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TWENTIETH CENTURY**

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Introduction

Over the twentieth century, several different art movements emerged in Europe as a reaction to people's dismay at profound changes in the political and socio-economic balance, scientific and technological progress, and daily life. Among these, Primitivism opposed modernity in favour of a return to a simpler and more people-oriented way of life that Europeans could embrace after having observed the lifestyle and customs of non-Western societies at that time.

Composers of art music were not exempt from being captivated by such impressions and began to bring a breath of fresh air to their music by drawing upon the most diverse sources of inspiration originating from very remote geographical backgrounds, thus conferring an incontrovertible exotic aura upon their works. The piano music tradition, firmly anchored to a rather crystalized and canonic paradigm of instrumental expression, eventually absorbed all such stimuli too, by, for instance, revealing the percussive character of the piano and opening itself up to a wider timbral diversification.

The present artistic research paper delves into the correlations between the artistic current of Primitivism and the field of piano performance over the twentieth century: the artist-researcher identifies the common characteristics of piano music modelled in a Primitivistic style and the ways they are implemented by the diverse composers whose compositions are attributable to this style, while also examining the most relevant performative aspects of this repertoire.

Research object. Primitivism in piano music of the twentieth century constitutes the research object, and its sociocultural premises, as well as the initial influence from the field of visual representation (the one most notably conveying a Primitivistic penchant from the outset), are considered in order both to achieve an informed understanding of the examined matter and to maintain a highly creative standard of performance in artistic practice.

The chosen topic demands both conceptual-analytical and descriptive-creative proficiency as well as a broad historical, philosophical, and artistic competency. At the same time, solid and versatile pianistic skills are required by the vast heterogeneity of the committed repertoire, ranging from the late nineteenth century to the last decades of the twentieth century and thus covering the work of several different composers, each of them incorporating features of a "Primitivistic" paradigm into their own music vocabulary.

Research significance. In general, musicological literature scarcely deals with Primitivism, being limited to referring to selected composers. It is worth mentioning the essay "Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources" (2004) by Daniel Albright, in which the

author, browsing through commentaries by artists and critics from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, provides a quite comprehensive report on several Avant-garde movements, including Primitivism. However, compared to other fields of art, the links between art music and the aesthetics of Primitivism have been not enough explored yet.

More specifically, the present discourse on Primitivism aims at reconnecting to the debate over the expansion of the traditional boundaries of the art of piano outside the Western music canon, as a result of the absorption of elements from different sociocultural contexts, and promoting them to new standards of artistic quality. In this light, the present artistic research paper investigates how the artistic-philosophical background of Primitivism affected the creation and the performance of piano music over the twentieth century by also eventually altering some of its traditional aesthetic qualities, as will be illustrated.

Although related studies were formerly carried out, it is easy to see how focus was given to some particular aspects while disadvantaging others, whereas a more organized study of Primitivism solely concerning piano music and related performative issues seems to be missing from academic work to date. Based on that, the present artistic research paper aims at providing a structured overview of the phenomenon of Primitivism in piano music of the twentieth century by pointing out diversities, similarities, contiguities, and breakthroughs between the diverse facets of the matter in question, leading to a more consistent understanding of the examined subject while also boosting the creative side of the artistic research.

Research aim and tasks. The present research aims to provide a systematic approach to the topic of Primitivism in piano music of the twentieth century in order to identify its distinctive features, resulting in concrete pianistic tasks most meaningfully innovating the actual instrumental practice. To do so, it entails the following tasks:

- To point out the essential ideas at the base of Primitivism, their historical, socio-economical, and philosophical background, and how they turned into artistic-musical trends. To this aim, the criterion of logical consequentiality is applied, beginning with the understanding of the historical and sociocultural context of reference, proceeding through the examination of several artistic manifestations, and eventually reaching the disclosure of the resulting musical phenomena. In this regard, a major focus is given to visual arts as the herald of a more authentic Primitivistic tendency in music: the paradigm of aesthetic distortion deduced from the field of visual representation finds its clear counterpart in music in the shape of specific characteristics, to be extensively verbalized in the following paragraphs.
- To recognize such tendencies in the realm of twentieth century piano music: to distinguish the qualifying traits of piano music modelled on a Primitivistic style and

how they are implemented by the diverse composers working in this style (a slight preference is given to composers from the first half of the twentieth century). To this purpose, the artist-researcher relies on selected classification methods of musical phenomena, which will be introduced in the following sub-section. Such a model of research is considered potentially suitable for further studies within different spheres of interest as well.

- To unravel the most significant performative aspects of Primitivistic piano music due to the ascertained characteristics of the pianistic style. In this regard, a major focus is given to *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6 (1908) by Béla Bartók, in light of its thorough conformity with a Primitivistic style (as broadly discussed in Chapter 1) and, for this reason, selected as a case-study in Chapter 3 of the present artistic research paper.

Research method. The employed methods were analytical (classification of musical phenomena, analysis of selected music examples, etc.), comparative (identification of parallels between the creative outcome of different composers, research for analogous patterns in both visual arts and music, etc.), descriptive (explanation of musical phenomena, verbalization of conclusions, etc.), and empirical (unravelling of performative issues, references to the pre-existing knowledge and experiences of the author, etc.). Most of the information pertaining to the historical, philosophical, and artistic background of reference were deduced from the examination of the literature, as will be clarified in the following sub-section.

Some of the key concepts serving as the main theoretical background are:

- The phenomena of Colonialism and Imperialism as the starting point for the merging process between European and non-Western cultural backgrounds.
- The ideas of the “Other” and “Otherness” as the dominating perspective in the representation of non-Western subjects by European artists between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- The definitions of “Orientalism” and “Exoticism” as a cauldron of heterogeneous trends generally using non-Western sources as inspiration, aiming at revitalizing the paradigm of artistic representation in Europe.
- The fundamental idea of “primitive” and the resulting “Primitivistic” quality in Western art as the common thread to different Avant-garde styles.
- Several musical theories, seen as the most suitable to convey the characteristics of Primitivism in the field of music, that are discussed in Chapter 1.2. These are: the theory of topics, as revealed by Leonard Ratner, Kofi Agawu, and Nicholas McKay, among others; a series of purpose-built creative categories by Dario Martinelli; and distinctive features of Primitivistic piano music as elaborated by the author of the present artistic

research paper.

The process of learning the scores usually ran in parallel with the examination of specific composers and trends. Examined works include: Béla Bartók, *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6 (1908); Igor Stravinsky, *Three Movements from Petrushka* (1910–11); André Jolivet, *Mana* (1935); Alberto Ginastera, Piano Sonata Op. 22 No. 1 (1952); and Giacinto Scelsi, Suite No. 8 *Bot-Ba: Evocation of Tibet with its Monasteries on High Mountain Summits: Tibetan Rituals, Prayers and Dances* (1952).

Literature selection. The employed literature can be traced back to the following main sources:

- Historiographic literature, contextualizing the examined phenomena within specific chronological coordinates and related socio-economical, philosophical and cultural scenarios, such as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin (1989), *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*; Edward Said (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*; and Robert Young (2015), *Empire, Colony, Post-Colony*.
- Literature specifically committed to the artistic front of Primitivism, such as Robert Goldwater (1938), *Primitivism in Modern Art*; Fred Myers (2006), *Primitivism, Anthropology and the Category of “Primitive Art”*; and Colin Rhodes (1995), *Primitivism and Modern Art*.
- Literature comprising selected models of musical analysis, as those included among the research methods, seen as the most suitable to the purposes of the present research, namely, Kofi Agawu (1991), *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music*; Dario Martinelli (forth. 2021), *The Overrated Truth – On the Concept of Authenticity in Popular Music*; and Leonard Ratner (1980), *Classic Music. Expression, Form and Style*.
- Monographs on individual composers, from which to extrapolate the most meaningful stylistic features to the aim of the present research based on the models of musical analysis mentioned above, for example, Peter Bartók (2002), *My Father*; Pierre Albert Castanet (1993), *Giacinto Scelsi: viaggio al centro del suono*; and Hilda Jolivet (1978), *Avec André Jolivet*.

Other suitable sources were represented by webpages and online databases, published artistic research papers and articles, and other media.

Structure of the work. The artistic research paper *Interpreting Primitivism in Piano Music of the Twentieth Century* consists of three chapters:

- The first chapter provides an overview of the origin of Primitivism in Western cultural life from visual representation to music, beginning with its philosophical and

ideological premises in order to comprehend what particular features of “primitive” art and music were originally perceived as such and eventually absorbed into the aesthetics of the twentieth century’s artists and composers. The latter aspect is systematized through selected parameters, such as those deduced from the theory of topics and Martinelli’s categorization of Primitivism in music, both mentioned above, as well as an original classification by the artist-researcher, to be introduced in Chapter 1.2.

- The second chapter analyzes the work of selected composers who eventually revealed a Primitivistic penchant within their musical works, according to the criteria established in Chapter 1.2. The focus is given to selected characteristics of the pianistic style as well as to the deriving performative issues. The examination proceeds using macro-categories in conformity with previously ascertained common features and leading trends.
- The third chapter examines a selected case study, *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6 (1908) by Béla Bartók, drawing attention to concrete executional practices, as they have been summarized through the course of the present artistic research paper as distinctive of Primitivistic piano music as a whole.

The paper contains one hundred fourteen musical examples, five illustrations and six tables. The complete examined works are listed in Appendix No. 1, and the musical references are presented in Appendix No. 2.

1. ORIGINS OF PRIMITIVISM IN THE FIELDS OF VISUAL ARTS AND MUSIC

1.1. Historical and Sociocultural Background of Primitivism in Western Art

1.1.1. Colonialism and the Historical “Otherness” of the Orient

In order to define the historical and sociocultural background of Primitivism, it is necessary to trace it back to encounters between European settlers and the native cultures of Africa, Asia, and Oceania. This phenomenon has ancient roots.¹ However, for the purpose of the present discourse, it is sufficient to recall some of its later implications, related to the actual practices of Colonialism and Imperialism in the modern period.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the major powers at that time, such as Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, strongly vying for economic supremacy over the rest of the world. The Conference of Berlin in 1884 represented a significant turning point, initiating formal guidelines for the partition of territories in Africa, Asia, and Oceania among the member states (Reinhard 1996: 139). Such organized expansionistic drive has profoundly affected the course of international politics to date, besides also influencing cultural terms, as will be reflected in the following paragraphs.

Ronald Horvath provides a rather comprehensive definition of Colonialism as “a form of domination, i.e. the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behaviour of

¹ During the Middle Ages, Arabic Muslims began to raid North Africa: their presence across the Mediterranean Sea, made of incursions and spoliations at the expenses of unarmed shore outposts, determined a situation of severe political instability and thus fostered the idea of analogous campaigns on behalf of Christianity by the major European powers at that time. The Portuguese were the first to undertake this endeavour at the beginning of the fifteenth century: their intervention started soon to interfere with pre-existing Arabic commercial interests, whilst native groups were rapidly converted to the Christian faith and several local kingdoms ended up being directly controlled by the Portuguese crown with the status of protectorates, receiving military support within local conflicts or against Muslims in exchange with minerals and other materials.

Portuguese expansion was firm and systematic due to the compelling necessity of finding alternative commercial routes to the Orient for spices and fabrics, in order to achieve complete economic hegemony from the source straight to the purchasers. Such an intent led to the discovery of new outposts along the Atlantic shore, to the full reconnaissance of the African seashore later on and, eventually, to the circumvention of the southernmost tip of the continent, firstly operated in 1488 by Bartholomew Diaz and paving the way for reaching India by sea, as Vasco de Gama successfully accomplished in 1498.

The Portuguese achievements loudly resounded all over Europe, gaining acclaim and inspiring similar endeavours by the other major powers. In 1492 the Spanish crown financed an expedition by the Italian navigator Christopher Columbus aiming at finding an alternative route to India by sailing West. However, Columbus’s expedition, firmly engraved in collective memory, eventually made landfall in the Caribbean Antilles, at first mistaken for the east coast of India, whereas they were part of a new, totally unexplored continent: America. Columbus’s discovery revealed new possibilities for an undisputed global Spanish commercial supremacy by sea. On the other hand, by the following two centuries all other European nations began to have colonial ambitions and, for this reason, to clash with each other, leading to the phenomena of Colonialism and Imperialism in the modern sense (De Bernardi & Guarracino 2009: 186–187).

other individuals or groups” (Horvath 1972: 47). Robert Young observes that such domination may involve “an extraordinary range of different forms and practices,” including “settler colonies such as British North America and Australia, economic protectorates such as British India and Japanese Taiwan, and maritime enclaves such as Hong Kong, Malta and Singapore,” despite the mutual traits of the “denial of self-determination,” the “dictation of rules from a separate political jurisdiction,” and the “belief of cultural superiority of the colonizing power” (Young 2001: 17).

As for Imperialism, although the two terms are often conflated, many scholars elaborated their own criteria of discernment in this respect. For instance, Young also contends that, while Colonialism may consist of a mere occupation for commercial purposes, without necessarily interfering with the internal political organization of the annexed territories, Imperialism inevitably implies a strong state policy from a central authority to the total detriment of any pre-existing local self-governance (Young 2015: 54). More particularly, Edward Said defines Imperialism as “the theory and practice of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Said 1993: 113), thus suggesting the existence of a more complex ideological machinery behind it.

In this regard, a first significant philosophical foundation lies in the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Ger. “Lectures on the Philosophy of World History,” 1837) by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), a set of arguments on human progress, outlining the reciprocal connections between History and Reason, the first being dependent on the latter. The philosopher banished *casualty* from the course of history in favour of *causality*, so that cause-effect relationships may represent the sole driving force of historical progression: collective entities such as populations, states and empires uphold the string of the events by dialectically opposing each other, thus imprinting different orientations to the course of history (Hegel 1837, quoted from Sibree 2011: 28–30).

Moreover, as Peter Singer explains, Hegel believed the progress of humankind to be the ultimate purpose of all historical events, which, according to him, are all rational, even those seeming contradictory, as they also contributed to the everlasting path of human progress. Based on that idea, Western expansionism is likewise a necessary and legitimate step forward along this course, giving impulse to both economic growth and extension of boundaries as well as fostering the supremacy of the European civilization model (Singer 1983: 73–78).

An additional input is taken from the theories of another intellectual, the French philosopher and historian Joseph Ernest Renan (1823–1892). During the lecture *What Is a Nation?* at the Sorbonne University in 1882, Renan denied the preponderance of objective criteria, such as pre-given characteristics (ethnicity, language, etc.), in defining nationhood,

whereas he claimed the latter to be based on what he called a “spiritual principle,” which he sums up with the expression “having made great things together and wishing to make them again.” In this respect, all European nations were bound by their past glories as well as far-reaching ambitions for future achievements, thus accentuating the sense of belonging to a predestined segment of humankind (Renan 2016/1882: 33).

In the same vein, from the first half of the nineteenth century, a new philosophical and cultural movement called Positivism began to reignite trust in scientific progress, mainly due to the exponential growth of the industrial and commercial middle classes in Europe following radical transformations in the methods of creation and fruition of goods towards modern industrial capitalism. In those years, technological innovations such as electricity, the steam engine, and railways contributed significantly to the development of industrial society, intensifying production while reducing time and decreasing costs. A similar scientific approach began to be sought in all practical and theoretical disciplines on such a wave of broad optimism, ending up including the humanities and social sciences as well (Abbagnano 2011: 314).

In the 1880s the term “Social Darwinism” was coined by the promoters of evolutionary theories within the scope of modern human society. Led to success by the English philosopher and anthropologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), this current of thought aimed at legitimizing disparities and oppression among human groups by re-defining the concept of natural selection elaborated by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) after he observed the evolutionary process of animal species in nature. On that basis, the supremacy of the European colonizers over the colonized was seen as logically responding to the mere natural law of “survival of the fittest,” Darwin’s own terminology considering as “fittest” the most versatile individuals, able to preserve the balance between themselves and the environment in which they operate (Hawkins 1997: 84).

Giuseppe Sermonti more convincingly outlines this archetype as “differential survival,” observing that a similar doctrine progressively excludes any deviation from patterns and consolidates a unique norm, fostering the opposition between “Us” and the “Others” (Sermonti 2005, quoted from Nelson 2009: 149), whereas from a cultural perspective, which is of utmost importance for the purposes of the present research, Said, mentioned before, also relates this opposition to the false image of the “East” as perpetuated by European colonizers: such an image was essentially modelled on a supposed contrast between the unevolved and uncivilized colonized and the advanced and civilized colonizers (Said 1993: 488–492).

Said extensively debates the latter tendency in his *Orientalism* (1978). He thoroughly examines this phenomenon, attributing at least three main shades of meaning to it:

- Orientalism as an *academic discipline*: “The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient, either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism” (Said 1975: 2). This definition refers to a specific branch of academic studies.
- Orientalism as an *epistemological source*: “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’”. Thus, a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborating theories, novels, epics, social descriptions and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, mentality, destiny and so on” (ibid.). This definition encompasses any Western creative work emphasizing a generic diversity between West and East, seen as two collateral entities.
- Orientalism as an *ideological basis*: “Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient, dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (ibid.: 3). This definition ultimately reflects the complex ideological machinery legitimizing the supremacy of Western civilization model above all, which is the core of the author’s own notion of Imperialism, as it was previously disclosed.

Regarding the Orient, Said observes that “it is essentially an idea, a creation with no corresponding reality” (ibid.: 5). In other words, there is no match between Orientalism and any actual Orient, but rather between Orientalism and a certain idea about the Orient, which is the one perpetuated by European colonizers. In this light, Ziauddin Sardar comments that “there simply has never been a definite object that is the Orient; the Orient is merely a pattern book from which strands can be taken to fashion whatever suits the temper of the times in the West” (Sardar 1999: 59), so that such definition may easily include, for instance, Islamic North Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

Said concludes that “Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is as a veridic discourse about the Orient” (Said 1975: 6): it reflects the dynamics of power perpetuated through a Eurocentric perspective towards the world, which was predominant over the era of Western expansion. As Gabriele Proglione indicates, Said’s assumptions expand Antonio Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony in the field of subaltern studies, mirroring the fundamental juxtaposition between ruling and

subjugated classes by the Italian intellectual into the one between the colonizers and the colonized, the “West” and the “East,” and “Us” and the “Other” (Proglío 2012: 7).

The key concepts of the “Other” and “Otherness” are also crucial in the realm of the present discourse on cultural representation, that is, the representation of the colonized through the eyes of the colonizers, which emerged from phenomena such as Orientalism. *Post-Colonial Studies*, one of the most authoritative sources in this field, provides the following definition: “The ‘Other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is ‘normal’ and in locating one’s own place in the world” (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 154). This definition harks back to existentialism, as it reconnects to the dichotomy between the Self and the Other as theorized by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), presupposing the existence of non-Selves as the *sine qua non* of the awareness of identity of the Self (ibid.: 155).

The recognition of the Other, therefore, leads to the acknowledgement of “Otherness,” that is, the quality of being Other as seen from the Self’s viewpoint. This assumption bears a prominent idealist connotation in the Post-Enlightenment sense: philosophers such as René Descartes (1596–1650) attributed a privileged role to the consciousness of the individual in defining all existing things, thus reducing the Other to a mere epistemological concern, only contemplated as a product of the faculties of discernment of the rational Self (ibid.: 9).

Relating the philosophical concept to the reality of Colonialism, Jean François Staszak defines “Otherness” as follows:

Otherness is due less to the difference of the Other than to the point of view and the discourse of the person who perceives the Other as such. Placing in opposition notions of Us, Self, Them and the Other is to choose a criterion that allows humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued, and another that is defined by its faults, devalued, and susceptible to discrimination. Only dominant groups (such as Westerners in the time of colonization) are in a position to impose their categories in the matter.²

In another passage, Staszak writes:

The creation of Otherness (also called “othering”) consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups: Them and Us. The Out-group is only coherent as a group as a result of its opposition to the In-group and its lack of identity. [...] The asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of Otherness. Only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of Others (their otherness) while imposing

² “Otherness” in International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, www.sciencedirect.com [last accessed: 15/03/2021].

corresponding discriminatory measures.³

In other words, the concept of “Otherness” sees the world “as divided into mutually excluding opposites,” the Self and the Other, based on a biased distinction to the benefit of the former and to the detriment of the latter: “If the Self is ordered, rational, masculine, good, then the Other is chaotic, irrational, feminine, and evil. This construction of the Other is a process of demonization, which in itself expresses the ambivalence at the very heart of authority” (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 3). Such inequality finds expression in binary oppositions of different sorts: “Us” vs “Them,” “Colonizer” vs “Colonized,” “Civilized” vs “Savage,” or “Superior” vs “Inferior,” where the first embodies the norm and, therefore, wields the power, and the second, by virtue of its “Otherness,” is marginalized from it (Kehinde 2006: 92–122).⁴

This theoretical background was further expanded by the Bengalese philosopher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who contends that any Other having limited access to the sources of authority, thus inevitably embodying a subordinate, is susceptible to the process of “othering” (Spivak 1988: 89). Spivak summarizes the core of this phenomenon with the expression “wording the world,” playing with the terms “word” and “world” as the two fundamental concepts at stake in the process of annihilation of the cultural identity of non-Western subjects at the hands of European colonizers: in her view, the latter’s discourse over the colonized (the word) betrays a univocal representational viewpoint, thus re-shaping, “othering” reality (the world) to the most suitable guise in order to preserve cultural hegemony (Spivak 1985: 243).

In the same vein, Said observes that in Western literature and art the East, that is, the non-Western “Other,” is “othered” by being deliberately “exotified, mystified and represented as savage and seductive, carrying all the dark traits of humanity, such as decadence, cruelty and sexual desire, as opposed to the West, being portrayed as civilized, rational and reasonable” (Said 1975: 4). Said also points out the total lack of individuality in representing non-Western subjects, who are normally portrayed as an indistinct, homogenous mass, “driven by emotions which are determined by race rather than by personality, individuality and intentional decision-making,” thus corroborating “the superiority of what is Western by un-determining everything that is not” (ibid.).

³ Ibid.

⁴ More recent Post-Colonial studies also fostered analogous discourses in the realm of extended notions of “Selfness” and “Otherness” based on diversities of gender, sexual orientation, social class, etc., aiming at disrupting the hierarchical mind-set behind them. For example, Post-Colonial Feminism expresses the viewpoint of non-Western, non-white women in the Post-Colonial world, e.g. Audra Lorde (1983), *Zami. A New Spelling of My Name*; Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014), *We Should All Be Feminists*. On a similar basis, other literature engages with sexuality, e.g. Anne McClintock (1996), *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*; William Spurlin (2001), *Broadening Postcolonial Studies / Decolonizing Queer Studies*; Neville Wallace Hoad (2007), *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality and Globalization*. All these matters are still topical and being broadly debated nowadays.

In other words, the representation of the colonized filtered through the eyes of the colonizers aims at emphasizing the undisputed superiority of the Western socio-economic and cultural model, promoting it to a standard of normality and thus leading to what is ascertained as a “false notion of the universal” (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 11). In this light, as Peter Barry observes, all the “dark human traits” associated with the colonized act as a consistent range of opposition criteria to a recognized normality, since “they are all specular to what is commonly pointed as reprehensible and blameworthy in conformity with Western morality” (Barry 2009: 192).

The radical opposition between “Selves” and “Others” can be ultimately traced back to the colonizers’ necessity of maintaining power over the colonized, which in turn explains the overall tendency to indistinctiveness and homologation in depicting the latter, depriving them of any individual quality, as the following excerpt explains:

The people to be “othered” are homogenized into a collective “they” which is distilled even further into an iconic “he” (the standardized adult male specimen). This abstracted “he”/“they” is the subject of verbs in a timeless present tense, which characterizes anything “he” is or does not as a particular historical event but as an instance of a pre-given custom or trait. (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 103)

In this regard, a very significant aspect of the Imperial gaze towards the Other is language, since “language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated” (ibid.: 7). In other words, the language of the colonizers is the dominant language, another cultural resource to serve and corroborate their power. This also explains why the voices of natives are generally not represented nor their points of view expressed, for instance, in any literary work of the Colonial era: a sort of “silence of the Others” is an essential requirement in order to preserve power, as “the word leads to knowledge, which provokes questioning, which generates change” (ibid.: 85).

Such awareness of overbearing superiority by the Europeans during the nineteenth century led to a widespread circulation of the idea of “primitive”: this term, deriving from the ancient Latin word *primitivus* (“the very first”), implied an unequivocally negative connotation, as if the colonized were culturally undeveloped in comparison with the colonizers, which gave the latter the natural right to rule over the former, thus ultimately fostering a sense of membership to an upper grade of development and the need for a world-wide diffusion of the European civilization model.

On the other hand, although such beliefs were predominant in Western high-minded elitist groups back then, sincere attraction to and curiosity about the lifestyles and customs of such “Others” started to spread among artists and intellectuals. Mere interest eventually turned

into admiration, whereby their ways of life, generally referred to as “primitive,” began to be praised as authentically simple, genuine, and people oriented, in contrast to the convulsive and oppressive modern industrial society.

A similar tendency is explicable through another central idea in Post-Colonial studies: that of ambivalence. This term was initially coined in psychoanalysis “to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action” (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 10). Later, theorists such as Homi Bhabba introduced it into Post-colonial discourse to describe “the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized,” thus comprising leanings such as those mentioned above (ibid.).

However, similar arguments had already come into existence during the Enlightenment: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) had wished humanity’s return to a state of nature, as the most suitable dimension for it. Rousseau considered the individual and modernity essentially incompatible: he believed the former to have been progressively corrupted by the latter, which had deprived humans of many positive qualities, such as respect for the natural environment, providing food and means, and the instinct for self-preservation, fostering a natural impulse of self-improvement. Modern individuals, instead, due to the growing complexity of society and the exacerbation of social disparities, had lost any sense of belonging to a balanced totality and had begun to be hostile towards each other: the lower classes aiming to overturn the current order and the upper classes keen to preserve their power and wealth (Rousseau 1762, quoted from Bertolazzi 2014: 25).

Gian Battista Vico (1688–1744) was one of the first intellectuals to engage with the discourse on “primitive” in the realm of artistic creativity: he attributed to artists from ancient times the utmost closeness to the spirit of artistic creation due to their genuine sense of disenchantment towards reality, whereas modern artists are limited by social and aesthetic conventions (Abbagnano 2011: 91). This new mentality was first reflected in visual arts in the works of the Nazarene Movement in Germany and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in England, privileging settings and characters from ancient epochs and emphasizing them by the simplicity of lines and plain brightness of colours (Cricco & Di Teodoro 2011: 298).

In the mid-nineteenth century, two important innovations altered the field of visual representation. The first was the invention of photography, which offered a representation of the visual reality that was an alternative to both pictorial and sculptural representation. The second was the formulation of non-Euclidean geometries, which theorized the existence of multiple dimensional worlds by denying the main postulates of plane geometry and, by so doing, opposing Realism itself. Consequently, artists started to search for new paths through

different styles of representation beyond the conventional three-dimensional method of depiction (ibid.: 207).

First, they became interested in Japanese art, which was extremely sophisticated even though it did not rely on any Western canon: the representation was rather distanced from the standard rules of perspective, with no *chiaroscuro* effects being implemented, although it seemed utterly dynamic due to the use of essential, sinuous outlines. The term “japonisme” was used in 1872 by the French art critic Philipp Burty “to designate a new current of artistic, historic and ethnographic borrowings from the arts of Japan” (Lambourne 2005: 6): Japanese woodcuts and prints became an object of study for several European-trained artists who aimed at reproducing their characteristics in their own artistic creations. One of the most outstanding cases is represented by the haystacks by Claude Monet (1840–1926), inspired by *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (1830–32) by the Japanese printmaker Hokusai (1760–1849) (ibid.: 59).

In those years the trend of world fairs, which mainly focused on industry but also involved arts and manufacturing, made it possible for European artists to be in direct contact with handcrafted products from all over the acknowledged world, along with plants and animals imported straight from overseas colonies. Moreover, in 1855 the Permanent Museum of Colonies was inaugurated in Paris and exhibited items and artworks from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, native America, Africa, and Oceania, thus becoming a significant pole of attraction for surveyors and the curious from all over Europe. Finally, thanks to the invention of the steamboat, indigenous cultures became easily subject to direct observation as well (Reinhard 1996: 208).

Fine arts institutions, prescribing a rigid observance of the traditional criteria of perspective, attempted to discourage all such novelties, although it had already become clear that there were other proficient ways of representing things besides those handed down by the academic tradition. The twentieth century’s European-trained artists became fascinated with all those stylistic traits which they referred to as an expression of an authentic “primitive” character: simple outlines, absence of linear perspective, emotive distortion of figures, use of symbolic signs, and massive presence of repeated ornamental patterns (Staszak 2004: 357).

Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) was one of the first significant European artists to implement a more resolved turn to Primitivism, distancing his work from the very conservative Parisian environment which had firmly rejected his creations. The painter was initially exposed to the diverse cultural heritages of the overseas populations during the Universal Exposition in the French capital in 1889, where he could observe in person their artistic works, and he was so fascinated by them that he decided to move to Tahiti in order to pursue a more genuine life distant from the Western conformist world (Solomon-Godeau 1992: 319).

During his stay in Tahiti and later in Polynesia, Gauguin developed a representative style combining the initial Post-Impressionistic features, such as rough outlines and bold colours, with new visual stimulations derived from the observation of people and landscapes: wild nature, its tangled vegetation, and its inhabitants as well as collective rituals and the sinuous shapes of native young women became the main subjects of his paintings. Moreover, a general simplification of forms and a widespread ornamental taste in his works bestowed a childish and savage character on the representation (Staszak 2004: 357).

1.1.2. Primitivism as a Concept and Artistic Current

The actual word “Primitivism” appeared for the first time in a French encyclopedia, the *Nouveau Larousse illustré*, published between 1897 and 1904, simply as the “imitation of primitives” (Morphy & Perkins 2006: 130). However, no more precise definition was given.⁵ In this regard, it is worth recalling that Primitivism never became an organized, unitary movement, but rather existed as a common attitude among several artists, regardless of their belonging to diverse Avant-garde groups. However, general definitions of “Primitivism” are scattered across modern dictionaries and encyclopedias too, representing a valid starting point in order to identify the common characteristics of this front.

For instance, Primitivism is defined in the Treccani Encyclopedia as: “A tendency to embrace and exalt the spiritual and artistic world of primitive populations, imitating their manners and forms.”⁶ In other words, Primitivism embodies a tradition of borrowings from cultural backgrounds perceived as “primitive,” the latter meant as an artistic quality. This aspect is particularly emphasized within another definition of “Primitivism” by Collins Dictionary: “A recurrent theory or belief, as in philosophy or art, that the qualities of primitive or chronologically early cultures are superior to those of contemporary civilization.”⁷

Certainly, both idealization and emulation presuppose a fundamental assumption: the subject (modern artists gazing upon primitive cultures as a source of inspiration) and the object (primitive cultures being idealized and emulated) of the process are separate, thus requiring more specific sub-definitions. In this light, the former can be simply called “Primitivists” as the herald of the artistic current of Primitivism, whereas the latter may stick to the definition of

⁵ Some initial ambiguities also derived from the fact the same word had been previously used in the field of art with regard to the Italian painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the forerunners of Michelangelo and Raphael, i.e. with the meaning of “previous,” “preceding.” Later on, critics began to employ this term with a denigratory meaning for those artworks directly inspired by non-Western representative features (Demian 2003: 33).

⁶ “Primitivism” in Treccani Encyclopedia, www.treccani.it [last accessed: 15/03/2021].

⁷ “Primitivism” in Collins Dictionary, www.collinsdictionary.com [last accessed: 15/03/2021].

“primitive” as conveyed by Primitivist artists themselves, thus meant as “prior” or “simpler.” The artistic outcome emerging from the encounter of the two, therefore, can be defined as “Primitivistic.” This general distinction will be applied throughout the present artistic research paper with regard to art and music alike.

More particularly, the art historian Colin Rhodes summarizes the diverse manifestations of the broad category of “primitive” in the field of artistic representation as follows:

The word “primitive” generally refers to someone or something less complex, or less advanced, than the person or thing to which it is being compared. It is conventionally defined in negative terms, as lacking in elements such as organization, refinement and technological accomplishment. In cultural terms this means a deficiency in those qualities that have been used historically in the West as indications of civilization. The fact that the primitive state of being is comparative is enormously important in gaining an understanding of the concept, but equally so is the recognition that it is no mere fact of nature. It is a theory that enables differences to be described in qualitative terms. Whereas the conventional Western viewpoint at the turn of the century imposed itself as superior to the primitive, the Primitivists questioned the validity of that assumption, and used those same ideas as a means of challenging or subverting his or her own culture, or aspects of it. (Rhodes 1995: 13)

In relation to Rhodes’ viewpoint, Fred Myers also writes:

This relationality may help us to understand an extraordinary diversity of forms within the “primitive”, what Connelly has called “the difficulty in discerning a rationale underlying the chaotic mix of styles identified as primitive”. [...] A consideration of relationality further suggests that the operation of this category must be understood within a particular structure and in relation to the properties of the objects themselves. (Myers 2006: 267)

Finally, in 1984 the MOMA exhibition *Primitivism in 20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, curated by William Rubin and Kirk Varnedoe, attempted at redefining the boundaries between the “primitive” and “modern” in art, pointing out “direct influences,” “coincidental resemblances,” and “basic shared characteristics” between contemporary and primitive artworks. The exhibition was supported by a catalogue summarizing the influences of several tribal objects from North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe on works by Gauguin and others (Berman 2001: 21).

The event placed itself on the wavelength of the fundamental assumptions by Robert Goldwater as summarized in the treatise *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938), aiming at discovering the common ground for all various facets of modern Primitivism. According to him:

Modern Primitivists deemed simplicity and basicness to be more profound, more important and more valuable than the complexity and sophistication that define modern civilization; they assumed that the closer one gets to historical, psychological or aesthetics origins, the simpler things become. [...] In this search for simplicity and for “lower origins”, modern artists valued tribal arts, whose intensity and

directness of emotional expression they believed to be more important than the technique employed to fashion the object. In addition to artefacts of foreign provenance, modern artists also appreciated certain European arts, such as those produced by peasants, children, and the insane, where, again, a direct conveyance of emotion was thought to overshadow the medium itself. (Goldwater 1938: 253)

One of the most authoritative sources representing how Primitivist artists saw themselves is, certainly, Paul Gauguin’s private correspondence. In a letter to his wife written before he moved to Tahiti, the painter claims:

May the day come, perhaps very soon, when I will bury myself in the woods of an oceanic island to live my life on ecstasy, calmness and beauty, with a new family and far from the European struggle for money. There, in the silence of the beautiful tropical nights of Tahiti, I shall be able to listen to the sweet murmuring music of my heart’s beating, in amorous harmony with the mysterious beings of my environment. Free, at last, without money trouble, I will be able to love, to sing and to die.⁸

In another letter, addressed to the Danish painter Jens Ferdinand Willumsen, he wrote:

I am going soon to Tahiti, a small island in Oceania, where the material necessities of life can be had without money. I want to forget all the misfortunes of the past, I want to be free to paint without any glory and I want to die there and to be forgotten here. [...] A terrible epoch is brewing in Europe for the coming generation: the kingdom of gold. Everything is putrefied, even men, even the arts. There, at least, under an eternally summer sky, on a marvellously fertile soil, the Tahitian has only to lift his hands to gather his food; and in addition, he never works. When in Europe men and women survive only after unceasing labour during which they struggle in convulsions of cold and hunger, the Tahitians, on the contrary, happy inhabitants of the unknown paradise of Oceania, know only sweetness of life.⁹

In these few lines, Gauguin conveys the complaint of an entire epoch, oppressed by the prerogatives of modern industrial society and seeking a misplaced inner harmony to be restored by considering different, simpler models of life. The artistic urge, therefore, is subordinated to a moral urge: Gauguin and his contemporaries aimed at a rebirth of art starting from radical changes in the ways of life, purifying them from all those aspects (social disparities, alienating job, immoderate desire to earn money) interfering with the pureness of artistic creation, in line with the totality and beauty of all existing things.

