A Study and Performance Guide for "Gaspard de la nuit" Emphasizing the Relationship of Piano and Orchestral Renderings

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A STUDY AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR GASPARD DE LA NUIT
EMPHASIZING THE RELATIONSHIP OF PIANO AND ORCHESTRAL
RENDERINGS

By

Jamila Tekalli

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A study and performance guide for *Gaspard de la Nuit*
Emphasizing the relationship of piano and orchestral renderings

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This essay is a study and performance guide for pianists that compares the orchestral and pianistic elements of Marius Constant’s *Gaspard de la nuit* for orchestra with Ravel’s *Gaspard de la nuit* for solo piano. The study of orchestration and instrumentation can shed light on the variable timbres, colors and different interpretations that pianists can utilize in their learning and interpreting of a piece. The effect of Constant’s choice of timbres, layering and the organization of the latter pushes the boundaries of what is on the written page. This study is based on studies of the historical, literary, and compositional approach of Ravel’s creative process seen in *Gaspard de la nuit* and on the comparison of Constant's orchestra version with Ravel's piano version. This performance guide offers an interpretation inspired by the orchestral effects, as well as technical suggestions for pianists seeking ease in communicating the story of a work of such technical and musical magnitude.
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CHAPTER ONE
CONCEPTION OF GASPARD DE LA NUIT

Introduction

Franz Liszt wrote a letter in September 1837, to his friend the Swiss statesman and politician Adolphe Pictet de Rochemont, in which he expressed the relationship of piano and orchestra:

Within the span of its seven octaves it encompasses the audible range of an orchestra, and the ten fingers of a single person are enough to render the harmonies produced by the union of over a hundred concerted instruments...thus it bears the same relation to an orchestral work that an engraving bears to a painting: it multiplies the original and makes it available to everyone, and even if it does not reproduce the colors, it at least reproduces the light and shadow. ¹

As a pianist I have striven to develop my ability to make the piano take on the expressive qualities of a full orchestra. The practical role of the piano as a “stand-in orchestra” is apparent through the orchestral reductions for numerous concerti as well as solo, four-hands and two-piano reductions of symphonies and orchestral works. There is also a creative approach to the relationship of piano and orchestra that is left to the performer when he or she is met with the challenge of creating a tapestry of sounds, not limited to the natural percussive nature of the instrument. Often, when confronted with the seemingly simple nature of a work by Mozart, one is drawn to his operas, encompassing a range of emotions, characters and layers of solo and accompanying figures. In this case, we can use an analogy to opera, where a synthesis of large-scale vocal and orchestral works can serve as the model for a pianist desirous of extracting instrumental and

emotional contrasts from an orchestral work in order to create a highly imaginative solo piano performance. One composer who was a master and meticulous craftsman of orchestration was Maurice Ravel, who further strengthened this relationship of piano and orchestra in his own orchestrations of his piano works. Such works as *Ma mère l'oye, Alborada del gracioso, Une barque sur l'océan, and Le tombeau de Couperin* all belong to the group of piano works Ravel orchestrated, and they in turn became part of the standard orchestral repertoire in popularity. Ravel consciously translated difficult passages from the original piano work into the orchestral transcriptions. Interestingly, one virtuosic work that Ravel did not orchestrate, *Gaspard de la nuit*, was intended to compete in its transcendental virtuosity with the seminal virtuosic work *Islamey*, by Mili Balakirev. Eighty years after *Gaspard de la nuit* was published for piano, in 1908, Marius Constant, a Romanian composer whose studies were also rooted in the Paris Conservatory, orchestrated the work.

With a work of technical and musical magnitude such as *Gaspard de la nuit*, the pianist must use every resource to better understand the complexity that exists with such a piece. This is a study and performance guide, delving into how Ravel's distinctive orchestration style compares to the orchestrated version by Marius Constant and how Constant’s orchestration of the work, modern in its conception but still in the shadow of Ravel, provides an important source for offering an original and effective interpretation of Ravel’s piano work.
Background and Style of Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel was born on March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France, a coastal city on the foot of the Pyrénées Mountains and bordering northern Spain. His mother, Marie Delouart, was of Basque origin and his father, Joseph Ravel, was a Swiss engineer, who many attributed to Ravel’s meticulous nature with the art of Swiss watchmaking. Ravel took from his father a fascination with mechanical objects in all forms and with this his parents nurtured an open and inquisitive approach to life and particularly supported Ravel’s career in music.²

Ravel’s musical education began at age seven with piano lessons with Henry Ghys, and harmony, counterpoint and composition with Charles-René, for it was stated that Ravel was a “natural…and not the result of effort” in his conception of music.³ Following private lessons, Ravel began his training at the Paris Conservatory at age fourteen. Ravel had a successful first two years of piano study, receiving second prize in the 1890 final competition and first prize in the 1891 competition. Based on the success of his examinations, he was admitted to compete in the harmony prize for the following three years. He failed to win in those three consecutive years, and was readily dismissed from his harmony course, as a result of the bylaws of the Conservatory.⁴ The Conservatory was a competitive atmosphere in which Ravel failed to win the piano prize in following years and was duly dismissed from his piano class as well. It was then that Ravel made the decision to quit the Conservatory himself in 1895, at the age of twenty.


