

# *Music through the Microscope*



**Claude Debussy**

*Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*

**Illustrations**

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## Themes and motifs



Figure 1 Theme A (Faune)



Figure 2 Motif A (Triplet)



Figure 3 Motif B horns



Figure 4 Motif B bars 7 to 11 horns

Motif Z (cadencial motif)



Figure 5 Motif Z oboe bar 17

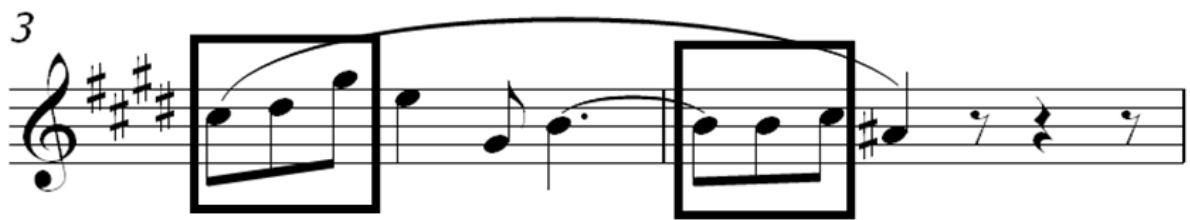


Figure 6 Motif Z flute bar 3

Motif Y ('cellos)



Figure 7 Motif Y 'cellos bar 31

Theme X (modal)