The theme of the “Other” is equally predominant: Gauguin looks at the Tahitians as a model of a perfectly organized society with its members in complete harmony with each other and their natural environment, something that he could hardly find in the Western world. Their attitude towards life was rather similar to that of their ancestors, living by simple means and within elementary social structures. In this light, Gauguin’s Primitivism contemplates two different assumptions of “Otherness,” a spatial (the geographical distance) and a chronological

⁸ Paris, February 1890 (Malingue 2003: 8).

⁹ Pont-Aven, February 1890 (ibid.).

one (ancestors' simpler ways of living), thus mutually integrating both exoticism and nostalgia. In addition, the moral question of the return to a more authentic living dimension lays the foundation for the need for renovated canons of artistic expression, and encourages the artist to neglect any leading conception in the name of such superior ideal.

An analogous tendency to idealize supposedly less civilized cultures is equally acknowledgeable in Gauguin's artistic outcome by the time of his stay in the village of Pont-Aven in Brittany during the mid-1880s, where the painter encountered the local peasant culture as a source of artistic inspiration worlds apart from frenetic modern civilization. In a letter to the painter Émile Schuffenecker, Gauguin wrote in this regard: "I love Brittany. I find something savage, primitive here."¹⁰

A similar foundation lays behind the pictorial works by Naïve artists such as Henri Rousseau (1844–1910), emphasizing genuineness, spontaneity, and instinctiveness in the artistic creation rather than the stylistic and formal accuracy of educated painting: their language was immediate and essential, making use of simple traits and vivid colours to represent landscapes, animals, rural scenes, and fairy-tale settings, along with a mystical and oneiric surrealism. Naïve painters were usually self-educated artists, not having received any formal training, who more or less deliberately ignored any rules of perspective, leading to an inaccurate perception of the geometric space in their pictorial works. In addition, the use of unrefined colours through all the levels of the representation determined a mistaken notion of depth. Finally, the overabundance of details also contributed to generate an awkward feeling of distances (Cricco & Di Teodoro 2011: 301–303).

A primeval character meant as deliberately "savage" found expression in Fauvism: *Les Fauves* (Fr. "The Beasts") opposed any attempt of naturalistic representation, tending instead to depict rudimentary figures and use unrealistic colour palettes: their brutality strongly destabilizes the observer, making them feel uncomfortable and anguished before such clumsy and distorted images (ibid.: 318). Further political implications arose within the work by *Die Brücke* (Ger. "The Bridge"), the German counterpart of the Fauves, characterized by the use of vibrant colours and rough shapes: their desire to be free from the habits and commands of modern civilization led them to represent mostly characters (prostitutes, beggars, circus artists) and situations (peripheral neighbourhoods, brothels with scenes of nudity) banished from the middle-class mentality (ibid.: 317).

Several other artistic movements also utilized the key concept of "primitive" in the field of visual representation. In this respect, it is worth at least mentioning the child-like surrealism

depicted by Joan Miró (1893–1983) and the artistry of mentally ill subjects as systematized by the German psychiatrist and art historian Hans Prinzhorn (1886–1933) under the denomination of *Art brut* (Fr. "Rough art"), promoting respectively the rough simplicity of children's drawing and the coarse, anguished representations by people suffering from mental disorders. Such stimuli proved an invaluable influence on the pictorial works of artists from the following decades, such as Vasilij Kandinskij (1866–1944), Paul Klee (1879–1940), František Kupka (1871–1957), and Maud Lewis (1903–1970).

To summarize, it is possible to claim that the field of pictorial representation most generously welcomed Primitivistic leanings into its semantic world from the outset, providing a paradigm of aesthetic distortion aimed at impressing analogous orientations onto other creative fields, such as those of literature, drama and, needless to say, music. Thus, the following sub-chapter examines the qualifying traits of Primitivistic music as encounterable in the works by various composers, in compliance with the selected models of musical analysis presented in the Introduction.

1.2. In Quest of Primitivism in Music

1.2.1. Concepts and Categories

Similar to what was previously ascertained with regard to visual arts, Primitivism never existed as a unitary movement in the field of music. It rather appears as a cross-tendency in the works of several composers within the spheres of various major artistic currents during the twentieth century. To find a definition of Primitivism in the field of music, therefore, represents a quite challenging task, as the term itself is suited to a variety of possible aesthetic, cultural, and ideological interpretations.

One of such interpretations, namely, the categorization of the possible types of Primitivism in music as presented by musicologist and semiotician Dario Martinelli, is taken as the point of departure in the framework of the present artistic research paper. Martinelli observes:

Most forms of musical practices that, directly or indirectly, are germane to an idea of authenticity (whether that idea is an explicit quest for the latter or a general perception of the audience), engage into more than one category at the same time. If we take the example of Primitivism – an area that, unlike common belief, is not only pertinent to art music, but has several applications to popular repertoires as well – it is manifest

¹⁰ Pont-Aven, February 1888 (ibid.).

that at least five categories are openly in action. (Martinelli forth. 2021)¹¹

According to Martinelli, these categories are:

- Primitivism as *geographical/anthropological*, “in its inclination to refer to any human civilization perceived as having remained in an earlier stage of evolution than modern society” (ibid.). As mentioned previously, this belief, today sounding rather prejudicial, was widespread among mainstream intellectuals in the early twentieth century, due to several prevalent ideologies. Diversely, composers as well as artists in general (such as the above-mentioned Gauguin), disclosed a sincere interest in non-Western settings as a source of inspiration for their artistic creations, bestowing an undisputable exotic character on them. In addition, Martinelli observes:

In more recent times, that slightly patronizing and colonialist look has been increasingly replaced by a declared admiration for how the non-Western, non-globalized and ultimately non-contaminated “Other” was able to retain that strong sense of sincerity, pride and truth in art. (ibid.)

This category easily encompasses musical works of an Exoticist penchant, among them piano repertoires such as Claude Debussy’s *Pagodes* (1903), Leopold Godowsky’s *Java Suite* (1925), and John Adams’ *China Gates* (1977) as well as compositions “exotified” by drawing upon local folklore, for example, Béla Bartók’s *Two Romanian Dances* Op. 8a (1910), Manuel de Falla’s *Fantasia Baetica* (1919) and Alberto Ginastera’s *Danzas Argentinas* Op. 2. Indisputably, such a manifestation of Primitivism in music is the closest to its original concept in the field of visual representation, one demonstrated by remarkable Exoticist tendencies as they are acknowledgeable in the pictorial works of the artists mentioned above. It is also the one from which further re-interpretations of the fundamental idea of “primitive” in music arose, as will be illustrated in the following chapters. For this reason, it is this category that receives the major focus in the present artistic research paper.

- Primitivism as *historical*, “in its reference to a prior phase of human history than the actual musical practice in question,” thus revising the idea of “primitive” as “preceding in time” (ibid.). Numerous composers have looked to music and culture from ages past as a source of inspiration in terms of stylistic features and formal construction without idealizing them in the Romantic manner, but rather enhancing them with objectivity and distance, and merging them into their own musical vocabulary. Among such works, Erik Satie’s *Ogives* (1866), Debussy’s *Canope* (1913), and Ottorino Respighi’s *Tre preludi sopra melodie gregoriane* (1919) may be mentioned as falling into the current of

historical Primitivism.

- Primitivism as *ontogenetic*, “in its reference to an earlier stage of development of human beings, such as the childhood,” also re-shaping the idea of “primitive” as “preceding in time” but in the narrower context of the individual’s life (ibid.). Composers fostering this trend, therefore, were inspired by memories from their childhood or, in wider terms, by the child’s world, filtering musical representation through the language of children, their psychological dimension, and their perception of reality. Consequently, form and content are deliberately naïve, child-like, and simplified, and the overall atmosphere tends to evoke innocence, genuineness, and spontaneity. As an example of this type, Satie’s *Gymnopédies* (1888), Debussy’s *Children’s Corner* (1906–08), and Federico Mompou’s *Scènes d’enfants* (1918) may be mentioned.
- Primitivism as *phylogenetic*, when “referring to different animal species” (ibid.). This category associates with the idea of “Otherness” in the sense of “other than human,” whereas the employed musical language can be very complex. Some of the most outstanding cases are represented by numerous attempts to imitate birdsongs, the most prominent example in the twentieth century being Olivier Messiaen’s *Catalogue d’oiseaux* (1956–58).
- Primitivism as purely *rhetorical/formal*, “when it employs essential elements of music creation, such as rhythm and sound-silence alternation, emphasizing them within more or less elementary structures” (ibid.), thus re-interpreting the idea of “primitive” as “the simplest.” For example, György Ligeti’s *Etudes for Piano* (1985–2001) rely on very essential, though very complexly organized, melodic and rhythmical elements. Another work by Ligeti, *Musica ricercata* (1951–53), is ascribable to this trend, as it exploits simplicity and the repetitiveness of musical ideas throughout.

Such a classification is important in the framework of the present research, since it unequivocally distances any negative implication which might arise from the definition itself of “primitive” as a legacy of mystifications and manipulations from certain early anthropological literature, now considered outdated. To be more precise, “primitive” is meant here not as a mere absolute, such as a condition of inferiority in opposition to an achieved ultimate status of superiority, but rather as a relative circumstance within a logic of priority and consequentiality along the space-time continuum (an earlier epoch, age, phase of progression), where none of the terms is subjected to a hierarchy for better or for worse.

Undeniably, such an approach to the matter is largely in debt to the Lévi-Straussian mind-set, which ultimately comes to the scholar’s aid in order to dispel any residual reservation in this regard. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) pinpointed the mental construction of binary

¹¹ The author of the thesis is grateful to Martinelli for sharing the draft version of the manuscript for the purposes of this research. The exact pages of the publication, therefore, cannot be indicated at this point.

opposition as the main unifying trait among people of different extraction, observing that “people think about the world in terms of binary opposites – such as high and low, inside and outside” or, as implied within Martinelli’s classification, “before and after,” and “every culture can be understood in terms of these opposites” (Lévi-Strauss 1972: 31). For this reason, Lévi-Strauss eventually claimed that immutable and deeply rooted structures exist in all cultures and, consequently, each cultural practice has its homologous counterpart in other cultures (Lévi-Strauss 1962: 219).

Having thus eliminated any misleading preconception due to the sensitivity of the matter of the “primitive” and aiming at more accurately defining such category in musical terms, we might wonder whether there may be specific syntactic characteristics of music attributable to a Primitivistic manner. Undoubtedly, several composers deliberately drew from concrete non-Western musical patterns in order to confer an indisputable “savage,” “barbaric” flavour to their music, also enlivened by a more scientific attitude. Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) are among these, having operated a meticulous collection and analytical study of folk tunes from East Europe and the Balkans and embedded them in their musical works.

Composer-ethnomusicologists, such as Bartók and Kodály, had a broad array of tools and methods available rather than Positivistic pseudo-science, and they relied on the direct observation of the phenomena as well as the analytical-synthetic study of the collected data. In addition, the broad variety and mutability of folk music heritages in comparison with their well-grounded European art music background and their belonging to traditions of oral transmission presented the researchers with difficulty in finding proper ways of measuring and representing any acknowledged discrepancy with the traditional Western tonal system, pushing them to advance progressive studies in acoustics and psychoacoustics, phonetics, phonology, precision mechanics, and logarithmic and infinitesimal calculation.

However, not all composers took such a scientific approach, but rather tended to draw equally from very different non-Western musical sources with a mere evocative intent: Primitivism in twentieth century music, therefore, comprised hugely diversified facets, either as counter-tendencies to or by welcoming one another. Its exponents were extremely heterogeneous and usually did not consider themselves as fostering some orientations in particular rather than others, even though some of them would eventually become predominant, as will be shown in the following paragraphs.

1.2.2. Topics

A significant source of help in an effort to systematize the phenomenon in question derives from the well-known theory of topics as revealed by Leonard Ratner in his *Classic Music. Expression, Form and Style* (1980) and later expanded by other music theorists. Nicholas McKay distinguishes at least two different generations of them: the first includes Ratner himself, Wye Allenbrook (*Rhythmic Gestures in Mozart: “Le Nozze di Figaro” and “Don Giovanni”*, 1983), and Kofi Agawu (*Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music*, 1991), having inaugurated this path of analysis “as a new branch of music semiotics,” while the second comprises Robert Hatten (*Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topic and Tropes*, 2004), and Raymond Monelle (*The Musical Topic*, 2006) among others, “suggesting more refined acts of interpretation” (McKay 2007: 161).

The definition of topic in music is outlined by Ratner in the following way:

From its contacts with worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt and the life of the lower classes, music in the early 18th century developed a thesaurus of characteristic figures, which formed a rich legacy for Classic composers. Some of these figures were associated with various feelings and affections; others had a picturesque flavour. They are designated here as *topics* – subjects for musical discourse. Topics appear as fully worked-out pieces, i.e. *types*, or as figures and progressions within a piece, i.e. *styles*. The distinction between types and styles is flexible; for instance, minuets and marches represent complete types of composition, but they also furnish styles for other pieces. (Ratner 1980: 9)

McKay, paraphrasing Ratner, defines topics as follows: “familiar, expressive, rhetorical gestures encoded in referential musical patterns” (McKay 2007:162). In other words, topics are distinctive signs and patterns in a musical piece ascribing it to a specific style or genre, as well as evoking particular images and atmospheres. Concerning the latter aspect of musical representativeness, or what he calls “pictorialism,” Ratner writes:

Given the wealth of available topics, 18th-century composers at times could easily take a further step and become frankly pictorial in their music. Pictorialism and word-painting in music represent efforts to imitate or symbolize specific ideas from poetry or other types of literature. Pictorialism, generally associated with instrumental music, conveys some ideas of an action or scene. Word-painting is the matching of a word or phrase in a text to a musical figure. (Ratner 1980: 25)

Also, McKay ascribes such awareness to a Postmodern approach to musical analysis, attempting at understanding music through its semantic entailments rather than its formal characteristics:

Today’s “Postmodern” musicology thus once again values music’s elusive “semantic” qualities. Running in the wake of Barthes and Derrida’s impact on literary theory, it attempts to *construct* multiple subjective

visions of what a musical work *might* mean through diverse acts of creative reader-oriented interpretation; situating expressive meaning firmly in the eye of the beholder and not in the work itself (e.g. Kerman 1980, 1985; Kramer 1990, 1995; McClary 2002; Subotnik 1988). Alternatively – but with a related eye on “new historicism” (e.g. Taruskin 1996, 1997)¹² – it attempts to *reconstruct* music’s expressive meanings in context, valuing a humanist engagement with music for “what it is” (inclusive of its so-called “extra-musical” ideas) over and above the constructivist mechanics of “how it’s done”. (McKay 2007: 162)

Certainly, extra-musical inspiration (an epoch, a landscape, a character) constitutes a significant influential factor along the arc of development of Primitivism in music, not to mention the life experience and cultural background of individual composers. As a matter of fact, such tendency was already recognizable in the musical outcome by earlier composers such as Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) and Mily Balakirev (1837–1910): they both repeatedly drew upon different folkloric heritages and proficiently integrated them into their musical languages, thus creating some of the absolute masterpieces of musical Exoticism at the end of the nineteenth century.

For instance, Rimsky-Korsakov’s symphonic poem *Scheherazade* Op. 35 (1888), inspired by the collection of Middle Eastern folk stories *One Thousand and One Nights*, extensively employs motifs of a remarkably exotic flavour, such as the main theme assigned to the violin, evocative of Oriental arabesques (Example 1). On the same wavelength, Balakirev’s *Islamey* Op. 18 (1869) for piano solo was inspired by the composer’s trip to the Caucasus, where he came into contact with local folk instruments and tunes: Balakirev merged some of their features into his pianistic style, (Example 2), although the means available to him were not sufficient to guarantee the accuracy and plausibility in reproducing them that would be sought by the pioneers of scientific ethnomusicology, such as the already mentioned Bartók and Kodály, later on (Carrozzo & Cimagalli 2001: 289).



Example 1. Incipit of the main theme from *Scheherazade* Op. 35 by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.¹³



Example 2. M. Balakirev, *Islamey* Op. 18 (bb. 1–8).

Getting back to topics, all such influences can be classified within a framework of *types*, *styles* and *pictorial devices* as intended by Ratner. In other words:

- A *type* is a discernible organization of music material within a piece in compliance with a codified form, what the author calls “fully worked-out pieces.”
- A *style* is a particular manner of presenting the employed material in the shape of clichéd figures.
- A *pictorial device* is a figure evoking an image or idea gathered from reality as well as other forms of artistic expression. (Ratner 1980: 9)

For instance, taking into consideration the incipit of *Islamey*, a piece for piano, it is possible to identify several correlations between the characteristics of music and Ratner’s terminology:

- The type of *dance* is predominant, as the trimmed and regular organization of beats suggests.¹⁴
- The style of *fantasia*, as the subtitle *Oriental Fantasy* also reveals, may be generally monitored throughout the piece in “elaborate figurations, shifting harmonies, chromatic conjunct bass lines, sudden contrasts, full textures or disembodied melodic figures – in short, a sense of improvisation and loose structural links between figures and phrases” (Ratner 1980: 24).
- The pictorial intent also emerges from the subtitle *Oriental Fantasy*, disclosing the

¹² Fully quoted works:
 Kerman, Joseph (1980). How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out. *Critical Inquiry*, No. 7. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 311–31.
 --- (1985). *Musicology*. London: Fontana.
 Kramer, Lawrence (1990). *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 --- (1995). *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 McClary, Susan (2002). *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
 Subotnik, Rose Rosengard (1988). Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno, and Stravinsky. In: Narmour, Eugene; Solie, Ruth A. *Explorations in Music, the Art, and Idea: Essays in Honor of Leonard B. Meyer*. Stuyvesant: Pendragon. Pp. 87–122.
 Taruskin, Richard (1996). *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through “Mavra”*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 --- (1997). *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹³ The list of the musical example sources is provided in Appendix No. 2.

¹⁴ Ratner made a further distinction between *high*, *middle* and *low* dances in music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dividing them so according to their different contexts of fruition: *high dances* (minuet, sarabande and gavotte) reflected the elegance of court balls; *middle dances* (*bourrée* and *gigue*) befitted more informal celebrations; *low dances* essentially belonged to the trivial context (Ratner 1980: 9). However, all of them were European dance forms, whereas the type of dance conveyed by Balakirev discloses a completely non-Western flavour, eventually opening up an opportunity to enlarge Ratner’s family of dances by drawing upon different, less conventional sources of influence too.

intention of representing a supposed “Orient” by several musical idioms evocative of it, such as rhythmical, melodic and harmonic.

Here, the conducted research presupposes that each of Martinelli’s categories listed above may also be expanded in terms of types, styles, and pictorial devices as intended by Ratner as a further tool in discerning recurring traits in musical works ascribable to one or more trends of Primitivism. Table 1 summarizes the recurring bond between the two terminologies, briefly describing the most suitable types, styles, and pictorial intents for each of the contemplated categories. However, these must be considered not as clear-cut divisions, but rather as guidelines for a more systematic approach to the examined phenomena.

MARTINELLI	RATNER		
Category	Types	Styles	Pictorial intent
Geographical/ Anthropological	Dance forms and song structures deduced from trivial contexts as well as from non-Western musical backgrounds	Executorial practices deduced from folksong repertoire (e.g. improvisational chanting) as well as from non-Western contexts (e.g. <i>gamelan</i>)	Evocation of exotic, non-Western scenarios, atmospheres, etc.
Historical	Musical forms from past ages such as the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, etc.	Executorial practices of past epochs (e.g. plain chanting)	Evocation of scenarios, atmospheres, etc. from ancient times
Ontogenetic	Forms typical of children’s music (e.g. lullaby)	Child-like simplicity (e.g. sing-song)	Reminiscences from the childhood as well as evocation of emotional statuses such as joy, light-heartedness, etc.
Phylogenetic	Various, often non-univocal forms such as short or open forms	Focused on the pictorial intent (e.g. improvisational for birdsongs)	Representation of birdsongs and animal calls, as well as peculiar behaviours (e.g. horse gallop)
Rhetorical/formal	Various, often non-univocal forms such as short or open forms	Predilection for textural elements (e.g. mechanism)	Various, often emphasizing percussiveness and mechanicalness

Table 1. The author’s scheme of the recurring bond between the two terminologies of Martinelli and Ratner as distinguished for the purposes of the present research.

It must be emphasized, though, that topics were initially conceived “as a tool for understanding 18th century’s music” by its codified schemes of musical expression, which in turn “marks out the terrain of 18th century’s musical style and embodies tangibly the society

from which it arose” (Horton 2014: 698). In contrast, the complexity and multiplicity of twentieth-century music, as well as the mutated social circumstances of its creation, require an extended notion of topics, as Julian Horton observes:

The 18th century’s thesaurus persists, but in changed social circumstances, and this renders attempts to read topical discourse as social commentary irreducibly complex. For the generation of composers born in the first two decades of the 19th century, Classical topics had themselves become historicized, and were thus received less as markers of social meaning, and more as conventions defining an emerging tradition. On the other hand, 19th century’s composers also devised fresh topics, which as facets of a new style are conceptually opposed to topics associated with the Classical past. (ibid.)

In this realm, different theorists have provided their own purpose-built topics, as Horton also discloses in the following Table 2, comprising definitions by Márta Grabócz, Kofi Agawu, and Janice Dickensheets, suitable for covering music from early to late Romanticism. As can be observed, some of these nomenclatures are reasonably ascribable to one or more categories by Martinelli too, as well as to broader tendencies such as Orientalism and Exoticism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century music.

1. Aria style	17. Italian style
2. Bardic style	18. Lamenting (elegiac)
3. <i>Bel canto</i> (singing / declaiming)	19. <i>Lied</i> style
4. Bird call	20. Lugubrious style (lament / <i>appassionato</i>)
5. Bolero	21. Nature theme
6. <i>Biedermeier</i> style	22. Pantheistic style
7. <i>Chinoiserie</i>	23. Pathetic
8. Chivalric style	24. <i>Religioso</i>
9. Declamatory style	25. Scherzo
10. Demonic style	26. Spanish style
11. Fairy music	27. <i>Style hongrois</i>
12. Folk style	28. <i>Stile appassionato</i>
13. <i>Grandioso</i>	29. Tempest style
14. Gypsy music	30. <i>Totentanz</i>
15. Heroic style	31. Virtuosoic style
16. Indianist style	32. Waltz

Table 2. List of nineteenth-century musical topics as elaborated by Márta Grabócz, Kofi Agawu, and Janice Dickensheets. (Horton 2014: 698)

A less schematic approach to the matter derives from the idea of “structural listening” as elaborated by Rose Subotnik, a way of appreciating music based on the identification of patterns as the guiding thread of the listening experience, “an active mode that, when successful, gives the listener the sense of composing the piece as it actualizes itself in time” (Subotnik

1996: 150). In this sense, as Andrew Dell'Antonio observes, Subotnik takes distance from the historical tradition of this practice, as conveyed in the work by Arnold Schoenberg and Theodor Adorno:

In her usage, the term designates an approach to listening that considers musical works as autonomous structures defined wholly through some implicit and intelligible principle of unity. Structural listeners who believe in the autonomous art work believe also in the possibility of reasoned musical discourse, and thus seek to find objectively determinable interconnectedness of structure based on concretely unfolding logic and on the self-developing capacity of a motivic-thematic kernel. This leads them to end by locating musical value wholly within some formal sort of parameter, to which it is the listener's business to attend. (Dell'Antonio 2004: 2)

In contrast, Subotnik intends structural listening as a highly contextualized phenomenon, not solely depending on the listener's ability "to receive the composer's coherent structural message in its full detail," based "on a very specific notion of listening, one that can only be gained through technical training" (ibid.), but also welcoming their own input descended from a concrete background of intellectual and cultural tools. According to Subotnik, "the communication of ideas depends on concrete cultural knowledge, and on the power of signs to convey a richly concrete open-endedness of meaning through a variety of cultural relationships" (Subotnik 1996: 167): in other words, the listener shapes the process of musical perception in a search for recurring signs throughout, which is based on their own capability to discern them.

A similar approach allows contemplation of topics in the vast realm of twentieth-century music with a sufficient degree of freedom: the analyst may identify recurring marks in a musical work as the most significant in order to reveal its expressive meaning, also based on their own viewpoint. In this respect, Agawu also contends that the identification of topics mostly "relies on a learned competence of sensitivity to these conventions": the analyst's own erudition plays a fundamental role in identifying them within a music piece as the starting point for "a coherent verbal narrative for the piece at hand" (Agawu 1991: 33–34). However, this does not necessarily impose an explicit program, but rather offers a bunch of scattered signs disclosing one or more of a work's possible orientations.

As Julian Hellaby observes, "to carry meaning, topics are not only invoked in a composition by the composer but need to be recognized as such by the listener and [...] the performer" (Hellaby 2020: 32). In other words, a fundamental role is ascribed to the competency of the performer to "identify and appreciate topical references in musical works" (ibid.). In addition, in examining piano music by John Ireland (1879–1962), Hellaby also assesses the bond between the perceived presence of topicality and its implementation during the performance in the interdependency between pictorial intent and recurring idiomatic

instrumental figurations (what he calls *idio-topics*), which in turn correspond to a variety of concrete pianistic gestures (ibid.: 33–36).

With this theoretical background in mind, the following sub-chapter presents the author's suggestion as for what may be considered specifically Primitivistic features in piano music repertoires and, most importantly for the artistic research paper, what challenges and perspectives such features present to music performers.

1.2.3. "The Primitivistic Topic"

Drawing on the previous research and perceiving a lack of clear distinction of the "pianistic otherness" with an inclination to aesthetic Primitivism, one is encouraged to investigate whether it is possible to define a topic of Primitivistic style in piano music, comprehensive of all possible variants contemplated, for instance, by Martinelli in his classification and based on recurring marks that would directly imply concrete pianistic tasks (as it is for many other univocally defined styles, such as the *stile brillante* or *cantabile* to mention a few). To this aim, the author of the present artistic research paper attempts at proposing a set of indicators of a supposed "Primitivistic topic", or style, in piano music, as they can be acknowledged in the works of different composers.

One such indicator is certainly percussiveness, even though composers were already acquainted with the innate percussive nature of piano from the very start of the instrument's history. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) would enhance this characteristic within his *Alla turca. Allegretto* from his Piano Sonata K. 331 (1778), in which fast, clamped *arpeggiato* chords attempt at emulating music by the Turkish infantry's bands, rich with bells, rattles and other small such instruments. A similar outcome is recognizable in works imitative of marches and parades, as well as evoking solemn celebrations, usually accompanied by ensembles inclusive of percussion instruments such as Franz Schubert's *Three Military Marches* (1818), Franz Liszt's *Les cloches de Genève* (1834), Modest Mussorgky's *The Great Gate of Kiev* (from *Pictures at an Exhibition*, 1874).

Indisputably, different Avant-garde trends promoted this characteristic to a cliché of distortion of the aesthetic paradigms of academic music and a source of bewilderment to the average European-trained ear. Primitivists most likely associate it with the savageness and uproar taken from peasant or tribal sonorities: such qualities rely on two distinctive features of music, which are compulsive and obsessive rhythms, often tightly organized in complex and asymmetric metres, and non-conventional timbres, innate to instruments alien to Western musicality.

Another aspect concerns the substantial exiguity and repetitiveness of the employed musical material, although it can be very complexly organized. In general, melodic profiles tend to be modelled around a central note and move within a narrow range. Their sources are often non-diatonic scales, mostly deduced from non-Western musical heritages, so that a lack of clear leading notes can be perceived along with no correspondence between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of music in a tonal sense, while rhythm preponderates as the main unifying and organizing trait of a composition.

Unquestionably, references to non-Western sources are widespread too, although they are not a safe indicator of a “Primitivistic” character of music on their own. Nevertheless, they are scattered across all such repertoires in combination with the other characteristics mentioned above, thus making it possible to more clearly discern the peculiar features of a supposed Primitivistic style in piano music as follows:

- Percussiveness and rhythmical emphasis.
- Exiguity and repetitiveness of musical material, that is, patterns.
- Reference to non-Western sources (the latter disclosing remarkable pictorial intent).

In relation to the aforementioned features, and from a performer’s point of view, the following observations naturally come to mind with the aim of framing Primitivism in the tradition of piano performance:

- A percussive use of the instrument provokes an utter distortion of those aesthetic qualities, such as the ones of *espressivo* and *cantabile*, traditionally bound to the paradigm of pianistic performance of a Romantic derivation,¹⁵ which is generally denied by avant-gardist movements to different extents. In this particular case, the newly formed aesthetic canon welcomes harshness, coarseness, and brutality, and, as a consequence, the pianistic approach mutates accordingly too: the array of pianistic tasks and gestures at stake remarkably increases, and so does the number of technical challenges to be faced by a performer, as will be examined below in regard to selected music examples.
- Simplicity and repetitiveness remarkably affect motivic elaboration: as mentioned before, Primitivistic music privileges circularity instead of linearity, so that reiterated and juxtaposed motivic units are generally preferred to developing melodic lines. This fact also redefines musical form to the detriment of the more crystallized structures, such as the sonata form, characterized by sophisticated and quite strictly regulated

¹⁵ Both aesthetic qualities, deduced from the operatic singing tradition, find their roots in the pianistic school of Muzio Clementi (1752–1832), exploring the application of the principle of *legato* to the piano keyboard and thus giving impulse to a vocal paradigm of pianistic expression to be ultimately absorbed by composers of the Romantic era such as Chopin, Liszt, etc. (Aleksavičius 2019: 40–49).

methods of organization of melodic material. The predominance of reiterated patterns over wide-ranging melodic constructions equally entails renewed criteria of musical expression and, as a consequence, differing pianistic approaches too. Last but not least, utter simplicity might also ultimately leave no room for any virtuosity, another very important aspect in the tradition of piano music performance.

- The reference to non-Western sources, foreign to the traditional developmental procedures and aesthetic paradigms of mainstream piano repertoires, expands the boundaries of artistic expression by opening up to diversity, variety, and “otherness,” as previously observed in the field of visual arts. In this sense, the gaze upon the “Other” also often matches with a prominent anti-academicism: extra-European plurality is seen as a herald of innovation against standard norms and values.

As will be revealed in the following chapters of this artistic research paper, these elements are observable to a different extent in musical works emphasizing one aspect of a Primitivistic penchant in music or another as theorized by Martinelli in his classification. All such characteristics are mirrored in twentieth-century piano music by diverse composers to different degrees, along with the specifics of Primitivistic style as listed above, thus making possible to more clearly ascribe one composition or another to the trend of Primitivism.

To summarize, a Primitivistic piano music piece will potentially reveal some of the following matches:

- Correspondence with one or more categories by Dario Martinelli (as listed in 1.2.1), also disclosing some of the potential interactions with Ratner’s array of genres, styles and pictorial devices (see 1.2.2).
- The presence of one or more features of the style of Primitivistic piano music according to the author of the present artistic research paper (as disclosed in 1.2.3).

These guidelines will be applied in Chapter 2, dedicated to individual composers having embraced Primitivistic aesthetics within their piano works, also leading to significant innovations in the pianistic style and to a variety of performative issues arising in this repertoire, as it is going to be examined.

As mentioned previously, a major focus is given to the geographical/anthropological aspect, as the one directly conveying the original concept of “primitive” from the field of visual representation (formerly discussed in this thesis) and giving impulse to additional re-interpretations of it as summarized within Martinelli’s categorization. In this sense, the present artistic research paper aims at providing the starting point for a coherent narrative on the topic of Primitivism in the field of piano music, to be furtherly expanded through future investigations on this matter by other scholars, also comprehensive of more possible facets.

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF PRIMITIVISM IN PIANO MUSIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

2.1. Geographical/Anthropological Primitivism: Orientalism and Exoticism

According to Dario Martinelli (see Chapter 1.2.1), Primitivism can be observed in a geographical/anthropological form when it contemplates “any human civilization perceived as having remained in an earlier stage of evolution than modern society” (Martinelli forth. 2021), thus potentially comprising both an exotic and folkloric element. The present sub-chapter will focus on the first aspect (while the second shall be discussed in the following one). In this sense, a significant turning point is represented by the vividly increasing popularity of Orientalist and Exoticist leanings at the beginning of the twentieth century, paving the way for more decisive turns towards modern Primitivism by composers of the following generations.

Obviously, Eastern influences could already be ascertained within the musical works by composers from previous epochs, such as Couperin’s *La sultanne*, Mozart’s *Alla turca. Allegretto*, and Saint-Saëns’s *Caprice Arabe* Op. 96, albeit without undermining the very Occidental characteristics of music. In contrast, twentieth-century composers more profoundly drew upon all such musical backgrounds aiming at heavily modernizing their musical languages.

In this respect, the American musicologist Ralph Locke points out five main interrogatives to be taken into account while carrying out an Orientalist study in the field of music:

1. How much of the work actually reflects the true Orient?
2. How does the composer’s imagination interplay with that?
3. How is the Orient musically and extra-musically portrayed?
4. If Oriental musical sources are there, how do they relate to other sources of musical Exoticism?
5. Do all these musical sources eventually relate to any actual Oriental music? (i.e., Is any actual music material of Oriental derivation employed?) (Locke 2009: 25)

2.1.1. Leaning Towards the “Otherness” in Early Twentieth-century Music

Locke’s outline from the introduction to this chapter may come to our aid in examining, for instance, selected musical works by Claude Debussy (1862–1918). The composer’s

Orientalist leanings responded to a yearning for a French music revival in conformity with a profound Anti-Romantic sentiment along with a more cosmopolitan vision. Such an approach certainly bears the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who had recommended drawing from very geographically remote music cultures, seen as a herald of freshness and innovativeness, and as an antidote to the Romantic aesthetics, thus providing the key for the long-desired renovation (Carrozzo & Cimagalli 2001: 300).

Debussy’s fascination with Oriental art and culture, present since his early years of study, culminated in his encounter with Javanese gamelan during the 1889’s Parisian Exhibition, which conferred an undeniable mark onto all his music. The composer would himself mention this experience in many letters to his friends and include his impressions in some articles too, such as the following review from 1913:

There used to be (indeed, despite the troubles that civilization has brought, there still are) some wonderful peoples who learn music as easily as one learns to breathe. Their school consists of the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind in the leaves, and a thousand other tiny noises, which they listen to with great care, without ever having consulted any of those dubious treatises. Their traditions are preserved only in ancient songs, sometimes involving dance, to which each individual adds his own contribution century by century. Thus, Javanese music obeys laws of counterpoint which make Palestrina seem like child’s play. (Debussy, quoted from Tamagawa 1998: 22)

Debussy’s music incorporated many Javanese musical features, such as expanded harmony, layered textures, and a variety of timbres. “Gamelan” is the actual Javanese word for “orchestra,” in which the instruments are grouped by means of their univocal function. All these interwoven functions eventually convey the key elements of gamelan music such as a nuclear theme, its paraphrase, and an independent counter-melody (Bird 1982: 31). In this regard, the Japanese pianist and musicologist Kiyoshi Tamagawa distinguishes five main criteria for determining the strength of this effect in Debussy’s music:

- A title evocating an Oriental or exotic setting, character, or event.
- Large-scale repetition structures or *ostinati*, ultimately distributed across circular or symmetrical constructions.
- Non-diatonic scales distancing the traditional major-minor opposition, i.e. whole-tones and pentatonic scales.
- Research for timbres and colours suggestive of gamelan music, that is light, pedalled *staccati*, soft dyads, low fifths held by the pedal, and quick high-notes figurations.
- Textures suggestive of gamelan music: slow-moving, sustained gong-type sounds in a low register, a melody in the middle register, and fast-moving figurations in the upper register of the keyboard. (Tamagawa 1998: 32–25)

Having this in mind, and also relying on the characteristics of the previously debated

style of Primitivistic piano music (see Chapter 1.2), it is more than appropriate to contemplate Debussy's Orientalistic outcome as a forerunner of more authentically Primitivistic tendencies. More precisely, the following features of Debussy's piano works can be ascribed to musical Primitivism:

- The imitation of percussive sonorities is widespread.
- The circularity of gamelan music fosters a general sense of repetitiveness.
- The reference to non-Western sources is deliberate.