⁴ Ibid, (14, 15).
Ravel’s inability to win the *Prix de Rome* in composing was not because he did not have the *ability* but rather, because he was unwilling to conform to the expectations of the Conservatory. Despite the popularity of Ravel’s works at the time, many were baffled by how lesser known composers were able to surpass him. Ravel greatly admired Erik Satie, whose independent spirit fueled Ravel’s own thirst for originality and counter culture to a large extent, for which the director of the Conservatory, Théodore Dubois, did not approve. Incidentally, Dubois resigned in light of his refusal to award Ravel the *Prix de Rome*, and his own increasing unpopularity. Ravel drew much of his influence compositionally and philosophically from his contemporaries through his involvement with an *avant-garde* group of artists, musicians and writers known as *Les Apaches* or “The Ruffians”. Ravel’s involvement in *Les Apaches* reflected not only the *fin de siècle* era in Paris which nurtured Ravel’s output, but also the development and support of his own philosophy and works. *Les Apaches* believed in artistic renewal through indigenous folksong and drew a great deal of influence from Russian and Asian music, and children’s music as well as symbolist philosophy.\(^5\) Influential members of *Les Apaches* included the composers Maurice Delage, Manuel de Falla, Igor Stravinsky, writers and poets M.D. Calvocoressi and Tristan Klingsor, and pianist and fellow comrade of Ravel, Ricardo Viñes.

It was during his Conservatory hiatus that Ravel dove into composition, completing the *Habanera* for two pianos, (which Ravel later orchestrated to be the third movement of the *Rapsodie espagnole*), and the *Minuet antique*, his first published work. Ravel’s teacher of orchestration and counterpoint was André Gédalge, whom Ravel

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greatly admired and credited with giving him the “most valuable elements of [his] technique. “⁶ Clarity and technique were key in Gédalge’s pedagogical approach that influenced Ravel heavily, and became highly characteristic of his orchestrating style. One of Ravel’s earliest pieces, written in 1897 when he was twenty-two years young, was a two piano work Entre cloches. This is one of Ravel’s earliest evocations of his fascination with bells, clocks and chimes, and would manifest throughout his lifetime’s works.⁷

A lifetime of friendship and collaboration began in 1889, as pianist Ricardo Viñes entered the Paris Conservatory in the same year as Ravel. Viñes was to premiere works by Ravel including his Menuet antique (1898), Jeux d'eau (1902), Miroirs (1906), and Gaspard de la nuit, which Viñes performed at the Salle Erard in Paris in January of 1909.⁸ Ravel and Viñes were companions for years, spent time with each other drawing, playing piano, experimenting with new chords and ideas, as well as exchanging literature. In a diary entry from Viñes in August of 1892, Ravel had showed him “a very gloomy drawing…[of] Edgar Allan Poe’s Maelstrom…[and] another one, also very black, from Poe’s Manuscript Found in a Bottle.”⁹ Ravel’s interest in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe and Baudelaire influenced and reflected his interest in the dark and macabre. Leading to most of Ravel’s great piano works, Viñes was key in introducing these works to the musical world and it could be argued that it provided Ravel with the crucial impetus for writing piano works in the first place. The impetus of Gaspard de la nuit’s conception is

⁷ Ibid, 50.
stated in Viñes diary entry of September 25th, 1896, which is when Ravel borrowed from Viñes the book of Aloysius Bertrand’s prose poems, *Gaspard de la nuit*.

**Literary Influences on the Style of Maurice Ravel**

The genesis of *Gaspard de la nuit* is largely connected to Viñes and Ravel’s own literary interests. French writer André Suarès and biographer of Debussy, said of Ravel, “His eyes, large, sad and serious…fixed their attention on an object and considered at length…Ravel’s head suggests to me that of a younger brother of Baudelaire. What in Baudelaire is profundity and suffering brought to the intensity of a passion, with Ravel is obsession, long application and unease veiled by melancholy.”\(^{10}\) Despite this gloomy portrait of Ravel, there is another side.

Mimi Godebska, the daughter of Ravel’s friends Cipa and Ida Godebski, would often sit with Ravel as he told her fantastical stories such as the story of Beauty and Beast. Ravel frequented the Godebski's house in the country as well as their Paris apartment. The imagination and honesty of childhood were of great importance to Ravel. At one particular *soirée*, Ravel had been noticed missing, but then found on the floor in thoughtful conversation with the children of the hostess. He preferred the company of children over adults in many situations and it was this “childish side…and warmth of feeling” which Mimi described as remaining “almost invisible beneath his *pudeur* [modesty]”\(^{11}\).

Ravel’s love for fairytales was not limited to those of “childish” fancy however. Ravel's assimilation of the stylistic traits of Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe’s works

\(^{10}\) Ibid. 29.

transcended to other aspects of his life. For example, Ravel adopted Baudelaire’s
definition of the dandy with an elegant coldness and discreet refinement in dress.