Figure 8 Theme X oboe bar 37 to 39

# Melody & melodic development

## Section A

1

3

2

4

Figure 9 Theme A Flute bars 1 to 4

Major second

Minor seconds

Minor seconds

Major seconds

Figure 10 Theme A intervallic construction bar 1 to 2 beat 1

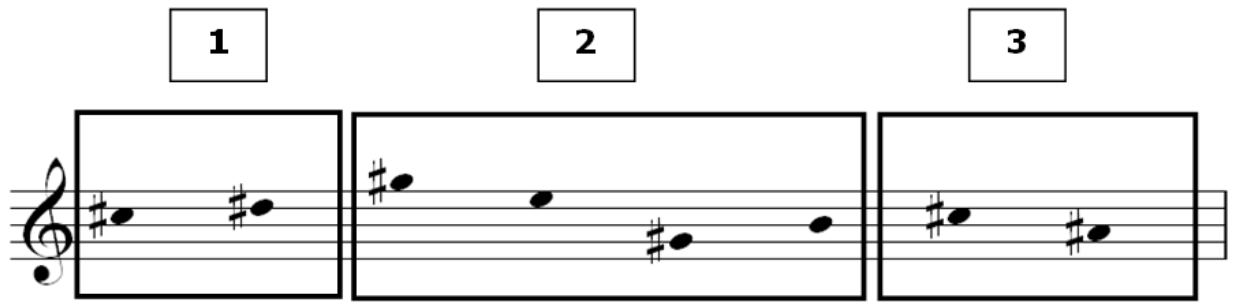


Figure 11 Theme A intervallic construction bars 3 to 4



Figure 12 flute bars 3 to 4



Figure 13 oboe bars 14 to 16



Figure 14 oboe bars 17 to 19



Figure 15 clarinet bar 20



Figure 16 flute bars 21 to 22



Figure 17 flute bars 3 to 4



Figure 18 flute bars 23 to 24



Figure 19 flutes bar 26 to 27



Figure 20 flutes bar 28 & 29



Figure 21 clarinet bars 31 to 34

augmented 6th

augmented 4th

major 2nd

major 3rd

augmented 5th

augmented 7th

Figure 22 whole-tone scale

Figure 23 oboe bars 37 & 38; flute bars 3 & 4

**Oboe**

**Violins in octaves** **Flute & Clarinet in octaves**

**Violins in octaves** **Flute & Oboe**

**Clarinet & Bassoon in octaves**

Figure 24 Theme X bars 37 to 44

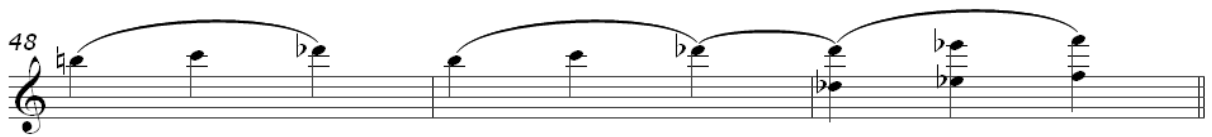
Figure 25 horns bar 47

Figure 26 clarinet bars 51 to 55

**Motif Z (Cadencial Motif)**



**Figure 27 clarinet bar 20**



**Figure 28 1st violins bars 48 to 50**

Musical notation for Figure 28 1st violins bars 48 to 50. The notation is on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of three measures, each containing a half note followed by a dotted quarter note. The notes are G4, A4, Bb4 in the first measure; G4, A4, Bb4 in the second measure; and G4, A4, Bb4 in the third measure. The notes are beamed together and have a fermata over the final note of each measure.

**Figure 29 bars 48 to 50**

## Section B (Central Climax)

### Theme W (Oceanic)

Figure 30 shows three staves of musical notation for Theme W (Oceanic), bars 55 to 62. The first staff (bar 55) features a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a shorter slur over the last two measures. The second staff (bar 59) shows a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a shorter slur over the last two measures. The third staff (bar 61) features a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and three triplets of eighth notes in the following measures.

Figure 30 Central Climax bars 55 to 62

Figure 31 shows two staves of musical notation for flutes Motif A, bars 28 to 29. The first staff (bar 28) features a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and three triplets of eighth notes in the following measures. The second staff (bar 29) shows a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a shorter slur over the last two measures, including a triplet of eighth notes.

Figure 31 flutes Motif A, bars 28 to 29

Figure 32 shows one staff of musical notation for woodwind bars 55 & 56. The staff features a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a shorter slur over the last two measures.

Figure 32 woodwind bars 55 & 56



Figure 33 woodwind bars 57 & 58

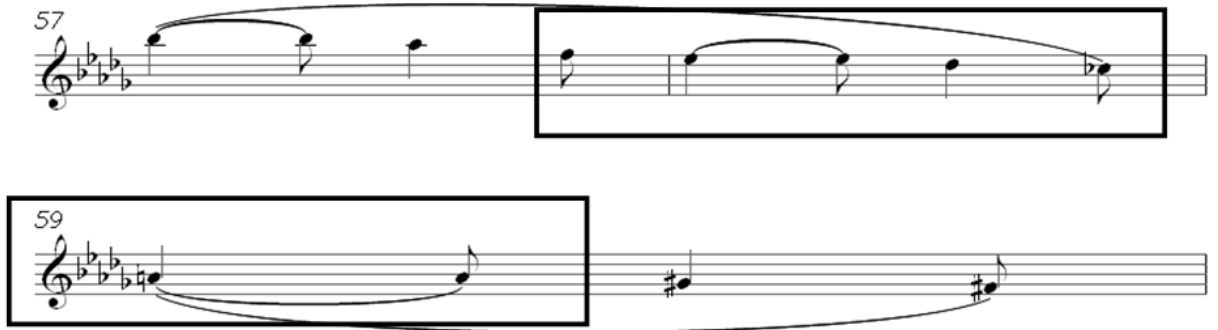


Figure 34 woodwind bars 57 to 59



Figure 35 woodwind bars 59 to 60



Figure 36 woodwind bars 61 to 62

## Second transition bars 74 to 93

### First False Recapitulation 79 to 83 beat 1



Figure 37 flute bars 79 to 83 beat 1



Figure 38 flute bars 1 to 4



Figure 39 oboe bars 83 & 84

Motif Y ('cellos) Bar 31



Figure 40 'cellos bar 31

85

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Figure 41 strings bar 85

## Section A1 True Recapitulation

The musical score for Section A1 True Recapitulation consists of four staves of music in treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and 3/8 time signature. The first staff (bars 94-97) features sixteenth-note runs with sixteenth-note triplets and sixteenth-note pairs. The second staff (bars 98-101) continues with similar patterns, including sixteenth-note triplets and sixteenth-note pairs. The third staff (bars 102-103) shows a continuation of the sixteenth-note patterns. The fourth staff (bars 104-106) concludes the section with a final sixteenth-note run followed by a double bar line and a 3/8 time signature change, with the final three measures containing whole rests.