In addition, by making a reference to Table 1 from Chapter 1.2.2, which summarizes the relationship between Martinelli's categories and Ratner's terminology (types, styles, pictorial devices), we can spot a thorough correspondence between the *style* of the gamelan and the music by Debussy it inspired, thus allowing us to attribute the latter to the realm of geographical/anthropological Primitivism.

The suite *Pour le piano* (1901) adds value to this argument, besides also ascertaining some of the features theorized by Tamagawa. The first piece of the suite, *Prélude*, often exhibits a typical gamelan textural construction: a long pedal note on the bottom, a quarter-notes melody in the middle line and fast 16th-notes figurations on top (Examples 3, 4). In addition, the whole piece largely employs non-diatonic scales, such as in the main theme appearing from b. 47 (Example 5). Finally, pedalled, percussive *staccati* frequently appear, for instance at bb. 80–81 (Example 6). Generally speaking, the employed material is frequently reiterated in analogous patterns throughout.



Example 3. C. Debussy, *Pour le piano* (*Prélude*, bb. 10–11).



Example 4. C. Debussy, *Pour le piano* (*Prélude*, bb. 74–76).



Example 5. C. Debussy, *Pour le piano* (*Prélude*, bb. 47–49).



Example 6. C. Debussy, *Pour le piano* (*Prélude*, bb. 80–81).

Another piece for piano, *Pagodes*, from the suite *Estampes* (1903), is traditionally seen as the most representative case of employment of gamelan musical material by Debussy. As it turns out, a clear three-layered construction can be appreciated throughout the whole composition, conveyed by different textural resolutions, as shown in Example 7, resulting in multiple timbral possibilities. Polyrhythms are also given a predominant role, for instance at bb. 13–14 (Example 8).



a)



b)



c)

Example 7. C. Debussy, *Pagodes* a) bb. 33–34 b) bb. 37–38 c) bb. 85–86.



Example 8. C. Debussy, *Pagodes* (bb. 13–14).

It must be noted that an exotic flavour is perceivable in many other compositions by Debussy not bearing any direct connection with the gamelan music tradition, for instance, in some of the *Préludes*, which refer to either remote epochs (e.g., *Canope*) or different geographical places (e.g., *La puerta del vino*), and which rely on an evocative intent rather than specific musical means. Nevertheless, as is known, none of the preludes have their title on the top; they are only disclosed on the bottom of the last page, attesting to the composer's intention not to pursue any focused representation of specific items, but, in conformity with his own symbolic vein, to simply allude to them, evoking some of the possible sensations related to them (Rinehart 1970: 19).

Pianistically speaking, despite an apparent freedom, Debussy's musical thinking stands as meticulously constructed, showing clear prerogatives and purposes. Consequently, his pianism equally demands specific skills of sound control and expression, which also foresaw percussiveness as an aesthetic quality in the decades to come. The composer himself provided detailed remarks and guidelines concerning how to perform his own music, as reported by his scholars and students. Marguerite Long, one of the most renowned pianists trained by Debussy, gives evidence of her master's concern for utter precision in performing his own music, in regard to both clarity of the articulation and timing. Long reports:

Debussy underlined his musical ideas with unbelievably minute precision. This he would say, "Four semiquavers mean four 16th-notes. The hands are not meant to hover in the air over the piano, but to enter into it". (Long 1972: 13)

As Sachi Patricia Hirakouji commented, "Debussy presumably intends that each 16th-note in a passage needs to be articulated with precision, such that each 16th-note in a beamed group retains its own identity, as opposed to blurring into indistinction as a result of sloppy execution" (Hirakouji 2008: 53). In addition, "his remark about *entering the piano* likely refers to the deeply tactile connection the player should maintain with the instrument" (ibid.).

These recommendations find perfect application in the 32th-notes passage shown in Example 7c, in which fast notes delineated as much as possible favour the accurate perception

of the three separate layers of the construction, as can be heard in gamelan music: a pianist, therefore, is demanded to produce both clarity and fluidity in the execution, in compliance with the need for distinctness of the single notes and their arrangement within a broader, more uniform pianistic gesture.

Indeed, the reiteration of similar patterns of notes, encompassed within the interval of minor eleventh G#–A, facilitates the retention of the same hand position throughout the passage. However, both the amplitude of the interval itself and the collocation of the whole passage on the black keys determine a full extension of the hand and, consequently, a greater lengthening of the fingers rather than the compactness generally required for the execution of similar excerpts. Thus, maintaining crispness and brightness in the articulation without fully relying on the very fingertips, while also fluctuating back and forth along the keyboard, may represent a challenging task for a performer.

Having accounted for that, the resulting sound effect would be that of a luminous cascade of tones recalling the smoothness and brilliance of wind chimes, bearing each its own vividness and individuality, neither interfering with nor prevailing on the two other layers underneath, but rather harmoniously filling them. Thus, a percussive effect is indisputably achieved: not that of a stroke, but rather of an attrition, such as the one produced, for instance, while rubbing suspended bells or doing a *glissando* on the surface of a xylophone.

Another pupil of Debussy, Maurice Dumesnil, ascribes the composer's meticulousness to his full mastery of the double escapement, as the capability of maintaining control over a passage on the edge of resistance of the keys themselves, which is generally recommended while playing the one mentioned above: the ascertained extended position of the fingers encourages a similar approach, conferring more levity to the hand than a more compact setting, the latter mostly relying on strength and incisiveness of the finger tips.

Referring to *pianissimo* passages, Dumesnil also recommends: "Keep your fingers in contact with the keys, and do not allow them to come back all the way up, only about half way, keeping the two pedals on all the time" (Dumesnil, quoted from Hirakouji 2008: 58). Certainly, the use of *una corda* pedal provides the performer with a sense of extra safety in preserving low dynamic levels while playing quickly, which in turn favours lightness and agility.

Diversely, concerning the firmness of touch, Debussy strives for a balance between a certain rigidity and an overall flexibility. When playing chords, Debussy states, "it is not advisable to use relaxation continuously. In chords, for instance, the fingers must have a certain firmness so that notes will sound together. But it must be the firmness of rubber, without any stiffness whatsoever" (Debussy, quoted from ibid.).

The series of repeated chords shown in Example 5 offers a valid chance for applying

this principle. Indisputably, their collocation in the middle-upper register of the keyboard unfolds the risk of resulting in too harsh and compressed a sound if not calibrating the movement of vertical repetition with the horizontal linearity of the passage in its entirety. For this reason, both solidity of hands and fingers and flexibility of arms and wrists are advised, along with a generous use of pedal to enhance sound amalgamation and an overall bell-like resonance. Indeed, a percussive effect is achieved again, albeit extremely polished and restrained in comparison to the further developments of such aesthetics towards harshness and brutality as will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Indisputably, Debussy's pianism shows noteworthy similarities with that of Maurice (1875–1937), concerning the meticulous diversification of sound layers, touches, and timbres as they appear in gamelan music. For example, in *La vallée des cloches*, from the suite *Miroirs* (1904–05), Ravel distributes musical material between six distinguished levels across different registers, generating a sophisticated timbral diversification. The coexistence of multiple metres is equally endorsed by asymmetrically juxtaposing the diverse fragments of music (Example 9).



Example 9. M. Ravel, *La vallée des cloches* (bb. 6–7).

A similar output is recognizable throughout Ravel's pianistic outcome within more complex musical constructions as well, such as in *Une barque sur l'océan* from the same cycle (Example 10) and many others, in which the impact of gamelan music is barely distinguishable as enriched by a robust transcendental technique, more elaborated textures, and very diversified melodic and harmonic solutions deriving from other spheres of influence, such as the music vocabularies of blues and jazz.



Example 10. M. Ravel, *Une barque sur l'océan* (bb. 30–33).

One of the features of Ravel's pianism mainly concerning the purpose of the current artistic research paper is the composer's peculiar use of thumbs, paving the way for further developments in piano technique towards the direction of percussiveness as well. Maurice Rosenthal (1862–1946) provides a detailed portrait of Ravel's physical relationship with the instrument in this sense:

He sat very low, with his hands held flat and close to the keys. One consequence of this unorthodox posture is the relative absence of octave passages in his piano music. On the other hand, he made great use of his thumbs which Roland Manuel, Maurice Delage and I used to call the strangler's thumbs. He had, in fact, knotted tapering fingers – not at all the hands of a pianist – with powerful thick thumbs, connected very high on the palm and at some distance from the other fingers. This anatomical peculiarity imparted a rare agility to his thumbs and one can see this in action in the piano works as the thumbs pass freely under the other fingers to play a melody. (Rosenthal, quoted from Marnat 1995: 36)

In addition, Maurice Delage observed: “Ravel's thumbs could move freely around the central joint and cover two keys simultaneously” (Delage, quoted from Nichols 1987: 89). Roy Howat identifies the main trait of Ravel's hand layout in what he calls “the prehensile hand and thumb”, that is, “a naturally falling thumb” combined with “natural wrist flexibility” (Howat 2009: 297–299). Such an arrangement allows particular sound effects to be created, such as the evocation of bells.

For instance, in *La vallée des cloches* Ravel imagines this solution for the accented notes on top of the chords at the left hand in the very last bars, in order to confer, through a deep, long pedal, a particular resonance effect typical of bells (Example 11).¹⁶ This pianistic gesture consists of applying a quick, elastic thumb stroke to the key while holding the pedal, like a whip

¹⁶ The imitation of such gong sonorities also reconnects to the pictorial intent (i.e. evocation of non-Western sonorities) contemplated within the realm of geographical/anthropological Primitivism in Table 1.

crack. A similar approach is recommended for playing the E# note in the middle staff at b. 6, shown in Example 9, and the following octaves played by crossing the left-hand on the upper register.

Such a degree of freedom in the hand represents a significant addressing factor in the development of piano technique in the following decades, giving momentum to more varied approaches to the instrument towards a preeminent timbral and acoustical research, including the character of brutal percussiveness identified as one of the qualifying traits of Primitivistic music.



Example 11. M. Ravel, *La vallée des cloches* (bb. 52–54).

Another pianist and composer from the turn of the century, Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938), manifests an equally clear influence from Javanese culture and music, observed directly by him during his tours, in his *Java Suite* (1925). In the preface to this work, Godowsky himself gives evidence of the profound fascination of Javanese sound experience on his musical outcome, called by him “musical travelogues”:

The Javanese are docile people, with quaint customs and old traditions. Possessing an ancient culture, they combine originality with proficiency in various arts. [...] All Javanese music is in duple or quadruple times. Its sameness of beat and its monotony of pulsation have a lulling, hypnotizing effect; its polyrhythms, syncopations, triplet-figures and manifold passage-patterns help to stimulate interest. (Godowsky 1925)

Most importantly, Godowsky provides rather detailed indications to a performer, aimed at specific aural results imitative of various sonorities deduced from Javanese music. For instance, concerning *pianissimo*, the composer recommends “extreme softness” (ibid.), pursuing the subtlety and lightness of a myriads of small percussion instruments gently combining with each other as in gamelan performances (Example 12), to be evoked by means of equal and minute finger movements on both resonance and *una corda* pedals. The composer also very distinctly emphasizes the separation between layers by means of generous articulation marks, resolving in different pianistic touches, as shown in Example 13.



Example 12. L. Godowsky, *Java Suite* (bb. 1–2).



Example 13. L. Godowsky, *Java Suite (Three Dances)* (bb. 15–16).

More broadly, the search for patterns and sonorities deduced from non-Western contexts is a prerogative, as already stated, of all musical Exoticism. Based on the well-known definition by Ralph Locke as “the evocation of a places, people or social environments which are perceived as far from home, creating something that is different, colourful and suggestive of another culture” (Locke 2009: 8), it becomes possible to potentially cover a broad array of composers in this sense. For instance, another French composer, Darius Milhaud (1892–1974), provides an utterly many-sided compositional output drawing from the most experimental and unconventional sources of his time and enhancing them through a vivid exotic flair.

The symphonic poem *La création du monde* (1923) is traditionally seen as the manifesto of Milhaud’s Exoticism, giving evidence of his prolonged exposure to African-American music. The composer initially experienced it in the music of Billy Arnold’s American Novelty Jazz Band in London in 1920. Milhaud himself enthusiastically reported this experience:

The new music was extremely subtle in its use of timbre: the saxophone breaking in, squeezing out the juice of dreams, or the trumpet, dramatic or languorous by turns, the clarinet, frequently played in its upper register, the lyrical use of the trombone, glancing with its slide over quarter-tones in crescendos of volume and pitch, thus intensifying the feeling; and the whole, so various yet not disparate, held together by the piano and subtly punctuated by the complex rhythms of the percussion, a kind of inner beat, the vital pulse of the rhythmic life of the music. The constant use of syncopation in the melody was of such contrapuntal freedom that it gave the impression of unregulated improvisation, whereas in actual fact it was elaborately rehearsed daily, down to the last detail. (Milhaud et al. 1995: 98)

Milhaud’s first attempt to convey these novelties in piano music is represented by *Caramel Mou* (1921), merging the aforementioned characteristics with a more hybrid, avant-garde language: the piece explores the totally new world of syncopated music, albeit filtered

through a mere exotic fascination rather than endorsed by a true, in-depth study of its peculiar rhythms and sonorities.

Saudades do Brasil Op. 67 (1920), a set of twelve short dance movements for piano modelled on the rhythms of samba and tango, heard by the composer during his stay in Latin America in 1917–19, equally gives the listener the illusion of being exposed to authentic Brazilian rhythms and tunes. However, such a result was mostly due to the restricted faculties of discernment of the average European-trained ears at that time, rather modelled on archetypes of Exoticism than able to distinguish actual features of diverse musical backgrounds. In other words, Milhaud implemented a verisimilar imitation instead of an accurate reproduction.



Example 14. D. Milhaud, Piano Sonata Op. 33 No. 1 (I. *Décidé*, bb. 18–19).

Certainly, *Saudades do Brasil* shows affinity with the mentioned characteristics of musical Primitivism, such as a circularity of forms and rhythmical, percussive emphasis. Those features are all diffusely ascertainable in his major works too, such as his Piano Sonata Op. 33 No. 1 (1916), conveying peasant and rustic atmospheres, determined by the very simple, singsong-like melodies (which is also a *style* related to ontogenetic Primitivism as shown in Table 1) in radical contrast with the loud brutality of the more percussive episodes. A certain predilection for layered structures imitative of the gamelan can also be observed (Example 14).

As illustrated by this point, Orientalist and Exoticist leanings in piano music of the early twentieth century anticipated more authentic Primitivistic tendencies in the decades to come, as it is going to be examined in the following sub-chapter.

2.1.2. From Exoticism to Primitivism through Oriental Mysticism

Several composers from the following decades undertook a more decisive turn into Primitivism, also starting from remarkable Exoticist penchants. Among them, it is worth mentioning the Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi (1905–1988), one of the most intriguing figures of twentieth-century music as an explorer of unconventional principles of sound treatment, whose adherence to Primitivism began from an interest in Oriental poetry,

philosophy, and mysticism and manifested in the enhancement of quite specific characteristics deduced from the Tibetan aural experience. This fact results in an overt exploitation of the sound capabilities of piano inherent to its percussive and resonance properties and, as a consequence, involves peculiar pianistic tasks as well, mainly concerning pedalling and the diversity of sound attack.

The fundamental link between the composer and Eastern cultures is reflected in the essays of the French musicologist and astrologist Dane Rudhyar (1895–1985), a passionate believer in Oriental mysticism and heavily critical of the course of Western music, which, according to him, had conferred excessive importance onto formal characteristics rather than the potentiality of sound itself:

European music is an architectonic of sound, a by-product of architecture. Its notes have no individual power of life. They do not grow into a fuller life, nor multiply themselves into secondary sounds. They are cut and dried figures, rocks. The melody does not flow between those rocks, but jumps mechanically from the one to the other, fearful lest it should fall into the dark abyss of "wrong notes". (Rudhyar 1979: 4)

In the following lines, Rudhyar also focuses on the fundamental idea of sound as living energy:

Western classical music has given practically all of its attention to the framework of music, what it calls musical form. It has forgotten to study the laws of sonorous energy, to intuit music in terms of actual sound entities, in terms of energy, which is life. It has thus evolved mostly splendid abstract frames in which no painting is to be seen. Therefore, the Oriental musicians often say that our music is a music of holes. Our notes are edges of intervals, of empty abysses. The melodies jump from edge to edge. Neither flies nor glides. [...] The inner space is empty. (Rudhyar 1930: 13)

In other words, Rudhyar considers the intervallic relationships between pitches as intended in Western music to be excessively note-centred, so that only their extremities (the actual notes) are brought to the foreground, whereas no attention is given to the space between them, enclosing a true, living entity. Rudhyar asserts:

A tone is a living cell. It is composed of organic matter. It has the power of assimilation, of reproduction, of making exchanges, of growing. It is a micro-cosmos reflecting faithfully the macro-cosmos, its laws, its cycles. [...] Because of this, a tone is not a mere mathematical point without dimensions or density, but it is a living reality, a sound. It is defined by various sets of characteristics, pitch and quality being only the outer one. (ibid.: 18)

Scelsi absorbed all these elements from Rudhyar's conceptual world into his own stylistic approach to the matters of sound and timbre, as he himself explained in the essay *Sound and Music* (1981), introducing the new parameter of "depth" in music:

Additionally, sound is spherical, but while listening to it, it seems to us to possess only two dimensions:

pitch and duration; the third, depth – we know that it exists, but in a certain sense it escapes us. The superior harmonics and less-audible sub-harmonics sometimes give us the impression of a vast and complex sound with properties other than that of pitch or duration, but it is difficult for us to perceive this complexity. Moreover, one would not know how to notate it musically. In painting, perspective was discovered, which gives the impression of depth, but so far in music, despite all the advances in stereophonic technology and all the subsequent experiments, we have not managed to escape from the two dimensions of pitch and duration, and to create a sense of the real spherical dimension of sound. (Scelsi 1981: 285)

According to Scelsi, such an approach would reveal the true essence of sonic experience, expanding the conventional boundaries of pitch and duration towards a more extensive notion of music, inclusive of dynamics, timbres, and sound attacks with equal significance. In this regard, Ivan Elezovic, a scholar of Scelsi's work, summarizes:

The third dimension consists of the other musical parameters such as articulation (microtonal clusters, trills, tremolos, glissandos, wide vibrato, flutter tongue), instrumentation, dynamics, and texture, upon which Scelsi heavily relied in his music. It seems that the third dimension also defines particular aspects according to which each single tone is observed and perceived. These aspects identify a single tone, recognized as a substance with a complex configuration. These characteristics, together with the pitch and duration, give each tone a particular individuality and personality. (Scelsi, quoted from Elezovic 2007: 8)

Suite No. 8 *Bot-Ba: Evocation of Tibet with its Monasteries on High Mountain Summits: Tibetan Rituals, Prayers and Dances* (1952) is a set of six compositions inspired by Tibetan religious life, as the title indicates. Scelsi conveys the most recondite and supernatural forces from such an intangible background by rather focused musical means: these are essentially harsh dissonances generating torment and disquietude, brutal percussiveness in association with rhythmical emphasis, and particular care for fluctuation and resonance as qualifying traits of the overall sound experience, as clarified in the previous excerpts.

For instance, the first movement is a relentless chain of trembling figurations sprinkled with single notes or small clusters strokes. The composer attempts to evoke the essence of Tibetan musicality, strongly characterized by the use of unpitched percussion instruments, whose character of pure vibration, unconditioned by exact tuning, reflects his aesthetic purposes. The gong in particular is extensively quoted: such recurring mark conveys a pictorial intent (i.e., evocation of non-Western sonorities) inherent to the aspect of anthropological/geographical Primitivism as illustrated in Table 1.

Another characteristic of Scelsi's music, which is also contemplated in this composition, is the pre-set delineation of very restricted pitch ranges around which to model the entire musical discourse, as most radically implemented, for instance, in *Quattro pezzi per orchestra*

(*su una sola nota*) (It. "Four Pieces for Orchestra on a Single Note", 1959).¹⁷ The composer himself describes the aesthetic parameters behind this compositional choice as follows:

Reiterating a note for a long time, it grows large, so large that you even hear harmony growing inside it. When you enter into a sound, the sound envelops you and you become part of the sound. Gradually, you are consumed by it and you need no other sound: all possible sounds are contained in it. (Scelsi, quoted from Castanet & Montaguti 1993: 25)

On such basis, the first piece of the set is centred on F and F# notes, which serve as a focal point for all subsequent developments and embellishments (Example 15). In this sense, the exiguousness and repetitiveness of musical ideas, as well as the reference to specific non-Western sources, reveals a certain affinity with Primitivistic style as was presented in Chapter 1.2.

The second piece is also essentially based on a few main musical ideas, all equally exploring the timbral possibilities of the instrument in a rather percussive way across the different registers. These ideas are:

- Shrill, screeching patterns of repeated dissonant clusters in the upper register marked as *squillante* (It. "Blaring," Example 16a).
- More sombre and ominous dissonant chords in the low register, dynamically oscillating from *pianissimo* to *sforzando* (Example 16b).
- Fast, mordant figures in the lower register (Example 16c).
- An *ostinato* episode marked as *percussivo* (It. "Percussive") engaging the very opposite registers of the keyboard (Example 16d).

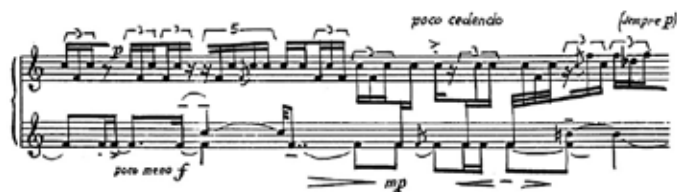
As can be observed, each of them efficaciously conveys the above-mentioned principle of minimal variation of musical materials, for instance by slightly altering the quality of intervals or chords, or by marginally varying the rhythmical ratio.

Once again, the characteristics of music seem to befit the previously stated definition of Primitivistic music: percussiveness and rhythmical emphasis; exiguousness and repetitiveness of musical material; and reference to non-Western sources. Pianistically speaking, it is evident how a deliberate percussive approach throws its weight all around, being the sole technical means in the running, as well as percussiveness posing as the only aesthetic quality all through the piece.

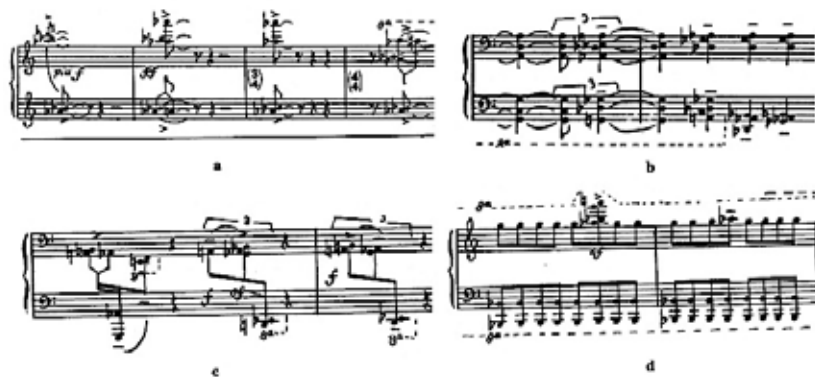
The latter is utterly brought to the foreground in several other moments during the cycle, for instance in an episode from the third movement marked as *percussivo, come xilofono* (It.

¹⁷ Such compositional choice may also recall the topic of mechanism ascribable to the front of rhetorical/formal Primitivism (as shown in Table 1): the reiterated use of very essential material constitutes the unifying thread of the piece.

“Percussive, like a xylophone”, Example 17a) or in the savage and flamboyant fourth movement, opening with a *percussivo, come gong* (It. “Percussive, like a gong”, Example 17b), reminiscent of Henry Cowell’s most frightful sonorities, and evolving in a fiery *Orgiastico* (It. “Orgiastic”, Example 17c). The Bartókian finale is also written in the style of an impetuous toccata, exhibiting persistent, pulsing chords and clusters (Example 17d).



Example 15. Excerpt from the first movement of Suite No. 8 for piano by Giacinto Scelsi (no bars).



Example 16. Excerpts from the second movement of Suite No. 8 for piano by Giacinto Scelsi a) 5–8 b) 23–24 c) 47–48 d) 69–70.



Example 17. Excerpts from Suite No. 8 for piano by Giacinto Scelsi a) 12–13 b) no bars c) 23–25 d) 46–47.

The following Suite No. 9 *Tai: A succession of episodes which alternatively express time – or more precisely, time in motion and a person symbolized by cathedrals or monasteries, with the sound of the sacred “Om”* (1953), also touching upon Tibetan spirituality, comprises nine movements, each of them featuring short, repeated motivic units, aiming at evoking specific timbres and sonorities.

Some of the composer’s remarks to encourage the achievement of the appropriate sound effect are characteristically pianistic. For instance, both the second and seventh movement bear the indication *Con ped. ten. Appoggiare le dita sui tasti, premere profondamente e poi lasciar vibrare*. (It. “Keeping the pedal. Lay the fingers on the keys, press them deeply and let it resonate”), inviting a performer to rely on the resonance capability of the instrument by combining a well-weighted tactile approach to the keyboard with a generous pedalling.

In general, Scelsi’s remarks about pedalling always favour a certain abundance of it: for example, in the fifth movement he recommends *sempre con moltissimo ped.* (It. “Always with a lot of pedal”) in correspondence with a fluid agglomeration of sound patterns also labelled as *Uguale, scorrevole* (It. “Equal, flowing,” Example 18). Such a pianistic approach translates into a sort of “liquid sound,” a uniform stream of pitches and colours. On a similar basis, the third movement begins as *Uguale, senza espressione* (It. “Equal, without expression,” Example 19) and *sempre con molto ped.* too. Likewise, the use of such long pedals favours both homogeneity and fluency, beside fostering the qualities of resonance innate to the piano.



Example 18. Excerpt from the fifth movement of Suite No. 9 for piano by Giacinto Scelsi (no bars).



Example 19. Incipit of the third movement from Suite No. 9 for piano by Giacinto Scelsi (no bars).

Several other passages also manifest rather characteristic pianistic remarks by the composer. For instance, the fourth movement exhibits the following *non molto legato, ma*

sempre appoggiando profondamente (It. “Not very *legato*, but always pushing deeply,” Example 20), to which Scelsi also adds *Ped. sempre tenuto*, naturally facilitating the obtainment of a general feeling of *legato* (not depending on the actual finger connection between subsequent key strokes) while focusing on the quality of each pressure. Finally, the composer often conveys his own auditory imagination, once again aiming at imitating sonorities from different instruments. For instance, in the second movement he specifically recommends *come campane* (It. “Like bells,” Example 21).



Example 20. G. Scelsi, Suite No. 9 for piano (IV, bb. 1-2).



Example 21. G. Scelsi, Suite No. 9 for piano (II, no bars).

At this point, Scelsi’s adherence to the paradigm of Primitivistic piano music leaves no doubt, as a sum of the following features of his piano writing:

- Percussiveness is thoroughly implemented with quite specific coloristic intents.
- Repeated patterns of different sorts (rhythmical, motivic, textural) are widespread, especially relying on very restricted pitch ranges.
- References to Tibetan musicality and spirituality are predominant. Such a characteristic unveils the overall pictorial intent as summarized in Table 1 (Chapter 1.2.2), where the author of the present artistic research paper discloses the recurring bond between Martinelli’s categories and Ratner’s terminology (types, styles, pictorial devices), thus accounting the evocation of non-Western atmospheres as the main representative trend of geographical/anthropological Primitivism.

Music by another contemporary of Scelsi, the French composer André Jolivet (1905–1974), shows an analogous tendency to combine a remarkable Exoticist vein with a more

effective leaning towards Primitivism by means of a deep philosophical foundation. In this sense, the influence of Edgar Varèse (1883–1965) was particularly significant for Jolivet: the relationship between the two posed as a proficient sodality while investigating the most recondite sides of music creation. Varèse introduced him to his own studies in acoustics, chemistry, physics of particles, and metaphysics, all aspects eventually shaping Jolivet’s concept of music as well (Jolivet H. 1978: 15).

At the time Jolivet met Varèse, the latter had already written several important works such as *Hyperprism* (1923), *Octandre* (1923), and *Intégrales* (1925), clearly exhibiting his interest in sound masses and timbral research as well as the oneness of the laws ruling the psycho-acoustic world and the Universe in general. This concept was essentially a legacy of Varèse’s attraction to the observation of natural phenomena, in light of his theoretical speculations on sound, noise, chaos and order, rarefaction and density, and matter and soul, and achieved its uppermost expression in works such as *Ionisation* (1931) and *Ecuatorial* (1934). Varèse handed all these own impressions down to his pupil Jolivet, as the latter also acknowledged: “He helped me to discover one of music’s most significant aspects: music as a magical and ritual expression of human society, [...] the balance between man and the cosmos” (Jolivet, quoted from Cadieu 1961: 2).

In 1946, Jolivet himself outlined the metaphysical bases of his music in an article entitled *Réponse à une enquête* (Fr. “Reply to an inquiry”), claiming: “I formed the canon of my aesthetic already in 1935, affirming my effort to restore to music its original, ancient sense when it was the magical and incantatory expression of the religiosity of human groups” (Jolivet 1946: 33). He continues: “All these researches, in order to produce valid results, are obliged to support human feeling. Too easily they tend toward virtuosity, or at least toward a complexity that removes music from its fundamental principle: the song of man” (ibid.: 35). According to Francis Routh:

To Jolivet and Messiaen man is part of something beyond himself: universal, eternal, spiritual man. Music is therefore not limited to the expression merely of a personal experience; it must not be tied down to the technical problems of a particular age, still less to the arbitrary solution of a particular composer. Rather the way to rediscover the one, universal, human music, whose thread had been broken, was to retrace one’s steps to the beginnings of human consciousness, to primitive and oriental civilizations, exotic modes and rhythms, the world of nature, belief in God. (Routh 1968: 65)

Jolivet’s investigation of ancient cultures and speculations about the role of music in primitive societies was also theoretically well-grounded in his readings of records by archaeologists such as Lucien Levy-Bruhl and Emile Durkheim, essays on sociology by his wife Hilda Jolivet, and the gigantic *Encyclopédie de la musique* (1913) by Albert Lavignac,

accounting for the music of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, African, and native American (Kemler 1983: 121). Bridget Conrad summarizes that:

Jolivet generally meant as primal culture an original tribal society, whose customs and features he imagined based on contemporary tribally-based societies structured around magic, superstition and a spiritual worldview, such as those found in Africa, Oceania, and native America. However, he sometimes also used the term to refer to ancient high civilizations, such as those found in Greece, India, Japan, and China. (Conrad 1994: 2)

Jolivet's most significant pianistic work in this sense is the suite *Mana* (1935), a collection of six pieces, each of them inspired by an item given to him by Varèse. The title consists of a Polynesian word literally referring to "an impersonal supernatural force or power that may be concentrated in objects or persons and that may be inherited, acquired, or conferred" (ibid.: 14). Jolivet himself reveals:

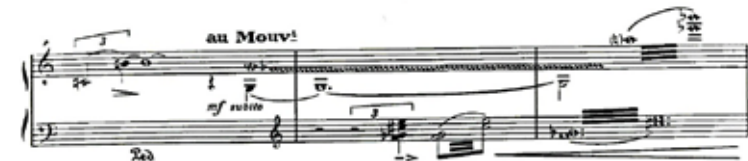
After witnessing their own daily life, these objects became my companions. By the memories they represent for me, by their naive forms or their primitive character, by the energy they have stored while living near Varèse, they have become my familiar fetishes. I entrusted them with a message that, from the aesthetic and metaphysical point of view, seems to me of paramount importance. (Jolivet, quoted from Cadieu 1961: 41)

The first piece of the set, *Beaujolais*, was inspired by a wooden puppet. The composer recommends *Avec entrain, non sans bizarrerie* (Fr. "Enthusiastically, not without eccentricity") on top, probably hinting at such character's personality as he would imagine it. The pianistic style is edgy and angular, frequently exhibiting irregular rhythms and clanging dissonances, evoking the clumsy pace of marionettes. Nevertheless, the overall metrical structure remains unvaried throughout. The general atmosphere is indisputably Varèsian: sonorities oscillate from denser and shriller sound masses to quite rarefied and punctiform events, as for the percussion instruments in *Ionisation*. Several fast figurations resolving on a longer beat certainly emulate marimba rolls, as shown in Example 22.



Example 22. A. Jolivet, *Mana* (*Beaujolais*, b. 8): the box added by the author of this research paper shows a figure imitative of marimba rolls.

L'oiseau (Fr. "The Bird"), inspired by a 1930's sculpture by Alexandre Calder, introduces additional textural features such as clusters and thick *tremoli*. The piece bears the indication *Nerveux et cassant* (Fr. "Nervous and fragile") on top, both qualities probably instilled in him by the observation of the item in question (Figure 1). Generally speaking, the music flows quite heavily and solemnly, despite the overall dispersion of musical material. The uppermost tension is achieved from bb. 16–18 by juxtaposing dissonant, percussive *tremoli* (Example 23).



Example 23. A. Jolivet, *Mana* (*L'oiseau*, bb. 16–18).

La princesse de Bali (Fr. "The Princess of Bali"), instead, is entirely percussive, as based on oppressive sonorities and an obsessive, anguished rhythmicity. However, despite the substantial uniformity, attention is conferred to the individual motivic cells and to the ways they differently interact and combine with each other while being constantly reiterated, as shown in Example 24a. The more lyrical moments carry the character of a free improvisation (Example 24b).



a



b

Example 24. A. Jolivet, *Mana* (*La princesse de Bali* a) bb. 6–7 b) bb. 10–13).

La chèvre (Fr. “The goat”) was inspired by a straw animal. Remarkable importance is given to dynamic contrasts, whilst the texture generally displays repeated patterns of dissonant harmonies whilst ornamental figurations differently vibrate around them (Example 25). The stubbornness of the animal might be portrayed through the most persistent and harsh percussive chords: that is a distinctive topic within the realm of phylogenetic Primitivism (i.e., representation of peculiar behaviours of animals), as revealed in Table 1.



Example 25. A. Jolivet, *Mana* (*La chèvre*, bb. 18–21).

La vache (Fr. “The cow”), also inspired by a sculpture by Calder (Figure 1), is placid and mysterious. A long clarinet-sorted *recitativo*, which projects the listener into a hypnotic atmosphere, plays remorselessly from the beginning to the end, occasionally enwrapped in dark, sombre harmonies. In contrast, the final piece of the set, *Pègase* (the mythological flying horse), is fierce and restless: the arrangement of music material is quite anticipatory of György Ligeti’s “organized chaos” such as it appears in his *Etudes for Piano*, but also largely owes to Jolivet’s own works for flute, since many episodes are written in the style of cadenza for this instrument (Example 26).



Example 26. A. Jolivet, *Mana* (*Pègase*, bb. 22–25).

