

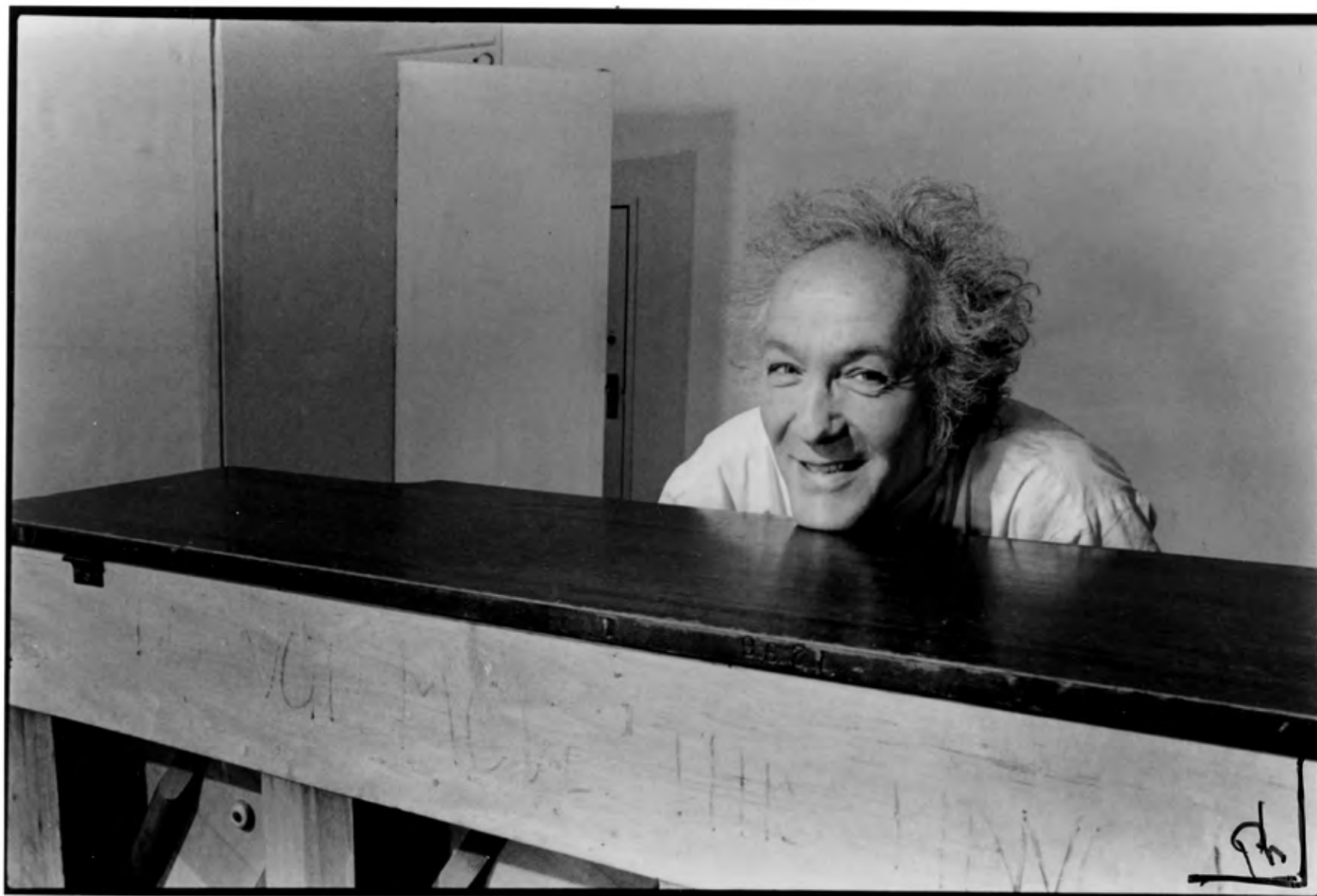
Satie Slowly



Erik SATIE
par lui-même



Avoid All Sacrilegious Exaltation
Philip Corner piano



© Daniel Falgerho

Philip Corner

OUT OF SATIE'S CAGE : AN APPRECIATION

Satie is not as great as John Cage would have us believe.

Who could be?

Certainly not Bach or Beethoven.

Which simply means that he, Satie, is not the only one.

True that they, each of them, represents an extreme.

What an unlikely trinity! Yet no one else is any-the-less for that,

Not necessary to repeat the slander that he is only a "petit maître" alongside Debussy and Ravel.....rather---: he, like all the great ones, have entered into history and thus continue to live.

(there was no cage; it was a small playground)

TO PLAY SATIE

If his piano pieces are so easy why are they so badly played?

What they have which must not be violated is an objectivity

all the more solid for being so fragile.

(Their delicate appearance is a trap).

They resist all "added expressivity"; They make those who indulge sound ridiculous.

Yet nothing is lacking in them.

This is to say that everything they have to say is written into them.
This is not to say, though, that you can just plough through them like an insensitive tone-klutz.

SATIE ACADEMICUS

Not a bad place to start---: those late-life exercises when he reinvented himself as a composer. These are surely not what he could have submitted in school!

But it is a good place to start.....20 years after those first works where he showed himself the only one to understand Medieval music. He has kept all along that modest and profound seriousness of those compositions at the age of 20. One could see this as a fulfillment not (no certainly not as he would slyly have us believe) a mere midlife crisis, a failure of self-esteem. He had faked them out again: he wrote fugues and pretended that counterpoint ruined him, made him boring. No it never did!

Nodoubt in the Schola his counterpoint exercises were perfect, correct.

But these CHORALES are extraordinary. (listed as 12 there are 13) I wonder who he showed them to --- if anyone --- surely not his teacher. So for his own amusement he writes exercises of non-academic academism.....examples of how music theory might be taught.* They are original and intelligent---and yet classic. A correct use of models.....

that is, creative, imaginative, not copies.

*and should-be ---i say.

They do not pretend to be abstract and absolute models. They cannot be taken as intended for other instruments----as with Bach's 'Art of the Fugue'. Clearly intended to be played (studied?) at the keyboard. Very well written for the piano, indeed.

SATIE'S HARMONYS. QUIETLY AMAZING

The thing that "gets" me about Satie's music is how "right" it sounds. Well why should it not? Because, while being right it is not correct. And this would be nothing for surprise if it were dazzlingly revolutionary-but, rather, it pretends to be traditional.

There are sets where all the pieces present a modal melody, in the same style for each. With a consistent harmonization procedure for each piece in it; but different for each set.

His inspiring example goes further. Because these newnesses are not just a matter of technique. From the very first (still a teenager) he used his ear. He had a vision and a sensibility (let this be fostered rather than suppressed) and the quiet courage to persist in the face of imposed models of "correctness".

And then (you have to wait years) you get to be praised for “innovation”!

How he must have just loved what he heard. So that is so that we can, now, too. (What more can be asked of musicke?)