Figure 42 True Recapitulation of Theme A bars 94 to 106

## Coda

The musical score for the Coda consists of two staves of music in treble clef, key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and 3/8 time signature. The first staff (bar 107) features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth-note runs and sixteenth-note pairs. The second staff (bar 108) continues the pattern, ending with a final sixteenth-note run and a fermata.

Figure 43 horns & violins bar 107 to 108



# Harmony

## Section A

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system consists of two measures. The right-hand part (treble clef) features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in each measure, indicated by a bracket and the number '3'. The left-hand part (bass clef) is silent, represented by a horizontal line. The second system also consists of two measures. The right-hand part continues the melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a quarter note and a half note in the second measure. The left-hand part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes, including a prominent sustained chord in the second measure.

Figure 44 Theme A bars 1 to 5

The image displays a musical score for Figure 45, consisting of two systems. The top system features a violin part with a melodic line and a piano accompaniment. A box labeled '1' is positioned above the first two measures of the violin part. Below the piano part of the top system, boxes labeled '2', '3', and '4' are placed under the first, second, and third measures respectively. The bottom system continues the piano accompaniment, with a box labeled '3' above the first measure and another box labeled '3' above the second measure. The piano part includes various chords and textures, including a complex chordal structure in the final measure of the second system.

Figure 45 harmony map bars 1 to 5

This figure shows a single staff of music for Figure 46, representing Theme A harmony bars 4 to 5. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It depicts two chords: a triad in the first measure (F#, C#, G#) and a triad in the second measure (F#, C#, G#). Two thick black arrows point from the first chord to the second, indicating the harmonic progression.

Figure 46 Theme A harmony bars 4 to 5

This figure shows a single staff of music for Figure 47, representing Theme A enharmonic. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It depicts two chords: a triad in the first measure (F#, C#, G#) and a triad in the second measure (F#, C#, G#). A large slur connects the two chords, indicating an enharmonic relationship between them.