Once again, a Primitivistic penchant is convincingly recognizable in the following characteristics of Jolivet’s piano music:

- Percussiveness is quite omnipresent, most often brutally implemented.
- Reiteration of analogous rhythmic and motivic cells throughout the pieces works as their main unifying trait.
- The theme of reference of the whole cycle belongs to the sphere of non-Western spirituality, once again marking a correspondence with the pictorial intent as the most representative of geographical/anthropological Primitivism.



Figure 1. *L'oiseau* (1930, on the left) e *La vache* (1929, on the right) by Alexandre Calder, inspiring the eponymous compositions by André Jolivet in the suite *Mana*.

As has been discussed, twentieth-century musical works for piano enlivened by an Orientalist and Exoticist flair represent a conspicuous tendency of Primitivism in music and pose as precursors of significant innovations in the aesthetics of the pianistic style towards brutal percussiveness and the circularity and fragmentariness of musical ideas. A similar outcome, along with further possibilities of development of the mentioned principles, was achieved by composers directly drawing from the musical backgrounds of their own rural traditions, as will be examined in the following chapter.

2.2. Geographical/Anthropological Primitivism: Local Folklore

As mentioned in Chapter 1.2, another aspect of geographical/anthropological Primitivism is that concerning references to a composer’s local folklore. As a matter of fact, Western composers have repeatedly fostered their creativity by drawing upon sources alien to the academic tradition, such as deriving their musical materials from trivial contexts. This phenomenon tracks back to the Middle Ages, when the study of music composition, as well as of any other discipline involving human creativity, mostly adhered to the artistic inheritance of Ancient Greek and aesthetic canons of Roman fine arts, and was filtered through the lens of

Christian theology, so that any compositional and executional practices would comply with concrete theories of intervals and the rules of counterpoint, seeking for the thorough dominance thereof.

In the course of time, many composers began to invigorate and revive their work by, for instance, gathering elements from the music of troubadours and minstrels, by referring to vernacular language instead of Latin in their lyrics, and by making reference to characters and events from the chivalric tradition (Carrozzo & Cimagalli 2001: 24). This tendency established itself during the Renaissance by means of more codified forms, such as the motet and the madrigal, both enhanced by the use of secular and folkloric material.

Taking a close look at the course of development of instrumental music during the following epochs, it is possible to acknowledge this same trend in a broad variety of multifaceted forms, that is, the collections of secular dance forms during the Baroque era, best known as suites or partitas; genres such as the mazurka and the polonaise promoted by Frédéric Chopin; or the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (1846–1856) by Franz Liszt. However, not all such works befit the present discourse about musical Primitivism, as they are firmly anchored in Western music languages and aesthetics. On the other hand, Modernist composers entered into this process more daringly and innovatively. Twentieth-century Russian composers were among them.

2.2.1. Russian Primitivism: In Search of Cultural Identity

As is commonly known, the Russian music tradition belatedly encountered Western art music due to the Austro-German hegemony over the European music scene from the Classicist period throughout the Romantic era, alongside the condemnation of secular music by the Orthodox Church, although European-trained composers and performers had been gravitating to the Imperial Court since the reign of Peter the Great (1672–1725), instituter of a cultural revolution on the basis of Enlightened monarchies in Central Europe (Cracraft 2003: 75).

The forerunner of emerging national feeling in Russian music was Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857), whose compositional outcome largely owes to the traditional folksong repertoire, including the harmonization of work and wedding songs, the attempt to imitate *balalaika* strumming as well as evoke other folk instruments' sonorities, and the employment of authentically Russian modes and rhythms (Taruskin 1992: 31). Russian folk music also became the primary source for the following generation of composers, such as Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov, who were mentioned in Chapter 1.2.

Primitivism in Russian visual art and music, thus, is tightly connected to the search for

cultural identity, aiming at distancing the imposed Western canons. As Michael Mitsuo Kunichika noticed:

One might suggest that Peter the Great's decision to modernize Russia invented the "primitive" in one stroke. In adopting Europe as the model of modernity, he designated Russia as primitive, with the term being functionally synonymous with "backward", "ignorant", "unenlightened", "superstitious", "benighted", etc. (Kunichika 2007: 3)

Likewise, Anetta Floirat observes:

It is the matter for the artists to turn the negative characteristics into positive, considering the primitive they found on Russian soil natural, not yet spoiled by civilization and as such authentic and powerful. The peasant, less influenced by European tendencies, closer to the Russian soil would be the hero of the new works and his environment as well as his beliefs, music, crafts will become the source of a new art. (Floirat 2006: 2)

Floirat, therefore, distinguishes three main sources of influence in Russian music of the late nineteenth century:

- The *lubok*, a simple Russian popular print characterized by a vivid ornamental taste, mainly depicting peasant stories and tales.
- Orthodox iconography and chanting.
- So-called "Scythian Primitivism," a look at the most archaic and pagan civilizations having inhabited Russia since the dawn of time (ibid.).

This last variant concerns the present research about Primitivism in twentieth-century music, even though its premises can be traced back to the Late Romantic period as well. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who was mentioned before, already considered chasing the quintessential soul of the Russian musical past beside his consolidated Orientalist leanings, as he would himself claim during a conversation with his pupil Alexander Spendiarov, labelling his own Orient as "far-fetched and speculative," as that was "not in his blood" (Yastrebtsev & Jonas 1986: 468).

As Adalyat Issiyeva noticed, Rimsky-Korsakov's doubts were fostered by specific circumstances of the time:

After Félicien David's *Le Désert*, which was inspired by his travel to the French Orient; Mily Balakirev's *Tamara*, inspired by music of peoples living in the Caucasus; and Camille Saint-Saëns's opera *Samson et Dalila* and the *Egyptian* Piano Concerto, motivated by the composer's travels to Algeria and Egypt, it seemed almost indispensable for a respected composer to be immersed in Oriental culture before creating a proper (i.e. "authentic") Oriental piece of music. Other conditions could also include cultural or genetic inheritance, which, in the case of Russia, was not unusual because of Russia's unique geographical advantage of sharing land with the East and steady assimilation over a few centuries of Eastern and Southern people living on the outskirts of the Empire. (Issiyeva 2018: 3)

Diversely, Rimsky-Korsakov's earliest impressions of the East derived from very few direct experiences, including a trip to Caucasus in 1874 and his visit to the Parisian Exposition in 1889; most of his knowledge about the musical Orient was mediated by Balakirev's sketchbook, comprising a huge set of transcriptions of authentic Caucasian tunes (ibid.).

Most significant is the introduction of the Polovtsian element in the opera *Prince Igor* (1890) by Alexander Borodin (1833–1887). *Polovtsi* or Cumans were nomadic East Turkish warriors whose presence across the Eurasian steppe has been acknowledged since the first century A.D. and whose clash against Rus' reign of the legendary Igor the Brave in 1185 outlines Borodin's narration.¹⁸ However, despite being antithetical, both Russian and Polovtsian qualitative traits were generally received as "savage" and "barbaric" when they were first introduced, for instance, to the French public by the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev in 1909. Arthur Symons wrote about this occurrence:

The primitive and myth-making imagination of Russians shows a tendency to regard metaphors as real and share these tendencies with the savage, that is to say with the savagery that is in them, dependent as they are on rudimentary emotions. Other races, too long civilized, have accustomed themselves to the soul, to mystery. Russia, with centuries of savagery behind it, still feels the earth about its roots, and the thirst in it of the primitive animal. It has lost none of its instincts, and it has just discovered the soul. (Symons 1923: 287)

Perhaps such misinterpretation originated from the fact that such works as *Prince Igor* were presented by Diaghilev along with more Orientalistic ones, for example, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*:

There is yet another reason why Orientalism is so readily identified with the Russian national character. At about the turn of the 20th century, Russian music first came to the attention of the Western public in Paris. Presented chiefly with Oriental works, the Parisians, unprompted, considered them to be "typically Russian". Understandably so: to them, Russia herself was part of the mysterious East, of Oriental "otherness". (Maes 2002: 181)

A true Scythian phase coincides with the years immediately before World War I (1911–1914). As Floirat summarizes:

The Scythianism takes its name from the Scythians, an Iranian-speaking nomadic, horse-riding tribe who inhabited the steppe, roughly between the Black sea and the Caspian Sea, approximately between the 9th and the 4th century B.C. Thus, they occupied the Russian territories before the Slavs and were regarded as a sort of mythical ancestors of the Russians [...]. The Scythians became not only a historical reference but also a symbol of savagery: an ancient, barbarous race, coarse and brutal. It is this image of a Russian-savage, because descendant of Scythians, that the artists choose to oppose to the Western-civilized. (Floirat 2006: 3)

One of the most representative works within this aesthetic is the ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1913) by Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), "a series of ritualistic actions culminating with a young girl dancing herself to death to propitiate Yarilo" (the Slavic god of fertility and springtime), portraying the brutal and sanguinary superstition of pagan Russians. The initial idea was conceived by Stravinsky from two primary sources: the *Russian Primary Chronicles* (ca. 1113), attributed to the monk Nestor (ca. 1056–ca. 1114), and *The Slavs' Poetic Views of the Nature* (1865) by Alexander Afanasyev (1826–1871), both describing the rituality of ancient Slavonic populations, except for human sacrifices, which are never referred to in any other similar report (ibid.: 5).

The ancient Greek historian Herodotus (ca. 484 B.C.–ca. 425 B.C.), instead, seems to have accounted for this practice among the Scythian tribes, as was certainly known by the anthropologist and archaeologist Nikolai Roerich (1874–1947), who also collaborated with Stravinsky and Diaghilev in seeking additional ethnographic accuracy:

Of enemies that they take alive, they sacrifice one man in every hundred, not as they sacrifice sheep and goats, but differently. They pour wine on the men's heads and cut their throats over a bowl; then they carry the blood up on to the pile of sticks and pour it on the scimitar. They carry the blood up above, but down below by the sacred pile they cut off all the slain men's right arms and hands and throw these into the air, and depart when they have sacrificed the rest of the victims; the arm lies where it has fallen, and the body apart from it. (Herodotus / Godley 1920)

The ballet, therefore, stands as an assemblage of elements from different sources (including references to Lithuanian folksong among other things¹⁹), probably aiming at complying with the expectations of French public at the *fin-de-siècle*. In fact, Russia had long been considered by the French as a cradle of barbarity, violence, and incivility, as reported by travellers of former epochs, according to whom Russians "wallow in filth, drunkenness, gluttony, sexual promiscuity, sodomy and bestiality, and superstition" (Berman 2001: 64). In addition, several politic occurrences, such as the partition of Poland in 1772–75 among Prussia, Austria, and the Russian Empire and the increasing power of Tsarist absolutism throughout the nineteenth century fostered a remarkable sense of opposition with this nation (ibid.: 69).

On the other hand, the introduction of the French public to literary works by Russian novelists determined an initial approach by the intellectual elite, culminating in sincere enthusiasm by the end of the nineteenth century due to the successful Parisian productions by Diaghilev in the pre-war period. As Richard Taruskin observed – and it is deducible from *The Rite of Spring* – Diaghilev "created a repertory manufactured specifically for export" (Taruskin

¹⁹ Richard Taruskin pointed out several correspondences between melodies from *The Rite of Spring* and Lithuanian folk songs from the collection of Antanas Juška (1819–1880), including the very bassoon incipit (Taruskin 1996: 891–950).

¹⁸ "Polovtsian" in The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, www.britannica.com [last accessed: 31/03/2021].

1996: 552), a superbly exotic brand meeting both the “East fever” and the avant-gardist tendency. His *Ballets Russes* were immediately perceived as “primitive” and so acclaimed as a source of cultural revitalization, as Alexandre Benois also noticed:

The success of the ballets is based on the fact that Russians are still capable of behaving in their creations, that they still retain enough spontaneity to become absorbed, just as children are completely absorbed in their play, in the God-like play which is art. This secret has been lost on the Western stage, where everything is technique, everything is consciousness, everything is artificiality, whence have gradually disappeared the mysterious charm of self-oblivion, the great Dionysian intoxication, the driving force of art. (Benois, quoted from Kochno & Foulke 1970: 21)

Stravinsky’s musical output, therefore, largely conveys all such impressions, which in turn innovatively impacted the field of piano music. As is known, his piano works are fewer in number than his symphonic works, showing a clear predilection for the latter and the primary use of the former as a mere compositional medium. His early piano pieces were inspired by analogous compositions of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Alexander Scriabin. For instance, some scholars have pointed out affinities between Tchaikovsky’s *Scherzo à la Russe* Op. 1 No. 1 and Stravinsky’s *Scherzo* for piano in terms of textural and motivic elaboration, as well as an early preference for orchestral and string quartet styles of writing, leading to rather non-pianistic hand settings (Chung 2002: 45).

Another source of influence was represented by the introduction of pianos with automatic roll-playing action systems (*pianola*) as a support during the rehearsals of *Les Ballet Russes*: Stravinsky himself arranged several of his ballet scores for such mechanic instruments and became fascinated by their unique properties of rhythmicity, percussiveness, and sound density at once. Similar features progressively merged into his own pianistic style, as observable in *Circus Polka* (1942), rearranged from the homonymous symphonic work.

The piece comprises the essence of Stravinsky’s pianism: obsessive pulse, intricate texture and anguishing close-up reiterations, united with a general sense of disenchanting and manifest extravagancy. For instance, from bb. 15–22 (Example 27) the composer modelled the entire episode on the diverse combinations of tones belonging to the E minor triad in conformity with identically repeated rhythmical patterns, resulting in thirteen distinguished motivic units at the right hand and a single reiterated *ostinato* at the left hand. Stravinsky proficiently brings music back to its most essential elements, such as rhythmical pulse, intervallic relationships, and dynamic contrasts, by also emphasizing them through the thickness and shrillness of his pianistic writing.



Example 27. I. Stravinsky, *Circus Polka* (bb. 15–24).

A similar outcome comes to light within several other short pieces by Stravinsky, such as *Ragtime* (1914) and *Tango* (1940), as well as in *Three Movements from Petrushka* (1910–11). The latter is one of the most difficult pieces of repertoire for a pianist, mostly due to the composer’s attempt to retain the majority of the elements from the equivalent orchestral score, causing the performer to play the notes of several instruments with only two hands on a single instrument and, consequently, demanding solid technical skills.

Generally speaking, Stravinsky, who had previously transcribed the three movements for *pianola*, similarly employs the piano as a mechanic instrument. For example, in the opening of the first movement, *Danse russe*, his pianistic writing, distributed over three staves, evokes the idiosyncratic, odd dance of marionettes.²⁰ Thus, a pianist is required to maintain a firm hand setting all the way through and to coordinate movements that flow up and down alongside the surface of the keyboard at once, resulting in a clattering percussive effect (Example 28). Such percussiveness is brought to the foreground in the most boisterous passages, such as the *fortissimo* chords at bb. 117–121 (Example 29), to be thunderously hit and let to resound on pedal.



Example 28. I. Stravinsky, *Three Movements from Petrushka* (*Danse russe*, bb. 1–4).

²⁰ There is also an ontogenetic implication: Stravinsky reconnects to a background of popular fairy tales, conveying a playful, light-hearted atmosphere typical of childhood. Such representative trend was formerly ascertained as characteristic of ontogenetic Primitivism in Table 1.



Example 29. I. Stravinsky, *Three Movements from Petrushka* (*Danse russe*, bb. 117–121).

Indisputably, Stravinsky's pianistic outcome manifests all the characteristics of Primitivistic piano music as they have been described above:

- A pianist is required to take a rather percussive approach throughout.
- Motivic fragmentariness and repetitiveness constitute the unifying trait of the musical discourse.
- The reference to traditional folk dances and melodies is widespread, thus determining a correspondence with the Ratnerian *types* indicated as peculiar of geographical/anthropological Primitivism in Table 1 (Chapter 1.2.2).

2.2.2. Béla Bartók's Pianistic Style: From Hungarian Folksong to Modern Primitivism

Another contemporary of Stravinsky, Béla Bartók (1881–1945), provides some of the most outstanding cases of expression of a primeval character on a modern instrument starting from his own folkloric tradition, leading to considerable changes and developments in instrumental writing and technique. As we know, the style of Bartók's music went through several different phases during his creative life, in which a significant turning point is represented by his discovery of folk music in 1904 and his subsequent ethnomusicological activity until 1917–18: his fieldwork led to a recollection of three hundred and twenty strophic items as representative of over one thousand folk songs classified by tune, range, rhythms, metric, ratio of variation, performance characteristics, and other parameters (Ritchie 1986: 7).

Generally speaking, Bartók's interest in folk music was fuelled by his aim to distance himself from the influence of Romantic composers in his early works, such as the *Rhapsody Op. 1* for piano solo (1904), which looked back to Liszt's pianism (Eremiášová 2011: 3). Bartók gave evidence of this trend reversal for the first time in a letter to his sister in the same year: "Now I have a new plan: to collect the finest Hungarian folksongs and raise them, adding the best possible piano accompaniments, to the level of art-song" (Bartók, quoted from Eremiášová 2011: *ibid.*).

However, it must be emphasized that his compositional activity between 1908 and 1910

while carrying out a meticulous fieldwork in Transylvanian villages led to the progressive disclosure of a truly innovative musical language rather than a simple arrangement of pre-existing melodies, incorporating them into more elaborate compositional schemes and conveying their essential character of modality towards new ways of pitch organization. Some of the most representative works of this period are *Ten Easy Pieces* (1908), *Two Elegies* (1908–09), *Two Romanian Dances* Op. 8a (1910), and *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6 (1908–10) (Dobszay 1981: 303).

Bartók's legacy, both as a musicologist and composer, also unfolded wider perspectives on the complexity of musical phenomena: his in-depth analysis of the customs and habits surrounding music, as well as its role during the ordinary life of human communities, brought about significant feedback for the comprehension of musical creation as a living process, submitted to space-time contingencies. His investigation contemplated a multitude of variables, such as the committed occurrence (for instance, weddings, funerals, work in the fields, etc.), the diversity of instrumental ensembles, and the wide range of their morphological features. All these aspects merged into the unique character of the composer's music.

The first of the *Two Romanian Dances* exhibits some specifics of Bartók's early musicality, also in light of a proficient cohesion between both compositional and musicological effort. The piece is modelled on a short, simple melodic segment based on the so-called Romanian Minor Scale (a Dorian scale with augmented 4th degree and variable 6th and 7th degrees) of C and made out of two motivic fragments, both repeated twice over (Example 30). The initial melody is symmetrically modelled around the central note of E ♭, so that the highest and lowest pitches are respectively G and C, that is, one third above and below. F and D ♭, not belonging to the main pitch set, occasionally appear either as ornamental notes or in correspondence with weak beats. A similar configuration is maintained throughout the diverse transpositions of the main thematic idea and with different gradients of variation throughout the composition.



Example 30. Scheme of the main theme from *Romanian Dance* Op. 8a/1 by Béla Bartók.

The dance carries an approximate compounded ternary form (ABA¹) with coda:

- A (bb. 1–63) is made of several reiterations of the main thematic idea by means of diverse transpositions, inversions, rarefactions and densifications, alongside the

employment of different registers, sound levels, and textures. The main unifying trait is represented by a constant, regular pulse, emphasized by the sharpness of rhythmical patterns.

- B (bb. 64–75) is a brief, more meditative episode, equally modelled on the same musical ideas and having the character of an improvised recitative on a long pedal section.
- A¹ (bb. 76–112) is a frenetic divertissement bearing the same rhythmicity of A, leading towards an overemphatic recapitulation from b. 101.
- The coda (bb. 113–138) encompasses a conclusive cadenza based on the main musical ideas all throughout the piece.

Generally speaking, periodicity and repetitiveness characterize the overall organization of music material, whereas a leading criterion of diversification is represented by the most elementary means of variation, such as those formerly mentioned. The musical discourse is shaped on recurring ideas in different manners, so that the supposed form does not rely on the opposition between two or more different thematic regions, but rather on the diverse manipulations of the same thematic material, generating areas of contrasting character and mood. A similar outcome resembles an organized improvisation beyond any pre-set temporal dimension, as it is ascertainable in folk-singing.

Allegro Barbaro (1911), one of only a few of Bartók's single-movement compositions for piano, chases analogous purposes: the piece is entirely modelled on very restricted musical means and within both a narrow pitch range and a rather reiterative structure. On the other hand, a strong, pervasive, percussive rhythm serves as an impending driving force for the musical discourse all the way through. More refined compositions, such as *Suite Op. 14* (1916), *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs Op. 20* (1920) and *Out of Doors* (1926) equally bring rhythmical properties to the foreground.

A typical feature of Bartók's music, which is already observable in his early piano works, is the predilection for a wide range of dynamics, articulations, and textures, aiming at recalling specific demeanours from the original sources, such as different types of voicing and instrumental timbres, as well as diverse styles and genres of performance. The first *Romanian Dance* also presents such characteristics, starting from the initial theme featuring rather meticulous phrasing and articulation marks, as shown in Example 30.

The percussive character of the composer's music is appreciable in such rhythmical patterns as both the sequence of alternating H–F# and C–G *staccati* and triple-*piano* bi-chords at the left hand from bb. 1–6 (Example 31a), imitating the soft action of mallets on a pair of timpani, and the sound agglomerations from bb. 37–38 at the right hand, generating harsh dissonances (Example 31b). Rolling drums, along with *tremoli* by plucked chordophones, are

recognizable at the left hand from bb. 64–71 (Example 31c). All such features demand specific tactile approaches to the keyboard and a vivid auditory imagination from a performer's side.

Another characteristic of Bartók's writing for the piano is the presence of chords exceeding the octave, which in this case is limited to only bb. 123–126. Diversely, this feature is largely common within more massive and demanding works by the composer, such as the *Piano Sonata* (1926). Mária Comensoli (1905–1982), who studied with Bartók in the mid-1920s, reported his tendency to play most of these chords as tight *arpeggi*, in compliance with a well-grounded tradition over the nineteenth century (Bonis & Laki 1995: 146). Another pupil, Irma Molnár-Kippich, also referred to some other characteristics of Bartók's pianistic technique, such as his ability to quickly change the position of his hands on the keyboard:

I had to play each recurring figure with the same fingering throughout, regardless whether there was a black key or not, and wherever it was. Bartók taught that the touch of every finger had its own special colour, and that one had to use it throughout the whole series of sequence, so that it sounded uniformly. Of course, to play in this way was much more difficult than usual, but it did not bother him at all. (Molnár-Kippich, quoted from Bonis & Laki 1995: 298)

An analogous approach is observable in the majority of cases of transpositions in quick succession of the same music material, such as at bb. 119–121 (Example 32a). An utterly radical application of this principle is acknowledged by the direct experience of his son Péter:

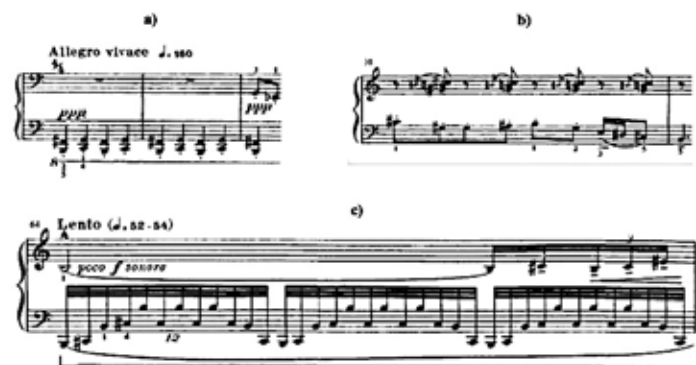
Instructions found in literature had to be disregarded in playing the scale: my father had his own method and he did not wish the thumb to be moved under the rest of the hand in climbing up a scale. Instead, he instructed me to shift the whole hand and simply jump at the appropriate point, without bending the thumb sideways; all fingers were to remain in the same relative position as the whole hand moved. Playing a scale this way appeared nearly impossible, but my father demonstrated how easy it was (for him). (Bartók P. 2002: 36)

For instance, at b. 86 the composer recommends maintaining an equal 2-3-4 fingering during the three consecutive transpositions of the same motivic cell (Example 32b), requiring fast-shifting movements of the hand. The true effectiveness of such approach relies in proficient hand-arm-wrist coordination, combining wrist dexterity and elasticity with the natural prehensibility of the hand solely depending on its own weight. Fingers must be also disengaged and freely move from one side to another, meaning that diverse physical abilities are employed at once.

Molnár-Kippich also commented on Bartók's wrist technique: "He based the whole technique of piano playing mainly on his wrists. That is why those Bartók's *staccati*, which were like the clattering of hailstones, sounded so wonderfully" (Bonis & Laki 1995: 299). István Thomán (1862–1949), who taught Bartók at the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music in Budapest, would not conceal his own predilection for wrist *staccato* in quite specific cases:

“With wrists we only rarely play chords. However, it will be good for variety of timbre, if another way of touch is available for us. Especially in light *staccato* chords we can benefit from this way of touch” (Thomán 1906: 2).

Thomán was mentored by Liszt, who in turn owed a similar approach to the nineteenth century tradition of playing octaves and *staccato*, in a way that *Die Schule des Octavenspiels* Op. 48 (Ger. “The School of Playing Octaves,” 1841) by Theodor Kullak (1818–1882) wholly summarizes. Besides that, it is definitely worth recalling how several of Bartók’s textural resolutions seem to replicate Kullak’s technical precepts, although enormous changes in piano playing occurred between the lives of the two composers. For instance, Kullak’s Preparatory Exercise No. 5, in which the upper voice is maintained by the 5th finger at the right hand whilst the other two voices independently move within the octave range, largely applies to textures such as the one from bb. 50–52 in Bartók’s Piano Sonata (Example 33), as an example of the full application of principles from a solid pianistic tradition to the modernity of his musical language.



Example 31. B. Bartók, *Romanian Dance* Op. 8a/1 a) bb. 1–2 b) b. 37 c) b. 64.



Example 32. B. Bartók, *Romanian Dance* Op. 8a/1 a) bb. 119–121 b) b. 86.



Example 33. Comparative view of two excerpts respectively from *Die Schule des Octavenspiels* Op. 48 by Theodor Kullak (bb. 1–2) above and Piano Sonata by Béla Bartók (bb. 50–52) below.

In *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6,²¹ a collection of short free-standing piano pieces composed in 1908, Bartók takes quite different approaches to the instrument in the logic of his own compositional style, aiming at “a reaction against the exuberance of the Romantic piano music of the 19th century, a style stripped of all unessential decorative elements, deliberately using only the most restricted technical means,” as he himself wrote in the introduction to the set (Bartók, quoted from Suchoff 1981: Introduction). In other words, he relied on the purest, most essential elements of pianistic technique, depriving them of any pretentiousness of virtuosity, but rather considering them as constructive parts of music.

In addition, the composer merged those elements into the typical features (melodic, rhythmic, textural, structural, etc.) of authentic folk music heritages, also variously processed by him. Hence *Bagatelles* ultimately highlight fundamental procedures of piano playing (scales, chords, passages in octaves, double thirds and sixths, etc.) as well as key features of music itself, such as sound and rhythm, also plunged into a certain peasant flavour, consequent to the employment of traditional folk tunes.

Such aspects, which find expression in all music by Bartók, provide the key of how to interpret a primeval character in his vast pianistic outcome. For instance, Bagatelle No. 1 quite convincingly supports this assumption:

- Simple scales pose as the main structural elements. The C# Eolian scale is hidden within the ascending motif at the right hand from bb. 1–6, while fragments of the descending C Phrygian scale always respond in the left hand (the complete succession is obtainable by juxtaposing the two counterpointing tetrachords at b. 9).
- The modal character derives from the combined usage of the two previously mentioned modes, generating an inclusive octatonic mode, whose alternation of tones and

²¹ In this chapter, the piece is examined with reference to Bartók’s pianistic writing as a whole, whereas it is going to be extensively analyzed as a case-study from a performative side in Chapter 3.

semitones defines a symmetry (Figure 2). However, the two intervallic constructions are always perceived as separated, since they never merge. Furthermore, the quite strict association between each of the two modes and a specific set of sound attacks (rather diversified for C# Eolian at the right hand and rigorously *tenuto/staccato* for C Phrygian at the left hand) utterly clarifies such distinction.

- Intervals and direction of the melody serve as the main diversifying traits of the composition, making use of the two alternating modal scales either rising or descending.



Figure 2. Octatonic scale constructed on B \flat note.

Bagatelle No. 3 functions similarly: in this piece, the composer repeatedly makes use of the same chromatic pattern all the way through, both as a constructive element (as it is entirely shaped based on it) and a rhythmic unit (as it provides a constant, regular pulse to the music). Such pattern serves as an accompaniment to the melodic line at the left hand, modelled on a B Major Phrygian scale (Figure 3), occasionally altered by some accidentals, such as F natural at b. 15 and D \flat at b. 16. However, despite not including any reference to specific folksong material, this bagatelle incorporates many features of folk music, such as the periodic character of the melody (recurrently swinging between two main tones, F# and C), the general use of repetitions and the employment of an *ostinato* construction at the right hand.



Figure 3. Major Phrygian scale constructed on B note.

Such a paradigm reveals quite an accomplished systematization in *Mikrokosmos*, a set of 153 progressive piano pieces in six volumes written between 1926 and 1939, representing the common ground for Bartók's experimentalism, his interest in local musical heritage, and his pedagogical effort. Once again, the composer operates within a perfect synthesis between the essential elements of pianistic technique and music in general, with a typical nod to the folksong tradition.

Exercises Nos. 1–6 are named *Six Unison Melodies*. Each of them goes along with a portion of score on the top defining the pitch range and summarizing the melodic profile. For instance, Exercise No. 4 ranges from B to F, while the melody consecutively rises and drops

(Example 34). Such configuration certainly reveals the influence of his musicological background: the composer would generally pair his transcriptions of folksongs with their main skeleton (usually disclosed beneath the main score line), stripped of all ornaments and rhythmical peculiarities. The composer was familiar with the necessity of identifying the essential elements of music, which in turn became the foundation of his own creative output, as has been observed in *Bagatelles*.



Example 34. Comparative view between Exercise No. 4 from *Mikrokosmos* by Béla Bartók (bb. 1–4) above and the composer's own transcription of the folksong below (Bartók / Lord 1951: 96).

That being said, Bartók's way of processing such elements may reflect standard procedures in folk music as well. For example, Exercise No. 2b is the exact inversion of Exercise No. 2a transposed one third above, except for ending with A instead of E. Also, Exercise No. 3 comprises four motifs of three measures each, whereas Exercise No. 5 presents motifs of either two or three measures, in antithesis with the traditional square-shaped musical discourse.

Table 3 summarizes the influence of the folksong tradition to the first seventeen exercises from *Mikrokosmos* (the ones preceded by their own melodic scheme). Analogous features are acknowledgeable within the more demanding exercises as well. The most complex pieces, which are meant as performable concert works, are similarly built on specific technical means within the framework of a more elaborate musical discourse. For example, Exercise No. 48 clearly brings to the foreground the rhythmical peculiarity of a never-ceasing 5/4 *ostinato* (Example 35). Similarly, Exercise No. 124 *Staccato* is entirely based on the use of *staccato*, both characterizing the melodic profile and emphasizing the rhythmical pulse: the uniformity of rhythm generally contrasts with the motivic fragmentariness, whose interactions determines multiple intervallic relations (Example 36).

1	n.d.
2 (a, b)	Simple imitation procedure: 2b consists of the exact inversion of 2a transposed one third above, except for ending in A instead of E.
3	Asymmetric phrasing: division in four motifs of three measures each.
4	n.d.
5	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either three or two measures each. Use of Aeolian mode.
6	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either two, three, or four measures each.
7	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either three or four measures each. Use of Phrygian mode.
8	Use of Aeolian mode.
9	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either three or four measures each.
10	Simple imitation procedure: canon in octave within three measures. Unusual clef signature: A \flat .
11	Simple imitation procedure: use of parallel thirds. Use of Mixolydian mode.
12	Simple imitation procedure: mirror counterpoint starting from the interval of major second. Asymmetric phrasing: change of metre from 2/2 to 3/2 at b. 15. Use of Dorian mode.
13	n.d.
14	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either four or five measures each. Use of Dorian mode. Presence of lyrics above the notes.
15	Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either two or three measures each. Use of either Ionian (Major) or Mixolydian modes. Title suggestive of peasant derivation (<i>Village song</i>).
16	Simple imitation procedure: use of parallel thirds and sixths. Asymmetric phrasing: combined use of motifs of either three, four, or five measures each.
17	Simple imitation procedure: mirror counterpoint starting at the unison. Use of Ionian (Major) and Locrian modes.

Table 3. Ascertained elements of influence from the folksong tradition in the first seventeen exercises from *Mikrokosmos* by Béla Bartók.



Example 35. B. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* (Exercise No. 48 *In Mixolydian Mode*, bb. 1–12).



Example 36. B. Bartók, *Mikrokosmos* (Exercise No. 124 *Staccato*, bb. 1–8).

From a performer's perspective, it is important to encompass all such technical and stylistic characteristics within a more global interpretative insight. It is worth recollecting what Bartók himself thought about folksong, whose influence on his music is so significant: "Peasant music is the outcome of changes wrought by a natural force whose operation is unconscious; it is impulsively created by a community of men who have had no schooling; it is as much a natural product as are the various forms of animal and vegetable life" (Bartók / Lord 1981: 4). Thus, an impression of spontaneity and impulsiveness befits the character of his music. For instance, sudden dynamic contrasts and abrupt accents or *sforzandi* may serve to enhance this aspect: a performer must train to avoid anticipating them, both by physical gestures and musical intentions, so that they truly sound spontaneous.

More generally, peasant music is constantly susceptible to variability, due the different sensitivities of different performers. A modern pianist, as well as any academically trained musician, might find this conception totally unfamiliar. However, a certain degree of freedom may be suitable to play Bartók's music, unless the score specifically requires the opposite. This applies, for instance, to Bagatelle No. 12, whose improvisational character is implicit in the

style of writing. The composer often relies upon the performer's own sensitivity and imagination as well, as for in Bagatelle No. 7, where the plenitude of *accelerando* and *ritardando* confers perpetual mutability to music.

The macro-category of "spontaneity" may also give reason to Bartók's predilection for the most genuine quality of piano: its being a percussive instrument. The composer overtly emphasizes such a feature for different purposes. Undoubtedly, one is rhythmical vitality, which is generally kept in the foreground instead of melodic or harmonic qualities: this generally goes along with the adherence to traditional folk-dance styles and forms. Another one is timbral variety, which requires the performer to experiment with the multifarious possibilities of touch.

In conclusion, the adherence to Primitivism in piano works by Béla Bartók is quite an elaborate phenomenon, to be approached in a very generalized manner from three main perspectives, which are also in compliance with the usual scheme of characteristics of Primitivistic piano music:

1. The reference to folksong repertoire, its morphological features (rhythmical, melodic, textural, syntactical, and formal), and certain related interpretative issues, which belong entirely to the sphere of oral transmission and, therefore, to the time prior to Western music tradition. All such characteristics define a correspondence with the Ratnerian *types* and *styles* characteristic of geographical/anthropological Primitivism.
2. The exploitation of the prime, simplest elements of music, such as rhythmic pulse, sound/silence alternation, dynamic oppositions, intervals, and pitch successions, thus entailing a dose of repetitiveness too.
3. The emphasis on primarily pianistic tasks (fast scales, chords successions, double-thirds passages, repetitions, etc.) as constructive elements of the musical discourse towards a remarkable percussive dimension.

