétorique de l’image de Roland Barthes et *La soirée dans Grenade* de Debussy: Quels outils pour quelle analyse,” *Musurgia: Analyse et pratiques musicales* 12, no. 1–2 (2005): 77–98; Michael Klein, “Debussy’s *Isle joyeuse* as Territorial Assemblage,” *19th-Century Music* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2007): 28–52.

77. “Exploring the Erotic in Debussy’s Music,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 117–36.

Stefan Jarocinski bucked tradition by advocating the former, an idealism fraught with paradox and contradictions,⁷⁸ but important to contemporary composers like Boulez. In part because of the choice of poetry Debussy set to song, scholars continue to reflect on the influence of Baudelaire (Helen Abbott, London 2012; Howat, London 2012; Michel Lehmann, Montreal 2012; McGowan, Montreal 2012; and Pasler, Brussels 2011), Verlaine (Dubiau-Feuillerac and Rolf, London 2012), and especially Mallarmé (Geoffrey Wilson, AMS 2008; Joseph Acquisto, London 2012; Imberty, Rome 2011; and Elizabeth McCombie and David Code).⁷⁹ By advocating a return to hearing this music with “some of the Baudelairean and Mallarméan depths so often effaced by modernist technocratic methods,” Code,⁸⁰ as Arnold Whittall put it in his review, seemed to be taking aim at Boulez’s “uncompromisingly intense take on Mallarmé.”⁸¹ But Debussy’s literary inheritance goes beyond the symbolists, and Linda Cummins has traced “an aesthetic of the unfinished” as far back as Petrarch.⁸² Work has also turned to engagement with Debussy’s music (or not) by such writers as Proust (Jean-Yves Tadié, Paris 2012) and Cocteau (Malou Haine, Montreal 2012). We have only begun to study Debussy as a writer, with Déirdre Donnellon’s essay⁸³ the sole study in recent years.

Current scholars are much less troubled than earlier by the notion of Debussy’s music as impressionist “painting in sound,” although impressionism was pejoratively used in 1887 to characterize his *Printemps* and explicitly rejected by Debussy in 1908. Howat defines its “key technique” as a “new awareness of color relationships.”⁸⁴ Far more can be said not only about its technical meaning, but also its social-political connotations. Martin Kaltenecker,⁸⁵ borrowing from German biographies in the 1920s, has defined impressionist as involving organic form and calling on a new way of listening. One could also point to the physics of vibrations, and the effect of the artist’s nervous system on the nature of the impressions. In one of his earliest articles (1899), Emile Vuillermoz suggested, “the progressive refinement of our nerves [by this music]

78. Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 524–37.

79. Elizabeth McCombie, *Mallarmé and Debussy: Unheard Music, Unseen Text*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Code, “Parting the Veils of Debussy’s *Voiles*,” *Scottish Music Review* (online) 1, no. 1 (2007), and his *Debussy*.

80. *Debussy*, 187–88.

81. *Music and Letters* 92, no. 4 (2011): 669.

82. Cummins, *Debussy and the Fragment*, 21.

83. “Debussy as Musician and Critic,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 43–60.

84. Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music*, 3–4. At the same time, Howat has associated the aesthetic most with Chabrier, who collected the paintings of Renoir and Monet.

85. “L’impressionisme comme forme de vie: Écoutes allemandes de Debussy dans les années 1920,” in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 136–45.

leads us to think that *this* is the path of musical progress.”⁸⁶ At the same time, Mallarmé associated impressionism with working-class vision and ideology, others with the desire for middle-class empowerment, both of little interest to Debussy.⁸⁷