Figure 47 Theme A enharmonic



Figure 48 harmony bars 9 to 11

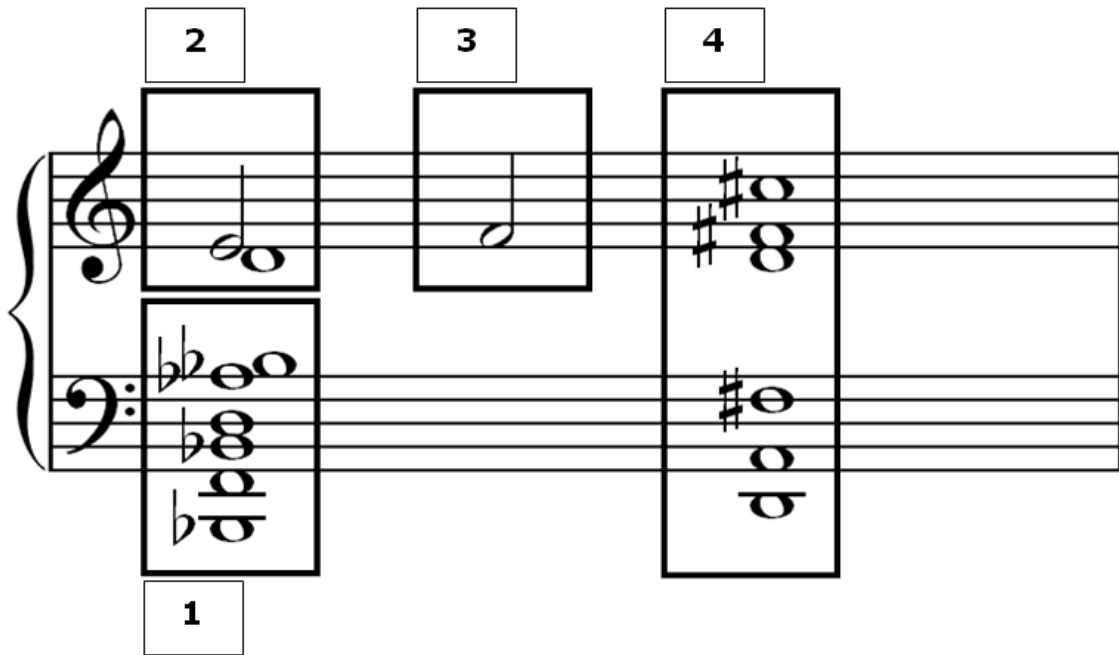


Figure 49 harmony bars 9 to 11

Figure 50 harmony bars 11 & 12

Figure 51 harmony bars 13 & 14

Figure 52 harmony bars 15 to 17 beat 1

11

15

Figure 53 bass bar 11 to 17 beat 1

16

Figure 54 melody & bass in contrary motion

Figure 55 harmony bars 17 to 21

Figure 56 harmony bars 20 to 21



Figure 57 the *Tristan Chord*. Wagner *Prelude to Tristan und Isolde* bars 1 to

3

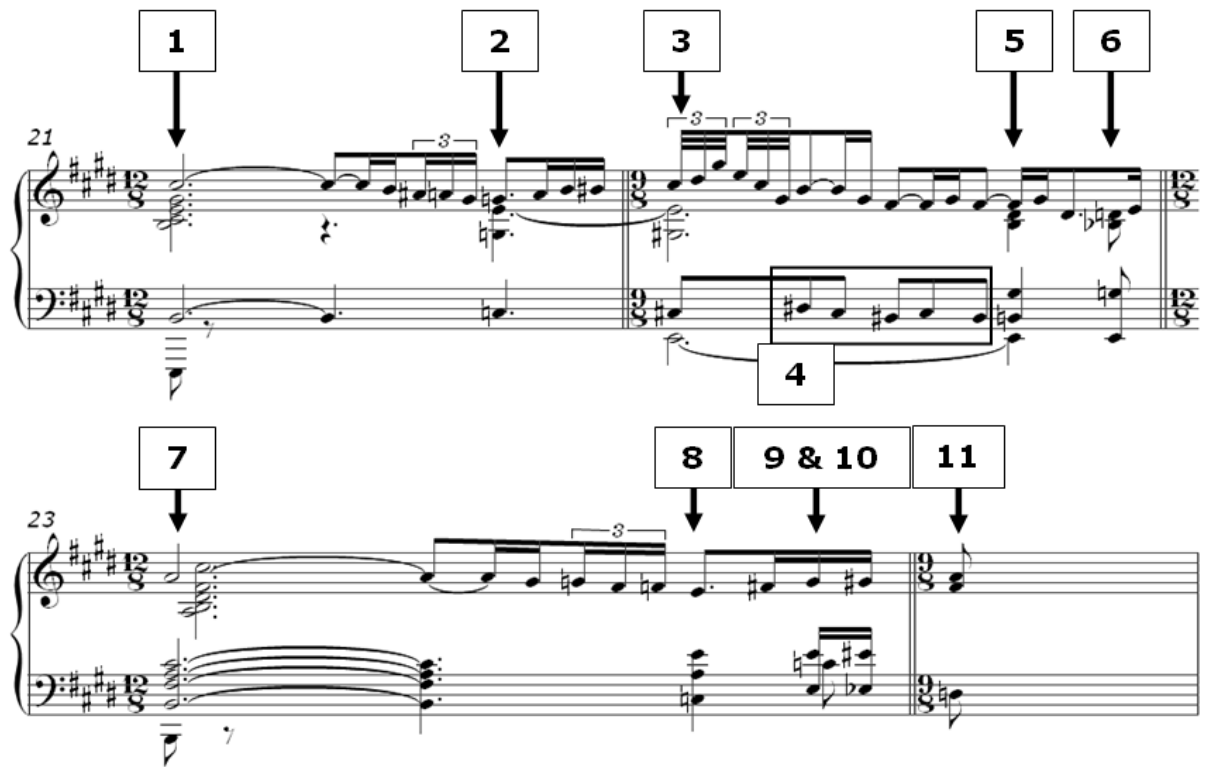


Figure 58 harmony bars 21 to 24 beat 1

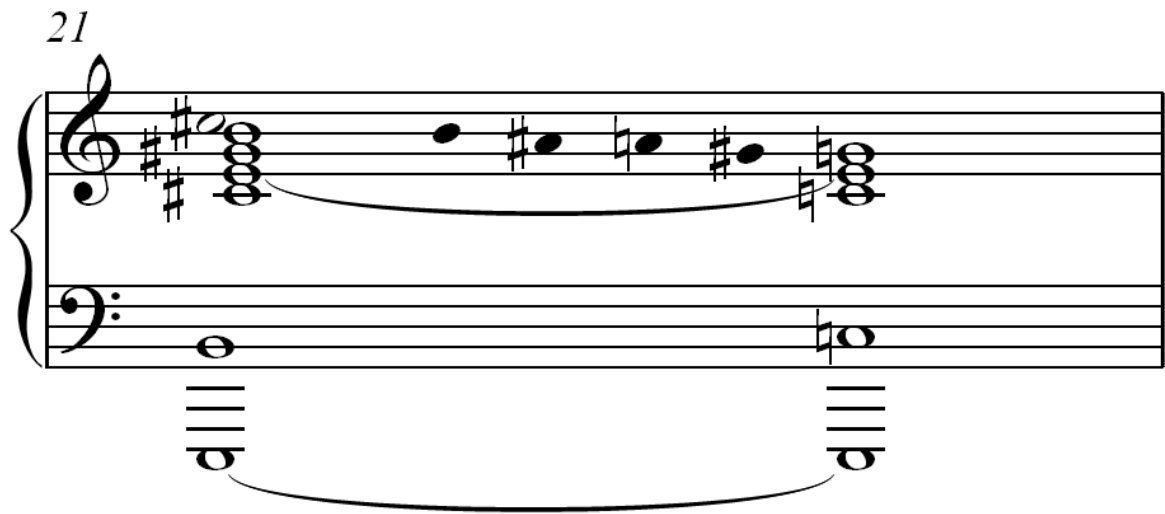


Figure 59 harmony bar 21

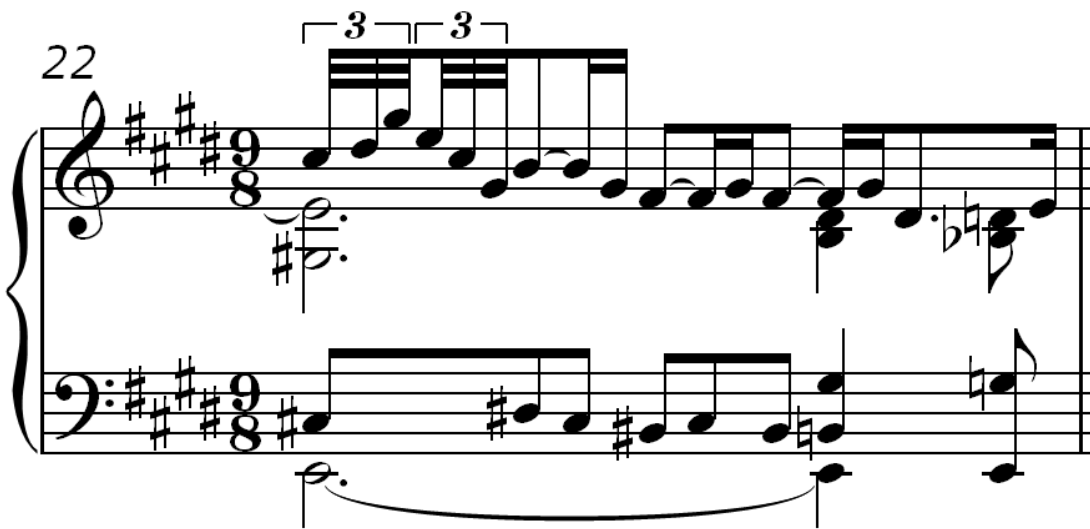


Figure 60 C sharp minor first inversion bar 22

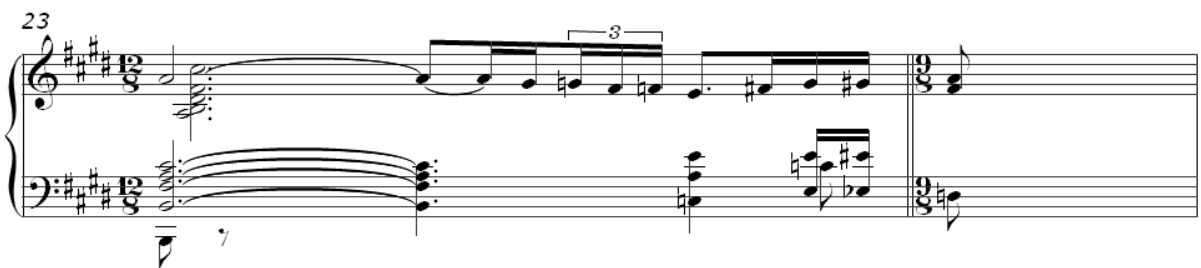


Figure 61 harmonic progression bars 23 to 24



Figure 62 shows a musical score for piano, starting at measure 24. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piano part consists of a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets. Above the score, there are 13 numbered boxes (1-13) with arrows pointing to specific notes in the piano part. Boxes 1, 2, and 3 point to the first triplet. Box 4 points to the first note of the second triplet. Boxes 5, 7, and 8 point to the first, second, and third notes of the third triplet. Box 6 points to the first note of the fourth triplet. Box 9 points to the first note of the fifth triplet. Box 10 points to the first note of the sixth triplet. Box 11 points to the first note of the seventh triplet. Boxes 12 and 13 point to the first and second notes of the eighth triplet.