2.2.3. Primitivism in Piano Music from Spain and Latin America

The influence of both Stravinsky and Bartók is strongly acknowledgeable in the musical work by other twentieth-century composers who deliberately pursued a Primitivistic intent. Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) is one of them; he took stock of all the emerging avant-garde tendencies of the early twentieth-century, including Russian Primitivism. Undoubtedly, his initial compositions manifest a certain late Romantic flavour: his early music vocabulary is, as argued by Carol Hess, "conventional," "harmonically timid," and has "rather isolated Spanish gestures" (Hess 2001: 60). Diversely, his subsequent compositions, such as *Cuatro Piezas Españolas* (1906–1909), determined an initial change of direction and incorporated more

authentic features, such as *fandango* dance rhythms, textures imitative of *flamenco* sonorities from the guitar, and percussive foot-stamping effects.

Fantasia Baetica (1919) represents the culmination of de Falla's nationalistic strain, seeking more internationally oriented means of expression, for it largely owes Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* its rhythmic incisiveness, brutal percussiveness, and overall ritualistic atmosphere. All such features can be appreciated from the very beginning of the piece, and are achieved by means of rough articulations, flickering ornaments and antithetic sonorities (Example 37). The initial thematic motif undergoes several reiterations, gaining a feverish dance character.

Texture resolutions such as the one showing up at b. 9 (Example 38) are equally distinctive: dissonant chords alternatively played by two hands further foster the sense of percussion, as the indication *Molto ritmico* recalls. An analogous hand setting is employed by Bartók in the incipit of his *Allegro Barbaro*, as shown in the same Example 38, reworked as *ostinato*. The indication *Giocoso* (It. "Playful") is also relevant, as it directs the character of music towards the joviality and festiveness of a ritual dance.

Generally speaking, dissonances and percussiveness are frequently associated. The use of superimposed seconds and octaves is a recurring textural element, aiming at emulating particular microtonal effects, by means of strident articulations as well. Such features are largely in common with Stravinsky's music, as shown in Example 39. Many other Stravinskian textures are ascertainable, such as fast passages at the left hand filling a melody at the right hand (Example 40) and the fast *tremolo* figurations in the middle line (Example 41).



Example 37. M. de Falla, *Fantasia Baetica* (b.1).



Example 38. Comparative view between two excerpts from *Fantasia Baetica* by Manuel de Falla (bb. 9–10) above and *Allegro Barbaro* by Béla Bartók (bb. 1–4) below.



Example 39. Comparative view between two excerpts from *Fantasia Baetica* by Manuel de Falla (bb. 112–113) on the left and *Three Movements from Petrushka* (bb. 80–81) on the right concerning the use of superimposed seconds and octaves.



Example 40. Comparative view between two excerpts from *Fantasia Baetica* by Manuel de Falla (b. 76) on the left and *Three Movements from Petrushka* (b. 61) on the right concerning the use of fast passages at the left hand filling a melody at the right hand.



Example 41. Comparative view between two excerpts from *Fantasia Baetica* by Manuel de Falla (b. 34) on the left and *Three Movements from Petrushka* (b. 52) on the right concerning the use of fast tremolo figurations in the middle voice.

The imitation of *flamenco* sonorities from the guitar, which was previously demonstrated in the *Cuatro Piezas Españolas*, also represents a quite distinguished characteristic throughout *Fantasia Baetica*. Such features are variously portrayed on the piano, as Table 4 summarizes with reference to the specific literature on this matter (Pohen 2005: 70):

Features of guitar playing in <i>flamenco</i> dance	Their implementation in <i>Fantasia Baetica</i>
Accompanying pattern by alternatively and regularly plucked string, in which the eight notes marked as <i>staccato</i> correspond to those usually struck by the thumb on the guitar.	<p>b. 121</p>
Strumming of the fingers individually running across the strings.	<p>b. 22</p>
Crushes on the sounding board of the guitar in correspondence with the strong beats.	<p>b. 9</p>
Finger snapping by the dancers, softly enhancing the rhythm of the music.	<p>b. 138</p>
Foot stamping by the dancers.	<p>b. 184</p>

Table 4. Different styles of writing imitative of *flamenco* sonorities in *Fantasia Baetica* by Manuel de Falla.

Composers from Latin America similarly sought to emulate their own national musical idioms in a Modernistic vein by also drawing from the Western academic music tradition, resulting in remarkable Primitivistic solutions. The most representative of them is Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983), whose role as the forefather of Argentinian art music is compatible with his relevance as an innovator of piano music writing, technique, and aesthetics from a wider perspective, despite him relying on traditional formal constructions (such as the sonata form).

Ginastera incorporated different elements from Amerindian culture, art, and music into his music vocabulary, not solely concrete trends or features, but also more conceptual and spiritual leitmotifs: as is known, both music and dance were ascribed crucial importance in the everyday life of all pre-Columbian civilizations, in conjunction with rituals and ceremonies to appease their idols, pay homage to their ancestors, and ensure wealth and prosperity. Thus, Ginastera proficiently treasured such a spiritual background, bestowing an incontrovertible arcane and savage aura upon his music, while also gathering influences from the leading artistic movements in Europe, such as atonality and serialism.

The synthesis of Western and native musical backgrounds was achieved by Ginastera and his compatriots in the light of Argentina’s desire for cultural individuality after the proclaimed independence from Spain in 1816 (Schwartz-Kates 2002: 253). However, the process of unification led to a rather heterogeneous outcome due to the diverse grades of development between the coastal and interior regions, determining significant socio-economical discrepancies. For this reason, many intellectuals, such as Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811–1888), yearned for a blend between their cultural identity and European modernity to fill such a gap: their portrayals of *gauchos* (the Argentinian equivalents of American cowboys and one of the symbols of the nation) in a more cultivated and enlightened guise are particularly representative of the strain to reach cultural unity while embracing Western models of civilization (ibid.: 250).

As Rachel Hammond eventually observed, in the field of music “the *gauchesco* tradition resolved the urban and rural dichotomy by implementing folk characteristics into European structures” (Hammond 2011: 8). For instance, Ginastera made extensive use of folkloric elements in his music, such as narrow-range melodies modelled on pentatonic scales and frequently doubled by third intervals; native dance rhythms based on repeated patterns and *ostinato*; textures and sound attacks imitative of the guitar; dissonant harmonies by means of additional second, fourth, and fifth intervals; and bimodality and polytonality. However, the formal constructions he employed are largely indebted to the Western music tradition, as he also relied on Western compositional techniques, such as counterpoint and serialism (ibid.: 14).

Malambo for Piano Op. 7 (1940) is a short composition based on the so-called *malambo*, a typical 6/8 moderately fast dance of the *gauchos*, comprising the most essential characteristics of the genre: a ceaseless motion guaranteed by the everlasting *ostinato*, brief and reiterate motivic units, progressively enhancing dissonances by superimposing intervals, and sudden and abrupt occasional eight-note shifts interrupting the metric periodicity. In addition, the very first measure includes Ginastera’s particular *guitar chord*, a pitch series based on the natural tuning of the guitar (E₂, A₂, D₃, G₃, B₃, E₄), in the form of ascending arpeggio (Example 42), habitually performed by the direct plucking of the strings inside the piano while holding the resonance pedal, although Ginastera did not expressly recommend doing so.



Example 42. A. Ginastera, *Malambo for Piano Op. 7* (b. 1).

This specific feature shows up throughout Ginastera’s musical output, from his early works to the later ones, representing a sort of *trait d’union* among different compositional stages. Nevertheless, as Carlos Gaviria summarizes, “it is important to mention that the guitar chord is an intellectualization of traditional elements, since it is not used in traditional Argentinean music (no *gaucho* would play the guitar without using the left hand to create triads) [...] The guitar chord was initially used as a pictorial element depicting the importance of the guitar in traditional Argentinian music” (Gaviria 2010: 22). Thus, it is rather a sign, symbolic of “the *gaucho* and the *pampa*, [...] in forms ranging from literal statement to complete metamorphosis, and from incidental allusion to complex structural integration” (Chase 1957: 454).

For instance, in the first of the *Danzas argentinas Op. 2* (1937) the author shapes the diverse accompanying formulas at the left hand on the pitch series of the chord (Example 43). The piece also bears an unequivocal *malambo* dance character: constant motion is endorsed by the eight-note triplets at the left hand on the black keys, while dissonant chords at the right hand define very simple melodic profiles on the white keys (the two staves also exhibit different key signatures for this purpose). The guitar chord itself reappears at the conclusion of the piece, as shown in the same Example 43.

The third and last of the *Danzas argentinas* is much more significant in terms of

rhythmical vitality, as it embryonically introduces a certain metric freedom which will be valorized by Ginastera within his own later works: for instance, at bb. 26–32 the same chord is repeated at the right hand at different intervals of time and in total non-correspondence with the regular metric construction of the *ostinato* at the left hand, generating a temporary sense of misbalance and casualty (Example 44). The same happens at bb. 122–149 on a larger scale, in which motivic units of two and four bars are asymmetrically distributed (Example 45).



Example 43. Comparative view between the incipit (bb. 1–2, on the left) and the conclusion (bb. 48–49, on the right) of *Danza Argentina* Op. 2 No. 1 by Alberto Ginastera, both shaped on the so-called *guitar chord*.

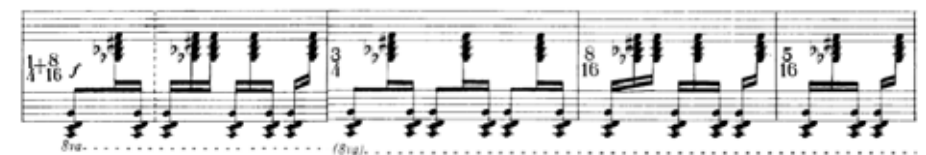
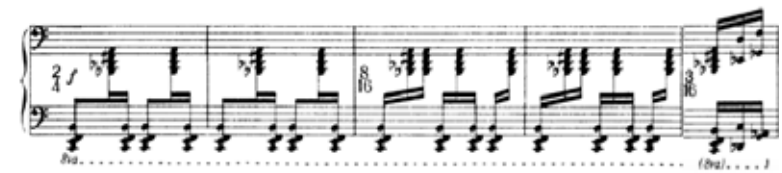
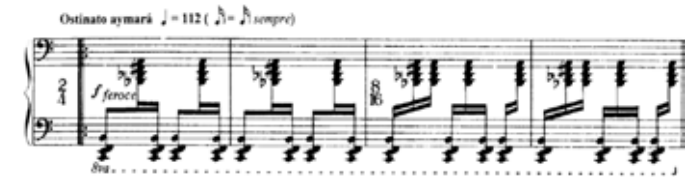


Example 44. A. Ginastera, *Danza Argentina* Op. 2 No. 3 (bb. 27–31).



Example 45. A. Ginastera, *Danza Argentina* Op. 2 No. 3 (bb. 99–118): the marks highlight the asymmetry of the employed motivic cells.

In a similar way, in the third movement of his Piano Sonata Op. 53 No. 2 (1981) Ginastera makes the music literally shift in and out of regular periodicity. The initial rhythmic pattern, essentially made of the alternation between the two chords played by two different hands, is reiterated within rather uneven metrical structures, as shown in Example 46. The folkloric material of reference is the frenetic so-called *carnavalito* dance (Pittman 2006: 28).



Example 46. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata Op. 53 No. 2 (III, bb. 1–15).

Another rhythmical aspect relies on the so-called additive processes, consisting of slight alteration of recurring musical ideas usually by adding or subtracting one or more beats, thus emphasizing the percussive character of music. This is particularly evident in the incipit of Ginastera's Piano Sonata Op. 22 No. 1 (1952), as shown in Example 47, where the initial motive at bb. 1–2 is similarly reproduced at bb. 3–4 with the insertion of extra notes in correspondence of as many extra beats.



Example 47. A. Ginastera, Piano Sonata Op. 22 No. 1 (I, bb. 1–4): the boxes show the insertion of extra beats.

In conclusion, the adherence to the paradigm of Primitivistic piano music in the work by composers such as de Falla and Ginastera can be summarized as follows:

- Elements of percussiveness, also related to the imitation of percussive effects from traditionally non-percussive instruments (such as the guitar), are given predominance.
- Motivic, rhythmic, and textural patterns are frequently used.
- The reference to folkloric backgrounds (*flamenco* for de Falla; the music of *gauchos* for Ginastera) is omnipresent. This characteristic allows the examined works to be ascribed to geographical/anthropological Primitivism as conveyed in Table 1 (Chapter 1.2.2), summarizing the recurring bond between Martinelli's categories and Ratner's *topoi*.

As has already been discussed, all the above-mentioned composers conveyed a genuine Primitivistic penchant by means of authentic folkloric material and by relying on the avant-garde sophistications accessible to them, paving the way for further sound explorations and thus determining a significant expansion of the pianistic technical idiom and style of expression. By doing so, they also paved the way for additional re-interpretations of the fundamental idea of "primitive" in the realm of musical expression, as will be examined in Chapter 2.3.

2.3. Other Re-Interpretations of the Idea of the "Primitive" in Music

2.3.1. Essentiality and Circularity in the Music of Erik Satie

The idea of the "primitive" in the field of music underwent considerable mutations starting from its original meaning, as discernible from the variety of Dario Martinelli's categories (cf. 2.1.1). The research focus on the field of twentieth-century piano music and its various manifestations presuppose that Martinelli's remaining categories (historical, ontogenetic and phylogenetic, rhetorical/formal) may actually be treated as descending from the predominant geographical/anthropological trends of Primitivism (which not by chance was the main research object of Chapter 2) and, as such, deserve a more organic treatise altogether. One of these tendencies of Primitivism in piano music, as shall be discussed in the present sub-chapter, is acknowledgeable in the musical works by Erik Satie (1866–1925), which genuinely welcome any element of innovation and further heterogeneity deduced from the cosmopolitan environment in which he could operate towards noteworthy Primitivistic gestures.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as was previously discussed, diversity and originality, as well as pure extravagancy, began to be seen as a sort of added value to artistic creation, which by then had drifted away from the sphere of influence of academic institutions and was seeking renewed paths of progression instead. The figure of the traditional academic artist was also essentially inadequate to convey such an innovative aesthetic profile, and a new type of artist became someone who expressed emancipation in the field of artistic creation as well as detachment from the bourgeois manner of life and its inherent values such as utilitarianism, social ambition, and the yearning for success. Such artists often cultivated a bohemian lifestyle and gravitated towards non-traditional production centres for culture and the arts, such as cafés, private ateliers, clubs, and salons.

Satie embodied this new model of artistry in the field of music. The composer's lifespan covered a particularly significant arc of time within the history of France after the establishment of the Third Republic at the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, which sought peace and restoration after its defeat (Pasler 2009: 701–702). The artistic establishment played a fundamental role in revitalizing national pride in this sense: in 1871, the *Société nationale de musique* was founded, giving impulse to an outstanding French music renaissance, in opposition to Wagner's legacy across Europe. Such process essentially rested upon the reference to such qualities as gracefulness and composure, regarded as the expression of the most authentic character of French music as perceived in the nation's aristocratic musical past (ibid.: 219).

For this reason, French music culture underwent a hugely diversified revitalization process. The *tumult noir* of the early twentieth century, that is, the fascination with the music of African Americans, also introduced jazz and blues to France. Furthermore, in 1913 Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* premiered in Paris, eventually casting the shadow of another titan of music over Europe (Taruskin 1996: 1006). Satie's musical outcome stands as a result of his own personal re-elaboration of all such cultural and artistic prompts. His experimentalism represents a monolith in French musical avant-garde history and gives one of the most significant and authentic manifestations of a Primitivistic penchant of a *historical* derivation (as introduced in Chapter 1.2.1) within the sphere of piano music, as will be discussed.²²

The first acknowledged full composition by Erik Satie for piano solo, *Ogives* (1886), carries the remarkable influence of the ancient plainchant (Lat. "cantus planus"), whereas the composer himself asserted to have gained inspiration from the shape of the windowpanes in

²² The reference to the executorial practice of plain chanting also defines a correspondence with Ratnerian *styles* indicated as characteristic of historical Primitivism in Table 1 (Chapter 1.2.2).

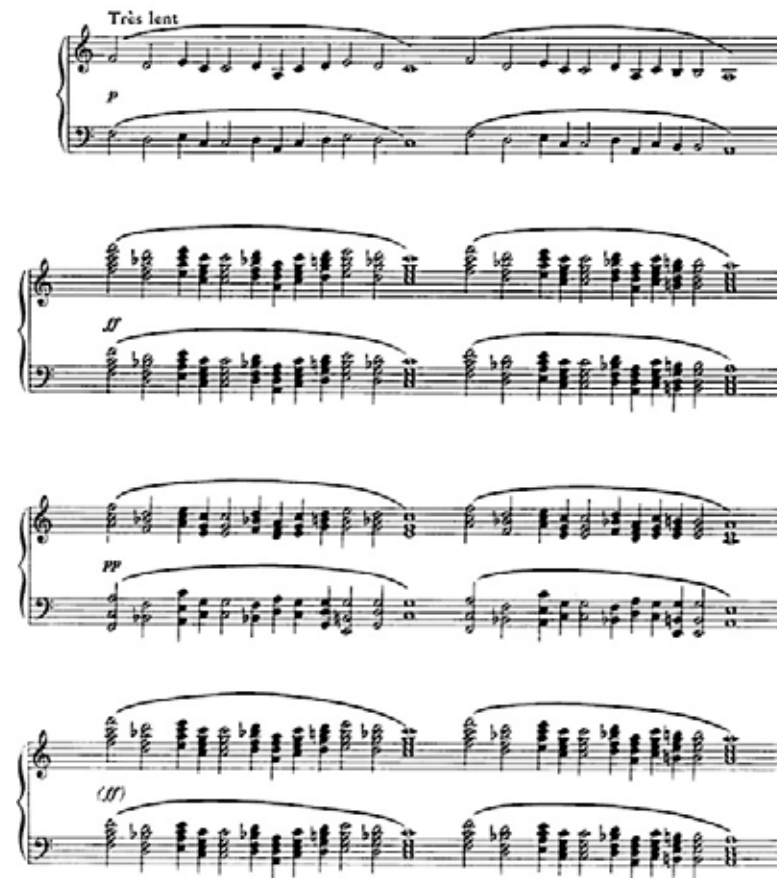
Notre-Dame de Paris. Thus, a truly nostalgic feeling is eventually conveyed by means of a radical simplification of both musical form and expressiveness in light of a very remote, “primitive” musical past (Davis 2007: 24).

Ogives comprises four short compositions all modelled on equally repetitive structures without any bar lines (Example 48):

- A period made of two consecutive phrases introduces a very rudimental melodic line marked as *piano*, to be played by both hands in unison (A).
- The formerly stated thematic element is reiterated in the form of loudly resounding chords marked as *fortissimo* (A¹).
- A slightly more compact texture engages in disclosing completely identical melodic profiles, once again marked as *pianissimo* (A²).
- A¹ is repeated.

Ogives also significantly relates to the field of visual representation, as it conforms to distinctive geometric models, in light of the composer’s own spiritual dimension. The title itself refers to a particular architectonic item, a pointed arc typical of Gothic architecture, which Satie may have appreciated in Notre-Dame de Paris. Repetitiveness and periodicity, both qualifying traits of Primitivistic music, can be fully appreciated in the visual aspect of the score itself. In this regard, native African decorative art, based on regularly repeated patterns (Figure 4), may have affected the composition of *Ogives* as well, besides bestowing an undeniable visual impression upon them, as can be seen in Example 48. Such hypothesis by the author of the present artistic research paper himself, far from being scientifically proved, relies on the following several arguments in favour.

First and foremost, Satie was definitely exposed to African art because it was introduced in France by the time of the Universal Exposition of 1855 in Paris. Furthermore, his appreciation of African sculpture is acknowledgeable in his self-portrait of 1924 in the magazine *L'Ésprit Musical*, showing traits such as stylized features, rudimentary shapes, and a firm facial expression (Figure 5). Last but not least, Satie was particularly active as a cabaret and *salle de bal* pianist as well, thus becoming acquainted with popular dance forms of an African-American derivation, such as ragtime, and related costumes and scenography.



Example 48. E. Satie, *Ogive* No. 4.



Figure 4. A geometric pattern typical of African decorative art.



Figure 5. Satie’s self-portrait (1924).

Generally speaking, Satie’s reference to the ancient musical past, such as that of early Christianity, is a recognized matter of fact in *Ogives*. Such aspect is conveyed by the overall modal character and the enchainment of static chords, bestowing the music with grandeur and solemnity, besides evoking the alternation between *solo* and *tutti* (respectively the very first

utterance of the melody and its consecutive reiterations in form of harmonic chords) typical of responsorial chanting (Potter 2016: 53). In addition, several other features of music show adherence to a Primitivistic style, such as:

- Very simple melodies, modelled around a central note and moving within a narrow range.
- Repetitiveness and periodicity.
- Dense and compact textures.
- Strong dynamic contrasts by means of mere juxtaposition.

Despite lacking technical complexity, *Ogives* present unusual challenges for a performer in terms of overall consistency of the musical discourse itself, due to the unconventional organization of musical material, proceeding with clear-cut juxtapositions rather than a hierarchic organization. Also, Satie's dramaturgic intents are quite vague, except for enclosing each phrase within a slur, in this way shaping the syntax of the music on a very fundamental level. A performer might eventually rely on such elementary hints in order to convey the inner vitality of the music on the simplest level, thus not undermining the overall need for conciseness and restraint. For this reason, it is generally recommended to shift from one key to another by the smallest and least abrupt movements of the fingers on the very surface of the keyboard, in order to avoid any peaks of expressiveness which might interfere with linearity and the maintenance of an equal dynamic level throughout.

Similarly, *fortissimo* episodes ought to equally sound from the beginning to the end as coming from organ pipes, and the apposition of full chords enhances grandeur and steadiness, thus privileging the vertical dimension of sound masses to the detriment of the horizontal dimension of melodic lines. The rendition of such passages assumes the piano to be employed as a fully-fledged percussion instrument: through a quite sudden and vigorous motion of the hand in correspondence with each chord and amortizing it through the elbows immediately afterwards, while also holding the resonance pedal, it is possible to achieve a well-rounded and loudly resonant sound at once, as coming from a bell tower, befitting the overall solemnity of the passage.

Another piano cycle, *Trois Gnossiennes* (1889–93), shows Satie's early predilection for non-academic ways of composition. The title bears a clear affinity with Gnosticism, a Neoplatonist movement from late antiquity which Satie would also be affiliated with, introduced in France in 1890 (Davis 2007: 61). Similar practices were popular among artists and intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century in response to a profound sense of the inadequacy of their own epoch (Satie himself was enthusiastic about mysticism and occultism, as is evident in many of his music compositions). For this reason, *Gnossiennes* can also be

ascribed to historical Primitivism as defined by Martinelli in Chapter 1.2.

Alan Gillmor commends *Gnossiennes* for “breathing fresh air into the decadent atmosphere of the *fin de siècle* in France, resurrecting the quintessentially Gallic virtues of Rameau and Couperin” (Gillmor 1988: 45). Such “fresh air” consists of the exotic and arabesque character of the melodies, whose circularity exempts music from any logic of hierarchic relationships between themes, episodes, and sections, but rather emphasizes the authentic, inner vitality of music itself, in opposition with the Wagnerian rhetoric of *Leitmotiv*.

Robert Orledge asserts that Satie was inspired in this work by the pastoral painting of Puvis de Chavannes (1824–1898), whose allegories recalled the ideals of the sobriety, austerity, and tranquillity of pre-industrial society, by means of faded palettes, clear outlines, and rather basic and static compositions (Orledge 1995: 36). Similarly, *Gnossiennes*' melodic profiles are delicately engraved on steady, sombre, repeated and juxtaposed harmonic patterns.

Speaking of musical form, they each consist of a few musical ideas simply alternating with each other by mere juxtaposition. Taking as an example *Gnossienne* No. 1, three thematic episodes A, B, and C (Example 49) repeatedly occur, simply altered with minor details on occasion. Taking into consideration the twice-repeated variation on episode A as well, the general structure of the piece can be summarized as A, A, B, B, C, C, B, B, A¹, A¹, B, B, C, C, B, B.

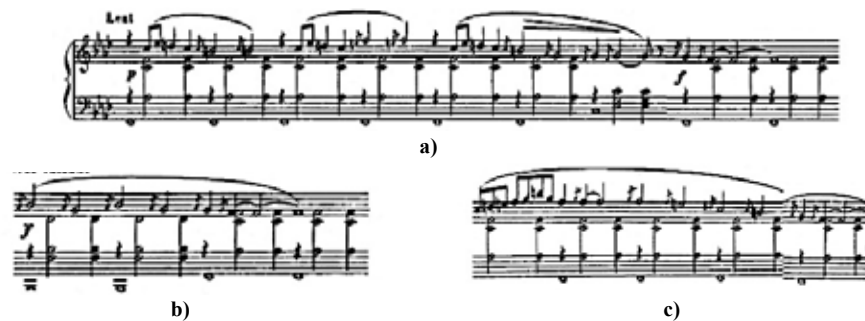
A similar configuration avoids any hierarchy of subordination between thematic elements, as a very static harmonic background also embraces them. Jann Pasler comments on this purpose:

Satie reduced his musical materials to a minimum. This allowed him to forge an original perspective on simplicity, distinct from the lightness of café songs or the naïveté of *chansons populaires*. [...] Working with short musical ideas with few formal implications also gave new freedoms. [...] There is intensification, deepening awareness of one idea or state of mind rather than a constant movement from one to the next. (Pasler 2009: 541–543)

Once again, a performer ought to face non-traditional dramaturgic challenges in order to preserve the static nature of music without at the same time ceding to overt monotony. Besides that, the performer has to abide by the overall simplicity of music, avoiding succumbing to the temptation of adding some of their own ideas (too loose *rubati*, dynamics, etc.) for the sake of variety. In other words, a performer ought to comply with the original sense of hazy indeterminacy and the unfathomable mystery of music as much as possible, and to convey it to the audience as a genuine aesthetic quality, albeit deprived of the usual benchmarks (such as the leanings towards a climax) and eventually trespassing into bemusement and discomfort.

A pianist would also be best advised to refuse any musical initiative or physical gesture

(such as any unnecessary hand gestures or redundant facial expressions) potentially interfering with the maintenance of such linear tension generating a nerve-wracking wait for something new to happen in the listener. Analogous outputs can be pursued in other works by Satie, such as *Gymnopédies* (1888), even though they are plunged into a more restful and dream-like atmosphere.



Example 49. Three main thematic ideas in *Gnossienne* No. 1 by Erik Satie (no bars).

Such ideas achieve their most radical implementation in *Vexations* (1893), a series of two variations on a theme of 18 notes (Example 50) to be repeated, according to composer's own recommendation, 840 times in a row. Orledge identifies one of Satie's "numerous ways to cheat the passage of time" in *Vexations*, purposely avoiding "any climax or movement towards a goal" (Orledge 1995: 143) by means of consecutive, unresolved, diminished, and augmented chords. The composer firmly denies the traditional adherence of the musical discourse to the space-time continuum, in favour of new criteria of musical reception, replacing linearity with circularity and variation with repetition. Such characteristics allow us to ascribe *Vexations* to the realm of rhetorical/formal Primitivism as theorized by Martinelli in Chapter 1.2.

In addition, the pre-eminence of unresolved dissonances might eventually upset the listener, having undergone a ceaseless flux of discordant sounds never reaching any goal that create a general sense of anguish and discomfort. Such aesthetic premises might also ultimately recant the centrality of the performer themselves during the performative event: as a matter of fact, the total detachment of music from space-time coordinates leaves no room for any hierarchical relationship at any level of the performance itself, so that it becomes impossible to clearly determine whether the pianist univocally leads the musical events or the flow of music simply passes through their hands, as only one of the many gearwheels contributing to the functioning of the complex sound machine.



Example 50. Scheme of *Vexations* by Erik Satie.

Perhaps the true one act of decision-making by the performer occurs when they decide to begin the performance. Conversely, the end itself is subject to several variables, last but not least the possibility for a single person to actually be able to play the piece many times in a row (different solutions may be implemented in this sense, such as involving more than one performer or employing mechanical instruments). The performance itself may also proceed with a variable number of listeners over time, infringing the traditional symbiosis between a public and performative event throughout the whole duration of the latter, no longer a clear-cut occurrence in space and time but rather a mere contingency in the existential paths of different subjects, such as occasional listeners and the performers themselves.

2.3.2. The Influence of Satie in Piano Works by Francis Poulenc and Federico Mompou

Satie's legacy is remarkably discernible in the musical outcome by *Les Six* (George Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germain Tailleferre), whose aesthetics are modelled on both the intent of fostering an authentic French music character and restoring simplicity and genuineness within the field of musical expression in opposition with Wagner's grandeur as well as the sophistications of the Impressionistic style. These artists, also significantly influenced by their literary mentor Jean Cocteau (1889–1963), frequently drew from a wide variety of artistic-musical sources, such as the music of cabaret, the circus, and European and extra-European folk tunes, in order to bestow their music with unusual freshness and vitality, as a result of being exempt from any traditional dramaturgical entailment.

For example, Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) elaborated a musical language by gathering

influences from Parisian and European cultural life during the *Belle Époque*, as well as from various non-Western sources. His music vocabulary covers a wide array of undertones and demeanours, ranging from cheerful humour to sober melancholy. Ned Rorem describes Poulenc's emotional ambivalence as follows:

If happy and sad are two sides of one coin, never has the metal been more unalloyed than when tossed in Poulenc's palm. Heads or tails, he is now almost always a winner, not, I contend, because he gladdens our hearts, but because the so contagiously seductive frivolity of his music is, like the man himself, fundamentally melancholy. Were this not so, it is doubtful that such giddy sounds could have so staunchly prevailed. (Rorem 1988: 146)

Ambiguity and equivocalness both constitute the leading thread in *Parade* (1917), Satie and Cocteau's masterpiece, which bestows a considerable influence on Poulenc and *Les Six*'s musical output: the scenario represents a group of managers and publicists attempting to persuade a crowd of passers-by to come inside the theatre by presenting a series of numbers in order to initially captivate them, although those are eventually mistaken for the show itself (Clifton 2002: 18). In this regard, Daniel Albright claims that all represented events might be read as non-events by virtue of their misinterpretation (Albright 2000: 190).

A truly significant case of Poulenc's ambivalence in the field of piano music, conveyed as both musical composition and emotional recollection, lies in *Mouvements perpétuels* (1918), which carry the stamp of Cubism as well. Generally speaking, their tonal relationships, proceeding by third-related tonalities through B \flat Major, D minor, and F Major, allow many triads to be hypothetically constructed, so that third and fifth intervals serve to consecutively unwrap the series from one tonal region to another.

The principle of juxtaposition of separated musical episodes, as has been seen in Satie's *Gnossiennes*, also stands as the main compositional guideline for Poulenc's *Mouvements perpétuels* in conformity with the Cubist concept view. For instance, in the first *Mouvement* the initial thematic element shows up four times (bb. 1–2, 3–4, 8–9 and 20–21) alternately with different motivic ideas, while being accompanied by identical patterns all the way through (Example 51).

The predominant use of muted colours in Cubist painting certainly reflects Poulenc's recommendation to play *En general, sans nuances* (Fr. "In general without nuances") or *incolore et toujours piano* (Fr. "Colourless and always piano," b. 14). The only indication, *forte*, shows up at b. 10. Such features altogether result in a bald and disenchanting musicality, avoiding any redundancy in expressiveness and heading towards clarity, lightness, and balance. The indication of *Assez modéré* on the header of the score also responds to an overall search for sobriety.

Thus, a contiguity between Satie and Poulenc's music can be ascertained in the methods of motivic elaboration in compliance with analogous principles of linear simplicity, reiteration, and circularity, which can also be appreciated within several other short compositions by Poulenc for piano solo, such as *Trois pastorales* (1917) and *Villageoises* (1937), and major works as *Rhapsodie nègre* (1917) for piano and orchestra.



Example 51. F. Poulenc, *Mouvement perpétuel* No. 1 (bb. 1–2).

An analogous output is observable in the musical work of Federico Mompou (1893–1987), a figure having enriched piano music history with the towering uniqueness that can be found in the composer's truly personal approach to composition as well as to concrete musical practice. Among his early musical discoveries, the so-called "metallic chord" assumes fundamental importance: this particular harmonic resolution, superimposing in turn an augmented fourth, a minor third, a perfect fourth, and an augmented fourth, originated from the most authentic and genuine memories from Mompou's childhood, recalling the auditory background of industrial Barcelona, with particular emphasis on the metallic, percussive resonances heard in his family's bell foundry (Ruiz De Gana 2009: 17).

Mompou himself tracks the origin of this chord back to his own earliest sonorous experiences, encompassing a multitude of diverse stimuli, in a text dating back to 1910:

This chord is all my music. I hear a strange harmony when I listen to distant noises. It is on a beach facing the sea mixing with a mysterious noise of iron and work... The factories spread over it, a humble worker neighbourhood, black smoke... like the dirty water that comes down from the city and gets caught between the sand and the large boulders... Four miserable shacks nailed on the wet sand, seem fearful of the sea that threatens them... It is getting dark! Work calms down... A hot wind passes by bringing me naively wild songs... boys and girls poorly dressed who roll and dance together around the fire... at night... the factories are left in silence... while the sea prays an eternal plea to ensure the eternal repose of all things, that concern of the dream... (Mompou, quoted from Janés 1975: 436)

The composer's particularly fragmentary style of writing, which relies on poetic impressions, gives evidence of a person being the recipient of very diverse multisensorial solicitations, conveyed by him in the field of sonic representation through his own musical means. The above-mentioned chord plays a fundamental role within the semantic universe of

the composer, taking on a multiplicity of significations. First and foremost, it carries an *ontogenetic* implication of Primitivism as defined in Martinelli's classification, for it stands out as a benchmark of Mompou's early life, recalling images and sensations from his childhood. Secondly, it alludes to concrete sound experiences within the environments of metallurgy and construction. Finally, it substantially employs the composer's musical vocabulary itself, which contributes to his distinctness and individuality, and confers upon his music an essential organizing criterion in terms of melodic, harmonic, and formal constructions.

On the other hand, the chord itself does not represent the fulcrum of Mompou's compositional research as, for instance, a twelve-note series in dodecaphonic music. Such a resolution primarily originates from his purely sensorial speculations, a mere attempt to codify many of his own impressions into the sound dimension of modern piano on the basis of the sole parameter of sensation. In addition, its employment is quite heterogeneous: the chord frequently appears deprived of some notes or in inverted positions, resulting in significantly diverging sound effects. Furthermore, its basic intervallic configuration is treated quite flexibly as well by the alteration of one or several notes or even the addition of extra notes.

Generally speaking, Mompou's attainment of pure sonorities was essentially a result of intuitive processes. However, the composer reveals his aesthetics of composition in several written works of different types. One of these is the short poem entitled *Solitude* (1917), the style of which recalls the conciseness of Hermetic poetry:

...Death blessed the union
Of soul with silence
Sleep and rest of my heart
The eternity sings and rocks you
The last love (ibid.: 210)

Such few words, hinting at a truly accomplished artistic maturity, touch upon the key concepts of silence and eternity as the ultimate unifying traits of the human soul's path, as will be manifestly conveyed in Mompou's late piano work *Música callada*. The composer himself thus explicates his own notion of simplicity above all other qualities in music: "Modern art is to be a return to the primitive. Not going back, it is to restart" (ibid.: 213). In other words, simplicity is the starting point for modernizing art, building on the most primeval character as a drive towards modernity itself.

Impresiones íntimas (Sp. "Intimate Impressions") is a set of nine brief compositions written between 1911 and 1914, representing Mompou's most embryonic attempt to apply such aesthetic principles to his own music. By that time, the composer had not received any composition lessons and relied on his musical vocation as his only guidance throughout his

creative process. However, the influence of French composers, such as Fauré, Poulenc, and Satie, as well as the inspiration from early music, is undisputable.