A precursor to Edgar Allan Poe was the novelist, critic and composer E.T.A.
Hoffman, a pioneer in German romanticism. His writings were tales of fantasy: dark,
bizarre and sinister, many which were the inspiration for many musical works of the
nineteenth century including Schumann’s *Kreisleriana*, Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker*,
Jacques Offenbach’s *Tales of Hoffman*, as well as works by Wagner, Baudelaire and
Debussy. Hoffman influenced the French romantic poet Aloysius Bertrand who wrote a
volume of fifty-three prose poems called *Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of
Rembrandt and Callot*, which was first published in 1842. Baudelaire and Mallarmé
rediscovered the work of Bertrand’s later in the nineteenth century. Contrary to what
many think of Ravel that he was an impressionist, his philosophy was closer to that of the
Symbolists. Jean Moréas described in his “Symbolist Manifesto” published in 1886, that
“art, scenes from nature, and the goings on of humans, and other real world phenomena
would not be described for their own sake; [instead], they are perceptible surfaces created
to represent their esoteric affinities with the primordial Ideals.”

Symbolists rejected matter-of-fact statements and plain speech, but instead believed that art could only
represent absolute truths through symbols and thus, indirectly. Objects and places
suddenly served to evoke feelings and emotions; including that of horror, terror and
apprehension, all encapsulated in the mind of the Romantic, gothic artist and writer.

The symbolist philosophy also had a profound effect on Ravel's technique of
composition. An important tenet of Poe’s was the perfect balance between “pure intellect

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12 Jean Moréas “Manifeste Du Symbolisme,” September 6, 2013, accessed September 6, 2013,
and emotion.” Edgar Allan Poe’s essay “The Philosophy of Composition” outlined that brevity was required to be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect. In short, the length was inversely related to the amount of effect.

Poe asserted that a poem could only sustain excitement for a half-hour and upon examining the length of Ravel’s great piano works: Miroirs, in its entirety is 29 minutes, the G major Piano Concerto is 21 minutes, the Left Hand Piano Concerto is 18 minutes, and Gaspard de la nuit is 23 minutes, we see that Ravel modeled the “Poetic Principle” of length with his own works.

Poe also stated, “Every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its dénouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence… by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.”

This calculated and meticulous approach to the creative process was one that Ravel took to heart, and it was this discipline in creativity that characterized the musical and literary output of Ravel and Poe, respectively.

According to the Academy of American Poets, the prose poem “maintains a poetic quality… utilizing techniques common to poetry, such as fragmentation, compression, repetition, and rhyme… [exploring] a limitless array of styles and subjects.” In her book “The Prose Poem in France: Theory and Practice”, Hermine Riffaterre describes the “two opposing tendencies in poetry: one toward increasing restraints, the other toward freedom

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from restraints.” She states that the prose poem belongs to the group of freedom from restraints. Suzanna Bernard describes the aesthetic of the prose poem as “vitaly necessary…to be short, condition \textit{sin qua non} of unity of effect, of its characteristic concentration, gratuitousness, intensity….the poem is a closed world, shut in upon itself, sufficient unto itself, and at the same time it is a kind of radiating mass, a small volume charged with an infinity of suggestions, capable of shaking us to the depth of our being.”

\textbf{Aloysius Bertrand's \textit{Gaspard de la nuit}}

Louis “Aloysius” Bertrand utilized this genre beautifully and uniquely, which many contemporaries found essential to survival, mental sanity and wholeness of being. Hermine Riffaterre states that “a text can be poetic without being closed, but it will become a poem…only if it has a well-marked beginning and end that turn it into an organized whole.” Therefore, poems that end “enigmatically” or “unexplained” still leave the reader with a sense of openness and that can only be explained as a refusal of closure. Bertrand stood out from his poetic contemporaries because his texts open up at the end into “a surreal temporality, [an] elasticity of time”. Bertrand’s poems have “uncanny final images [that] invite the reverie to prolong its echoes instead of closing on itself, open it [the poem] onto a kind of indefinite future.”

From Bertrand’s work \textit{Gaspard de la nuit}, Ravel extracted three poems to set to a musical narrative. However, it would be fair to assess that Ravel drew from the work as a

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whole. The three poems Ravel extracted, *Ondine*, *Le gibet*, and *Scarbo*, are presented to the reader as if he is witnessing them as parts of a miniature dramatic vignette. The works within themselves encapsulate opposing forces both beautiful and grotesque. The reader is taken on a multisensory experience: smells evoking the perfume of petals and almonds, a love letter scented with musk, sounds of the north wind screeching in the night, Scarbo’s fingernails grating on the silk of the curtains, and the imagery of a corpse hanging reddened by the setting sun. Bertrand establishes the character of *Gaspard de la nuit*, as his alter-ego and the author of the book, as a “mysterious old tramp in tattered frock coat and beard whom Bertrand meets in a public garden in old Dijon.”

The dichotomy of light and dark throughout the work can be derived from Bertrand’s dedication, in the title *Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot*. Jacques Callot was a printmaker, responsible for over 1,400 etchings that chronicled the life of his period, the late 1500s into the early 1600s, featuring soldiers, clowns, drunkards and gypsies, as well as court life. Although from a noble background, Callot was most notable for his prints on the subject of the “Miseries and Misfortunes of War” including one particularly disturbing print of twenty plus corpses hanging from a tree surrounded by soldiers of war. The disturbing nature has much to do with Callot’s realistic style and detail and was very much an influential depiction of the grotesqueness of life and war.