The most important studies in this regard are *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, and Jean-Michel Nectoux’s elegant *Harmonie en bleu et or: Debussy, la musique et les autres arts* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), both lavishly illustrated. Nectoux began his contribution to the former⁸⁸ by examining the images in photographs and descriptions of Debussy’s studio in his later years: not impressionist paintings, but Japanese engravings and various Asian objects. Michel Duchesneau (Brussels conference 2011) and Mary Breatnach (London conference 2012) also took Debussy’s interest in *Japonisme* seriously, specifically the influence of Hokusai, also analyzed in Howat’s *The Art of French Piano Music*. In addition, Nectoux, in both his essay and book, pointed to Debussy’s relationship with the sculptors Camille Claudel and Rodin. In the end, Nectoux found Debussy’s aesthetic of mystery to be symbolist most of all, with Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond suggesting that the composer shared with Roderick Usher “the search for the bizarre and the peculiar.”⁸⁹ Yet, impressionists too sought to renew a sense of the mystery of life, using art to explore the fleeting moment and reveal the deep intuitions of the unconscious. Moreover, *Debussy: La musique et les arts*’ cover image by Henri-Edmond Cross suggests connections to neoimpressionism, with which Debussy shared a certain sense of musical line and return to traditional values (folk songs), while the paintings by postimpressionists Sérusier and Nabis here featured point to the intimate connection between form and color in Debussy’s later music. What is important, I would argue, is to recognize that Debussy’s music changed over time, as did various styles in painting, and cannot be reduced to one aesthetic or another.

Scholarship on Debussy’s relationship to dance continues to focus on convergences and dissonances with Nijinsky (John McGinness, AMS 2004; Samuel Dorf, AMS 2008; and Gianfranco Vinay, Paris 2012), along with other choreographers who have worked with his music (Stéphane Sawas, Paris 2012). In addition, three new directions have emerged. First, David Code (“Debussy’s String Quartet”), August Sheehy (Montreal 2012), and Francesco Spaminato (Montreal 2012) have investigated the gestural aspects of Debussy’s music. Second, among those

86. Emile Vuillermoz, “L’impressionisme en musique,” *Revue jeune*, 10–25 July 1899, 1–6.

87. See Jann Pasler, “Impressionism,” *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed 21 August 2012).

88. “Je veux écrire mon songe musical . . .” in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 14–31.

89. Jumeau-Lafond, “Du côté de l’ombre,” 177.

working on the influence of early music on the composer, Howat (*The Art of French Piano Music*) has studied the influence of the *clavecinistes'* baroque dances. Herlin as well as Pasler (*Composing the Citizen*, and Paris 2012) have discussed the larger context and political meaning of this influence.⁹⁰ Third, scholars have taken special interest in “Golliwog’s Cakewalk,” examined for its complex potential meanings more than as a pastiche of Wagner. Deaville (AMS 2006) contrasted it to the Viennese waltz, Philippe Gumpowicz (Paris 2012) interrogated questions of race, Davinia Caddy and Lindy Smith the Parisian context.⁹¹

Debussy’s attraction to and use of non-Western music has been explored anew by Fauser (*Musical Encounters at the Paris World’s Fair*), Michael Fend (Paris 2012), Howat (*The Art of French Piano Music*), Locke (“Unacknowledged Exoticism”), and Pasler (*Composing the Citizen*).⁹² But in his entry on Debussy in a recent dictionary of orientalists,⁹³ François Picard, a Chinese music specialist, has argued that Debussy’s “supposed exoticism,” particularly his use of the whole tone scale and pentatonism, was a “personal invention,” not the influence of Asian music he may have heard. His reasons: “no traditional music studied during the last century by ethnomusicologists has confirmed the supposed existence of whole tone scales.”⁹⁴

Political questions continue to permeate scholarship, particularly Debussy’s “nationalism.” Stridently anti-republican, though the beneficiary of a decade-long Conservatoire education and a state-funded production of *Pelléas* at the Opéra-Comique, in 1909 he nevertheless explained, “I’ve sought especially to become French again.” “Silent between the opposing camps” during the Dreyfus Affair, Gumpowicz writes, “his cultural nationalism increased until it exploded during the Great War. . . . Indifferent to political affiliations, Debussy was . . . seeking what would be the quintessence of the nation.”⁹⁵ But what did this

90. Denis Herlin, “L’embarquement pour Cythère ou Debussy et le XVIIIe siècle,” in Wanda Landowska et la renaissance de la musique ancienne, ed. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, 59–73 (Arles: Actes Sud; Paris: Cité de la Musique, 2011). Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 496–507, 635–40.

91. Davinia Caddy, “Parisian Cake Walks,” *19th-Century Music* 30, no. 3 (2007): 288–317. Lindy Smith, “Out of Africa: The Cakewalk in Twentieth-Century French Concert Music,” *Nota Bene: Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Musicology* 1 (Fall 2008): 66–82.