THE FORM OF NO-FORM

Not to be thought of as “aspects of the same thing”, these sets of usually-3..... but as separate and distinct things which are just not that different. They have shapes but no will towards pre-imposed “order”. He makes a principle of just recycling a limited number of elements--- No surprise that later---much later---he is still indulging and carrying further that escape from obvious intellections to lead towards a fascinated mind-fullness. Mantras of sonic presence masquerading as---furniture! To the boors only a vexation. To the enlightnd a passing-through of thought, to another level of intelligence.

He did not change the world. Just added something wonderfull to it.

I will write about them but not to reduce music to words.
What we want are analyses that are not reductions but revelations.

VERBOSE ADJUNCT TO THE GRAPHIC ANALYSES

Information made explicit (words) must be checked against the scores. The images reveal formal essences and can be appreciated as design.

(Since a page is the precise image of musical space you can read it like a writingfollow the line with its ups and downs translated as highs and lows ---- move-meants in the mind.)

OGIVES I put the statements for these pieces at the beginning not only because i play them first. They were actually the first written, but that is not my reason either.

(A slavish adherence to historical sequencing is best avoided.)

As it happens these 4 pieces already contain elements of a stylistic approach which is going to permeate all subsequent works.

All-the-more to marvel at from so young a composer.

And such marvelous music too.

There will always be that simplicity. A profound simplicity underlying everything. And yet he touches everything.

So instead of getting into those early works as i promised i find myself talking about the Satie-bar-pianist , composer of chansons , frequenter of cabarets. This personality of deep innerness, spirituality.

Here too he is extraordinary. And innovative.

Let us leave that for later...except for noting that such inclusiveness, this covering the whole range of human experience from high to low, exalted and down to earth puts him that elite group which includes Purcell and Mozart, Charpentier and Ives. Even if in Satie's case it is with an almost excruciating humility.

When i meditated for hours in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris it was the dazzlement of the vitraux bright light pure-coloured windows which drew my fascination. For him it was the stone high and sombre solidity which "got to him". And the space they made, ofcourse.

How better to express this? ---and not only that physical presence but the experience itself--- but by an (updated certainly) reinterpretation of the ancient church chants.

A smoothly flowing melody in a regular rhythm minimally varied is first heard in naked unisson. Seemingly insignificant detail but which had been largely absent since they began adding the extra notes would be called counterpoint and harmony. A thousand years ago. (Those occasional raw passages in a Vivaldi concerto! The unaccompanied sonatas of Tartini---Bach's always implying an accompaniment by arpeggiated chords). Beautifully developed later by Messiaen. (Would there be a link in spiritual yearning there? even if Messiaen would be content to take the church as he found it. Satie

eventually founded his own.)

(I always regretted that Messiaen, as he expressed it in class at the Conservatoire) could not see through to the “genius” of Satie. I think he liked things always complex, and grand.

Also in the flexibility of phrases where, even where there are no words to be accommodated, the section lengths tend away from regularity. (An organization of time which will much later entice John Cage.)

These sequences of notes leave no room for gratuitous emoting, though. They are as solid as the stones they evoke. !No rubato!

But they show modernity in their refusal of any tonal unity compulsion. (Alright, occasionally sticking to a mode---but not compulsively.) (Not that this can be also found in the Tradition.....by a close looking under what the theorists say.) (Compare this outrageous daring hiding under the refusal to be dissonant with traces of tonal unity thinking lurking even under tone rows in Webern.)

Note though the presence of organizational thought:
The lines move in clearly, very clearly defined shapings.
Moreover they show symmetries and subtle balances
often structured by the simplifying effect of the perfect intervals.....
8ves of course but even more by 5th and 4th (as inversion of each other are equivalents - harmonically - the 3:2 and 4:3 vibration ratios).

His exploratory but by-no-means eccentric sense of harmony gets a good first try-out here.

For the rest of his life Satie works in groups of three. And there is an internal sense makes that choice not arbitrary.

Here too in his only suite of four movements the contextual details make a similar sense: Infact there are two pairs.

The second and so the fourth are in effect augmentations of the other two. A considerable mental effort to hold the tempo against the mind's tendency to run when there is no audible content.

I note as well the starting note relationships: E - G ; D - F showing the parallelism of a transposed minor third. (but how significant that is, or if at all, I leave undecided).

Each piece has an identical form---he will be doing that a lot in future...: In this case solo theme ; melody repeated in a full-range fortissimo harmonization ; repeat with the harmonies—exact same chords—in open position and softly ; repeat of the “plein jeu” effect of a “grande orgue” where there still is some room for a very subtle play of voicings by leaning the hand into one of the four register possibilities of the main tune. And the effect of great cavernous spaces can be suggested by some selective overlapping resonances by use of the pedal.

Similarly the unison sections (octaves really) will sound well with the weight towards the bass making the right hand's lighter playing an effect of natural resonance.

This formula is so simple and so successful one wonders why it should not be adopted as a model for beginning harmony students who could immediately put under hand effective keyboard realizations of any linear--especially hymnlike melody instead of the contrapuntal complications derived from and adapted to vocal chorales.

Although Satie does not go on to make a practice of this procedure, the more orthodox version (3rd phrase) is suggestive: All the chords are here presented in root position. And they turn out to have sensible functional connections; and give an attractive bass-line.

The voices are in essentially 6 parts; and a quiet gorgeous resonance which (perhaps surprisingly for block chords with no inner-voice counterpoint) make the piano sound just great.

Special attention to those open-position Major 10ths between bass and tenor. But ouch! the stretch for my small hand.

Needless to say the prohibition of parallel 5ths is inoperativ.

By the time he has evolved to the **GNOSSIENNES** he had found out how to project his own special sensibility

even into stereotypically conventional formulae.

Here it is no more than an Ump Pah Pah bass accompanying a melody: except ----it is much more.

I prefer to play just one of them, the first which seems to me the only one fitting for that excruciatingly slow tempo which is to take Satie's "lent" seriously.

Yet i always feel it is a little too fast!

The holding of the first afterbeat over the middle of the measure (in effect a syncopation) serves to suspend time---- especially when so often there is nothing else against it.

I think the tempo must find that exact point where movement forward may be implicit yet timelessness is not violated.

(You see it still do "got that swing"! May be call it "spiritualized".)

When i was in school the harmony professor looked for examples of the primary triads in root position. He could not find any. "The composers' refusal to be boring" says he.

Well here is one that does and it is not boring. Wait!..... he might have rejected that as an example because----because the V chord is minor.

Yes it is in F minor and the Dominant in the natural form makes it pure Aeolian mode.

Once again an apparent simplemindedness whose innocence straddles the line between incompetence and genius.

Since you may search far-and-wide for other examples we must ask if it is here just ignorance ---or innovation.

Then note a few extra touches: grace notes, many of them alterations to make them Minor 2nds----half-steps which add to the “snap” and keep the melody from complacency. They raise two scale degrees, 7th and 4th, thus colouring the scale exotically.

It is played through four times: the second is a mysterious variation where the melody becomes a mystically out-of-the-mode scale which might be recognized as an Occidentaly acceptable Melodic Minor---except for going upwards---the wrong direction.....that is until the skip into and out of a B natural -- for which no easy explaining away.