The first piece of the set bears the indication *Lento* (Example 52). The absence of metre is noteworthy; nevertheless, the composer employs bar lines in order to mark the division between portions of phrases. Quarter notes provide a constant pulse rate, whereas every measure contains respectively 10, 12, 10, 8, 12, 4, and 2 of them. The first phrase comprises bb. 1–2, whereas the second and third ones encompass respectively bb. 3–4 and 5–7, determining a certain asymmetry, even though the music as a whole never ceases to flow, since each upper line always begins and ends with the note E (except for the conclusion of the piece on the A minor triad).

The end of each phrase is marked out by a half note followed by a quarter rest, evoking the typical syntactic configuration of Protestant chorales. The texture itself maintains a four-line polyphonic shape (although a fifth voice occasionally shows up to further characterize certain harmonies), as revealed by the employment of internal rests and slurs. In addition, the harmonic language is imbued with modality, conferring an overall ancestral ambiance, unitedly with a soberly contemplative atmosphere. Finally, the frequent reiteration of the initial motif, enhanced by subtle variations, introduces the element of circularity, in parallel with a slight improvisational character.



Example 52. F. Mompou, *Impresión íntima* No. 1 (b. 1).

Mompou remains loyal to his own aesthetics of linear simplicity within the more elaborate pieces as well, such as the seventh one, named *Cuna* (Sp. "Cradle," Example 53), characterized by a more extended use of the whole instrumental range and peaks of greater emotion. Repetitiveness serves as the main unifying trait in terms of formal coherence, operating on two main levels. The first level is that of motion in time, which is guaranteed by the constantly reiterated *ostinato*. The second is that of the musical discourse itself, conferring diverse shapes to the sound space anytime new melodic elements are presented. Dynamic contrasts and occasional accidentals eventually provide additional variety.



Example 53. F. Mompou, *Cuna* (bb. 1–2).

The following piece, *Secreto* (Sp. “Secret,” Example 54), accomplishes a rather well-rounded synthesis between the two forces in play: rhythmical continuity, assured by the *ostinato* at the left hand, equally absorbs the melody at the right hand, resulting in an almost complete homorhythm. As can be observed, no elements of variation are introduced to brighten up the three consecutive reiterations of the main thematic unit.



Example 54. F. Mompou, *Secreto* (bb. 1–4).

Mompou’s aesthetics of simplicity and conciseness are ultimately consolidated in *Cants mágics* (Cat. “Magic Chants,” 1920), a collection of five short compositions characterized by extreme freedom of expression and minimalism of content, aiming at evoking a fantastical and devotional atmosphere. The beginning of the first piece (Example 55) is fully representative of the conception behind the whole cycle: lack of key signatures and metre indications, total absence of bar divisions, constant reiteration of brief thematic units, and dependence upon an essentially tonal harmony, eventually enhanced by occasional accidentals and sparks of modality, provide the music with a unique amplitude, magniloquence, and expressive power in spite of the very few means of adoption. The overall coherence of the musical discourse, which may appear fragmentary and flawed at first glance, relies on the uninterrupted sound flow, resulting in a sombre and opaque effect due to the maximal employment of incomplete chords (usually made of only fourth and fifth intervals). In addition, the style of notation employed, implying the free resonance of such chords on long pedals, also recalls gong sonorities as a topic within the realm of geographical/anthropological Primitivism (i.e., evocations of non-Western sonorities, see Table 1).



Example 55. Incipit of *Cant mágic* No. 1 by Federico Mompou (no bars).

The second piece (Example 56) makes use of variation as the main diversification device. The initial theme consists of a brief melodic segment modelled on a F#–H tetrachord, successively reiterated in different manners. The first variation simply harmonizes the initial theme, showing up in a different register, and bears no bar lines. The second variation is distributed within three staves: the usual theme appears in the middle staff; the bottom staff holds timeless bell-like dyads; and the upper staff is filled with an ornamental slow *tremolo*. Curiously, only the middle variation presents bar lines. The indications of *Obscur*, *Clar*, and *Brilliant* are the only concrete suggestions of the character to the performer, as the variations are essentially very similar to each other.



Example 56. Excerpt from *Cant mágic* No. 2 by Federico Mompou (no bars).

The influence of Debussy and Ravel is unequivocal here, as well as in the more virtuosic passages, such as the one from the fourth piece, showing affinity with the brief cadenza from the first movement of Ravel’s Piano Concerto (Example 57), as they are both equally built on circularly repeated formulas.



Example 57. Comparative view between a more virtuosic passage from *Cant mágic* No. 2 by Federico Mompou (no bars) above and the cadenza from the first movement of Piano Concerto in G by Maurice Ravel (b. 58) below.

Música callada (Sp. “Silent Music”), published between 1959 and 1967, leads all such impressions towards a more mature style. Mompou himself accounts for the spirit of his work: “This music has no air or light. It is a weak heartbeat. [...] It is quiet because its hearing is internal. Contentment and reservation. Its emotion is secret and only takes shape in its sound echoes under the great vault of our cold loneliness” (Mompou, quoted from Janés 1975: 371). The denomination of “silent music” refers to the soberest qualities of his own music, generating from the most intimate feelings of the composer himself.

Such feelings are essentially intuitive, so no intellect interferes: they are alimeted by the most primeval emotional faculties and foster the only authentic artistic inspiration. In order to limit any adulteration by the rational mind, Mompou also opts to limit developmental procedures, removing everything which is unnecessary and superfluous from his music: “Primitive instinct is to search for the most expressive music with the least amount of resources, to avoid any kind of development, in which the subject appears stripped of all artifice, always in search of a pure music” (ibid.: 369).

All this music is generally very plain and concise; nevertheless, the pianistic writing is by far more refined than in *Cants mágics*. For instance, the third piece of the set (Example 58) recalls the style of writing of a string quartet. Its compositional scheme is indeed rather elementary: ABA¹BA². As a matter of fact, the only actual difference between A and A¹ consists of minimal variations in voicing, whilst A² introduces *pianissimo* dynamic level instead of the

initial *piano*. All three gravitate around the B ♭ note, whereas the B section is centred on its dominant F. The harmonic language generally complies with the idea of a broadened tonality.²³



Example 58. F. Mompou, *Música callada* No. 3 (bb. 1–5): the boxes show simple, reiterated motivic units.

An authentic miniaturist propensity is seconded by different means:

- As already mentioned, the form is very restrained, alternating between two main thematic episodes.
- The harmonic plan is equally essential, switching between the tonic and dominant regions in correspondence with the two reiterated episodes.
- Reiterated, nursery rhyme motifs are discernible.
- The dynamic range is framed between *pianissimo* and *mezzo forte*.

Finally, such music does not undergo any developmental procedures. As the composer would himself admit, he would rather overlap pre-existing material than introduce new material: “I enjoy deleting, removing anything that I consider unnecessary or superfluous until I stick with the essential. So, I’m happy” (ibid.: 330).

Essentiality is the main qualifying trait of Mompou’s Primitivistic penchant, even though the latter can be approached from several other perspectives. For instance, as has been said, memories from his childhood recur as well, for example, in *Scènes d’enfants* (1918), a set of three compositions, each of them inspired by images of young boys and girls outdoors. Catalan folklore is also assimilated within works such as *Suburbis* (Sp. “Neighbourhood,” 1916–17), *Fêtes lointaines* (Fr. “Distant Celebrations,” 1920–21) and *Cançons i danses* (Cat. “Songs and Dances,” 1921–79), all of which have a programmatic intent.

2.3.3. The Complexity of Simplicity: György Ligeti’s “Folkloric Mechanism”

These ideas of constant reiteration of pre-existing musical material were broadly implemented by twentieth-century composers such as John Cage (1912–1992), Morton Feldman (1926–1987), and all promoters of Minimalist music (Terry Riley, Philip Glass, John

²³ The overall child-like simplicity, as well as the light-hearted atmosphere, also mark a correspondence with the Ratterian *styles* and *pictorial intents* ascertained as peculiar of ontogenetic Primitivism in Table 1 (Chapter 1.2.2).

Adams, etc.) in the following decades. Approached pianistically, it is also worth ascribing to this tendency the musical work by György Ligeti (1923–2006), who definitely brought it to the apex of exploitation: as a matter of fact, Ligeti often achieves extreme complexity by close-up reiterations of the simplest elements. The composer himself would define such an approach as “texturalism,” in which the attention to the overall continuity of the sound stream prevails over the individuality of single, simple details. This concept bonds Ligeti with other contemporary composers, such as Iannis Xenakis, Witold Lutosławski, and Krzysztof Penderecki (Toop 1999: 49).

One of the most significant aspects of Ligeti’s music is how he processes the element of rhythm, resulting in two main aspects:

- *Machine-like* rhythms, deduced from the industrial, mechanical, and electronic world.
- Folkloric rhythms from his homeland and different cultures, such as African music (Steinitz 2003: 267).

Matt Pollock, a Ligeti scholar, summarizes the peculiarities of the composer’s diverse approaches to rhythm as follows:

His *meccanico* music is one of the most complex and fascinating concepts of the 20th century. This music often consists of a group of instruments repeatedly playing short notes in multiple tempi, usually notated through irregular tuplets. The resultant texture is a sea of metronomic points, creating a disjointed and revolving pattern of sounds rather than a traditional pulse. It can also be seen in his solo works for keyboard instruments, such as *Continuum*. In these cases, he frequently uses constant streams of repeated pitches to create different pulses through the rhythmic distribution of notes. [...] His rhythms in his later works feature a different but equally effective approach to rhythm. Rather than fracturing the pulse into smaller and smaller units (and blurring the concept of pulse all together), he worked with additive rhythms that pay homage to Hungary, as well as the music of Central Africa. In these works, there is frequently a constant pulse that has different additive rhythms superimposed over the rhythmic grid. (Pollock 2003: 4–5)

Different works by Ligeti for various instrumental ensembles, such as his String Quartet No. 2 (1968) and the Chamber Concerto (1970), largely reflect his conception of so-called “granulated *continuum*,” where single sound events occur so quickly that they are perceived as part of a larger, flowing entity, whereas his works for piano embody his fascination with the complexity of non-Western rhythms, especially those from Africa. Ligeti himself asserted on this matter:

A completely different metric ambiguity occurs in African music. Here there are no measures in the European sense, but instead two rhythmic levels: a ground layer of fast, even pulsations, which are not counted as such but rather felt, and a superimposed, upper layer of occasionally symmetrical, but more often asymmetrical patterns of varying length. (Ligeti 1988: 5)

Ligeti’s *Etudes for Piano* (1985–2001) outstandingly reflect this orientation. Written between 1985 and 2001, they extensively exploit polyrhythms and related technical issues, together with particular attention to the diverse sound possibilities of the instrument. For instance, his Etude No. 1 *Désordre* (Fr. “Disorder”) is a moderately fast chain of asymmetric segments of notes delimited by dephasing accents between the two hands in correspondence of octaves, chords, or clusters. Such displacement concerns bar lines as well (Example 59).



Example 59. Excerpt from Etude No. 1 *Désordre* by György Ligeti (no bars).

Etude No. 3 *Touches bloquées* (Fr. “Blocked touches”) combines such rhythmical freedom with unusual technical means: Ligeti recommends silently pressing some keys and holding them while depressing some others normally, in order to make the tones associated with the first ones constantly resonate (Example 60). Coordination between hands goes along with the coordination between fingers, as the dual task of actively pressing some keys while holding some others leads the performer to alternatively engage different fingers according to an asymmetrical scheme as well. Bar lines are regularly placed, although they serve as a mere orientation for a performer.



Example 60. G. Ligeti, Etude No. 3 *Touches bloquées* (bb. 1–4).

Etude No. 4 *Fanfares* introduces an *ostinato* at the left hand, while persisting in rhythmical freedom with the right hand (such configuration overturns later on). The unusual 3+2+3/8 metre indication at the beginning solely apply to the aforementioned *ostinato*, as well as the actual bar division (Example 61).



Example 61. G. Ligeti, Etude No. 4 *Fanfares* (bb. 1–3).

Etude No. 8 *Fem* (Hun. “Metal”) enhances polyrhythms between hands while also emphasizing the coloristic intention of imitating the clangor of metal (Example 62). Ligeti equally explores different dynamic possibilities related to such typology of timbre, ranging from *pianissimo* to quadruple *forte*. Once again, bar divisions stand as an approximate guideline for the performer.



Example 62. G. Ligeti, Etude No. 8 *Fem* (bb. 1–2).

In Etude No. 9 *Vertigo* (Fr. “Vertigo”), Ligeti constructs a very dense and tightened canon, whose consecutive entrances progressively get lost within the sound mass (Example 63). As each voice outlines chromatic scales, they all result in strident clusters at the end.



Example 63. G. Ligeti, Etude No. 9 *Vertigo* (bb. 1–3).

Etude No. 10 *Der Zauberlehrling* (Ger. “The Apprentice Wizard”) is processed in the manner of a *continuum* (Example 64a) progressively increasing in density, whilst the middle section introduces a blurred, indistinct cascade of crystalline sounds littered with irregular accents (Example 64b). The two features progressively merge into each other towards the conclusion (Example 64c).



Example 64. Different rhythmical constructions in Etude No. 10 *Der Zauberlehrling* by György Ligeti
a) bb. 1–3 b) bb. 50–51 c) bb. 78–79.

As observable by this point (and already mentioned in Chapter 1.2), Ligeti’s familiarity with rhetorical/formal Primitivism as described in Martinelli’s classification is quite evident: the composer relies on “essential elements of music creation, such as rhythm and sound-silence alternation,” although organizing them in the most complex way (ibid.). However, non-Western sources, such as Hungarian folk tunes and African rhythms, are equally observable. Noticeably, such characteristics were formerly summarized in Table 1, when disclosing the recurring bond between the Primitivistic categories and the theory of topics.

Indisputably, analogies with the artistic movement of Minimalism can be ascertained, first and foremost the repetitiveness of patterns and drones. At this point, we could ask whether it is worth ascribing pianistic works by representatives of this trend (Riley, Glass, Steve Reich, etc.) to the style of Primitivism as well. The choice was made not to include an analysis of Minimalism in this thesis due to the following reasons:

- As David Cope notices, one of the characteristics of minimalist music, along with conciseness and repetitiveness, is continuity (Cope 1997: 91). Diversely, Primitivism shows a predilection for discontinuity, for instance, in terms of sudden dynamic contrasts, asymmetric rhythms, or abrupt textural changes.
- As a consequence, the element of percussiveness is also softened, or “minimalized”, in compliance with the general tendency to uniformity. Moreover, it is worth recalling that Primitivistic percussiveness is often characterized by a descriptive penchant, aiming at reproducing the timbre of specific percussion instruments (often belonging to either non-Western or peasant musical backgrounds) on a modern piano, whereas this feature is not truly appreciable in Minimalistic music.
- More generally, the non-representational approach of Minimalism, which rather focuses on the internal processes of music, leaves no room for the implicit pictorial flair in

Primitivistic piano music, as extensively illustrated by this point (Ligeti himself endows his études with programmatic titles). On the other hand, it must be said that some of the musical features (rhythmical, melodic, etc.) borrowed from such genres as Javanese gamelan or Indian raga are often employed as the main compositional source in minimalist music too, although they are deprived of any representative intent.

In conclusion, Primitivism in piano music reveals itself in a multifaceted variety of forms, diversely emphasizing specific features ascertained as indicative of this aesthetic tendency and thus contributing to the reassessment of the technical, stylistic, and aesthetic parameters of piano music in the ways described above. A purposefully chosen case-study, taking into account the most performative sides of the matter, will be presented in the last chapter of this artistic research paper.

3. INTERPRETING A CASE-STUDY: BÉLA BARTÓK'S *FOURTEEN BAGATELLES* OP. 6

As mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2, Béla Bartók's adherence to the paradigm of Primitivism relies on multiple aspects: the influence from the folksong repertoire, the emphasis on the simplest features of music, such as the rhythmic pulse, and the significant employment of textural elements, such as repeated patterns of chords. *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6, which were also considered in the previous chapter, fully reflect such characteristics within the realm of the geographical/anthropological aspect of musical Primitivism according to Dario Martinelli. Undoubtedly an example of the "Primitivistic topic" as suggested by the author of the present artistic research paper, this piano cycle offers a rather multifarious case-study in terms of interpretation and performance, especially concerning the large variety of percussive approaches entailing different pianistic touches throughout, as well as rather specific stylistic features related to the predilection for repetitiveness and exiguity and to the employment of folkloric material, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The author of the present paper has performed this cycle extensively during the years spent preparing this artistic research project²⁴; hence, the performative suggestions in this chapter are due both to the conducted research and the knowledge acquired through thorough performer's analysis and artistic practice.

The first dilemma to be faced by a performer approaching the set is whether the pieces that comprised it ought to be contemplated as individual, fully-fledged compositions independent from each other, or rather as a coherent piece, as members of a wider dramaturgical construction from the beginning to the end. Indisputably, all of them are quite short and often are not developed and thus hardly achieve completeness on their own. On the other hand, each of them shows a quite specific character and employs analogous musical material throughout, as shown in Table 5, thus corroborating its own individuality.

An undeniable element in favour of their supposed unity resides in the title of the collection, since, as it suggests, all the pieces within the set belong to the same genre: the bagatelle, that is, "a short, unpretentious instrumental composition," as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2002), which genuinely befits all of fourteen pieces. Another significant aspect is represented by their arrangement within the cycle, which generally complies with two types of alternation:

²⁴ Some of the performance occasions were: 3rd *Festival Conference of Music Performance and Artistic Research "Doctors in Performance"*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. 4–6 September, 2018; *LMTA doktorantai. Vincenzo De Martino, Mantautas Katinas*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. 28 June, 2018; *Melns un balts*. Riga: Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. 8 September, 2018.






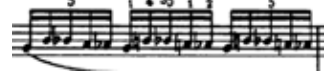



- the alternation between slow and fast bagatelles;
- the juxtaposition between more structured bagatelles (characterized by a uniform pace throughout) and more improvisational ones (exhibiting frequent *rubati* and changes of tempo and privileging free-chanting textures with rich ornamentation).

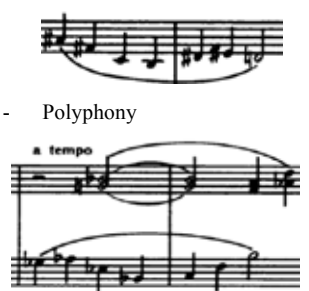


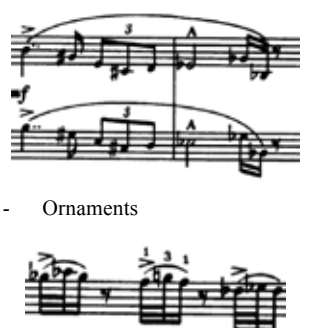

Although the two alternations are not strict, their enchainment (as summarized in Table 5) leads to a sequence of truly diverging characters, which is only partially spoiled by the coexistence of Bagatelles No. 11 and 12, both slow and improvisational, one after another. Nevertheless, such diversification between contiguous bagatelles eventually confers inner variety to the whole set, corroborating the idea of a unique cycle of contrasting moods. Following this idea, the decision was taken to present a “bagatelle-to-bagatelle” performative analysis, in order to offer interpretative tools for pianists taking up the task of performing the full cycle.

I. Molto sostenuto	Slow	Improvisational
II. Allegro giocoso	Fast	Structured
III. Andante	Slow	Improvisational
IV. Grave	Slow	Structured
V. Vivo	Fast	Structured
VI. Lento	Slow	Improvisational
VII. Allegretto molto capriccioso	Fast	Improvisational
VIII. Andante sostenuto	Slow	Improvisational
IX. Allegretto grazioso	Fast	Improvisational
X. Allegro	Fast	Structured
XI. Allegretto molto rubato	Slow	Improvisational
XII. Rubato	Slow	Improvisational
XIII. Lento funebre	Slow	Structured
XIV. Presto	Fast	Structured

Table 5. Alternation between bagatelles of contrasting character within the eponymous cycle by Béla Bartók.

The following Table 6 summarizes the variety in the employment of specific musical materials and typologies of tasks for a performer in each of the *Bagatelles*, as a scheme for a pianist in preparation to approach them individually:

	Mainly involved pianistic tasks	Privileged aspects of music	Elements of influence from peasant music
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sound attacks (accents, articulation marks, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals - Scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplicity of the melody - Homophony - Repetitiveness
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitions  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sound attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm - Intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percussiveness - Repetitiveness
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chromaticism - Rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplicity of the melody - Repetitiveness - Periodicity
IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i> - Chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals - Chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplicity of the melody - Repetitiveness - Periodicity
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitions  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sound attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simplicity of the melody - Repetitiveness

VI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i> - Polyphony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals - Chromaticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness - Periodicity
VII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sound attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm - Intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness - Percussiveness
VIII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i> - Polyphony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chromaticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness
IX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i> - Sound attacks - Ornaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness - Homophony
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chords - Sound attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness - Percussiveness


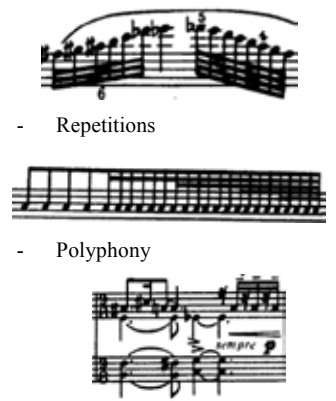

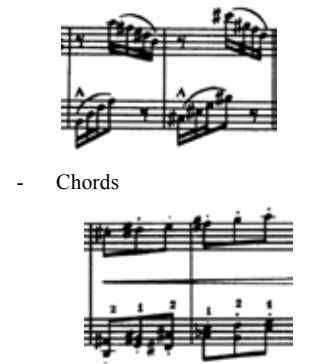
XI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chords - Sound attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals - Chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness
XII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scales - Fast notes - Repetitions - Polyphony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervals - Scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness
XIII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Legato</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm - Intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homophony
XIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast notes - Chords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rhythm - Intervals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repetitiveness - Percussiveness

Table 6. Prevalence of diverse typologies of music materials in each of 14 Bagatelles Op. 6 by Béla Bartók.

Further on, each bagatelle is analyzed individually, by pointing out the essential characteristics for each of them in terms of pianistic approach and disclosure of musical properties formerly ascertained as symptomatic of an authentic primeval character in Bartók's pianistic outcome, as well as other particular creative features related to more varied representative and coloristic intents.


Bagatelle No. 1


Bagatelle No. 1 effectively presents some of the characteristics of an introduction to the entire set: the bright, laconic incipit at the right hand, mostly revolving around the main pitch of the key tone of C# Eolian; the improvisational character, imitating responsorial chanting; and the absence of significant modulations or developmental procedures, due to its extreme brevity and conciseness.


The piece revolves around two main melodic materials (Example 65):


- a freely moving melodic line in C# Eolian at the right hand;
- recurring descending five-notes motifs in C Phrygian at the left hand.

Bartók meticulously indicates phrasing and articulation for each melodic fragment, contemplating four main types of pianistic touch:

 *Tenuto*, to be held long enough by a generous portion of phalanx, switching from one key to another using slow, restrained finger movements.

 *Marcato*, a faster, more percussive stroke from the very fingertip, which, different from *staccato*, does not necessarily imply a shortening of the note duration.

 *Tenuto – staccato*, essentially combining the mellowness of *tenuto* with the fast-outbound movement of *staccato*.

 Accented notes, rather emphasized without increasing the speed of the stroke as for *marcato*.

Their employment is quite varied throughout the piece; however, all the descending melodic fragments at the left hand are always marked as *tenuto – staccato*, as a sort of leitmotif. For this reason, it is reasonable to play it always in the same manner, while conferring more freedom of expression to the upper melody.

For instance, Zoltán Kocsis (1952–2016), one of the most eminent interpreters of Béla Bartók's music, impresses a moderate *rubato* onto it, complying with the indications of phrasing by the composer himself, in other words by slightly speeding up and slowing down respectively at the beginning and at the end of each slur. Moreover, each *marcato* note is preceded by a slight hesitation.²⁵ The author of the present artistic research paper would also recommend to play *marcato* notes without pedal, while individually pedalling each *tenuto* note before, in order to emphasize the percussive character of the stroke. Similarly, no pedal at all is advised while playing the *tenuto-staccato* notes.

²⁵ Kocsis, Z. (2010). *Béla Bartók. Complete Solo Piano Works*, Vol. 1. Decca: 00028947893110.



Example 65. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 1 (bb. 1–4).

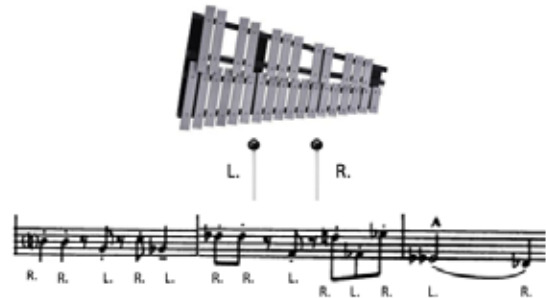
Bagatelle No. 2

Bagatelle No. 2 is a swift, forward-leaning gallop entirely modelled on an everlasting eight-note pulsation. The opening consists of an extravagant, sharp-cornered melody at the left hand, progressively revealing the amplitude of its intervals, revolving around the repeated notes of the *ostinato* at the right hand (Example 66a). The latter, guaranteeing rhythmical vitality, should be played on the very edge of the double-escapement capability of the instrument and aim at reproducing a *detaché* sound typical of string instruments, which enhances the fluency and directionality of the passage and safeguards its clarity and liveliness at the same time. A 2-3 fingering is recommended while also indulging the movement with a certain wrist flexibility.

In contrast, the theme at the right hand will sound crisper and more articulated, complying with the indications of touch by the composer. A more percussive character can be obtained by employing very firm fingers and equalizing all *staccati*, having as an auditory reference the clanging of the two alternating sticks on a xylophone (Example 66b). The figure at b. 6 also recalls a recurring motif in Camille Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals* (1886), as shown in Example 66c. However, in Saint-Saëns' work, the descending leap is given more acoustic space by the insertion of an eight-note rest in between; similarly, a minimal spacing is recommended in the analogous passage within the bagatelle in order to better emphasize the tumble on the accented note. A 1-1 fingering from the top to the bottom note is also recommended: such thumb stroke results in a sharper and more incisive sound.



a)



b)



c)

Example 66. a) Excerpt from Bagatelle No. 2 by Béla Bartók (bb. 1–6). b) Prospectus of alternating xylophone sticks in performing the initial theme. c) Comparative view between two analogous fragments respectively from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns (on the left) and Bagatelle No. 2 (on the right).

Faster values than eighth-notes appear at b. 8: groups of four semiquavers (the first one being accented) leading to a *tenuto* quarter note (Example 67). A performer must certainly consider them as a unique pianistic gesture, gaining impulse from the initial accented note, to be held more deeply and to be stressed by slightly protracting its duration, whilst the arrival point, indeed, will sound less incisive, but just as distinct due to its *tenuto* quality. Nevertheless, semiquavers should not sound sloppy and indistinct, but vivid and clattering.

Another significant figure appears at the right hand at b. 12 (Example 68) on top of a ceaseless eighth-notes *ostinato* once again: despite being noted as a triplet, it should not be strictly measured by the performer, who instead must focus on the potential shrillness and brutal dissonance of the passage, opting for execution as an *arpeggiato* cluster. Recommended fingering is 2-3-4.



Example 67. Figure from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 2 (on the left) and its recommended execution as graphically represented by the researcher (on the right).



Example 68. Figure from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 2 (on the left) and its recommended execution as graphically represented by the researcher (on the right).

The sequence of descending *arpeggi* subsequent to each other on a two-quavers shift, each of them beginning with an accent and leading to a *tenuto* note (bb. 15–16, Example 69), represents one of the many ways Bartók conferred rhythmic playfulness to music: despite occurring on two sole melodic lines, a performer is led to give the illusion of as many instruments as the number of *arpeggi* chasing one another. In order to achieve this effect, a pianist ought to overshadow the individual qualities of each pitch and register involved in the passage by emphasizing the mere rhythmical properties; in other words, to equalize the sequence accent-*staccato-tenuto* for each *arpeggio*, except for the dynamic change (Bartók indicates *diminuendo* until *piano*). The author of the research paper recommends the same fingering throughout.



Example 69. Excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 2 (bb. 15–16) on the left with recommended fingering by the author of the present artistic research paper, leading to equal 5-4-2-1-2-1-3 and 1-2-4-1-2-4-1 patterns at the right and left hand respectively; the desired effect is the one of four different instruments progressively chasing each other, as illustrated on the right.

A similar approach is advised at b. 17 (Example 70): by considering each of the two-note motifs as an independent cell, hypothetically associated with a different instrument, the effect of squeezing the time is much stronger than it would be if we contemplated bigger groups of notes, as the notation by Bartók himself of one accent every four notes would initially hint. Indeed, the alternation between hands (also indicated by the composer) favours a more frequent

rhythmical fragmentation: each rhythmical unit is associated with its own pianistic gesture.

The author of the present artistic research paper, therefore, recommends the insertion of an accent every two notes, the additional ones being less incisive than the ones indicated by Bartók. Furthermore, each cell ought to comply with the indication of *crescendo*, progressively increasing in sonority. This idea of canon actually finds notorious correspondences in twentieth-century music, such as in the second movement *Toccata* from Alfred Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1, as shown in Example 70.



Example 70. Excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 2 (b. 17, top left): the accents between brackets are recommendation by the author of the present artistic research paper. The desired effect is the one of different instruments progressively chasing each other (top right), as it happens, for instance, in the second movement *Toccata* from Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1 (bottom).

The following section, essentially based on different combinations of the initial musical material and thus leading to the conclusion, introduces a new accompanying pattern at b. 21 (Example 71): this new material, which is essentially a variation on the main *ostinato* figure, is marked by *staccato*, thus requiring a different tactile approach, in order to make it sound articulated enough. The author recommends fixing the hand position in compliance with the amplitude of the intervals and hammering the keys through small side movements of the hand around the axis of the keyboard on the very surface of it. Dynamically speaking, it should sound crisper than the original *ostinato*, but never overshadow the thematic material.



Example 71. Comparative view between the main accompanying pattern starting from b. 1 (top and bottom left) and its variation appearing from b. 21 (top and bottom right) in Bartók's Bagatelle No. 2.

Bagatelle No. 3

Bagatelle No. 3 is a brief interlude wrapped in an aura of indefiniteness, made up of two sole musical elements: a chromatic quintuplet *ostinato* pattern at the right hand and an enigmatic melody at the left hand. However, the exiguity of the employed music material is counterpoised by the multiplicity of diverse executional approaches.

The *ostinato* at the right hand deserves a few considerations: although it is visually reiterated in compliance with the metre, a certain freedom is advised in its execution, as would also be the case in György Ligeti's *Musica Ricercata* No. 7 (Example 72), thus avoiding too strict a vertical correspondence with the underlying melody. Regarding the level of clarity, it is recommended to make each note identifiable at the very beginning and to progressively flow into haziness by means of generous pedalling (nevertheless to be modulated in respect to the melody at the left hand). To this purpose, recommended fingering for the cell is 1-5-4-3-2: the use of weaker fingers favours the required smoothness.



Example 72. Comparative view between two *ostinato* cells respectively in Bartók's Bagatelle No. 3 (on the left) and Ligeti's *Musica ricercata* No. 7 (on the right).

On the contrary, the melody at the left hand is meant to be played at a more regular and static pace, also due to the employment of larger values. Its stride is enlivened by occasional *marcato* signs at the conclusion of a segment and in correspondence with the longest of its values (two dotted half notes tied between) in bb. 5–6 and bb. 9–10. Kocsis, who was taken as an example before, emphasizes this note by placing it at the top of a *crescendo* starting from the beginning of each melodic segment, also assisted by the increasing volume of the *ostinato*

at the right hand. Furthermore, he highlights the intervallic relationship of empty fifth between C note indicated as *marcato* and the initial G of the *ostinato* cell above, by impressing a slight accent to the latter as well. Curiously, he does the same at the beginning of the segment, stressing the dissonance between the F# note of the melody and the G note of the *ostinato* cell (Example 73).²⁶



Example 73. Excerpt from Bagatelle No. 3 (bb. 3–6): dynamic and agogic insertions by Kocsis are shown in brackets. Moreover, the pianist emphasizes the dissonances between the notes of the right and left hand enclosed in the boxes.

The conclusion shows a progressive depletion of the *ostinato*, starting by a *ritardando* at b. 22 and leading to the actual stretching of its value in the very last bar (Example 74). The transition should sound as smooth as possible, giving the illusion of a real, gradual *allargando* (by also wisely decreasing the amount of pedal) which would disguise the actual change in the writing. However, the indication of *staccato* in the very last bar implies greater distinctness of the single notes, despite languishing and fading out. The author of the present artistic research paper recommends the following 1-4-3-1-2-1 fingering: the insertion of stronger fingers ensures the right clearness to the passage, as a sort of *pizzicato*.



Example 74. Final bar of Bagatelle No. 3: the fingering at the right hand is recommended by the author of the present paper.

Bagatelle No. 4

Bagatelle No. 4, a harmonization of the Hungarian folk song *Mikor gulyásbojtár voltam*, is written in the form of choral hymn and is characterized by a clear predilection for sound masses rather than for the individual qualities of intervals and notes. The incipit (bb. 1–2) introduces the main thematic material sustained by consonant harmonies. The use of *fortissimo* from the very beginning confers boisterous magniloquence and affirmativeness; the indication of *legatissimo* is ill-suited to a finger *legato* throughout, but rather implies generous pedalling to facilitate connections between chords. In this regard, the author of the present artistic research paper recommends a pedal change in correspondence with every chord. Indeed, it is possible to group chords into delineated pianistic gestures, as shown in Example 75.

Generally speaking, the series of chords at the right hand ought to sound full-bodied and dense, with one element fluidly merging into another. Such an effect is naturally achievable by combining a rather sudden and vigorous motion to the hand in correspondence with each chord with its amortization through the elbows immediately afterwards. On the other hand, the series of empty fifths at the left hand may bestow an edginess upon the passage: such bichords can be considered in their verticality rather than in sequence, underlining their percussive character by:

- not connecting all of them. For instance, the first and the last two can be assigned an equal 5-1 fingering and separated slightly.
- letting the hand fall from an upper distance in correspondence with them, conferring a sort of gong effect.

Regarding the *fermata* on the last chord, it can be differently interpreted according to the deployment of the preceding musical material:

- If the execution was rhythmically quite strict, the *fermata* might also be relatively measured (for instance, exactly doubling the duration of the chord).
- If the execution tended to *rubato*, with *accelerando* in correspondence to the eight notes and *rallentando* toward the end of the segment, the *fermata* could be variously longer, accomplishing the progressive slowing down.

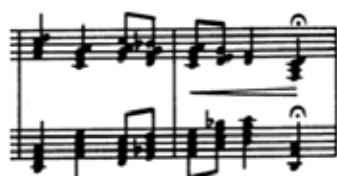
The author would recommend the first solution, which befits the solemnity of the passage more.

²⁶ Kocsis, Z. (2010). *Béla Bartók. Complete Solo Piano Works*, Vol. 1. Decca: 00028947893110.



Example 75. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 4 (bb. 1–2): fingering and groupings are recommended by the researcher.

The following bb. 3–4 consist of a reiteration of the previously enunciated material with the insertion of extra dissonances (Example 76), perhaps aiming at emulating pitch imperfections in peasant vocal ensembles. This unavoidably requires a different hand setting, thus making an actual finger *legato* throughout impossible. Diversely, a performer should not be afraid of accentuating the powerful shrillness of the passage, by treating each of them just like a strident, frightful cluster. For this purpose, it is recommended to avoid any actual finger connection at all, making each chord fully roar by means of unsparing pedalling.