Figure 62 harmony bars 24 to 26 beat 1

Figure 63 shows a musical score for piano, starting at measure 25. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piano part consists of a simple harmonic pattern with chords. The score is shown for two measures, 25 and 26, with the first beat of each measure.

Figure 63 harmony bars 25 to 26 beat 1

Figure 64 shows a musical score for piano, starting at measure 25. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piano part consists of a simple harmonic pattern with chords. The score is shown for two measures, 25 and 26, with the first beat of each measure. Arrows indicate the harmonic motion from measure 25 to measure 26.

Figure 64 harmonic motion bars 25 to 26 beat 1

Figure 65 parallel 7<sup>th</sup>s bar 24 to 25 beat 1

### Transition

Figure 66 harmony bars 32 to 34 beat 1

augmented 6th

augmented 4th

major 2nd

major 3rd

augmented 5th

augmented 7th

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a whole-tone scale starting on F natural. The notes are F, G, A, B, C#, D#, and E#. Brackets above and below the staff indicate the intervals between adjacent notes: major 2nd (F-G), major 3rd (G-A), augmented 4th (A-B), augmented 5th (B-C#), major 2nd (C#-D#), major 3rd (D#-E#), augmented 6th (F-E#), and augmented 7th (F-E#).

Figure 67 whole-tone scale founded on F natural

Modéré (♩ = 88)  
 (Dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant)