That section will also be the last; thus a solid symmetry. With the second half bringing in this most striking variant on the 2nd and 4th beats: long-tone not re-attacked; held through the third beat. Syncopation in slow tempo. Suspended time achieved.

As for the verbal communications written into the score, messages from composer to pianist, some are explicit instructions; some more implicative; some purely inspirational; and some irreducibly mysterious.

**THE FEAST GIVEN BY THE NORMAN KNIGHTS TO HONOUR A
YOUNG GIRL** does something similar in a very different way.....:

Yes a modal melody; in barely varied equal beats-

Yes an alternation between the monophonic and chordal presentation of it.

Yes to the harmonys being triadic; and without dissonance.

But:

Those triads are not the normal kind built on Perfect 5ths;

They are not invertible; and they do not conform to the mode;

The textural solutions are extraordinary;

The formal arrangement is different---- and imaginative;

It starts off fully harmonized. And what a harmonization!

The melody and its bass are separated by an abyss. This is in essence two parts though the line above is thickend---by octave doubling filled-in with two added chordal tones.

Both lines move together and as-much-as-possible in contrary motion.

The first --and last— chord forms a symmetrical harmony within the

octaves of the upper stratum (this is essential--- so the 8ve cannot be dismissed as a mere doubling). Those Minor 3rds above and below leave a space which conforms to the tritone. (To be noted that in equal temperament it is the interval which divides the octave into two equal parts; hence stable. Though not "of this world"---it only becomes "devilish" when treated as such by a civilization obsessed by "perfection"----and has the 5ths and 4ths to prove it!

The tritone though, when liberated, is as far from the diminished 5th (7:5) or the augmented 4th (11:8) -- its nearest enharmonic confusions -- as any other interval could be to its "just" neighbor. Such acoustic facts show why it has no obligation to "resolve"..... or even a tendency to do so. a Perfect Dissonance, indeed!)

This chord, then serves not only as the establishment and the cadence, but is wellnigh ubiquitous. Note also that it always forms an 8ve with the accompanying bass. As if it needed further solidification!

It is usually found in a 2-note motive of which the 2nd element is a Perfect Triad but not in root-position infact in that disposition that classical theory has called dissonant (the more to plague counterpoint students)--: the (Perfect) 4th. Only here has it, after centuries, been finally treated according to its "perfection".

In terms of function, the avoidance of the triad in root position helps to not-diminish the significance of the prevailing diminished sonorities.

(And here is the place to notice that any attempt to force these into the theory of inversions is not only misguided but wrong.)

So: taking advantage of fully chromatic acoustic space, a consistent limitation has been forged, necessitating a harmony far from according with the prevailing melody-created mode. (Which bytheway is a neat Dorian, well-established by frequent returns to the tonic D; and by movements to the strong-structural interval, the 5th (Perfect!)-- That is: up to the A; and down to the G.....where it does end, giving a kind of Plagal Cadence effect.

(Need there be a reminder that, albeit rare, such a cadencing has been acceptable atleast since the Renaissance? and exists in folk music.)

I would like to point out one wonderful moment:---the augmented triad in the 2nd phrase. Does it really need any further "explanation" than just "It sounds so good!"? ("C'est si beau.") As he himself might express in a refined Montparnasse manner Carl Ruggles' bluster

"A real composer ought to be able to bust hell out of a system!")

Yet some insight into the workings of a composer's mind might be not out-of-order. Except here, he has always taken advantage of a rising Whole-Step to apply his two-chord formula. Of which many oportunities. He could have here. But that would have "given away" the so-soon-to-be-repeated occurrence of same, ruining its effect.

He also enabled to continue a nice smooth contrary motion.....

one which renders the improbable root progression

E Minor , A Augmented , G Minor , and backwards easily acceptable.

The way he breaks up the phrases---there are four of which the last repeats the first--- after the initial presentation of the whole.....: each one first in an 8ve "unisson" followed by a mid-range chorale-like 4-voice open-part harmonization---the same chordal sonorities as before Over the same bass-line Now bringing out the full potential of exquisite voice-leading..... is admirable.

PRELUDES OF THE NAZARENE, 1st and 2nd

(Perhaps they were written to be part of the set which contains the above-just-analysed composition "4 Preludes" or maybe those were just put together by an editor. Whatever).

These two pieces belong together. -----In a curious way:
They seem to be something like a diatonic and a chromatic version of an identical idea.

That being a smooth flowing chant-like melody accompanied in four equal-rhythm parts like a chorale. (Familiar Satie-territory by now). Interrupted by short phrases of completely different character.

The "tune" of the first (eminently hum-able) is unequivocally Aeolian. The second (much less-so) is in near-continual modal contradiction but yet shows traces of diatonic insistence. We find many of those tritone-based sonorities already so familiar combined with a curious tendency to cadence on first inversion (perfect) triads.

The first one instead favors those very triads and presents them in the (classical) root position giving some very beautiful resonant sounds.

I point out that here too a normal schoolbook labeling would be insufficient as the vertical distribution of intervals is meticulous----my favorite being those alternating chords where a 5th above a 3rd becomes a 3rd above a 5th and so on back&forth.

The at-first established Aeolian mode gives way in its development to an almost Dorian predominance; in any case the continual modulation between the A and the D---where it does end gives even the inconstancy a firm underlying structure.

In the second no such order is to be found; But there is a certain logic in that all phrases begin and end on triads in 6/3 position. The opening unharmonized motive is in two parts. Symmetrical. And while failing to establish a tonal center they partake of the same intervals and the second is an approximate inversion. The rhythmic pattern set out, though (long, short, short, hold) will permeate all subsequent unfoldings.

The length-of-phrase between the interruptions is very flexible.

Not-so they themselves. Uniformly of 4 beats they might as-well be perceived as "acoustic pillars".

In each of the Preludes they are constant. ----except for a transposability which has its own kind of logic: there are only three of them. In one Prelude they are related by the circle of 5ths (i chose to consider the point-of-arrival in naming the cadence---but any other place would give the same result.). In the other they cycle by rising 3rds. (A thing like that could escape you unless you went looking for it.

As-i-said these should be stylistically divergent from the near-neutral continuity of the body of both these compositions. Whether by tempo or dynamic level or both and with a degree of coloring, like with pedal.

Of course these elements are up for personal interpretation. But:----

I find, for the first, that these rich lower-register sonorities with Dominant 7ths added 6ths and 9ths (French Baroque music!) inevitably invite le grand gesture---- a bigness: slowing down; arpeggiating; holding a resounding last chord.....

While in the second a higher-register phrase in rollicking triplets invites me to play with it fancifully.

Here we see Satie experimenting with the inclusion of a multiplicity of harmonic languages. His style becomes a "meta-style". (Charles Ives too made such an innovation - but more obviously.)

It is Satie's refusal to be dissonant (ugly? too harsh?) that allows

such a flagrant violation of "stylistic unity" to pass almost unobserved. But as i previously suggested "If you got it, flaunt it!")

An observation: all of those called "Prélude" (and here include that of Eginhard) end surprisingly with a disconnected dense Minor Triad. Which, however, has a perfectly satisfying cadence effect. Perhaps the hidden structure heretofore elucidated--- something fundamentally static..... needs such a shock (a Logic of Illogic) to break out of its endless cycling.

the GOTHIC DANCES can only by a stretch of the imagination be called that.