On the other hand, the works of Rembrandt are described as one who "communes with the spirits of beauty, science, wisdom and love." Bertrand reminds us that art is

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born from the conflict of opposites in the works of Callot and Rembrandt. With this personification of the duality of art, Bertrand brought to literary life the transcendental art form of exploring the unconscious and subconscious mind in dreams and the occult, much like his contemporaries Poe, Berlioz, Baudelaire and Paganini. *Gaspard de la nuit* is categorized as a work of negative transcendentalism, which assumed the responsibility of redeeming the collapsed values of the late eighteenth century Western culture with the “act of artistic creation.”

The entire body of *Gaspard de la nuit* is comprised of two prefaces, a dedication, six books of prose poems and a closing prose poem. The three movements of Ravel’s work draw their literary material from *Ondine* from “The Night and its Marvels” and *Le gibet*, and *Scarbo*, which are taken from “Detached Pieces”. “Detached Pieces” is a collection of Bertrand’s poems compiled by Victor Pavie, who, with David d’Angers and Sainte-Beuve, succeeded in publishing the entire work in 1842, one year after Bertrand’s death.

It is no wonder that Ravel assimilated Bertrand’s work into the language of music, as his brand of prose poem was characteristically short, compact, intense, and complete in itself. Through Ravel’s meticulously controlled compositional technique, he revealed his deep-seeded literary and philosophical influences and consciousness. The death of Ravel’s father, Pierre Joseph, also had an immense effect on Ravel as he completed

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*Gaspard de la nuit* in 1908. The intensity of the technical and musical depth of *Gaspard* is well within the context of this time in his life.

Example 1.1: *Ondine, Le gibet*, and *Scarbo* from Aloysius Bertrand's larger work *Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot*

**Ondine**

…I thought I heard a vague harmony enchanting my slumber, and near me spreading a murmur like songs broken by a voice, sad and tender.

CHARLES BRUGNOT – “Two Spirits”

1 “Listen! Listen! It is I; it is Ondine, who lightly brushes with water drops the resonant diamond-shaped panes of your window, lit by the dull rays of the moon; and here, in her silk dress, is the lady of the manor, who muses from her balcony on the beautiful starry night and on the lovely sleeping lake.”

5 “Each wave is an Ondine swimming in the current; each current is a pathway winding towards my palace; and my palace is built fluidly, in the depths of the lake, in the triangle of fire, earth, and water.”

“Listen! Listen! My father whips the croaking water with a green alder branch; and my sisters caress with arms of foam the cool islands of grasses, of water lilies, and of gladiola, or tease the decaying bearded willow, fishing with a line!”

10 After murmuring her song, she begged me to receive her ring on my finger, and be an Ondine’s husband and to visit her palace with her and to become the king of the lakes.

15 And when I told her that I loved a mortal, sullen and vexed, she shed a few tears, burst into laughter, and vanished in a sudden shower that streamed white trickles down my blue stained glass windows.22

Le gibet

What do I see moving around the gallows?

---FAUST.

Ah! Is what I hear the night wind howling, or the hanged man sighing on the gibbet?

Could it be a cricket singing, hidden in the moss and the sterile ivy which the woods covers itself out of pity?

Could it be a fly hunting and sounding its horn around those ears that are deaf to the slaughterer’s triumph?

Could it be a beetle plucking, in its uneven flight a bloody hair from its bald skull?

Or could it be a spider, embroidering a length of muslin as a scarf for that strangled neck?

It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a town beyond the horizon, and the corpse of a hanged man that glows red by the setting sun.23

Scarbo

He looked under his bed, in the fireplace, in the trunk----no one.
He could not understand how he had gotten in, how he had gotten out.

----HOFFMANN - Nocturnal Tales.

Oh! How often have I heard and seen him, Scarbo, when at midnight the moon shines in the sky like a silver crown on a blue banner strewn with golden bees.

How often have I heard his laughing murmur in the shadow of my alcove and the grating of his nail on the silk curtain of my bed.

How often have I seen him come down from the ceiling, pirouetting on one foot and rolling through the room like the spindle fallen from the distaff of a witch.

Did I believe he vanished then? The dwarf was growing bigger between the moon and me, like the tower of a Gothic cathedral, a little golden bell swinging on his pointed cap!

But soon his body turned blue, diaphanous like candle wax, his face grew pale like the wax of a candle stub---and suddenly he was extinguished.24

CHAPTER TWO

FORMAL AND LITERARY ANALYSIS OF GASPARD DE LA NUIT

Background

With such a meticulous composer as Ravel, it is necessary to look into how he manipulated his musical language to serve as a narrative alongside Bertrand’s. In understanding and interpreting the work as a pianist, one must understand the constructs Ravel utilized in creating the colors, sounds, and emotions that all make up the separate movements and stories that are unified in its whole work.

Ravel’s faith in classical structures, explained by Alfredo Casella, fueled his renewal and rejuvenation of those structures. In an interview with musicologist David Ewen, Ravel stated, “I am not a modern composer in the strictest sense of the word, because my music is an evolution, not a revolution.” He goes on to say, “To the greatest extent possible my music is built upon the traditions of the past and grows out of them.”