The musical score consists of four systems of piano notation. The first system shows the right hand with chords and arpeggios, marked *p très doux* and *p*, with a *più p* marking in the third measure. The second system shows the left hand with a steady bass line, marked *pp* and *pp expressif*, with a *toujours pp* marking. The third system shows the right hand with arpeggiated chords, marked *très doux*. The fourth system shows the right hand with chords, marked *pp*, and the left hand with a bass line, also marked *pp*.

Figure 68 Debussy *Voiles*

Transition theme X

Figure 69 shows a musical score for four measures (bars 37 to 40). The score is written for piano and consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex melodic line in the upper treble staff with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The grand staff provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

Figure 69 harmony bars 37 to 40

Figure 70 shows a musical score for three measures (bars 41 to 43). The notation is similar to Figure 69, with a single treble clef staff and a grand staff. The key signature remains three sharps and the time signature is 3/4. The melodic line continues with intricate rhythmic patterns, and the harmonic accompaniment in the grand staff includes some sustained notes and chordal textures.

Figure 70 harmony bars 41 to 43

Figure 71 shows a musical score for three measures (bars 43 to 45). The notation continues with a single treble clef staff and a grand staff. The key signature changes to two sharps (F#, C#) and the time signature changes to 4/4. The melodic line features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure of the section. The harmonic accompaniment in the grand staff includes a triplet of eighth notes in the bass line in the second measure.