They are the strangest of all, structurally:

Here again the flowing lines of chant with their "devilish" tritone harmonys (the better to confront Christian associations?)

But never more than short passages.....interspersed with wholly unexpected other things:

That 4th chord---does it stick out!---a harmonic anomaly in this context And, bytheway, lifted bodily from "The Son of the Stars" (where the recycling of unrelated material is carried to a maniacal extreme).

A markedly rhythmic passage in parallel minor triads, the 5ths accentuated.

Parallel full-bodied dominant 7th sonorities---- as if rising from the Engulfed Cathedral of his friend Debussy (which they actually anticipated).

Similarly----: in parallel added 6 chords.

A triumphalist minor triad coming out of nowhere.

Unison bass themes.

And the weirdest---but effective---“take” on the Authentic Cadence you could’ve ever imagined. And which effects nothing, however.

The music overlaps the entitled “movements” in no coherent way; and is in no way different for any of the stated expressions.

There are indeterminate blanks at arbitrary places (which i interpret as uncounted proportional silences) .

LES GYMNOPIÉDIES

Untranslatable. Invented word. Evoking naked immovable Greeks.

Invented dance. No one now can “pick up” that etherialized umpah without immediately seeming plagiarist.

And why should one? At best you would be evoking Erik Satie and not that ancient classical time that was his *raison d'être*, not-at-all.

Beat/Afterbeat and hold.....a suspended time on the 2nd beat which, although (must be) precisely measured does not really "make it" to an experience of "3". Better to feel it innerly, corporeally, than try to count it in-the-head. Here the body is more dependable than the mind.

And this under-structure goes on placidly, unperturbed by a melody dependent on it. Yes-- it is not a mere accompaniment.

The melody just fits in over it: There is no place for it to bend towards "self-expression". Sure, play with sensitivity....pianists' touch can accommodate that. And the very explicit swells and ebbing would bring out all that is necessary for "feeling"....: would that they were followed.

Not only the meter stamps immediate recognizability; from the first chord everyone knows: "the Gymnopédie by Satie!" This in-part by a special texture--- How so?----it seems so ordinary, just a tune a bass-line and chords in the middle. But wait!

Who starts off with a Major 7 chord?

G Major 7 which is the first chord there imposes itself as there before there is any movement from it.

The next chord is D. Also with a Major 7th. Should that make you think of D Major? After all a first chord by itself is not a certain establishment of tonality. But before deciding make sure that the judgment is not just an effect of habit, of the "tonicising" brainwashing caused by over-exposure to Major/Minor tonality. It could just-as-well be G Lydian.

Two objects in alternation lose any aspect of hierarchy. All things being equal there will be no basis for a preferential thought.

When the long section finally comes to a cadence on D (albeit modal: Minor v7 - I) it might be thought that that resolves the issue. But hold! Since it goes right back to the beginning to start again, it is possible to hear it as a semicadence.--- Still in G, then.

Let this discussion not be taken to "prove" one-or-the-other. What it does prove is the willful ambiguity there---fully conscious.

No-doubt. Thus Both/And --or, better-- Neither/Nor.
(A lot of words for Nothing!)

But here is something:- The wide separation of the strata kind-of "cuts loose" the mid'range triads to suggest an independent parallel
i v pro-gression in B Aeolian.

And then it is noticed that the high F# is what seems to be holding everything together. Infact it is a persistence which will

endure to the end. Therefor i weight my thumb toward it.....for sonic sensitivity as-well-as analytic intelligence.

Note! The "tune" too takes off from that F# curves downward suggests F# Phrygian more than anything else and comes to a long-held note..... on F#. The one Debussy put a horn on.

Who came up with the idea of playing it soft then bumping in the !Forte on the offbeat? A bad idea!! An even worse sound. (Surely a misunderstanding of a perhaps sloppily placed dynamic sign in the manuscript. If too far to the right to line up on the downbeat this would be no more than the earlier manner of placing whole notes in the middle of measures they dominate.) Imagine if the orchestrator had put a flute on that note and then brought in three trombones! Surely one of the great blunders in the history of music. Any ear should hear that. Play it like a horn!

Notice that the melodic line (that could be a flute!) has made a drop into the zone of the harmonies. Every once-in-a-while it will do that for special effect. Require extra care in touching the notes.

The three layers have their own independence and so must not always be played on the same level of loudness.

Notice that there is a counterpoint at the cadence which crosses the melody and goes above it..... Danger! that it not take over and confuse

the line. Like a solo arrangement i know of where it is made the tune.
(and that was a flute!)

When played correctly the F# sounds through the surrounding chord-notes
and can be heard moving, within the chord, to E and back to F#.

The whole second half is indeed a half---- being exactly the same except
that that famous F# changes at the end to an F natural. Except!
Take note rather that this constitutes a change to the Minor. The opposite
of what we know so well from older music.
Yet nobody seems to have been bothered by it.
We easily accept it as a final cadence.

Is it possible there is a "reason" for this most-unusual occurrence?

Look ahead. The next dance starts with the same rhythm and the same
texture and the same bass line---- and the chords are different. The
sharps canceled, we have been moved into a white-note area. Given the
inner-voice chords: E Minor and F Major we realize that the
preceding move towards D minor was a modulation.....therefor a
connection And therefor an invitation to make that connection
Which i do by counting silently an exact 4-beat measure.
(I do the same at the same place--before the last of the Gymnopédies.)

By giving that first G chord a 6th instead of a 5th a consistent sense of
double-meaning is preserved. Satie, bytheway, often softens a major

triad in this way. The melody confirms the key as G Mixolydian.

The form, as a variant of the first piece, is interesting:

The first half is itself in halves: A return to G has passed through the flats(b) tonal area by way of a C Major(6) chord which turns out to be the Tonic of the Mixolydian mode; a final cadence on Bb (still and again with that chord where the 6th replaces the 5th) leads by a neat economy of means using the same 3 chord tones makes it G Minor and the second measure being the same the mode is now Dorian.

But----- the material used is that of the previous second half.....;

perhaps that old scheme for analysis of Form may clear up things here:

A B B'. Not so simple, though.....: We are brought back to G (alright, we were always in G---- no-matter the mode) But the G is the Major, er Mixolydian, which started the piece as if nothing had happened.

Wait a minute! All we get is the first A B again (yes, subtly varied).

Making this second half just a half of the first half (OK, two-thirds.) Of which its second half was just half of the first.....

A B B' A B hardly seems to do justice to this structure.

What about the second B'? The original 4 measures are restored (the G

D recapitulations were always half as long up-to-now) are restored, thus balancing the introduction even if the whole be truncated---

But no way can that second chord be the last one. To effect the cadence this change is made: G D G C (!)---a stroke of genius if you ask me. With that C supporting a 1 3 5 voiced C Major triad (how final can you get?) it sounds so right you can hardly imagine another solution. (I cannot).

Moving on to the third we know it will be the last.
From sharps to flats we have come to the white notes.