Ravel’s style was one of precision and a meticulous inventiveness that classified him as a “craftsman,” not only in his thematic manipulation but in his melding of the color, nuance and form that allowed him to broaden the known sonorous capacity of the piano with an array of “pianistic sound effects and instrumental tone colors.”

The romantic bug bit Ravel in the conception of Gaspard de la nuit and continued to influence the work compositionally. The three movements of Gaspard de la nuit have ties to previous models, often of the Romantically inclined: Ondine calls on Liszt’s Waldesrauschen and Fauré’s Nocturne No. 6; Scarbo recalls Liszt’s Mephisto Waltz,

Saint-Saëns’ *Danse macabre* and Balakirev’s *Islamey*; and *Le gibet* echoes the desolate tolling B-flat bell tones of Chopin’s *Sonata Op. 35 Marche funèbre*.\(^{27}\)

Before embarking on an analysis of the three movements of *Gaspard de la nuit*, it is very important to note Ravel's own philosophy on form. The critic M.D. Calvocoressi stated, “Ravel was primarily concerned with points of originality in idiom and texture. Questions of form seemed to preoccupy him far less. The one and only test of good form, he used to say, is continuity of interest. I do not remember his ever praising a work on account of its form. But, on the other hand, he was very sensitive to what he considered to be defective form.”\(^{28}\) While Ravel was not preoccupied on the subject of form, it is apparent that he was keenly aware of how the form thrived on the story telling. For this reason, I have chosen to focus on the significance of the form and motivic development in relation to the literary narrative.

**Ondine**

*Ondine* suggests the influence of Liszt’s *Waldesrauschen* “Forest Murmurs” (1862), through its arpeggiated and accompanimental figures in combination with its sweeping, singing melodies. “Forest murmurs” implies an otherworldly entity set in nature, while *Ondine* combines the natural and supernatural. For many pianists, Chopin is also a key influence in approaching a thick texture while maintaining a clear melody. A specific example can be seen in Frederic Chopin’s *Etude Op. 25, No. 1*, shown in Example

---


2.1. The textures are very similar, with the direction of the arpeggios inverted. The first two beats of measure 30 in Example 2.1, illustrate the half step movement in the melodic line that characterizes the melodic movement of Ravel's work in Example 2.2.

Example 2.1: mm. 29-30, *Etude Op. 25, No. 1* Frederic Chopin

Example 2.2: m. 66, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel

Bertrand’s *Ondine* is told by three narrators; the narrator of Charles Brugnot’s epigraph; the immortal water sprite, Ondine, whose voice is denoted by quotation marks, and the opposing voice of a mortal man. The epigraph immediately establishes a very important aspect of *Ondine* that pervades the work: its songlike quality. The narrator of the epigraph sets the tone for the work with such words as “vague”, “murmur” and “voice”. All three words can be applied in how one approaches the articulation of the melodic and thematic material. It is as if the initial narrator speaks as the curtains begin to
rise, before the music has begun: “I thought I heard a vague harmony”. This suggests a dream or fantasy world to the listener. It is important to note the process Ravel utilized to musically portray these initial descriptive words of the epigraph. I have devised a table to map how Bertrand’s work translates into Ravel’s schema of *Ondine* in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Poetic Map of *Ondine* Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza I</th>
<th>Stanza II</th>
<th>Stanza III</th>
<th>Stanza IV-V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm. 0 - 29</td>
<td>mm. 30 - 41</td>
<td>mm. 42 - 83</td>
<td>mm. 84 - 91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.3: *Ondine* from Aloysius Bertrand's *Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot*

…I thought I heard a vague harmony enchanting my slumber,
and near me spreading a murmur like songs
broken by a voice, sad and tender.

CHARLES BRUGNOT – “Two Spirits”

1 “Listen! Listen! It is I; it is Ondine, who lightly brushes with water drops the resonant diamond-shaped panes of your window, lit by the dull rays of the moon; and here, in her silk dress, is the lady of the manor, who muses from her balcony on the beautiful starry night and on the lovely sleeping lake.”

5 “Each wave is an Ondine swimming in the current; each current is a pathway winding towards my palace; and my palace is built fluidly, in the depths of the lake, in the triangle of fire, earth, and water.”

10 “Listen! Listen! My father whips the croaking water with a green alder branch; and my sisters caress with arms of foam the cool islands of grasses, of water lilies, and of gladiola, or tease the decaying bearded willow, fishing with a line!”

15 After murmuring her song, she begged me to receive her ring on my finger, and be an Ondine’s husband and to visit her palace with her and to become the king of the lakes.