92. See also François de Médicis (Paris 2012) on the integration of folklore in *Gigues*.

93. François Pouillon, ed., *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de langue françaises*. (Paris: Karthala, 2008).

94. “Debussy,” in *ibid.*, 266.

95. Philippe Gumpowicz, *Les résonances de l’ombre, musique et identités: Du Wagner au jazz* (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 164–66. See also David Code’s reading of *Fêtes* against the backdrop of the Dreyfus Affair (AMS 2006); Glenn Watkins, *Proof through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), with compact disc; Jane Fulcher’s view of his wartime pieces as reflections of his inner turmoil in her *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914–1940* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Debussy’s response, along with that of other composers, to an interview in the *Cri de Paris* (1915) in Jean-Christophe Branger “La réponse de Debussy à une enquête du *Cri de Paris* pendant la Grande Guerre,” *Cahiers Debussy* 35 (2011): 97–108; and Annette Becker (Paris 2012).

mean? In part, Debussy wished to be seen as Rameau's successor.⁹⁶ As discussed below, it took his death for his meaning to come into focus.

Intimately related to all this was Debussy's reception abroad. Michael Christofordis has examined what Albeniz's and de Falla's music meant to Debussy (AMS 2004). Building on perspectives presented in the *Revue musicale* (1920) and at the 1962 Paris symposium, recent studies of the influence of Debussy's music on foreign composers have turned to Brazilian composers such as Villa-Lobos,⁹⁷ Takemitsu in Japan (Tomoko Deguchi, AMS 2010, and Paris 2012), and American composers.⁹⁸ Scholars have also investigated public reception of his music in Belgium (Brussels 2011), Canada (Montreal 2012), Italy (Paris 2012), Mexico (Montreal 2012), Poland (Paris 2012), the U.K. (Paris 2012), and the United States ("Debussy in Daleville," Paris 2012, Montreal 2012).⁹⁹ In his study of Debussy at the Proms in London, Michel Rapoport (Paris 2012) showed that before the 1970s, Debussy was way behind Wagner, and, among French composers, less performed than Berlioz, Saint-Saëns, and Ravel; *Jeux* was not performed before 1960. Later this changed and he moved ahead of Ravel. In the United States, Tobias Fasshauer has studied Debussy in Sousa's repertoire (Montreal 2012) and Rolf (Montreal 2012) shattered our assumptions about the *Marche écossaise's* Scottish origin—in fact it was commissioned by an American, albeit incorporating a bagpiping tune. Sylvia Kahan (Paris 2012, Montreal 2012) and Fauser (Paris 2012) took a close look at the critical reception of Debussy in the U.S. While the former compared it to the American reception of Thomas Adès, the latter argued for Debussy as representing the anti-Germanic ultramodern. Unfortunately, other than the systematic work documenting orchestral music in Lille by Guy Gosselin, richly illustrated with concert programs,¹⁰⁰ scholars have yet to focus on the place of Debussy's music in concert life in France and how this changed over time, nor have they looked at it in various venues, including the radio.

96. On Debussy and Rameau, see Ana Suschitzky, "Debussy's Rameau: French Music and its Others," *Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 398–448; and Julien Dubruque/Vançon (Paris 2012).

97. Ayres de Andrade, "La première audition au Brésil de deux oeuvres de Debussy," *Cahiers Debussy* 31 (2007): 59–75; Manoel Corrêa do Lago, "Auditions d'oeuvres de Claude Debussy au Brésil au début du XXe siècle," *Cahiers Debussy* 32 (2008): 51–87; and Kassandra Hartford (AMS 2010).

98. James Briscoe, "Debussy in Daleville: Toward Early Modernist Hearing in the United States," in *Rethinking Debussy*, 225–58.

99. See also Anna Petrova, "La réception de Debussy à Saint-Pétersbourg au début du vingtième siècle," *Cahiers Debussy* 25 (2001): 11–63.