(Notice in passing one last trace of the flats in the guise of G minor. And, with that exception, a pure Aeolian mode made firm by, finally, using root position perfect triads.
No other reason for it.

But even here the principle of economy is operating: The three notes of the triad have already been seen---above a C.
And we certainly know the following E Minor. No longer the structuring Tonic the bass is D. Still D. A surprise until it is noticed that that is the note taken over from the previous harmonic movements.
No use wasting it. Give it a different function. Here, without ambiguity, is a real poly-chord..... E minor/D which any jazz musician would know what to do with.

When the material possibilities are sufficiently reduced
Formal coherence comes, naturally.

Yes, the Form: again the repeating halves. Except that the second is (much) shortened. Cut out is the voluptuous Dominant 9th chord in measure eleven. Once is enough for its effectiveness.

half is the same
half.

The second half of the second
as the second half of the first

One detail i especially like: an F on a first beat against the bass E--- far below. A passing tone. But not accented. So much softened by the large open distance between them. So make sure not to.

Nicely finished off with a return of the introductory chord sequence. A four measure balance. Where he gives us a final reminder that the chord of six-five substitution has not been forgotten.

And then finally, and very finally, the final chord.

THE ROSICRUXION FANFARES

This, a possible translation, does not have the right spirit. Is not the evocation of blaring trumpets a bit **loud** for these pieces? Which were composed for and used at religious ceremonies.

Nor a reduction of the most-evocative "Rose Cross" to "Rosicrucian".

Something like a "Sounding" i say for that "Sonneries"
("Soundings for the Rose Cross"? -- "Rose Cross Soundings"?)
--Sound the Rose Cross! (but softly)

Apparently played by, they say, trumpets and harps
nothing remains now but the memory.

Must have been a nice sound. The piano version we have evokes it. And surely should evoke it.....play it so!

Yet to my imagination a bit "poor".
The doubled-in-octaves melody sounds to me like trombones: Or horns. I can imagine a great orchestration, sensual and austere, with few instruments, as was his wont. When that melody appears in the high register and harmonized i think we rather have woodwinds. The harps must be marvelous.

Anyway, the piano can be made to evoke them.....sound like them. How dare he demand an impossible thing like "detached without dry-ness?"
And how dare we fail to give it him?

A hint of resonance after the staccato chord will do. Use of pedal and half-pedal sensitive feet. Selective sustainings---the melody tone is always in the upper or middle of consistent 6-voices chords perfectly

voiced for hands on the keyboard. Or a note of the bass brought out; chosen harmonytones of either hand; delicate arpeggiations.

The melody alone..... broad and commanding.

For once again he is alternating the monophony with the chords that go with it. Only that in the chords (the unaccompanied chords!) the only trace of the generative tune is that unadorned note on top--- or its doubling in the middle. The melody itself elaborates these same notes, quite in the manner of an Oriental heterophony.

In a quiet way expectant tension is built up by the long continuing of nothing-but the chords. And that in relentless unvarying regularity. And yet the phrases are suggested. This should affect interpretation. But not too obviously!

A nice rejection of formulaic composing gives us the occasional surprise of something like "development": a short phrase repeated; an unexpected modulation; almost un-notice-able minute variants. Choice registrations.

A look at structure: Woe to those who start with the search for tonal root functions. Once-and-for-all----!
Do not mark up your score with Roman numerals.

As usual (with him) there is a logic. But it is not that one.

Like, the first one starts on D minor (does this mean it is in D minor?)
But how did he get to B Minor in 5 chords?

When you see the melody you recognize F established as the Tonic of a Lydian mode. The once-to-be-avoided tritone here placed as shamelessly as by Bartók (and without the precedent of folklore).

What are we to "make of" the opening of #2? : Fmajor Bdimin Dmajor G#dimin Bminor Amajor. which continues G#minor Dmajor Fmajor (Well he does get back to F.) Or this:
D#dim E#dim Bmin Amaj Bmin G#min Dmaj Emin.

Yes sometimes he has a progression based on the close relationship of the simplest intervals: Perfect 4ths and 5ths.

or he might have a chain of just Major triads moving by 3rds.....
unavoidably non-diatonic (hello! Rimsky-Korsakoff).

or the bass-line moving in steps; sometimes in parallel with the melody; or in contrary motion; or some thing else etc.

What he is really doing is to define the mode by the melody alone---- and hang root-position (always root position) chords from its notes, come what may. For my ear at-least, the choices are always convincing And a wrong note will sound wrong. So it is right.

(Someone else may also remember Bach's trouble with the Phrygian mode. Where he either makes the E the 3rd of C Major; or the 5th of A Minor; or when putting a proper E Major chord under it he treats it as if the Dominant of A Minor, and making that the cadence chord.)
(Well, is that not familiar from Flamenco?)

the CHORALES they are numberd as 12 but there are 13

If they were written as exercises it was not for school.

And yet they would be perfect..... Substitute a disciplin of creativ exploration for Academia's time-honourd trivia.

Yes, First one starts off as if just another imitative assignment.
An indubitable Eb Major with all the right chords (so it seems).
Calling the progression I vii°6 vi6 VII iii #i 6/5 II
V/iii V6/5/#iv V/V

will get you that good grade.

But the professorial rap.on-the-knuckles will be reserved for the composer. What about those parallel 5ths?!

What about the incorrect voice leading?!

What about the wrong resolution of the applied dominant?!

And how do you get so far from the key?

Indeed.

True it does move towards the Dominant (by a rather strange choice of chords) and there is a semi-cadence But----- in seven measures ! "balanced" by five ! Which turns what should be the leading chord into the chord of resolution. This splits the intended cadence chord ($Bb=V$) from the phrase it belongs in to make it start the second period.

Atleast the return to the Tonic is by a descending scalar bass which has the clever trick of retrograding the initial progression.
"Bravo! M. Satie."

As if to show right-away that he has a very different approach
The whole thing is repeated but as a real piano piece.

No longer abstractions from an idealized vocal music (which in the classrooms is never sung, even.)

The bass is doubled in octaves by the left hand;
the chords in the right are in close position.

(Every student must sit down and play one's own work.)

Suspensions are added----Theoretical Harmony loves

Suspension---- perfectly correctly. Yet also perfectly strange-sounding----:

"Must you put them where they make mini-clusters?"

"Must you have them two-at-a-time resolving in

contrary motion?"

"Must you put them in the Bass?"

YES!

From here on is just a matter of expanding creative imagination.
The style and sense of the academic chorale exercise retained, though.

The 2nd introduces a nicely moving melody; some independence of inner voices; there is only one suspension.

The movement to iii is orthodox....except for that Major 9th in the Dominant chord. Also less normal to stay on G Minor for four measures.

As well the usual return to the key (never went far-away this time.....but added some pleasant chromatic passing tones) via that all-too-familiar formula $V(6/4 - 7/3)$ with above it a 9th, this time the usual Minor one.