And when I told her that I loved a mortal, sullen and vexed, she shed a few tears, burst into laughter, and vanished in a sudden shower that streamed white trickles down my blue stained glass windows.²⁹

Ondine is in an arch form, with characteristics of sonata form in its larger formal groups. We are introduced to Ondine’s family and surroundings, as the story begins in a succession of similes, realities in the world of the Ondine portrayed as “currents” turning into “paths winding” and her sisters with “arms of foam”. The narrator’s description of her marriage proposal ensues. It concludes with the narrator’s confession of his love for another woman, thus creating the whirlpool of anguish for the Ondine, to be soon forgotten in a flurry of laughter and shower of water droplets. With this, Ravel organizes the work into Exposition, Development, Recapitulation and Coda. The lines between the Exposition and the Development blur with the thematic connection of a whole step. Further, the thematic order in the Recapitulation reverses from its initial appearance in the Exposition, thus creating an over-arching form.

The formal diagram of Ondine is not straightforward and varies from scholar to scholar. In an effort to visually map out the movement to better understand how the structure affects the experience, I have devised a formal map of Ondine in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Formal Map of Ondine Maurice Ravel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Measure #</th>
<th>Pitch center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposition</strong></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>C#: I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: (2-9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: (10-13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segment A: (14-15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>16-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>30-41</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>A: (42-44)</td>
<td>42-66</td>
<td>V/V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retransition:</td>
<td>62-65</td>
<td>V/IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recapitulation</strong></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>66-71</td>
<td>iv/IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>72-79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coda</strong></td>
<td>Man’s reply: 84-87</td>
<td>84-91</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ondine’s laughter and descent into water: 88-91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The thirty-second note motive that pervades *Ondine* is the formal and underlying thematic glue, representing various movements of water: flowing streams, droplets and whirlpools. As the story of *Ondine* develops throughout the poem, so does Ravel’s treatment of the motive. Contrary to what many may think, *Ondine*’s role is that of “integration” rather than “seduction, domination, or destruction.” Her story and eventual rejection is told through the transformation and prolongation of the asymmetrical thirty-second note motives that integrate major and minor modalities. Even with *Ondine*’s rejection in the context of the poem, she reintegrates into water. The only section that does not integrate the watery aspects is measures 84-87, which are unmistakably the voice of the mortal man.

The motive’s repetitive nature draws the listener in, creating a layer of sound, that is meditative and mesmerizing. In measure 1, as the tonal center of C# Major is established, the G# can be seen as the fifth scale degree moving upwards to the flatted sixth of A-natural, creating a minor second dissonance. The grouping is irregularly presented, with the A-natural unexpectedly displaced on the second, fifth and eighth thirty-second beats of the thirty-second note grouping. There are three ways of grouping this motive, for a pianist executing the passage and for the listener experiencing the movement of sound. They are a 2+3+3 grouping as seen in Example 2.4, 3+3+2 grouping in Example 2.5, and 3+2+3 grouping in Example 2.6. With the 2+3+3 grouping, an inflection is implied at the first, third, and sixth C# major chords. With each subsequent alternate grouping, the C# major chord assumes a different inflection, thus creating larger beats within the stream of thirty-second notes. Larger scale rhythms become apparent when the inflections based on these groupings are brought out. In Example 2.5, the rhythm of the
**habañera** is infused into the grouping, as we see Ravel’s Basque background embedded in the motive that brings the movement together. Pianists may experiment with each in creating the effect of the undulating nature of water.

Example 2.4: measure 1, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score, 2+3+3 grouping

![Example 2.4](image1.png)

Example 2.5: measure 1, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score, 3+3+2 grouping

![Example 2.5](image2.png)

Example 2.6: measure 6, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score, 3+2+3 grouping

![Example 2.6](image3.png)
The ambiguous tonality of the work as a whole is largely due to the intervals of sixths that pervade this thirty-second-note motive. Ravel uses these streams and combinations of major and minor triads with added sixths as a way of camouflaging the tonality as well as with his use of registral variations. Leading into the transition beginning in measure 16, the motive is transformed from two octaves into an arpeggiated three-octave range. Stephen Zank refers to Richard Wagner’s concept of an “endless melody” in reference to Ondine, since Ravel integrates a “gently relentless fabric of rhythmic and metrical ambiguity.” This irregularity in metrical groupings can be referred to as metrical dissonance, whereas metrical consonance refers to regular, even, groupings.

Ravel creates dissonance in the climax of the piece at measures 66-69, shown in Example 2.8, making it the most texturally dense transformation of the motive. The density of the writing is a feature in this climactic point, but it is the dissonance that also creates a density of emotions to be experienced by a listener. Therefore, it can be argued that melodic and harmonic dissonance creates density in itself. A final Lisztian flourish occurs at measure 88, combining major, minor and diminished figures as the waters calm into the once mysterious, now familiar C# major added sixth arpeggiated motive, this time over the length of the keyboard. Ravel clearly establishes a tonal center in the final coda section at measures 89-90, creating metrical consonance with regular groupings and arpeggiated transformation of the motive.

Ravel utilizes his characteristic developmental technique starting at m. 41, employing two contrasting themes, much like a duel between a soprano and a bass.

---

Through this dialogue and impending building of density, the melodic content surges upward, accompanied by the downward cascading thirty-second motive transformation.

In the development, from measure 57 to measure 65, the accompanimental figure is metrically off by one thirty-second note from the theme, thus creating instability. The C# major harmony, shown in Example 2.7, makes a subtle appearance of the tonic before it bursts forth into the Recapitulation of measure 66, in Example 2.8.