Example 76. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 4 (bb. 3–4).

The following section, twice reiterated (bb. 5–8 and 9–12), begins as more restrained (as imitative of an alternation between *solì* and the initial *tutti*) and entails elements of a very rudimentary polyphony. For instance, the melody at the right hand is counterpointed by a lower voice between bb. 5–6, which deserves to be pointed out, as well as the brief motif at b. 8, as Bartók himself indicates by a dotted line (Example 77).



Example 77. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 4 (bb. 5–8): the dotted lines draw attention to a middle voice.

Bagatelle No. 5

Bagatelle No. 5, based on a Slovakian folk tune, relies solely on two musical elements, variously reiterated among the different registers and between the two hands:

- A vivid, playful melody, characterized by specific articulation marks.
- A persistent chain of repeated dissonant chords.

The melody is rather narrow-ranged and singsong. Generally marked as *poco marcato*, it presents the following articulations:

Tenuto characterizes almost the entirety of the quarter notes. As for Bagatelle No. 1, it is meant to be held for a fairly long time; however, considering the overall brilliance of the melody, in this case it does not imply a soft, restrained attack, but it rather well gets along with a more incisive stroke, befitting the rusticity and extravagance of the piece.

Staccato, generally associated with the eighth-notes, ought to be sharp, vivid and with a hint of eccentricity, may also be assisted by the wrist, which can confer further dynamism and elasticity.

Marcato appears in correspondence with longer notes, usually at the end or at the beginning of a melodic fragment. In Bagatelle No. 1, this implies a faster, more percussive stroke, perhaps even deviating to an “uglier,” shriller, and more compressed sound.

Sfrozato is quite similar to *marcato*, but additionally implies a slight delay before the actual sound emission (as for a short breath).

An accent only appears at b. 11. If the performer is willing to pursue certain diversification, the researcher recommends a sudden dynamic emphasis on it.

The accompanying pattern is entirely homorhythmic, also entailing a certain mechanism, thus hinting at the eponymous topic within the realm of rhetorical/formal Primitivism as summarized in Table 1. Regarding the type of sound to be generally strived for, a performer should take into account the principle of *doppio staccato* gathered from the woodwinds technique, in which sound emissions in rapid articulation are associated with the alternating movements of attack and rebound of the tongue while releasing the air. Similarly, a pianist might discern between more active movements of pressing the key and less active ones derived from the action of double escapement of the keyboard itself, resulting in a smooth, equal succession (Example 78). The maintenance of a firm hand position and the contribution

of the wrist play a crucial role in pursuing such homogeneity in the passage. Bartók employs this feature in the incipit of *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1918–19), assigning to groups of woodwinds the fast repetition of chords with rhythmical incisiveness and a fair percussive character.



Example 78. Main accompanying pattern in Bartók’s Bagatelle No. 5 (on the left): the arrows show a possible application of the principle of *doppio staccato* as illustrated in the body of the text. This feature is frequently employed by Bartók writing fast repetitions for woodwinds, for instance at the beginning of *The Miraculous Mandarin* (on the right).

Although it is quite regular and repetitive, this pattern often implies inconvenient hand settings, due to the thickness of chords. For instance, the descending series of chords at bb. 21–25 (Example 79) feels quite unnatural to be played by one single hand, as Bartók writes. The author of the present artistic research paper recommends a division between the two hands, as well as for the ascending succession at bb. 46–47 (Example 80).



Example 79. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 5 (bb. 21–25): the notes below the dotted line are meant to be played with the left hand.



Example 80. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 5 (bb. 46–47): the notes below the dotted line are meant to be played with the left hand.

Bagatelle No. 6

Bagatelle No. 6 is a languishing interlude that is also modelled on very few musical means, such as:

- a twisty, enigmatic melody, marked as *poco espressivo* deliberately avoiding any tonal centre, alternatively in the middle and low registers;

- obscure, enveloping chords in the bottom register;
- from bb. 8–15, a two-voices countermelody in the middle register.

The melody should avoid any peaks of expressiveness and solely comply with the thrifty dynamic indications. Furthermore, in order to emphasize its static nature, which does not lead towards any climax, the researcher recommends imagining each note marked as *tenuto*, to be sustained by a generous portion of phalanx, switching from one key to another with slow, restrained finger movements (Example 81). A moderate *rubato* is contemplated in compliance with the shaping of the phrasing as indicated by the slurs.



Example 81. Melodic excerpts from Bartók’s Bagatelle No. 6: the *tenuto* signs above each note are a recommendation from the author of the present artistic research paper.

A similar approach is advised while playing the countermelody, which, on the contrary, is recommended to be performed more rhythmically and with a shriller sonority, a sort of more incisive *tenuto* with elements of *marcato* (i.e., a slightly faster sound attack and prolonged contact with the key), thus producing a meaningful contrast with the main melody, which is now located in the bottom register, as gloomier and more sombre (Example 82). The counter melody is also characterized by sudden breaths, not interfering with the sinuosity and mellowness of the left hand.



Example 82. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 6 (bb. 12–13): the *tenuto* and *marcato* signs at the right hand are a recommendation from the author of the present artistic research paper.

The chords in the bottom register are made of two sounds and most frequently rely on the intervals of “empty” fifth, conferring an unmistakable ancient guise. In some cases, where the melody allows, it is possible to make them resound using the pedal, not necessarily holding them with the fingers, by impressing a more percussive stroke to each of them, thus leading to a sort of *gong* effect and potentially creating an ambience of this sort, as formerly disclosed (Example 83).



Example 83. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 6 (bb. 17–18).

Bagatelle No. 7

Bagatelle No. 7 is a shimmering, free-flowing *czardas*²⁷ imbued with grotesque humour. The very beginning introduces the features of free instrumental improvisation, a figuration among the most interesting of the whole cycle: a fluctuation between two tones, a vibration as obtainable on a violin by means of alternated bow strokes, as the slurs would also suggest (Example 84).

The author of the present artistic research paper recommends playing it with the right hand (Bartók gives it to the left hand) maintaining the same 1-3 fingering throughout, in order to easily comply with the indicated phrasing by keeping an analogous hand setting. A firm 3rd finger may also act as a springboard to the whole hand, conferring the right impulse to each small pianistic gesture. In addition, the separation between the groups of notes may be emphasized and the longer note may be assigned a *fermata*, in order to enhance the improvisational character.

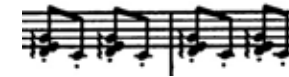


Example 84. Incipit of Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 1–2, above) and its recommended execution as graphically represented by the researcher (below).

The following bb. 4–66 present a quick dance characterized by frequent changes of speed: Bartók provides specific metronomic indications for each of them. The most persistent

²⁷ A compelling, syncopated Hungarian folk dance, usually preceded by a slower introduction. Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com [last accessed: 31/03/2021].

characteristic of this episode is the accompanying formula, made of groups of two sound elements (both to be played as *staccato*), the first being a compact dissonant chord to be played as a descending *arpeggiato* (Example 85). Their being more or less tightened depends on the speed of execution reached: for instance, when the tempo is slow, they might be wider, whereas they will result as more contracted in the faster sections. A general 1-3-5 is recommended throughout.



Example 85. Main accompanying formula in Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7.

The melody is mordant, idiosyncratic, and variously articulated. The very beginning already presupposes the necessity of differentiating its type of *staccato* with the one of the accompanying pattern for the sake of the distinctiveness of the two musical materials. The researcher recommends treating it as the *tenuto/staccato* in Bagatelle No. 1, essentially combining the mellowness of *tenuto* with the fast-outbound movement of *staccato*, thus conferring a more mysterious character to such a sinister incipit (Example 86).





Example 86. Excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 5 (bb. 8–9), in which the indication of *tenuto* together with the one of *staccato* (the latter by Bartók himself) is an insertion by the author of the present artistic research paper.

Concerning the syncopated sections, typical of *czardas* rhythms, the author of the present artistic research paper also suggests emphasizing them with a *sforzando* as meant in Bagatelle No. 5, slightly retarding the sound emission and emphasizing it by means of a more brutal, clumsy stroke with the thumb (Example 87). Regarding the series of repeated B notes from bb. 34–38 (Example 88), characterized by a rich articulation, the researcher recommends the following diversification:



Accented *staccato* notes are meant to be played as *staccato* with a bigger dynamic inflection due to the accent itself.

 *Tenuto* notes are comparable to those in Bagatelle No. 5.

 *Staccato* notes are to be played as regular *staccato*, sharp and vivid.



Example 87. Excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 20–23): the indications of *sforzando* in correspondence with the syncopations are an insertion by the author of the present artistic research paper.



Example 88. Recurring figure in Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7.

A significant change of texture occurs from b. 67: the accompanying formula ceases to exist, in favour of groups of two *staccato* notes, the first marked as *sforzando*, alternating between the two hands (Example 89). The recommended articulation is a sharp *martellato*, producing sonorous snaps as though generated by clattering hailstones. The most suitable fingering would be 1-3 for both hands, also in order to guarantee the sharpness of the *staccato*.

For the following episode from bb. 75–86, re-introducing the main accompanying formula furtherly characterized by *marcato* in correspondence with the descending *arpeggi* (Example 90), the author of the thesis suggests almost ignoring the indication of *arpeggiato* in favour of a more squawking sonority, given by the dissonant clusters. Regarding the left hand, these longer notes have to be vigorously struck on a bar pedal, and the performer must not fear blending the superimposed musical material: a general sense of harmonic chaos ultimately befits the overall sonorous atmosphere.



Example 89. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 67–70).



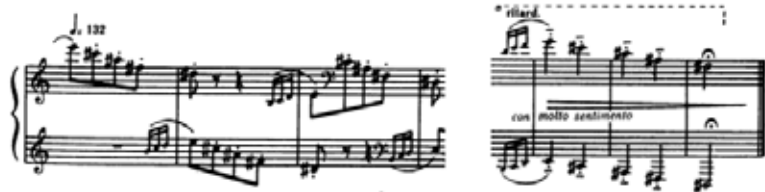
Example 90. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 78–82): the author of the present artistic research paper recommends to almost ignore the indication of *arpeggiato* at the right hand in favour of more strident clusters.

An excursus of stillness is suddenly given at bb. 100–104 (Example 91). This material should be enounced with sober expressiveness, as the lack of phrasing and articulations may suggest, in clear contrast with the previous sections. Rhythmical flexibility is discouraged, except for the *ritardando* indicated by Bartók himself at b. 103. Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967) employs an analogous melodic fragment, of a probable gypsy derivation, in his *Háry János Suite* (1926), transposed one semitone below and with a different rhythmical connotation.



Example 91. Comparative view between an excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 100–104) on top and a fragment from Kodály's *Háry János Suite* below, concerning the employment of analogous musical material.

From b. 105, the usual precipitous atmosphere is restored, by means of a succession of fast imitations between hands based on the initial thematic material, marked as *staccato* and each preceded by a flickering group of grace notes (Example 92). This material is quite rarefied as well: it is important to preserve such scarceness by maintaining a *pianissimo* dynamic level throughout. Concerning the grace notes, they should sound as distinct as possible, conferring both extra liveliness and capriciousness. This same material is once again disclosed in the very last bar in a further parodic re-elaboration, this time reiterated by both hands on very distant registers, each note marked with the usual *tenuto/staccato* and the whole passage labelled as *con molto sentimento* (It. "With much sentiment").



Example 92. Two excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 7 (bb. 105–108, on the left; bb. 113–115, on the right), displaying the employment of analogous musical material.

Bagatelle No. 8

Bagatelle No. 8 is sinister and gloomy, made of mysterious harmonies flowing into each other. The very beginning presents the rather unusual configuration of *tenuto* notes at the right hand preceded by *tenuto* grace notes at the left hand (Example 93). It is recommended to conceive the passage as it follows:

- The melody should be played linearly, complying with the general indication of phrasing.
- The faster notes must dart immediately before the main notes, almost in unison with them, conferring extra colour similar to rubbing the strings inside the sounding board with the flesh of a finger. This effect was actually put into practice by Henry Cowell (1897–1965) in his *Aeolian Harp* (1923). This same configuration is employed later on, deprived of the *tenuto* indication, for instance at bb. 24–25.



Example 93. Two excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 8 (b. 1, top left; bb. 24–25, top right), showing a similar configuration, aiming at a sound effect comparable to the one of rubbed strings, as achieved in Cowell's *Aeolian Harp* (bottom).

More melodic sections, characterized by an elementary polyphony, are scattered throughout the piece. References to free improvisational chanting, such as at bb. 21–22 (Example 94), are prominently significant: this section should sound fiercely blaring, like

howling, and furtherly characterized by *poco agitato*, as Bartók himself wrote. For this purpose, the author of the present artistic research paper exhorts the performer to fully comply with the phrasing indication by the composer, and further recommends characterizing each note with a slight *martellato* sound, typical of string instruments, enhancing the brutality of the passage.



Example 94. Excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 8 (bb. 21–22), bearing the characteristics of a free improvisational cadenza.

Bagatelle No. 9

Bagatelle No. 9 is a playful scherzo entirely played in unison by both hands throughout. The main thematic element (Example 95), variously reiterated, is seesawing and mocking and should be considered as a whole pianistic gesture (as the slur suggests), gaining impulse from the initial accented note and fluttering away by the faster notes at the end, almost as *acciaccatura*.



Example 95. Incipit of Bartók's Bagatelle No. 9 (bb. 1–2, on the left) and its recommended execution (on the right).

Analogous fast figurations are scattered throughout the piece. For instance:



A group of two ascending notes, without any articulation mark (on top), to be executed as if they were grace notes (below).



A group of two descending notes, at wider, dissonant intervals (on top), to be executed more widely as if they were a triplet (below).



A similar configuration with the insertion of *marcato* signs (on top), to be also more widely executed, additionally slightly stretching the duration of each upper note (below).

Even faster figurations appear:

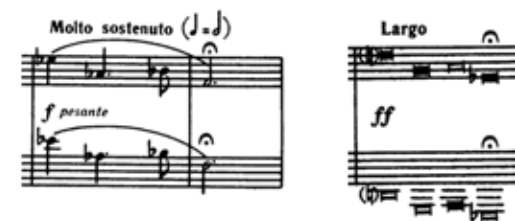


Flickering sixteenth-notes preceding longer values (on top), to be also executed in the manner of grace notes (below).



Mordent-shaped figurations (on top), to be executed as actual upper mordents (below).

A few *Molto sostenuto* sections, usually lasting one bar, temporarily suspend the excited pace (Example 96). These fragments, marked as *forte pesante*, should be forcefully declaimed, impressing each note with a vigorous stroke. Similarly, the last bar, marked as *Largo* and *fortissimo* and deprived of actual durations, must be clangorous, each note imbued with pedal and let to thunder as a gong or bells (a frequent topic within the realm of geographical/anthropological Primitivism, as repeatedly observed by this point).



Example 96. Excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 9 (bb. 13–14, on the left; b. 70, on the right).

Bagatelle No. 10

Bagatelle No. 10 is a wild and brutal dance, privileging coarse and scratchy sonorities. The incipit (Example 97) is abrupt and impetuous: a contracted series of jarring chords marked as *forte molto marcato*, to be vigorously hammered by the robustly fixed hand, as air blows by brass instruments. The researcher recommends further specific articulation marks. This texture fortuitously interlaces more delicate chords, to be more gently tapped imitating the sudden but minute strokes on a xylophone. In this case, a firm hand is also recommended, but more restrained movements, unitedly with a certain wrist amortization, are preferable as well.



Example 97. Excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 10 (bb. 1–3, above; bb. 5–7, below), with additional articulation marks above the right hand by the author of the present artistic research paper.

The following section from b. 15 presents a vigorous *ostinato* at the left hand, made of alternating C and G notes imitative of the smashes of a timpani (Example 98): Bartók himself employs this configuration writing for such instrument, for instance, in his Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (1937) or in his Piano Concerto No. 2 (1930–31). The author of the present artistic research paper recommends a very clear *marcato* articulation for this sequence, using a constant 3-1 fingering. The melody above should also comply with the strong rhythmicity and angularity of the left hand. A long pedal throughout might be suitable to enhance the sonorous mass.



Example 98. Comparative view between the style of writing for left hand in an excerpt from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 10 (bb. 16–18, above) and the timpani parts in his own Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (in the middle) and Piano Concerto No. 2 (below).

A similar configuration re-appears in proximity of the end, from b. 50 (Example 99), further strengthened by additional dissonances. In this case the researcher recommends, while maintaining the same fingering throughout, employing ampler rotatory movements of the hand, protracting the trajectory of each stroke and so smashing the keys with greater energy and consequently a more clamouring, scarier sound.



Example 99. Figure from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 10 (bb. 30–31), imitative of the style of writing for timpani.

The same *ostinato* is characterized by different sonorous events on top towards the end:

	<p><i>Tenuto</i> notes marked as <i>pesante</i>, to be energetically emitted, bouncing from one to another while letting them resonate in long pedals.</p>
	<p><i>Marcato/tenuto</i> notes, similar to the previous ones but sharper, more persistent and eventually shorter, by changing the pedal on each of them.</p>
	<p>Tightened <i>arpeggi</i>, almost squeezed to the limit of harsh sound, to be held within the same pedal.</p>

The very end is uproarious and metallic, each grace note meant as an individual, sharp-edged pianistic gesture (Example 100). Pedal changes are recommended at every bar: not so clear-cut between the fourth and third last bars, but straight and tidy before the very last two bars, taking care of a clear bottom note.



Example 100. Conclusion of Bartók's Bagatelle No. 10 (bb. 50–53).

Bagatelle No. 11

Bagatelle No. 11 is a mosaic of different figurations bearing the characteristics of an *ex tempore* improvisation. The incipit (Example 101) is based on a sarcastic thematic element, recurring throughout, characterized by a very rich articulation:

- The chords at the right hand marked as *staccato* would sound better crispy and crystalline, as though chiselled from a xylophone: such effect relies on very firm hands that naturally bounce from one position to another. *Ritenuto* is meant as homogeneous, perhaps with a slight hesitation before the *tenuto* chord, conferring extra irony and grotesqueness.
- Diversely, the *staccato* notes resemble string *pizzicato*, achievable by sharp, accurate strokes with the fingertips.
- *Tenuto* chords are to be taken deeply and more gently, and sustained.



Example 101. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 11 (bb. 1–2).

Episodes such as the one from b. 40 (Example 102) introduce additional figurations:

- The melody at the right hand is quiet and murmuring, to be played with slow movements

of fingers and sustained by a generous portion of the phalanx, as for *tenuto*.

- The *arpeggi* shared by both hands must be whispering and colourless, almost together and rigorously without pedal, hand barely brushing the keyboard.

In contrast, the very culmination of the following *accelerando* (b. 55) is blaring and emphatic, the melody sharp and intense, almost hammered like two alternating strokes on timpani, the *arpeggi* widened and generously imbued with pedal.

The conclusion (Example 103), following the recapitulation of the initial thematic material, is sombre and shadowy, entirely occurring in the bottom register. Through generous pedalling, these chords should vibrate until the sound naturally fades away, as for gongs or bells, eventually modulating the resonance with fast, small pedal changes in proximity of the very last bar. The pianistic gesture at the left hand is very percussive as well: the two notes should be articulated separately within the pedal, like two distinguished mallet strokes.



Example 102. Excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No 11 (bb. 40–44, above; bb. 55–59, below), displaying analogous textures.



Example 103. Conclusion of Bartók's Bagatelle No. 11 (bb. 71–79).

Bagatelle No. 12

Bagatelle No. 12 is also very improvisational. The incipit (Example 104) introduces a recurring figure: repeated notes in progressive *accelerando* at the right hand and a stable harmony at the left hand. For the fast notes, an equal second finger is recommended throughout,

as for Ravel's *Scarbo*: repetitions should sound sharply quivering and anguishing, using the very edge of the finger. The chord at the left hand must be firmly accented as recommended by Bartók himself, all of the three notes resounding equally. A sustained pedal is advised for the whole bar.



Example 104. Comparative view between the two incipits of Bartók's Bagatelle No 12 (bb. 1–2, above) and Ravel's *Scarbo* (bb. 1–3, below).

The second thematic block, also variously recurring, is based on flickering scales alternatively ascending and descending (Example 105). Such scales should be pearly and crystalline, like *glissandi* on a xylophone, privileging both smooth directionality and internal clarity at the same time. Finger movements should be as small as possible and strictly grouped by recurring hand positions, as illustrated by the author of the present artistic research paper.



Example 105. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 12 (b. 9).

The very frequent *stretto* episodes, such as the one from b. 15 (Example 106), emphasize the most genuine improvisational character: these sections should be unmeasured, the groups of fast notes fleeting as if they were ornaments, the articulated ones disengaged and pedantically pronounced, almost pounded. The implied *accelerando* should be urging and frantic,

progressively calming down in proximity to the end of the section according to the performer's taste.



Example 106. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 12 (bb. 14–20).

Bagatelle No. 13

Bagatelle No. 13, is a lugubrious, gloomy funeral march, consisting of two musical elements, as shown in Example 107:

- An *ostinato* cell at the left hand: a chord repeated twice, the first shorter and slightly dynamically emphasized, the second as a mere echo of the first. Generous pedalling is recommended throughout, making them resonate like gongs or bells, once again evoking a particular topic within geographical/anthropological Primitivism.
- A twisty, languishing melody marked as *molto espressivo*, to be approached by slow, retained finger movement, as if every note were characterized by *tenuto*.



Example 107. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 13 (bb. 1–3).

Whilst the *ostinato* proceeds quite uniformly, generally accomplishing the pace of the melody, the latter is characterized by very precise phrasing, culminating at b. 21 (Example 108), with two shrill *marcato* notes to be vigorously and harshly bashed, perhaps with both first and third fingers joined together.



Example 108. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 13 (bb. 19–22).

Bagatelle No. 14

Bagatelle No. 14 is a grotesque waltz characterized by utterly diversified textures. One recurring element is the regular, waltz-form *ostinato* at the left hand marked as *forte con fuoco*, the first note being *marcato* (Example 109). This should sound persistent throughout, each note stridently punctuated, the first one additionally emphasized by a stronger lateral stroke of the fifth finger. Almost no pedal is advised.



Example 109. Recurring *ostinato* formula in Bartók's Bagatelle No. 14.

The melody above (Example 110) is vivid and sparkling, further sharpened by means of different marks. Each note should be discernibly articulated, clattering like on a xylophone, by accurate strokes of the fingertips.



Example 110. Excerpts from Bartók's Bagatelle No. 14 (bb. 9–13, on the left; bb. 29–30, on the right).

The *poco largo* section from b. 65 is even more facetious, characterized by strong syncopations between the two hands, each note marked as *marcato* (Example 111). This passage ought to sound the most discordant, pushing the strident sound to the limit of gross and unpleasant. It is possible to conceive this passage as grouped in pairs, so additionally staggering it and making it sound more pedantically coarse.



Example 111. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 14 (bb. 108–112).

The stormy bridge from bb. 128–140 must be conceived as furiously chaotic.²⁸ A main, unique pianistic gesture is advised starting from the *marcato* note and so encompasses two bars. (Example 112). Pedal ought to change accordingly, thus comprising different *staccato* bi-chords: the deriving sonorous flux will be boisterously thunderous, like the frenzy of drums.



Example 112. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 14 (bb. 128–133).

The few bars immediately before the reprise at b. 177 (Example 113) exhibit a figuration manifestly harking back to the idea of two alternating drum sticks' strokes on a xylophone or marimba. These repeated notes are expected to persistently clang on a pedal (perhaps played by both the first and third fingers joined together), slightly hesitating when diverging in proximity of the actual reprise between bb. 175–177. A similar configuration is employed towards the end from bb. 207–215 (Example 114), where the very last bars present one note each, to be vigorously smashed on their own pedal and, if possible, further increasing their sonority, as if they are disastrously crumbling from the very top to the very bottom.



Example 113. B. Bartók, Bagatelle No. 14 (bb. 171–177).

²⁸ At the same time, the ceaseless motion of such reiterated patterns also implies a certain mechanism, a recurring representative topic within the rhetorical/formal manifestations of Primitivism, as previously ascertained. In addition, the particularly thunderous character of the passage may recall another, more traditional topic of Ratnerian derivation: the one of storm.



Example 114. Conclusion of Bartók's Bagatelle No. 14 (bb. 193–199).

The research conducted and the author's own artistic practice allows us to conclude that the examined case-study, Béla Bartók's *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6, provide a varied and intriguing array of pianistic tasks to be fulfilled in the realm of Primitivistic music. In particular:

- The prevalence of the percussive character constitutes an important unifying thread in terms of overall pianistic approach, in combination with a remarkable timbral research in this sense.
- The frequent organization of musical material in reiterated patterns most often entails the systematic implementation of specific pianistic gestures throughout, thus resulting in a recurring correspondence between stylistic features and a physical approach to them.
- The performer's imagination is also constantly stimulated by a very rich sonic experience in this sense. Regular reference to folkloric elements, fundamental characteristics of the field of musical Primitivism, also considerably expands the expressive vocabulary available to the interpreter of this music.

Conclusions

The artistic research paper *Interpreting Primitivism in Piano Music of the Twentieth Century* focused on the impact of the artistic paradigm of Primitivism on the field of piano music, pointing out the most significant innovations in the pianistic style within selected works by different composers. In addition, emphasis was given to several performative matters seen as particularly relevant in best conveying the characteristics of such music: the artist-researcher combined the knowledge acquired from the conducted research with insights stemming from his own performance practice in order to reveal a conspicuous range of technical, expressive, and coloristic features typical of a “Primitivistic style” in piano music, entailing the implementation of specific pianistic skills and leading to the expansion of the creative boundaries of piano performance.

Taking into account examples from very diverse musical works within the piano repertoires of the twentieth century, the research provided a widely comprehensive framework of the acknowledgeable facets of the examined phenomenon and, most importantly, drew attention to the common features and thus led to a rather unitary and systematic concept view. As a consequence, common performative tasks were ascertained as well.

The conducted artistic research led to the following conclusions:

1. The artistic tendency of Primitivism appeared as a result of multiple geo-political, socio-economical, cultural-philosophical, and psycho-behavioural changes in Europe as a consequence of the progressive expansion of its borders throughout the ages and the inclusion of ever-increasing elements of diversity. The sense of belonging to a consolidated normalcy by the average European citizen contributed to the establishment of the dichotomy Us-Others, also implying the opposition between the *civilized* Western society and the *uncivilized* outer world and thus modelling the idea of “primitive” on this assumption. The “Orient,” an undefined region encompassing several different geographical places (North Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, etc.) generally opposed to the “Occident” by virtue of a supposed inferiority of the former to the latter, has been seen and depicted as the cradle of barbarity and immorality, thus further fostering the self-identification of Europeans with a higher degree of civilization and cultural development. This process, however, went hand in hand with artists advocating innovation in the ways of representing reality. Visual artists, writers, and musicians from the late nineteenth century welcomed any heterogeneity as their inspirational background: the subjects of artistic representation often turned out to be non-Western landscapes, characters, and situations; the style of the representation was shaped on what

was perceived as a Primitivistic manner – as that of non-Western cultures, whose characteristics of rough simplicity were in contrast with the traditional three-dimensional manner of representation in Western art.

2. The object of the conducted research, musical Primitivism, presents noteworthy analogies with its counterpart in the field of visual arts. To begin with, the reference to non-Western sources is widespread: exotic scenarios are often contemplated, as well as hints of extra-European musicality. In addition, the distortion of the traditional means of instrumental expression is noticeably present: formal complexity leaves room for simplicity, circularity, and repetitiveness; *cantabile* and *espressivo*, so pertinent to the Western musical canon, are overwhelmed by brutal percussiveness; while outstanding virtuosity is replaced by obsessive and repetitive mechanisms. The recurrence of such characteristics in the examined musical works contributed to defining the common thread of Primitivism in piano music, labelled by the author of the thesis as “Primitivistic topic,” ultimately summarized as the combination of the following elements: percussiveness and rhythmical emphasis; exiguousness and repetitiveness of musical material, that is, patterns; and reference to non-Western sources. The categorization of musical Primitivism suggested by Dario Martinelli, along with Leonard Ratner’s theory of topics, offered a proficient scheme of reference in organizing the multiplicity of Primitivistic manifestations in conformity with ascertained sub-trends.
3. The aforementioned models of classification provided a consistent framework potentially suitable to the various facets of the examined musical phenomena: the analysis of each trend within the realm of Primitivism could proficiently take the steps from such schemes of reference, which conferred continuity and organicity to the discourse, while at the same time examining its very different facets.
4. As revealed, Orientalist and Exoticist leanings in piano music of the early twentieth century indisputably foresaw more decisive turns into Primitivism in the decades to come. For example, the employment of gamelan in piano music by Claude Debussy and Leopold Godowsky considerably re-shaped the pianistic style by introducing embryonic characteristics of circularity, repetitiveness, and percussiveness. Composers of the following generations, such as Giacinto Scelsi and André Jolivet, more deeply drew from Oriental mysticism and spirituality and also eagerly related to the ritual aspects of music, conveying all such immaterial background by more specific musical means, such as deliberately brutal percussiveness, obsessive rhythmicity, and particular care for fluctuation and resonance as qualifying traits of the overall sonic experience.

5. Diversely, a considerable part of Modernist composers took inspiration from their own peasant cultures in order to best convey their Primitivistic penchant. For instance, Igor Stravinsky's pianistic outcome quite evidently manifests this characteristic by a constant reference to traditional folk dances and melodies, often intertwining with each other in the light of remarkable motivic fragmentariness and repetitiveness and along with a predominant percussive approach throughout his creative output. A more consistent, if not scientific, attitude in this sense was pursued by Béla Bartók through a meticulous recollection of thousands folk songs and classification by their actual morphological features, thus leading to a full exploitation of the prime, simplest elements of music, such as rhythmic pulse, dynamic oppositions, intervals, and pitch successions. Analogous impressions are widely scattered across the musical works by other composers enlivened by such a nationalistic penchant of rural Primitivism, such as Manuel de Falla and Alberto Ginastera.
6. Different nuances of the idea of the "primitive" may come into play as well, despite the mutual traits of percussiveness, repetitiveness, and exoticness, thus implying further performative issues. For example, in Erik Satie's music, radical simplification of forms, motivic conciseness, and an overall static nature prevail, thus leading to unusual challenges for a performer in maintaining consistency and directionality throughout the musical discourse. Similarly, the music by Federico Mompou attains pure sonorities by an utter simplification of both forms and contents, involving the performer in overtly subtle timbral research. Finally, György Ligeti's music also pursues an extreme simplification of musical material, albeit very complexly organized, with particular emphasis on the continuity of the sound stream over the individuality of the single details: the pianist is vigorously challenged on a technical level, whilst the mechanic flow ceaselessly drags the interpreter along the musical discourse.
7. The selected case-study, Béla Bartók's *Fourteen Bagatelles* Op. 6, offered a fully-fledged possibility of applications of the examined principles in the realm of performance practice: a huge variety of pianistic touch, consequent to an extensive percussive style, constituted a rich pool for timbral research; specific physical approaches were put in line in implementing the different textural and motivic patterns involved; the performer's fantasy and creativity were thoroughly stimulated as well by the extraordinary various range of characters and demeanours.
8. On a broader note, by performing and conducting research on several other pieces of related piano repertoire (thus reaching beyond the one explicitly examined in the thesis), the artist-researcher was able to enhance and develop both theoretical knowledge and

his pianistic abilities at the same time, which were further disseminated during thematic recitals, concert-lectures, and artistic research publications.

9. Ultimately, the conducted artistic research provided an in-depth systematic perspective on a partially unexplored matter: as was observed, an organized and systematic study of Primitivism in music, let alone solely concerning piano repertoire and related performative issues seemed inexistent up to date, even if topical, yet more discontinuous or incomplete sources were available. For this reason, the author of the present artistic research paper also wishes to encourage future artist-researchers to undertake similar endeavours on other less surveyed fronts of piano music and its interpretation.

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PRIMITIVEVIZMO XX A. MUZIKOJE FORTEPIJONUI INTERPRETACIJA

IVADAS

XX a. įvairios meno srovės Europoje radosi kaip reakcija į nusivylimą giluminiais politinės ir socialinės-ekonominės pusiausvyros, mokslo ir technologijų pažangos bei kasdienio gyvenimo pokyčiais. Viena iš šių srovių, primitivizmas, formavosi kaip priešprieša modernumui, skatindama grįžimą prie paprastesnio, labiau į žmogų orientuoto gyvenimo būdo, atrodžiusio patraukliu su to meto nevakarietišku visuomenių gyvenimu ir papročiais geriau susipažinusiems europiečiams.

Akademinės muzikos kompozitoriai nebuvo išimtis: nauji įspūdžiai buvo lyg gaivaus oro gūsis jų kūrybai, įkvėptai įvairių šaltinių iš pačių tolimiausių geografinių vietovių, suteikiančių jų kūrinams neginčijamą egzotinę aurą. Fortepijoninės muzikos tradiciją, įsitvirtinusių išgrynintoje ir kanonizuotoje instrumentinės raiškos paradigmoje, galiausiai taip pat paveikė šios įtakos: taip, pavyzdžiui, atsiskleidė perkusiškumo vaidmuo platesnei tembrinei įvairovei atsivėrusioje fortepijoninėje muzikoje.

Šiame tiriamajame darbe gilinamasi į meninės primitivizmo srovės ir fortepijoninio atlikimo sąsajas XX a.: menininkas tyrėjas siekia nustatyti primitivizmo stiliumi kurtos fortepijoninės muzikos bendrąsias ypatybes ir jų raiškos būdus įvairių kompozitorių primitivistų kūryboje; nagrinėjami aktualiausi tokio repertuaro atlikimo aspektai.

Tyrimo objektas. Šio tyrimo objektas yra primitivizmas XX a. muzikoje fortepijonui. Siekiant įgyti ir darbe perteikti žinomis paremtą analizuojamos temos supratimą, o taip pat – išlaikyti aukštą kūrybinio atlikimo standartą meninėje praktikoje, analizuojamos ir šios srovės susiformavimo sociokultūrinės prielaidos bei pradinė vaizduojamojo meno (pirmiausia pasukusio link primitivizmo) įtaka.

Nagrinėjant pasirinktą temą reikalingas tiek konceptualus-analitinis bei aprašomasis-kūrybinis išmanymas, tiek plati istorinė, filosofinė ir meninė kompetencija. Kartu tvirtų ir universalių pianistinių įgūdžių reikalauja didžiulė aktualaus repertuaro įvairovė – pradedant XIX a. pabaiga ir baigiant paskutiniais XX a. dešimtmečiais: darbe apžvelgiama keleto skirtingų kompozitorių, įtraukusių primitivizmo paradigmos bruožus į savo muzikos žodyną, kūryba.

Tyrimo naujumas ir reikšmingumas. Apskritai muzikologinėje literatūroje

primitivizmas beveik netyrinėtas; apsiribojama nuorodomis į individualiai pasirenkamus kompozitorius. Verta paminėti Danielio Albrighto esė „Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources“ [Modernizmas ir muzika: šaltinių antologija] (2004), kurioje autorius, remdamasis XIX–XX a. menininkų ir kritikų komentarais, pateikia gana išsamią kelių avangardizmo srovių, įskaitant primitivizmą, apžvalgą. Vis dėlto, palyginti su kitomis meno sritimis, sąsajos tarp akademinės muzikos ir primitivizmo estetikos dar nėra pakankamai iširtos.