But when the cadence resolves it is (surprise!) to the minor.....Eb Minor held out over two measures....; with the Dominant (v) refusing to be a classical Dominant --- by staying Minor (natural-ly) ---is it then a "Dominant" at all? (Food for an academical disputation) While for Satie it is to break out of two centuries of "common practice" out towards a past which one may no-more call archaic.

Chorale III (Good Heavens! Is each one going to prove itself individual-ly interesting?) starts off inoffensively enough in Ab Major But by no more than the three beats of the first measure Is headed for G Minor which is built on vii. The leading-tone leads no more. But then he does get "home" easily enough showing himself a master of Modulation----if he can link those two keys he could go from anywhere to

anywhere. Give the man a First Prize! --a Prix de Rome!

Which he proceeds to throw away.....by simply sliding up to A Minor.

Outrageous. That doesn't even count as a modulation.

Well,

i remember again the Carl Ruggles remark:

"Hell!

I'd just pick myself up and go."

Number 4 is going "further out".....It is, if anything, in F Major which the final cadence demonstrates is indeed the truth.

The opening chord is a 3rd position Dominant 7--- the most dissonant form, with its 2nd at the bottom. Oh well.....: Beethoven's 1st Symphony. And the Coronation Scene from "Boris"!

The chromaticism continuing belies any tonal orientation.....at least up to a cadence on Db --What! Where? only to move on by creeping chromatic voice-leading where even a seeming-to-come cadence formula is contradicted.

And he is beginning to bring in suspensions again.

Just two measures before the end something new happens:

There are four Augmented Triads formed from a single Whole-Tone Scale. They must break out of this in order to cadence on F Major.

(sheer voice-leading is the only functionality here). the transforming of a possible Gb (which would have given a fine quasi-Phrygian Augmented 6th effect) into G natural turns it into a garden-variety Authentic

Cadence.

the Fifth one succeeds in preserving a clear C Major throughout (though not-quite typically). A nice touch is the 3rd of the chord, E ,in the upper voice at the beginning -- and making sure that it is again at the end.

The next one has to be a favourite.....: A perfectly projected Phrygian harmony flows uncontradicted (not by its delicate suspensions) to its peaceful cadencing---marked by a confirming low 8ve. Play quiet-ly -!

What is in-effect the seventh has been numberd "6 (2)". It is extraordinary for its 3-measure phrases each beginning with a jarring upward-moving dissonance in the bass:---- Appoggiaturas---accent-uation is their essence. Even more inner-tension than Suspensions. Then, as-if to compensate, the next two--and last--phrases bring in the smoothness of passing tones made even more gentle by 7th chords in which the dissonance resolves but not the chord it is in. Nevertheless, it is to be interpreted as C Major , i think.

What is called the Seventh is a real surprise: A wide-spaced chord (Huge the hand that could span it!

But my arpeggiation has a strong effect.

Even seeing through to a hypthesized simplicity behind this accumulation of distantly related notes: A# D F# E --- which would result in the mind-boggling figures: m6/5°/4°---comes with scant conviction.

Yes - you can understand it as a 1st inversion F#7 which with its resolution to B Minor (simply!) an applied Dominant---V/VI.
Did not Occam convince us of the validity of the simplest explanation?
And does Science not now shave with that razor too?

(We do accept the final D as tonally determinant; which constitutes a Plagal Cadence in Dorian mode.)

That D in the tenor of the first chord (making you first think of an Augmented chord---lay aside the soprano's Augmented 4th---on an enharmonic Bb) turns out to be an Appoggiatura resolving reasonably down to C#. But my ear is not convinced!

A 4thbeat chromatic Passing Tone complicates things.
Neither is clarity facilitated by a 3-beat prolonging of the suspended C#.

This pattern continues, favoring sharp dissonances: the just-resolved B clashes with a C; which drops to an F while the Bass holds F#.
(Maybe that is just the "blues" as the chord is easily interpretable as D7, a parallel to the first measure's applied dominant, this time to G.
Even the last measure has a pretty long suspension.

Chorale #8 has similar procedures, but with an attractive tune and smooth independent inner voices.

An opening dim7 is heard to resolve into Eb Major.

However the leading logic is the Bass's chromatic descent to C (minor).

A curious touch is the Tenor which holds over a chord-tone, G, passing to F, which is no "resolution" as the consonance goes to a dissonance.

The next, B Minor, chord has a 7th in the Soprano so far above the other voices that I cannot imagine anyone stretching it. Anyway, my necessarily broken attack gives the right tone.

This phrase seems to move to G though the notes above it ---M6/5/m3--- make one think of another root.

Going on, Ab is maintained as a tonality.....through complicating chromatic passing-tones. Large hand-stretches still required.

Number 9 is contrastingly (compensatingly?) smooth.

It --correspondingly-- maintains a Db Major pretty clearly throughout. (And how ---- the details could be instructive)

the Tenth is a different thing: very different, with its empty 5th chords. (prelude to Debussy's prelude "The Engulfed Cathedral")

Very effective the contrasting 2nd phrase (and the 4th) in the high register where 4ths are used.

Three cadences go to D. ----but this does not make them in D.

Rather we have the well-tried procedure of moving to a tonality.

Surprising and effective is the sudden appearance of a filled-in triad which goes to a 7th chord to culminate on a whole-tone chord (C#9,°5).

From there back to D (so D is the key....but more on it than in it)--- the hollow 5ths (and 4ths) restored ---this time by a linear descent from

F# -- parallel octaves on top and bottom.

the Eleventh (perhaps my favorite) restores full-bodied triads in a simple block-chord progression: What compels admiration is a master-full use of tonality: Unarguably G Major is the framing unity. Which is set forth from by I iii. Continuing by way of that second (B Minor)'s proximity to F# that key is immediately established---and strongly---in its Mixolydian form. And so it continues.....exception for an A Major (bII) which hints at the Phrygian F# continues to be insisted upon.....this time in Dorian. Until atlast as if he suddenly remembers what key he "should" be in, with a theorybook-learned "common chord" modulation, within three chords, He is home.

too bad there is only one more. 12 This one seems to delight in moving austere sonorities to voluptuous ones.

Noteworthy the (kind-of) interruption where parallel 7th chords move. Then from this touch of "Impressionism" he moves on to another kind of modernity: an ingenious use-of and contradiction-of the Whole-Tone Scale as a V I cadence where the D is augmented..... And the G is too. with a 7thheld long.

This tonality which strikes us as in no-place in particular makes us look at the structuring of the Chorale to see that, indeed, there does seem to be some kind of predilection for G. But we began on E. So punctuating by a short and significant silence 3 notes lead down to it G F E(Phrygian mode)

Where on the last a very convincing E Major is supported.

THE QUEEN OF THE EMPIRE

(Not so slow) This girl is a stripper.
Even the piano version should sing
like a swinger. Expressing what is explicit
in the lyrics---You will not forget that she sez "Eet eez at ze same time
verry innocente-----and verry verrry ex-ci-tante."
The mood changes every four measures. A music-hall performer would
have no inhibitions about taking all the libertys it takes to "put it over."
Her clients are Gentlemens and Dandys; the place the center of that
domin(ion)nation over which the "sun never sets".....that is: Pi Ca Di LY

The bump&grind routine in the middle section tells us we are in (how-
ever ele-gante) a burlesque house And these "fanfreluches" for all
their being Frrrrench are no more refined than the "swirls&curls"
of a beauty-parlor in the Bronx.