Example 2.7: m. 57, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 2.8: m. 66: Recapitulation/Secondary Theme *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score
Further, Ravel establishes an arch form by inverting the order of the themes are, starting with the Secondary Theme at measures 66-71, the Bridge at measures 72-79, and the Primary Theme at measures 80-83, which ends in D minor, a tritone away from G-sharp. The texture becomes very sparse and absent of accompaniment, as a singular and lonely melodic line at measure 84 makes a statement that elicits the cadenza explosion of measure 88.

Finally, Ravel completes the arch of the movement by quietly and subtly injecting the most regular transformation of the G#-A-G#-A-G#-G#-A motive in the final three measures, as the story ends on a simple, pure, sustained C# major harmony.

*Le gibet*

In the story of *Ondine*, the lightness of colors and the empassioned plight of fleeting love’s rejection fades beautifully and untragically, despite her loss. Ondine’s immortality implies a certain hope for the future, one that does not worry itself with the strife of mortal problems and includes the ability to quickly forget, recover and laugh, in spite of the disappointment of the present. This lightness of immortality is replaced with the heavy, brooding and darkly colored landscape of mortality in *Le gibet*.

*Le gibet* establishes a sense of uncertainty, repression and even that of denial. The poem begins with Faust’s epigraph and a question: “What do I see moving around the gallows?” There is a frighteningly impersonal approach to this whole description, with no real explanation of who this man is, where he is from, and why he was hanged. Peter Kaminsky describes Ravel’s musical setting of *Le gibet* is based on the elements of
Bertrand’s poem and as a “formal circularity from the question-answer framework…[highlighting] its undercurrent of repression to ultimate revelation”.  

Ravel utilizes different themes with Le gibet to create an arch form. Examples 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14 illustrate the five main themes, with the underlying B-flat ostinato, that tolls relentlessly throughout the movement. I have devised a table mapping the measure numbers in relation to Bertrand’s stanzas in Le gibet.

Example 2.9: Le gibet from Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot

What do I see moving around the gallows?  
---FAUST.

Ah! Is what I hear the night wind howling, or the hanged man sighing on the gibbet?

Could it be a cricket singing, hidden in the moss and the sterile ivy which the woods covers itself out of pity?

Could it be a fly hunting and sounding its horn around those ears that are deaf to the slaughterer’s triumph?

Could it be a beetle plucking, in its uneven flight a bloody hair from its bald skull?

Or could it be a spider, embroidering a length of muslin as a scarf for that strangled neck?

It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a town beyond the horizon, and the corpse of a hanged man that glows red by the setting sun.  


Table 2.3: Stanza Map of *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanzas</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure #s</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>20-27</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>35-43</td>
<td>44-52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 is greatly influenced by formal map of Table 2.4, as well as the word painting that Ravel cleverly works into the musical material. The only living creatures embodied in the literary work are a cricket, fly, beetle, and spider. Ravel creates a musical representation of Stanza V’s spider, embroidering a scarf for this hanged man, with the slowly ascending and descending chords of measures 40-42. Stanza III questions if it “could be a fly sounding its horn”, as the incessant B-flat ostinato sounding faintly in the backdrop suddenly takes on a different embodiment: that of the horn of the fly from measures 20-23.

There is sense of helplessness associated with the descending whole-step ending gestures, indicative of a “sigh” found at the end of the majority of the themes. This, in conjunction with the prevalence of the open fifth harmonies and the tritone of F-flat to B-flat, constantly offsets the feeling of tonic.

Similar to *Ondine’s* arch form, Ravel reverses the appearances of the themes starting at the Development, as seen in Table 2.4. The Development, which appears from measures 28-34, enjoys a long, extended phrase, beginning with the sighing gesture of the half step from F to E in measure 28, shown in Example 2.14. The stark and lonely theme, which embodies the Development, gives way to reappearances of Theme C in the Recapitulation. These slightly altered and expanded motivic gestures echo the brief
Development section. Theme D serves as a transition between Theme B and C. In the movement’s final Coda section, the final manifestation of B-flat ostinato chords suggests tolling bells. The reappearance of Theme A underscores the arch form, this time with an inner line beginning with the tritone F-flat, descending by half steps to its original D-flat to B-flat figure in measures 44-48. Although the question has been answered, the overwhelming loneliness from this descending line to the beginning elicits a sense of stasis, suggesting nothing is quite resolved and we are back to where we started.

Table 2.4: Formal Map of *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel piano score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>23-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41-43</td>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>40-41</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43-44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>48-52</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.10: m. 4, Theme A, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel
Example 2.11: mm. 6-7, Theme B, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel

Example 2.12: mm. 12-14 Theme C, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel
Example 2.13: mm. 20-22, Theme D, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel
Example 2.14: m. 28-33, Theme E, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel
Scarbo

Scarbo is the technical giant of the three movements. This is perhaps the movement that would be largely responsible for the transcendental virtuosity that Ravel intended with the work, specifically, to be more difficult than Mili Balakirev’s Islamey. With Ravel’s brand of virtuosity in Gaspard de la nuit, his contribution to piano technique is in how he utilized all the resources of the piano to express the mood and imagery of the poems. In superseding Balakirev’s Islamey in technical demands, Ravel transcended technique to not only require the pianist to execute the arpeggiated, repeated-note acrobatic feats found in Ondine and Scarbo, but to also create the layers and colors that make the technical difficulty musically relevant, not just a technical end in itself.