Figure 71 harmony bars 43 to 45

46

Figure 72 harmony bars 46 to 47

48

Violins

Horns

Strings & Woodwind

Figure 73 harmony bars 48 to 51

Figure 74 shows the piano accompaniment for bars 51 to 53. The music is in a key with three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a series of chords in the first two bars, followed by a melodic line of eighth notes in the third bar. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with a long note in the first bar and a series of eighth notes in the second and third bars.

Figure 74 harmony bars 51 to 53

Figure 75 shows the piano accompaniment for bars 53 to 54. The right hand features a melodic motif consisting of eighth notes, which is repeated in both bars. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with a long note in the first bar and a series of eighth notes in the second bar.

Figure 75 Motif Z bars 53 to 54

Figure 76 shows the piano accompaniment for bars 54 to 55. The right hand features a melodic motif consisting of eighth notes, which is repeated in both bars. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with a long note in the first bar and a series of eighth notes in the second bar.

Figure 76 harmony bars 54 to 55

## Central Climax Section B

55

1 2 3 4

Figure 77 harmony bars 55 to 58

follows a quite remarkable harmonic progression between bars 59 to 61.

59

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

3

Figure 78 harmony bars 59 to 61

58

Figure 79 harmonic skeleton bars 58 to 61



Figure 80 harmony bars 61 to 63

### Section A1 (True Recapitulation)

Figure 81 harmony bars 94 & 95

Figure 82 harmony bars 94 & 95, compound harmony

Figure 83 harmony bars 96 & 97

Figure 84 harmony bars 98 to 99

Figure 85 harmony bars 100 to 102 beat 1

Coda bars 106 to 110

Figure 86 Harmony bars 106 to 107

Figure 87 Harmony bars 108 to 110

## Orchestral technique

### Oboe & Cor Anglais

Figure 88 Theme X bars 37 to 44

At bar 90 the clarinets revert back to the A versions for the more mellow tones of the Final Transition and Section A1, the True Recapitulation.

## Antique Cymbals

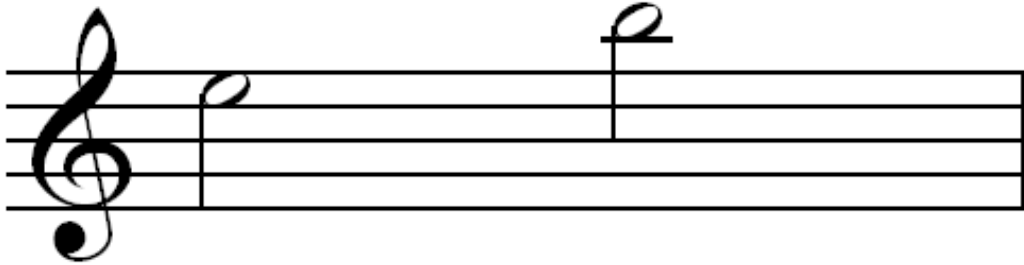


Figure 89 antique cymbals tuning

## Strings

A musical score for strings and flute. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of staves. The top staff is for the flute, showing a melodic line with sixteenth-note runs and slurs. The bottom two staves are for the strings, showing a tremolandi pattern of chords. The first system is labeled with the number 94. The second system has a '6' above the first measure, and the third system has a '6' above the first measure, indicating sixteenth-note patterns.

Figure 90 string tremolandi with flute melody bar 94 to 95

# Texture

This musical score for Figure 91, bars 67 to 68, illustrates heterophony. It features three staves: Woodwind, Harp 1, and Harp 2. The Woodwind part consists of a single melodic line with eighth-note patterns. Harp 1 plays a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Harp 2 provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The key signature has three flats, and the time signature is 12/8.

Figure 91 heterophony bars 67 to 68

This musical score for Figure 92, bars 108 to 110, illustrates heterophony. It features four staves: two Flute parts, Antique Cymbals, and Harp 1. The Flute parts play melodic lines with some rests. The Antique Cymbals part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. Harp 1 plays a rhythmic accompaniment with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The key signature has four sharps, and the time signature is 12/8.

Figure 92 heterophony bars 108 to 110

## Nick Redfern

I am a composer and lecture in music. I studied music at Huddersfield Polytechnic, King's College London, the Royal College of Music and Birmingham Conservatoire.

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