Did i say "middle section"? A thousand excuses for my letting slip in an
extraneous bit of intellectuation where this audience has nothing more in
mind than "getting it off".

And they do! With the help of Bass Drum whomps on the offbeat
which, to give the full effect we borrow some left-hand open-palm
smacks from Jelly Roll Morton.

However not even the most carried-away patron...er, devotee, could

fail to notice that this dramatic switch to the “sock it to me” style happens right in the middle! That’s Form for ya!

Infact for all its décor this piece is built ---as we used to say--- “like a brick shit-house”. So i apologize though i need not-to for an indulgence in the professorial :

Magnifying the gross perception of A B A we can notice that the song itself has two phrases (and i permit myself to speculate on this subtlety: that the alternation of “hard” and “soft” manners....the tough and the seductive---- are reversed.) Anyway when the singer comes back on the two phrases come in retrograid. So we can now see the symetry in a spotlight : A B C B A. Not to overlook this little detail that the piece had an intro---- ----which is now the coda.

So now you can forget all this and go back to having a good time! Except that you will not forget it. And still have a good time!

comment on Satie

the Satie of the early meditation resonances

Satie of the Rose+Cross pieces

to a pianist

who was no doubt put off

by the absence of visible display

of her competence

^mechanic

who said ----- it's boring ----- it's not

music ----- you're devoting yourself to

Satie? ----- there's nothing there -----

you need so much patience .

reply : Yes . but once you have it you

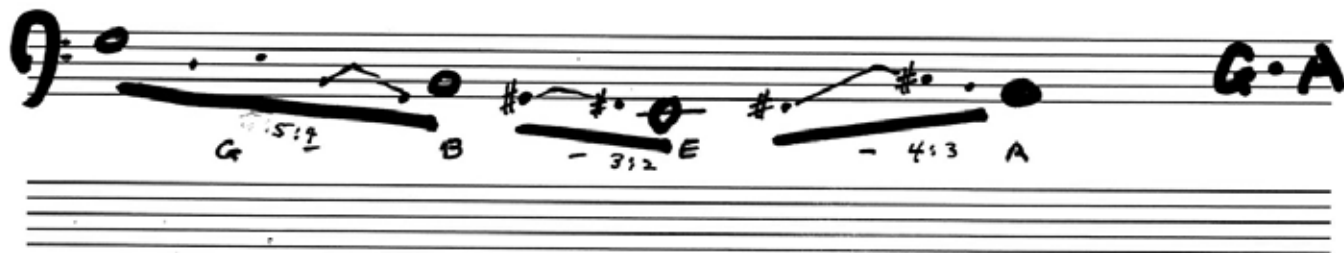
don't need anything else .

found among my papers

from the 60s

Phl

OGIVES



Preludes de Nazareen *harmonic analysis*

1. $\overset{a}{A_{\text{m}}} \boxed{F} \overset{a}{A_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} \boxed{C} \overset{a}{A_{\text{m}}} \boxed{G} \overset{b}{A_{\text{m}}} \overset{b}{A_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} \rightarrow G_{\text{M}} \boxed{F}$

$\overset{c c'}{D_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow \overset{c c'}{A_{\text{m}}} \boxed{C} \overset{c c'}{E_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow \overset{c c'}{C_{\text{M}}} E_{\text{m}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} \boxed{G} \overset{b}{G_{\text{m}}} , C_{\text{M}} , G_{\text{m}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} , G_{\text{m}} \rightarrow G_{\text{M}} \overset{c c'}{F}$

$\boxed{F} \overset{b}{D_{\text{m}}} , \rightarrow G_{\text{M}} \boxed{C} \overset{c c'}{D_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow \overset{c c'}{A_{\text{m}}} \boxed{G} \overset{c c'}{E_{\text{m}}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} \rightarrow C_{\text{M}} , E_{\text{m}} \rightarrow D_{\text{m}} \overset{c c'}{F}$

$\boxed{F} \overset{a}{A_{\text{m}}} \boxed{C} D_{\text{m}} \boxed{G} D_{\text{m}} \rightarrow A_{\text{m}} \boxed{F} D_{\text{m}} \text{—}$

2. $D_{\text{m}} \text{—} | B_{\text{6}}^{\circ} - D_{\text{6}}^{\circ} | A_{\text{m}} - G_{\text{m}} | E_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - C_{\text{M}} | D_{\text{m}} - C_{\text{M}}^{\#} | D_{\text{m}} - C_{\text{m}} |$

$A_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - B_{\text{6}}^{\circ} | F_{\text{M}} - D_{\text{m}} | C_{\text{M}} - E_{\text{b}}^{\text{m}} | C_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - F_{\text{M}} | C_{\text{M}}^{\#} - F_{\text{M}} | B_{\text{6}}^{\circ} - F_{\text{M}} |$




$D_{\text{6}}^{\circ} - G_{\text{m}} | E_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - F_{\text{M}} | D_{\text{m}} - C_{\text{m}} | F_{\text{M}} - D_{\text{m}} | A_{\text{6}}^{\circ} - C_{\text{M}}^{\#} | D_{\text{m}} - F_{\text{M}} |$




$B_{\text{M}} - B_{\text{6}}^{\circ} | A_{\text{m}} - C_{\text{m}} | A_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - B_{\text{6}}^{\circ} | E_{\text{b}}^{\circ} - E_{\text{b}}^{\text{m}} | C_{\text{b}}^{\text{M}} - F_{\text{M}} | C_{\text{M}} - B_{\text{m}} |$




$C_{\text{M}} \text{—} | D_{\text{m}} \text{—} \boxed{E_{\text{m}}} \text{—}$
7-8




1^{er} Prélude de Nazarién




time structures

6 + 7  6 + 5 + 6  6 + 7 




10 + 11 + 7  4 + 8  5 + 7 + 5 + 9 




5 + 13 + 4 + 7 + 4 + 6  5 + 13  4 + 7 




5 + 7 + 5 + 9  6 + 7  6 + 11 





6 + 7    |

2^e Prélude de Nazarién

4 + 4 | 4 + 4  4 + 6  4 + 4 + 4 

8 + 6  6 + 5  7 

5 + 5 + 5  6  5 + 8 

6 + 6 + 4  7  6 + 5  3 + 6 

Préludes du Nazaréen

space structures



Aeolian mode

1er Prélude du Nazaréen



Dances Gothiques - cadence formula

G_2^5 Cb_7 $G\sharp 4_7$ $D\sharp m_7$ G

5 b_7 $\sharp 7$ $\sharp 5$ $\sharp 7$ $\sharp 5$ 5

9 b_7 $\sharp 7$ $\sharp 5$ $\sharp 7$ $\sharp 5$ 5

perfect authentic cadence

Repeat in C with variation

Tonic chord, unaltered — held off to perfect the cadence.

Starting with super-imposed 5ths the chords get increasingly complex

Out-of-the-key accidentals add tension but do not affect functions.