100. Guy Gosselin, *La symphonie dans la cité: Lille au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2011).

REPUTATION AND LEGACY

Debussy's legacy, we are learning, is as much the product of the discourse surrounding his music as his musical decisions, and of critics as much as composers. Certainly *les apaches*, Ravel's circle of friends, did all they could to promote Debussy's music, beginning with attending dozens of the first performances of *Pelléas*.¹⁰¹ Barbara Kelly¹⁰² has shown, however, that when Les Six rejected Debussy, Ravel was caught in the middle. Jane Harrison (AMS 2010) has drawn attention to the equally important impact his music had on minor composers who, as it became fashionable, transformed his innovations into normative procedures. Wheeldon (Paris 2012) has suggested that Debussy may even have changed his style in response to the *Debussystes* in order not to fall into "self-imitation."

After the war, in part because Debussy had stood up to the Germans and written patriotic music, he achieved broad association with Frenchness, so long coveted. Wheeldon¹⁰³ and Danick Trottier¹⁰⁴ have looked carefully at *hommages* to the composer, such as in the *Revue musicale* (1920), with its eight articles, reports from abroad, and *Le tombeau de Debussy*—ten commissioned compositions by such composers as Bartók, Ravel, Stravinsky, Satie, Roussel, and Dukas. But not the "usual panegyrics," Wheeldon noticed many "unflattering appraisals" here, tributes that "dwell almost entirely on works drawn from earlier in his career," and a stunning disparity with "the composer's desired legacy" as articulated by the lineage he wished to evoke in his late works.¹⁰⁵ At Montreal and at a conference in Ottawa (October 2011), Wheeldon and Kelly, with their various interpretations, have reignited debates over the meaning of *Debussysme* in the 1920s, returning to the disagreements between Vuillermoz, Vallas, and Prunières over what image of Debussy should prevail.¹⁰⁶

Scholars are also beginning to consider the purposes to which Debussy and his music were put before, during, and after the next war. The historian Pascal Ory, in his paper on cultural memory (Paris 2012), argued that Debussy's posthumous reputation, his music taken to represent the

101. Jann Pasler, "A Sociology of the *Apaches*: 'Sacred Battalion' for *Pelléas*," in *Berlioz and Debussy*, 149–66.

102. "Ravel after Debussy: Inheritance, Influences and Style," in *Berlioz and Debussy*, 167–80.

103. "*Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy*: The Early Reception of the Late Works," in *Rethinking Debussy*, 259–76.

104. "La pratique de l'hommage musical chez Debussy," *Cahiers Debussy* 34 (2010): 53–79, and Montreal 2012.

105. "*Tombeau de Claude Debussy*," 261.

106. See also Barbara L. Kelly, "Remembering Debussy in Interwar France: Authority, Musicology, and Legacy," *Music and Letters* 93, 2 (2012), forthcoming.

inversion of German attributes, came to be associated with that of France after war. The Debussy cult was never more pronounced than under Vichy when the composer was identified as someone who resisted, and in 1955 as someone who helped liberate the country.¹⁰⁷

Also fascinating has been new work on André Schaeffner. Nicolas Southon has studied his correspondence with Marcel Dietschy, some of the longer letters reproduced in one of his articles.¹⁰⁸ This began with Schaeffner's review of Dietschy's biography of Debussy (see n. 4), and the latter's objection to the former's article on Debussy and Russian music, commissioned by Pierre Souvtchinsky for his two-volume *Musique russe* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953). From Dietschy's perspective, Schaeffner's passion had led to affirmations without substantiation à la Vallas; Schaeffner concurred that Debussy was for him the subject of "adoration" that led him to musicology. If Schaeffner focused on "the intellectual climate, the affiliations, the genius of Debussy," Dietschy was more interested in Debussy the man. Indeed, many chapters of Dietschy's book begin with the composer's relationship with a woman. At the Paris conference 2012, Southon concentrated on Schaeffner—from his objections to Jankélévitch to the vision of the composer Boulez shared in a letter to him, arguing for *Jeux* as Debussy's masterpiece rather than *Pelléas*.