Šiuo diskursu apie primitivizmą siekiama įsitraukti į diskusiją apie tradicinio fortepijono meno plėtotę, kai peržengiamos vakarietiškos muzikos kanono ribos, o elementai iš skirtingų sociokultūrinių kontekstų inkorporuojami ir pakeliami iki naujos meninės kokybės standartų. Atsižvelgiant į šiuos siekius, darbe tiriama, kaip meninės-filosofinės primitivizmo nuostatos veikė fortepijoninės muzikos kūrimą ir atlikimą XX a., galiausiai keisdamos kai kurias tradicines estetines jos savybes.

Nors panašių tyrimų atlikta ir anksčiau, pastebima, kad daugiau dėmesio buvo skiriama tam tikriems individualiems aspektams kitų sąskaita, o sistemingesnių primitivizmo tyrimų, susijusių tik su fortepijonine muzika ir jos atlikimo klausimais, akademinėje literatūroje iki šiol nesama. Todėl šiame meniniame tyrime siekiama pateikti struktūruotą primitivizmo fenomeno XX a. fortepijono muzikoje apžvalgą nurodant įvairių nagrinėjamos temos apraiškų įvairovę, panašumus, gretimybes bei proveržius ir taip formuojant nuoseklesnę analizuojamos temos supratimą, kartu sustiprinant kūrybinę meninio tyrimo pusę.

Tyrimo tikslai ir uždaviniai. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama pateikti sisteminių požiūrį į primitivizmą XX a. muzikoje fortepijonui. Tikslui pasiekti numatyti šie uždaviniai:

- Įvardyti esmines primitivizmo idėjas, jų istorinius, socialinius-ekonominius ir filosofinius pagrindus bei jų virsmą meninėmis-muzikinėmis srovėmis. Šiam tikslui taikomas loginės sekos kriterijus, pradedant istoriniu ir sociokultūriniu atskaitos kontekstu, tęsiant kelių meninių apraiškų analize ir galiausiai atskleidžiant muzikinių reiškinių atsiradimą. Daug dėmesio skiriama vaizduojamajam menui kaip autentiškesniam primitivizmo srovės muzikoje pirmtakui: estetinio nukrypimo paradigma, išvedama iš vizualinio vaizdavimo lauko, randa aiškų atitikmenį muzikoje specifinių ypatybių, kurios bus išsamiai aptartos toliau, pavidalu.
- Atpažinti šias tendencijas XX a. fortepijoninės muzikos srityje: išskirti primitivizmo stiliumi kuriamos fortepijono muzikos ypatybes ir jų įgyvendinimo būdus įvairių kompozitorių primitivistų kūryboje (teikiant pirmenybę XX a. pirmosios pusės kompozitoriams). Šiuo tikslu menininkas tyrėjas remiasi pasirinktais muzikos reiškiniais klasifikavimo metodais, pristatomais kitame poskyryje. Toks tyrimo modelis laikomas potencialiai tinkamu tolesniems tyrimams įvairiose interesų srityse.

- Identifikuoti reikšmingiausius primityvistinės fortepijono muzikos atlikimo aspektus pagal nustatytas pianistinio stiliaus ypatybes. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama Bėlos Bartoko ciklui *14 bagatelių* op. 6 (1908): kaip visapusiškai atitinkantis primityvistinį stilių (išsamiai aptariamą darbo I skyriuje) jis buvo pasirinktas atvejo analizei šio meninio tyrimo III skyriuje.

Tyrimo metodai. Darbe taikomi šie metodai: analitinis (muzikinių reiškinių klasifikavimas, pasirinktų muzikos pavyzdžių analizė ir kt.), lyginamasis (paralelių tarp skirtingų kompozitorių kūrinių nustatymas, analogiškų modelių vaizduojamajame mene ir muzikoje paieškos ir kt.), aprašomasis (muzikinių reiškinių aiškinimas, išvadų verbalizavimas ir kt.) ir empirinis (atlikėjiškų problemų atskleidimas, nuorodos į ankstesnę informaciją ir autoriaus patirtį ir kt.). Didžioji dalis informacijos, susijusios su istoriniu, filosofiniu ir meniniu argumentų pagrindu, sukaupta analizuojant literatūrą.

Teoriniam pagrindimui naudojamos kelios pagrindinės sąvokos:

- Kolonializmo ir imperializmo reiškiniai kaip pradinis taškas europinių ir nevakarietišku kultūrinių pagrindų sujungimui.
- „Kito“ (*Other*) ir „kitoniškumo“ (*Otherness*) idėjos kaip dominuojanti prieiga Europos menininkams vaizduojant nevakarietiškas temas XIX ir XX a. sandūroje.
- „Orientalizmo“ ir „egzotizmo“, kaip heterogeninių tendencijų katilo, apibrėžimai, paprastai remiantis nevakarietiškais įkvėpimo šaltiniais, kuriais siekiama pagyvinti meninio vaizdavimo paradigmą Europoje.
- Pagrindinė „primityvizmo“ idėja ir iš to kylanti „primityvistinė“ kokybė Vakarų mene kaip bendra skirtingų avangardinių tendencijų gija.
- Kelios muzikinės teorijos, laikomos tinkamiausiomis primityvizmo ypatybėms muzikoje atskleisti, aptiriamos 1.2 poskyryje. Tai pirmiausia *topoi* (topikų) teorija, kurią plėtojo Leonardas Ratneris, Kofi Agawu, Nicholas McKay’us ir kiti; Dario Martinelli tikslingai sukurtų kūrybinių kategorijų serija; ir šio meninio tyrimo autoriaus iškristalizuoti skiriamieji primityvistinės fortepijono muzikos bruožai.

Lygiagrečiai su konkrečių kompozitorių kūrybos ir meninių srovių analize vyko muzikos kūrinių studijavimas. Analizuoti šie kūriniai: Bėlos Bartoko *14 bagatelių* op. 6 (1908), Igorio Stravinskio *Trys dalys iš baletu „Petruška“* (1910–1911), André Jolivet *Mana* (1935), Alberto Ginasteros Sonata fortepijonui Nr. 1 op. 22 (1952) ir Giacinto Scelsi Siuita Nr. 8 „Bot-Ba“: *Tibeto ir jo vienuolynų ant aukštų kalnų viršūnių prisiminimas: Tibeto ritualai, maldos ir šokiai* (1952).

Naudota literatūra ir šaltiniai:

- Istoriografinė literatūra, įkontekstinanti analizuojamus reiškinius konkrečiose

chronologinėse koordinatėse ir su jomis susijusiuose socioekonominiuose, filosofiniuose ir kultūriniuose scenarijuose, pavyzdžiui, Billo Ashcrofto, Garetho Griffithso ir Helen Tiffin (1989) veikalas *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* [Imperija atsako: Teorija ir praktika pokolonijinėje literatūroje], Edwardo W. Saído (1993) *Culture and Imperialism* [Kultūra ir imperializmas] ir Roberto Youngo (2015) *Empire, Colony, Post-Colony* [Imperija, kolonijos, pokolonijinis laikotarpis].

- Literatūra, skirta meniniam primityvizmo aspektui nagrinėti, pavyzdžiui, Roberto Goldwaterio (1938) *Primitivism in Modern Art* [Primityvizmas moderniajame mene], Fredo Myerso (2006) *Primitivism, Anthropology and the Category of “Primitive Art”* [Primityvizmas, antropologija ir „primityviojo meno“ kategorija] ir Colino Rhodeso (1995) *Primitivism and Modern Art* [Primityvizmas ir modernusis menas].
- Muzikinės analizės modeliai, pasirinkti šiam meniniam tyrimui ir laikyti tinkamiausiais tyrimo tikslams, pavyzdžiui, Kofi Agawu (1991) *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classical Music* [Žaidimas ženklais: semiotinė klasikinės muzikos interpretacija], Dario Martinelli (2021) *The Overrated Truth – On the Concept of Authenticity in Popular Music* [Pervertinta tiesa apie populiariosios muzikos autentiškumo sampratą] ir Leonardo Ratnerio (1980) *Classic Music. Expression, Form and Style* [Klasikinė muzika. Raiška, forma ir stilius].
- Monografijos apie kompozitorius, iš kurių, remiantis anksčiau minėtais muzikinės analizės modeliais, ekstrapolijuojami stilistiniai bruožai, reikšmingiausi šio tyrimo tikslams, pavyzdžiui, Peterio Bartoko (2002) *My Father* [Mano tėvas], Pierre’o Alberto Castanet (1993) *Giacinto Scelsi: viaggio al centro del suono* [Giacinto Scelsi: kelionė į garso centrą] ir Hildos Jolivet (1978), *Avec André Jolivet* [Su André Jolivet].

Kiti tyrimui aktualūs šaltiniai rasti tinklalapiuose ir internetinėse duomenų bazėse, meninių tyrimų publikacijose bei žiniasklaidoje.

Darbo struktūra. Meno doktorantūros projekto tiriamąjį darbą „Primityvizmo XX a. muzikoje fortepijonui interpretacija“ sudaro trys skyriai:

- Pirmajame skyriuje apžvelgiama primityvizmo kilmė (nuo vaizduojamųjų menų iki muzikos) vakarietiskame kultūriniame gyvenime, pradedant filosofinėmis ir ideologinėmis prielaidomis, leidžiančiomis suprasti, kas iš pat pradžių buvo identifikuojama kaip būdingi „primityvaus“ meno ir muzikos bruožai ir kaip jie galiausiai buvo inkorporuoti į XX a. dailininkų ir kompozitorių estetiką. Pastarasis aspektas susisteminamas pagal pasirinktus parametrus, suformuluotus remiantis minėtomis topikų teorija ir Martinelli primityvizmo muzikoje kategorizacija, taip pat

autentiška darbo autoriaus klasifikacija, pristatoma 1.2 poskyryje.

- Antrajame skyriuje apžvelgiami pasirinktų kompozitorių kūriniai, kuriuose pagal 1.2 poskyryje išskirtus kriterijus atskleidžiamas polinkis į primityvizmą. Pagrindinis dėmesys skiriamas pasirinktoms pianistinio stiliaus ypatybėms ir išvestinėms atlikimo problemoms. Tyrimas vykdytas naudojant primityvizmo makrokategorijas, atsižvelgiant į anksčiau išskirtus bendrus bruožus ir pagrindines tendencijas.
- Trečiasis skyrius skirtas pasirinkto fortepijoninio ciklo – Bėlos Bartóko 14 bagatelių op. 6 (1908) – analizei. Atkreipiamas dėmesys į konkrečių atlikimo praktikų skiriamuosius bruožus, šiame meniniame tyrime apibendrintus kaip būdingus visai primityvistinei fortepijono muzikai.

Darbe pateikiama šimtas keturiolika muzikinių pavyzdžių, penkios iliustracijos ir šešios lentelės. Visi analizuoti kūriniai yra išvardyti priede Nr. 1, o natų leidinių nuorodos pateiktos priede Nr. 2.

1. PRIMITYVIZMO KILMĖ VAIZDUOJAMAJAME MENE IR MUZIKOJE

Pirmajame skyriuje apibūdinamos istorinės ir sociokultūrinės primityvizmo formavimosi prielaidos. Autorius primityvizmo kilmę sieja su europietišku kolonizatorių ir vietinių Afrikos, Azijos ir Okeanijos kultūrų susidūrimu, sąlygotu XIX–XX a. kolonializmo ir imperializmo praktikų. Toks organizuotas ekspansionizmas, grindžiamas įsiskaidijusiomis ideologinėmis nuostatomis, turėjo didžiulę įtaką kultūrai, teigdamas europinio civilizacijos modelio viršenybę kaip visuotinės normos standartą ir taip kurdamas klaidingą neginčijamos vakarietiškos kultūros hegemonijos koncepciją (1.1.1).

Tokiame kontekste radikali kolonizatorių ir kolonizuotųjų priešprieša skatino „primityvumo“ idėjos plėtrą. Šis terminas iš pradžių turėjo neigiamą konotaciją, tarsi abi grupės būtų buvusios skirtingose raidos stadijose ir pirmoji grupė būtų ryškiai pranašesnė. Kita vertus, įvairių sričių menininkus domino ir traukė nevakarietiškas gyvenimo būdas ir papročiai, vertinti kaip paprasti, tikri, autentiški ir orientuoti į žmones, skirtingai nuo konvulsiškos ir slegiančios moderniosios visuomenės tikrovės. Autorius atskleidžia, kaip primityvizmo menas kaupė tokius įspūdžius labai įvairiomis apraiškėmis, nors jis niekada neegzistavo kaip bendras judėjimas – veikiau reiškėsi skirtingų XX a. europinio išsilavinimo menininkų įvairių meno srovių kūryboje (1.1.2). Kalbėdamas apie fortepijono muziką, autorius atskleidžia bendras polinkio į primityvizmą savybes, remdamasis šio meninio tyrimo tikslams parankiausiais teoriniais šaltiniais.

Visų pirma tyrimas remiasi italų muzikologo Dario Martinelli (1.2.1) skirtingų primityvizmo apraiškų muzikoje klasifikacija, kurioje pagal įvairias pagrindinės

„primityvumo“ idėjos interpretacijas skiriamos penkios kategorijos:

- *Geografinė / antropologinė*, apimanti kūrinis, pagyvintus egzotizmo tendencija, taip pat kūrinis, „egzotizuotus“ naudojama folklorine medžiaga.
- *Istorinė*, apimanti praeities epochų meno ir muzikos įkvėptus kūrinis, taip perinterpretuojant „primityvumo“ idėją kaip „ankstesnę laiką“.
- *Ontogenetinė*, kai atkuriant ankstesnę žmogaus raidos stadiją, pavyzdžiui, vaikystę, „primityvumo“ idėja taip pat suprantama kaip „ankstesnė laiką“, tačiau siauresniame individo gyvenimo kontekste.
- *Filogenetinė*, būdinga įvairių gyvūnų rūšių vaizdavimui.
- *Retorinė / formalioji*, pasikliaujanti esmingiausiais muzikos kūrimo elementais, tokiais kaip ritmas bei garso ir tylos kaita, perinterpretuojant „primityvaus“ idėją kaip „paprasčiausią“.

Siekdamas tiksliau apibrėžti „primityvumo“ kategoriją muzikiniu požiūriu, autorius pasitelkia topikų teoriją, išplėtotą Leonardo Ratnerio, Kofi Agawu, Nicholas McKay'aus ir kt., nuroydamas kai kuriuos galimus skiriamuosius ženklus ir muzikinius žymenis kiekvienoje iš Martinelli kategorijų (1.2.2). Tokiu pagrindu darbe apibrėžiamos pasikartojančios numanomo „primityvistinio topiko“ ypatybės fortepijono muzikoje (1.2.3):

- perkusiškumas ir ritminis akcentavimas;
- negausi ir besikartojanti muzikinė medžiaga, t. y. modeliai;
- sąsajos su nevakarietiškais šaltiniais.

Iš atlikėjo perspektyvos autorius daro išvadą, kad:

- Perkusiškas instrumento naudojimas išprovokuoja visišką tokių estetinių savybių kaip *espressivo* ir *cantabile*, tradiciškai siejamų su fortepijoninio atlikimo paradigma, iškraipymą ir atveria kelią griežtumui, šiurkštumui ir brutalumui.
- Paprastumas ir repetityvumas naujai apibrėžia motyvo plėtojimo būdus renkantis cirkuliarinį, o ne linijinį principą: pirmenybė dažniausiai teikiama repetityviesiems arba gretinamiesiems motyvo elementams, o ne melodinių linijų kūrimui, taip permodeliuojant muzikinės formos sąvoką pačių sudėtingiausių formų, pavyzdžiui, sonatos, nenaudai.
- Nevakarietišku šaltinių, svetimų tradicinėms Europos akademinės muzikos raidos taisyklėms ir estetinėms savybėms, panaudojimas praplečia meninės raiškos ribas ir atveria galimybes įvairovei ir pliuralizmui, kaip šviežumo ir inovatyvumo nešėjams.

Visi šie aspektai detaliau nagrinėjami II skyriuje, skirtame kompozitoriams, kurių kūriniai fortepijonui pasižymi polinkiu į primityvizmą. Aptariamos reikšmingos pianistinio stiliaus naujovės ir įvairios atlikimo problemos.

2. PRIMITIVEVIZMO APRAIŠKOS XX A. MUZIKOJE FORTEPIJONUI

Antrame skyriuje apžvelgiami įvairių kompozitorių kūriniai, artimi meninėms primitivizmo tendencijoms. Reiškinių kilmę autorius sieja su ryškiai išaugusiu polinkiu į orientalizmą ir egzotizmą XX a. pradžioje. Pavyzdžiui, Claude'o Debussy (1862–1918) muzika gali būti priskirta šiai srovei kaip autentiškesnių primitivizmo apraiškų pirmtakė dėl gausiai naudojamų perkusinio garso imitacijų bei cirkuliarinio repetityvumo, atsiradusio dėl gamelano muzikos įtakos (2.1.1).

Būta ir daugiau kompozitorių, ryžtingai pasukusių link primitivizmo ir pradėjusių nuo orientalistinių tendencijų. Du iš jų buvo Giacinto Scelsi (1905–1988) ir André Jolivet (1905–1974). Jų polinkis į primitivizmą prasidėjo susidomėjimu Rytų poezija, filosofija ir misticizmu ir pasireiškė gana specifinių savybių, gimusių iš nevakarietiškos akustinės patirties, stiprinimu. Tai – rafinuotais koloristiniais sumetimais (siekiant imituoti skirtingų neeuropietiškos kilmės mušamųjų instrumentų tembrą) nuosekliai naudojamas perkusyvumas, dažnai pasitelkiami repetityviniai modeliai (ritmo, motyvo, tekstūros), dažniausiai grindžiami labai ribotais tonų diapazonais, nevakarietišką atmosferą kūrė ir nematerialus rytietiško dvasingumo ir ritualumo fonas (2.1.2).

Panašių rezultatų pasiekė kompozitoriai, kurie rėmėsi savo šalies valstietišku tradicijų muzikiniais pagrindais. Tarp jų buvo XX a. rusų kompozitoriai: vadinamasis „skitų primitivizmas“ kaip į muzikinio įkvėpimo šaltinį atsigręžė į archajiškiausias ir pagoniškiausias civilizacijas, nuo anksčiausių laikų gyvenusias Rusijoje. Ryškiausiai tokius išpūdžius perteikęs Igoris Stravinskis (1882–1971) turėjo itin novatorišką poveikį fortepijono muzikai. Stravinskio pianizmo esmė – obsesiškas pulsas, įmantri faktūra ir kankinančiai sutankintas repetityvumas drauge su bendru iliuzijų praradimo pojūčiu ir akivaizdžia ekstravagancija – dera su anksčiau apibrėžta primitivistinės fortepijono muzikos charakteristika: iš pianisto reikalaujama perkusyvaus skambesio prieigos, o fragmentiškas motyvo pobūdis ir repetityvumas sudaro vienijančią muzikinio diskurso bruožą. Taip pat nuosekliai remiamasi tradiciniais liaudies šokiais ir melodijomis (2.2.1).

Dar vieno Stravinskio amžininko, Bėlos Bartoko (1881–1945), kūryboje randame puikių pirmąsio charakterio raiškos šiuolaikiniais muzikos instrumentais pavyzdžių. Primitivizmas šio kompozitoriaus kūryboje yra gana sudėtingas fenomenas, pasireiškiantis šiais aspektais: remiamasi liaudies dainų repertuaru, jo morfologinėmis ypatybėmis (ritminėmis, melodinėmis, tekstūros, sintaksinėmis ir formaliosiomis) ir su tuo susijusiomis atlikėjiskomis užduotimis, visiškai priklausančiomis žodinio perdavimo sferai ir todėl ankstesnėmis už vakarietiškos muzikos tradicijas; naudojami pagrindiniai paprasčiausi muzikos elementai (tokie kaip ritminis pulsas, garso / tylos alternacija, dinamikos priešpriešos, intervalų

ir tono aukščių sekos), kuriantys savotišką repetityvumo išpūdį; akcentuojami pianistinės technikos niuansai (greitos gamos, akordų sekos, dvigubų tercijų pasažai, pasikartojimai ir kt.) kaip konstruktyvūs muzikinio diskurso elementai, orientuojami į išpūdingą perkusinį matmenį (2.2.2).

Stravinskio bei Bartoko įtaka atpažįstama ir kitų XX a. kompozitorių, demonstravusių polinkį į primitivizmą, tokių kaip Manuelis de Falla (1876–1946) ir Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983), kūryboje: dominuojantis perkusyvumas, atsirandantis, be kita ko, ir imituojant efektus, išgaunamus autochtoniniais instrumentais (pavyzdžiui, gitara); nuosekliai naudojami motyvo, ritmo ir tekstūros modeliai; nuolat remiamasi folklorinės muzikos tradicijomis (*flamenco* de Fallos ir *gauchos* muzika Ginasteros kūrinuose) (2.2.3).

Primitivizmo idėja muzikoje patyrė ir kitų reikšmingų manipuliacijų, palyginti su jos pradine prasme. Pavyzdžiui, Eriko Satie (1866–1925) kūrinuose randame gana radikalių formų supaprastinimą, motyvų glaustumą bei bendrą statiškumą. Tokios savybės lemia ir neįprastus iššūkius atlikėjui bendro muzikinio diskurso nuoseklumo atžvilgiu: dėl neįprasto muzikinės medžiagos organizavimo jai būdingi cirkuliariniai, ryškūs sugretinimai, o ne hierarchinė organizacija (2.3.1). Panašiai Federico Mompou (1893–1987) gryną skambesį pasiekia išskirtinai kompaktišku turiniu: trumpi jo kūriniai pasižymi ypatinga raiškos laisve, kuria siekiama sukurti fantastinę ir charakteringą atsidavimo atmosferą ir taip suteikti muzikai nepakartojamą ryškumą ir ekspresyvią galią, nepaisant itin šykščių raiškos priemonių (2.3.2). Galiausiai, György Ligeti (1923–2006) siekia kraštutinio muzikinės medžiagos, kad ir labai sudėtingai organizuotos, esmingumo perteikimo, ypatingą dėmesį skirdamas garso srauto tęstinumui atskirų individualių detalių sąskaita: kompozitorius to pasiekia sutankintu paprasčiausių elementų kartojimu, vedančiu prie jam būdingų *mašinistinių* ritmų, gimusių pramonės, mechanikos ir elektronikos pasaulyje. Be to, Ligeti muzikoje atsekami nevakarietiški šaltiniai, tokie kaip vengrų liaudies melodijos ir afrikietiški ritmai (2.3.3).

3. ATVEJO TYRIMAS: BÉLOS BARTOKO 14 BAGATELIŲ OP. 6 INTERPRETACIJA

Paskutinis skyrius skirtas pasirinkto fortepijoninio ciklo, Bėlos Bartoko *14 bagatelių* op. 6, analizei. Kaip jau minėta, primitivizmo paradigma Bartoko kūryboje remiasi įvairiais veiksniais: liaudies dainų repertuaro įtaka, pačių paprasčiausių muzikos bruožų, tokių kaip ritminis pulsas, akcentavimu ir gausiu tekstūros elementų naudojimu, pavyzdžiui, repetityviais akordų modeliais. Analizei pasirinktas kūrinys visiškai atskleidžia šias savybes: šis fortepijoninis ciklas, tyrimo autoriaus nuomone, neabejotinas „primitivistinio topiko“ pavyzdys, interpretacijos bei atlikimo požiūriu yra daugialypis atvejis, charakterizuojamas didžiule perkusijos prieigų įvairove, reikalaujančia įvairių pianisto tušė visame kūrinyje, taip

pat gana specifiniais stilistiniais bruožais, susijusiais su polinkiu į repetityvumą ir priemonių taupumą, bei su folklorinės medžiagos panaudojimu. Autorius ne kartą yra atlikęs šį ciklą per meno doktorantūros projekto rengimo metus, todėl šiame skyriuje pateikiamas rekomendacijas atlikėjams suponuoją tiek jo atliktas teorinis tyrimas, tiek žinios, sukauptos pasitelkus kruopščią atlikėjišką kūrinio analizę ir meninę praktiką.

Kiekviena bagatelė pateikiama individualiai, nurodant esmines kiekvienos iš jų ypatybes pianistinės prieigos ir muzikinių savybių atskleidimo požiūriu (vertinant tas muzikines savybes kaip simptomiškas autentiškam pirmykščiame Bartoko fortepijoninių kūrinių pobūdžiui), taip pat atsižvelgiant į kitus savitus kūrybinius reikalavimus, susijusius su įvairesniais vaizduojamaisiais ir koloristiniais tikslais. Atvejo tyrimas kelia gana įvairias, intriguojančias pianistines užduotis, kurios turėtų būti atliktos remiantis primityvistine muzikos estetika, atkreipiant ypatingą dėmesį į šiuos dalykus:

- Perkusiškumo dominavimas derinyje su vertingais tembro tyrimais yra svarbi vienijanti gija bendros pianistinės prieigos atžvilgiu.
- Dažnas muzikinės medžiagos organizavimas repetityvinių modelių pagrindu reikalauja sistemingo specifinių pianisto gestų naudojimo visame kūrinėje, siekiant stilistinių ypatybių ir kryptingos fizinės prieigos atitikimo.
- Atlikėjo vaizduotė nuolat stimuliuoja itin turtingi garsiniai potyriai. Nuolatinis folklorinių elementų naudojimas kaip esminis muzikinio primityvizmo bruožas taip pat gerokai išplečia raiškos priemonių, prieinamų tokios muzikos interpretuotojui, žodyną.

IŠVADOS

Meno doktorantūros projekto tiriamajame darbe „Primityvizmo XX a. muzikoje fortepijonui interpretacija“ pagrindinis dėmesys koncentruojamas į primityvizmo meninės srovės įtaką fortepijoninei muzikai, nurodant reikšmingiausias pianistinio stiliaus naujoves pasirinktuose įvairių kompozitorių kūrinuose. Be to, akcentuojami tie atlikimo klausimai, kurie laikomi itin aktualiais geriausiai tokios muzikos ypatumų perteikimui: žinias, įgytas tyrimo metu, autorius sujungė su įžvalgomis, kylančiomis iš jo paties atlikėjiškos praktikos, siekdamas atskleisti ryškiausias technikas, raiškos ir koloristikos bruožus, būdingus primityvizmo stiliaus fortepijoninei muzikai, tarp jų ir specifinių pianistinių įgūdžių, kurie skatintų fortepijono atlikimo meno kūrybinių ribų plėtrą, realizavimą.

Remdamasis labai skirtingų muzikinių kūrinių pavyzdžiais iš XX a. muzikos fortepijonui repertuaro, tyrėjas pateikė išsamią tiriamojo reiškinių pripažintų savybių sistemą ir, svarbiausia, akcentavo jo bendruosius bruožus, taip suformuodamas gana vientisą ir sistemingą konceptualų paveikslą. Šiuo pagrindu suformuluoti ir bendrieji atlikėjiški

uždaviniai.

Atliktas meninis tyrimas apibendrinamas tokiomis išvadomis:

1. Primityvizmo menas susiformavo dėl įvairių geopolitinių, socialinių-ekonominių, kultūrinių-filosofinių ir psichobihevioristinių pokyčių Europoje, šimtmečiais plečiantis jos sienoms ir integruojant vis daugėjančius įvairovės elementus. Eilinio Europos piliečio priklausymo konsoliduotai normai pojūtis prisidėjo prie dichotomijos „Mes – Kiti“ suformavimo: ji reiškė priešpriešą tarp *civilizuotos* Vakarų visuomenės ir *necivilizuoto* išorinio pasaulio, šios prielaidos pagrindu modeliuojant „primityvumo“ idėją. „Rytai“, neapibrėžtas regionas, apimantis keletą skirtingų geografinių arealų (Šiaurės Afrika, Pietryčių Azija, Viduriniai Rytai ir kt.), remiantis tariama vakariečių viršenybe prieš rytiečius paprastai priešpriešintas „Vakarams“, rytietišką regioną vaizduojant kaip barbariškumo ir amoralumo lopšį ir taip dar labiau skatinant europiečių tapatinimąsi su aukštesniu civilizacijos ir kultūrinio išsivystymo lygiu. Tačiau greta šio proceso buvo menininkai, propagavę realybės vaizdavimo būdų naujumą. XIX a. pabaigos vaizduojamojo meno atstovai, rašytojai ir muzikai kaip įkvėpimo pagrindą palankiai priėmė bet kokią įvairovę: meninio vaizdavimo objektais dažnai tapdavo nevakarietiški peizažai, personažai ir situacijos; vaizdavimo stilių formavo tai, kas buvo suvokiama kaip primityvistinė maniera: nevakarietškų kultūrų grubaus paprastumo bruožai buvo priešpriešinami tradiciniam vakarietiškam trimačio vaizdavimo būdai.
2. Atlikto tyrimo objektas – primityvizmas muzikoje – pasižymi aiškiais analogijomis su primityvizmu vaizduojamajame mene. Visų pirma tai paplitęs nevakarietškų šaltinių naudojimas: dažnai kontempliuojami egzotiniai scenarijai bei aliuzijos į neeuropietišką skambesį. Be to, pastebimi nukrypimai nuo tradicinių instrumentinės raiškos priemonių: formos sudėtingumą keičia paprastumas, cirkuliarinė forma ir repetityvumo principas; *cantabile* ir *espressivo*, tokius aktualius vakarietiškos muzikos kanonui, išstumia brutalus perkusyvumas; vietoje išskirtinio virtuoziško atsiranda obsesiški repetityvumo mechanizmai. Šių charakteristikų pasikartojimas nagrinėtuose muzikos kūrinuose padėjo identifikuoti bendrąją primityvizmo giją fortepijono muzikoje. Darbo autorius pavadino ją „primityvistiniu topiku“, tyrimo eigoje apibendrintą šių elementų deriniu: perkusyvumu ir ritmiu akcentavimu; muzikinės medžiagos, t. y. modelių, negausumu ir repetityvumu; rėmimusi nevakarietiškais šaltiniais. Dario Martinelli pasiūlyta muzikinio primityvizmo kategorizacija kartu su Leonardo Ratnerio topikų teorija pasiūlė tinkamą atskaitos schemą klasifikuojant gausias primityvizmo apraiškas pagal nustatytas pakraipas.
3. Minėtieji klasifikacijos modeliai suponavo nuoseklią sistemą, potencialiai tinkančią

įvairiems nagrinėjamų muzikinių reiškinių aspektams: kiekvienos primityvizmo tendencijos analizė gali atsispirti nuo tokių atskaitos schemų, užtikrinančių diskurso tęstinumą ir organiškumą analizuojant primityvizmo apraiškų įvairovę.

4. Paaiškėjo, kad XX a. pradžios orientalistiniai ir egzotiniai polinkiai fortepijono muzikoje neabejotinai pranašavo ryžtingesnius posūkius į primityvizmą ateinančiais dešimtmečiais. Taip, pavyzdžiui, gamelano naudojimas Claude'o Debussy ir Leopoldo Godowskio fortepijono muzikoje įnešė ryškių pokyčių į pianistinį stilių, įvesdamas užuomazgines cirkuliarumo, repetityvumo ir perkusyvumo savybes. Vėlesnių kartų kompozitoriai, tokie kaip Giacinto Scelsi ir André Jolivet, gilesnio įkvėpimo sėmėsi iš Rytų mistikos ir dvasingumo bei siejo savo kūrybą su ritualiniais muzikos aspektais, perteikdami šį nematerialų pagrindą specifinėmis muzikinėmis priemonėmis, pavyzdžiui, sąmoningai brutaliu perkusyvumu, obsesišku ritmiškumu ir ypatingu dėmesiu svyravimui ir rezonansui kaip skiriamiesiems bendrojo garsinio potyrio bruožams.
5. Siekdami geriausiai perteikti savo polinkį į primityvizmą, daugelis kompozitorių modernistų įkvėpimo sėmėsi iš valstietiškos kultūros. Pavyzdžiui, Igorio Stravinskio kūriniai fortepijonui akivaizdžiai demonstruoja šią savybę nuolat įkomponuojamais tradiciniais liaudies šokiais ir melodijomis, dažnai persipinančiais ryškaus motyvų fragmentiškumo ir repetityvumo fone, greta jo kūryboje dominuojančios perkusyvumo priegios. Nuoseklesnio, net moksliško požiūrio šiuo atžvilgiu laikėsi *Béla Bartókas*, skrupulingai rinkdamas tūkstančius liaudies dainų ir klasifikuodamas pagal jų faktines morfologines ypatybes – tokiu būdu jo kūryboje visiškai išnaudojami pagrindiniai paprasčiausieji muzikos elementai, tokie kaip ritminis pulsas, dinamikos priešpriešos, intervalų ir tonų sekos. Analogiški reiškiniai aptinkami ir kitų kompozitorių, tokių kaip Manuelis de Falla ir Alberto Ginastera, muzikiniuose kūrinuose, pagyvintuose polinkiu į nacionalinį kaimiškąjį primityvizmą.
6. Nepaisant bendrųjų perkusiškumo, repetityvumo ir egzotizmo bruožų, gali pasireikšti ir kiti „primityvumo“ idėjos niuansai, suponuojantys įvairias atlikimo problemas. Pavyzdžiui, Eriko Satie muzikoje vyrauja radikalus formų supaprastinimas, motyvo glaustumas ir bendras statiškas pobūdis, todėl atlikėjas, stengdamasis išlaikyti muzikos tėkmės nuoseklumą ir kryptingumą, susiduria su neįprastais iššūkiais. Panašiai Federico Mompou muzikoje grynas skambesys pasiekiamas visišku tiek formos, tiek turinio supaprastinimu ir atlikėjo įtraukimu į nepaprastai subtilią tembrų analizę. Galiausiai György Ligeti kūrinuose taip pat labai supaprastinama muzikinė medžiaga, nors ir labai sudėtingai organizuota, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant garso srauto tęstinumui, o ne atskiroms

individualioms detalėms: pianistas susiduria su techninio lygmens iššūkiais, mechaniniam srautui nepalaujamai vedant jį per muzikinį diskursą.

7. Atvejo tyrimui pasirinktas Bėlos Bartoko ciklas *14 bagatelių* op. 6 suteikė visavertę galimybę taikyti teoriškai išnagrinėtus principus atlikimo praktikoje: dominuojančio perkusiškumo sąlygota didžiulė tušė įvairovė sudarė plačias tembrų tyrimo galimybes; konkrečios fizinės priegios eksperimentiniu būdu buvo taikomos įvairių tekstūrų ir motyvų modelių atlikimui; visa tai, kaip ir įvairių charakterių ir elgesio modelių įvairovė, skatino atlikėjo fantaziją ir kūrybiškumą.
8. Atlikdamas ir analizuodamas kitus tokio pobūdžio kūrinius fortepijonui (greta tiriamajame darbe išsamiai išnagrinėto Bartoko kūrinio), menininkas tyrėjas turėjo galimybę kartu pagausinti ir pagilinti tiek savo teorines žinias, tiek atlikėjiškus įgūdžius, meno doktorantūros projekto rengimo metu pasitelktus ir skleistus teminiuose rečitaliuose, koncertuose-paskaitose ir meninio tyrimo publikacijose.
9. Galiausiai, atliktas meninis tyrimas suteikė išsamią sisteminę perspektyvą ligi tol menkai ištirtam klausimui. Buvo rasta aktualių, nors tik pavienių ar nelabai išsamių šaltinių, tačiau struktūruotų ir sistemingų primityvizmo muzikos tyrimų, jau nekalbant apie fortepijono repertuarą ir su juo susijusius atlikimo klausimus, nebūta. Tikėdamasis, jog šis tyrimas bus naudingas tiek atlikėjams, tiek fortepijono meno tyrėjams, šio meninio tyrimo autorius nori paskatinti būsimus menininkus tyrėjus imtis panašių darbų ir kitose mažiau tyrinėtos fortepijoninės muzikos ir jos interpretacijos srityse.

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