Penultimate chord has 2 leading tones not to the tonic. (except 2nd time: 3 leading tones)

G Maj I IV I V I (all primary triads: Subdominant & Dominant) in root position.

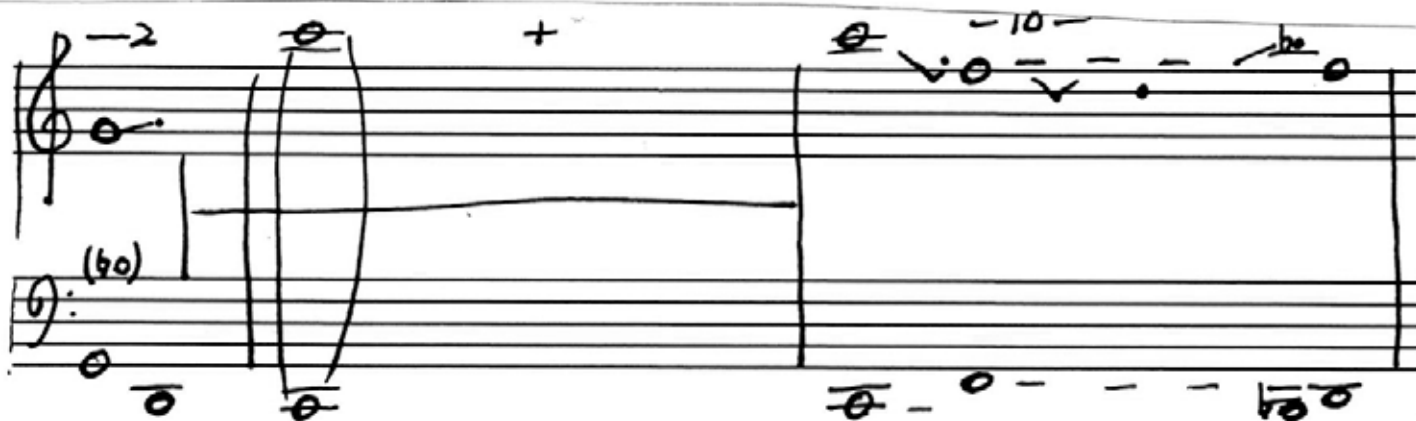
SPACE & TIME STRUCTURES FOR THE GYMNOPÉDIES

Gymnopédie #1

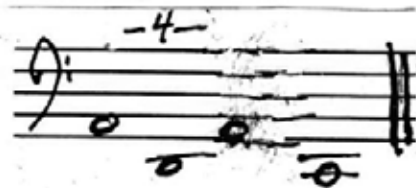


Gymnopédie #2



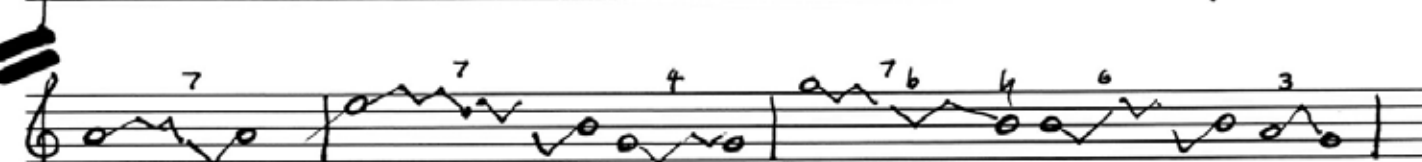
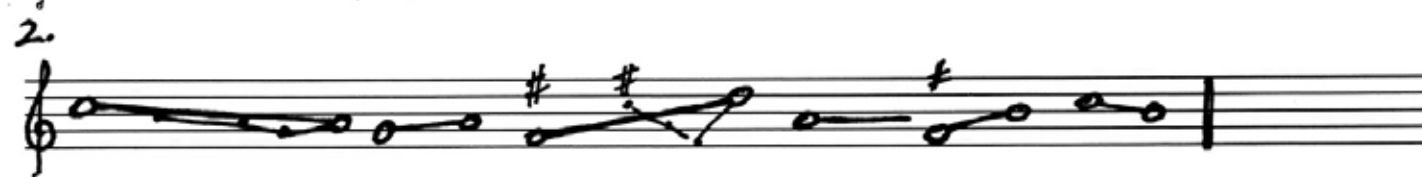
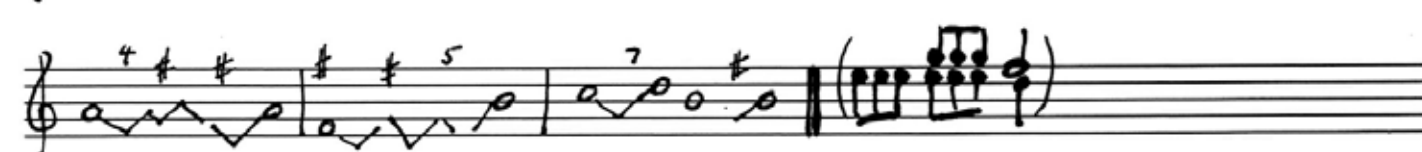
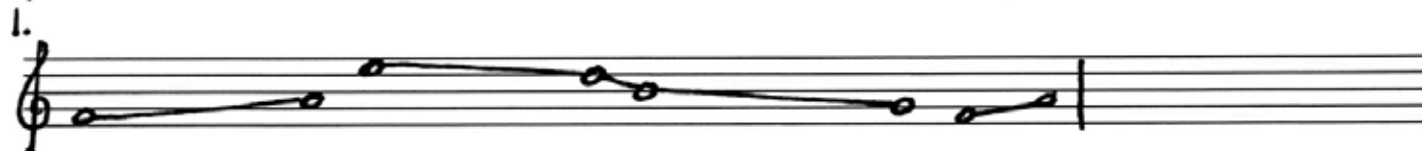
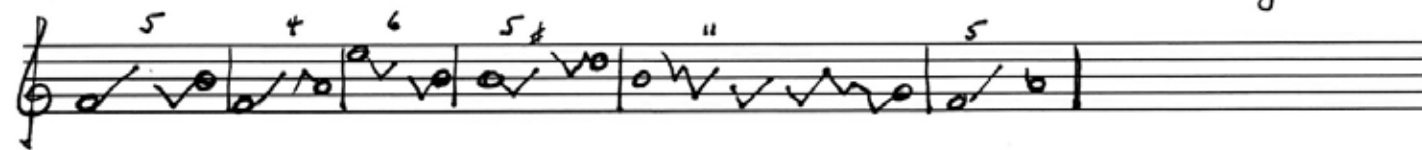


Gymnopédie #3



3 Sonneries de la Rose Croix

structural
analysis



All Selections Composed By Erik Satie
All Performances By Philip Corner, Piano
Recorded 2013 November 17+19, Systems Two, Brooklyn, NY

Produced By Tommy McCutcheon
Mixed By Damon Whittemore And Steve Silverstein
Mastered By Damon Whittemore

Texts And Graphic Analyses By Philip Corner
Cover Drawings By Erik Satie
Calligraphy and Collage By Philip Corner

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