Scholars are still dissecting Debussy's influence on Messiaen (Yves Balmer and Christopher Murray, Paris 2012; and Timothy Cochran, AMS 2011). Arnold Whittall¹⁰⁹ has reviewed Debussy's importance for various composers over the years. But Boulez's generation perhaps did most to shape the next era of Debussy's legacy. Jennifer Iverson (AMS 2008, 2011) has analyzed the influence of *Jeux* on Ligeti; Matthew Greenbaum (SMT 2004) Debussyan structures in Wolpe; Klein (SMT 2006) Debussyan temporality in Lutoslawski; and Anne-Sylvie Barthel-Calvet (Paris 2012) Xenakis's take on Debussy. Laurent Feneyrou (Paris 2012) has revisited Jean Barraqué's analysis of *La mer*. Hugues Dufourt¹¹⁰ represents French spectralists who later built on Debussy's sense of color. A new compact disc of experimental music based on Debussy, including music by Alvin Lucier, was issued in 2003.¹¹¹

107. See also Yannick Simon on the Debussy cult under the occupation: "Claude de France, notre Wagner: Le culte de Debussy sous l'Occupation," *Cahiers Debussy* 30 (2006): 5–26; and Jane Fulcher, "Debussy as National Icon: From Vehicle of Vichy's Compromise to French Resistance Classic," *Musical Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (2011): 454–80.

108. "Une correspondance entre André Schaeffner et Marcel Dietschy: Dialogue et controverses debussyistes (1963–1971)," *Cahiers Debussy* 34 (2010): 81–124.

109. "Debussy Now," in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, 278–87.

110. "L'insaisissable pointe du coloris," in *Debussy: La musique et les arts*, 158–63.

111. *Replay Debussy*, various composers and performers, Universal Classics 472 801-2, CD.

Lastly, as elsewhere in American musicology and theory, scholars are now looking at Debussy's place and meaning in popular culture. Fauser (Paris 2012) pointed to Debussy's music in 1940s films, and *Clair de lune* at the end of the 2001 release *Ocean's Eleven*, played while the gangsters face the Bellagio Hotel fountains—an image hard to get out of one's head. Matthew Brown's new book, *Debussy Redux*,¹¹² has gone farthest, as engaging as it is imaginative in its analytical choices. The notion of high and low culture, Brown argued, is artificial and exaggerated (as it has long been in France, I would add). Schenker is used to tease out similarities between Debussy's music and various popular transformations of it. Included is "Reverie" by the rock band Queen and an analysis of leitmotifs in the film *Portrait of Jenny* (1943), as compared with those in *Pelléas*, these works sharing a similar dramatic structure. Debussy's influence on Duke Ellington and Chick Corea come to light, but without mentioning Cecil Taylor. Even Martha Stewart's Easy Listening collection does not escape analysis.

With all these reasons to revisit Debussy, his music, and his legacy, we eagerly await the next big Debussy celebration—the centenary of his death in 2018. More critical editions will be out, more letters and historic recordings unearthed, and a new generation of listeners to engage. In original and provocative ways, scholars have plumbed the depths of individual pieces, techniques, and perspectives. What is needed in every domain is the long view, including engagement with how the questions we ask have evolved over time, taken various forms in the work of our predecessors, and might even be revisited in the future. How did Debussy think of genre over the long term, tonality, timbre, and time? How has his influence on successive composers affected how we hear his music as well as theirs? And what are we missing by insisting on Debussy's exceptionalism? As Arnold Whittall put it, "the story of 'Debussy now' is, above all, a story of unfinished business."¹¹³

ABSTRACT

On the 150th anniversary of Debussy's birth, after four international conferences, this review of research in the past decade focuses on the man, his music, and his legacy. Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* and his songs continue to capture the greatest interest, and scholars continue to investigate tonality, timbre, and time; his aesthetic in the context of

112. Matthew Brown, *Debussy Redux: The Impact of His Music on Popular Culture*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

113. "Debussy Now," 287.

painting, poetry, and dance; and reception and influence of his music, at home and abroad. The recent publication of 3,000 letters (2005), new critical editions of his music (including unfinished works), and the discovery of sketches, song drafts, and other little-known documents, along with study of historical recordings, have opened new perspectives and laid new foundations for future scholarship. Recent histories have shed light on what French identity meant to Debussy and *Debussystes*, especially in the 1920s and 1940s. Newest of all is study of Debussy's place and meaning in popular culture.