Example 2.15: Scarbo from Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit: Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot

He looked under his bed, in the fireplace, in the trunk----no one. He could not understand how he had gotten in, how he had gotten out. ----HOFFMANN - Nocturnal Tales.

Oh! How often have I heard and seen him, Scarbo, when at midnight the moon shines in the sky like a silver crown on a blue banner strewn with golden bees.

How often have I heard his laughing murmur in the shadow of my alcove and the grating of his nail on the silk curtain of my bed.

How often have I seen him come down from the ceiling, pirouetting on one foot and rolling through the room like the spindle fallen from the distaff of a witch.

Did I believe he vanished then? The dwarf was growing bigger between the moon and me, like the tower of a Gothic cathedral, a little golden bell swinging on his pointed cap!

But soon his body turned blue, diaphanous like candle wax, his face grew pale like the wax of a candle stub---and suddenly he was extinguished.33

---

With the opening of Scarbo, the motives, intervallic relationships, and thematic material are established for the whole piece. The work is in a clear Sonata-Allegro form. Peter Kaminsky describes in Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music that there is an “introduction” in the first thirty-one measures. Kaminsky states that all thematic material in the piece can be derived from two motivic seeds p and q. The themes in the recapitulation appear in a “condensed” cycle and conclude with what Kaminsky characterizes as “mirroring the elements of the introduction”. However, I believe this section does more than “introduce” the work; it serves as the motivic foundation for the work’s thematic processes, and therefore cannot be characterized as an introduction.

The two motivic structures, p and q, in Example 2.16, reveal how Ravel constructs and develops Scarbo. There are four main themes in which p and q manifest themselves. These appear in fragmented states in the development section (measures 214 to 395).

Table 2.5: Four Main Themes, Motives Map in Scarbo Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Measure #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>32-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>52-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>95-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>p and q</td>
<td>121-130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.16: Motives $p$ (m. 1) and $q$ (m. 52) *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score

Table 2.6: Formal Map of *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Area</th>
<th>Measure Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>1-213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>214-394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>395-562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>563-627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept of the minor second and major second as unifying forces within the thematic material also serves as a basis for discussion. The minor second serves as the basis of most of the harmonic movement. However, the minor second as the main point of departure, or even an embodiment of the *Scarbo*, is a point of discussion in reference to the existence of the major second’s role in two of the four themes. It is perhaps the
oscillations of the minor and major seconds that are found throughout the themes as well as harmonic movement.

In the topic of key areas, there is a prevalence of g-sharp minor and B major areas. Upon a closer look at the pitches in each section, and in comparison with the key areas Peter Kaminsky states on page 130, that a more accurate description would be to classify the “key areas” rather as whole-tone scale collections based on a G-sharp or B rather than minor or major areas respectively. Surprisingly, Alfredo Casella (who was a classmate and had much contact with Ravel), stated that Ravel’s “polymodality, however, is essentially different from Debussy's in that it never employs the hexaphonic scale (in whole tones)…”

In approaching Scarbo programmatically, Bertrand’s poem serves as the point of reference not only in content, but also in motion and development. Stephen Zank refers to the “macro’ use of programmatic crescendo” and Ravel’s “organizing” force of chaos, created by Ravel's command of crescendo. This crescendo refers to the crescendi that occur in the score: hairpins which span a measure allude to a "micro" use of crescendo while the macro refers to a larger crescendo that begins in measure 447 until measure 563. This can be seen to be text painting in the description of Scarbo "inflating himself between the moon and me like the giant bells of a Gothic cathedral, with a golden rattle shaking on his pointed head.” The macro crescendi and dance-like qualities of the music are proof


that Ravel’s work not only draws programmatic inspiration from Bertrand’s poem but also actually follows the poem developmentally.

Bertrand’s poem describes the dwarf pirouetting and rolling around the room. The dwarf’s qualities of shape-shifting and evanescent expression are depicted by Ravel’s layering of themes, which often interrupt each other, and disappear just as quickly as they appear. Ravel’s ability to create a scurrying flurry of motion, (also in reference to the minor-second intervallic embodiment of the Scarbo found in measures 51 and 57), also are expressive of the characteristics of the mischievous dwarf.
CHAPTER THREE
ORCHESTRAL VERSIONS OF RAVEL’S PIANO WORKS

The Orchestral Style of Maurice Ravel

In orchestrating the works of others, Ravel isolated each family of instruments; his tutti sections resulted in a full and clear quality for the total sound. For Ravel, the strings were the “soul of the orchestra” and in the context of instrumentation, he would notate the strings first. It was paramount for him that the strings, as the bread and butter of the orchestral sound, sounded perfect, and once this was accomplished, final and further instrumental choices could be made.38

Ravel was drawn to unusual and uncommon instruments: the eoliphone (wind machine) in Daphnis et Chloé (1909), the jazzo-flute, a slide-whistle that sings like a nightingale, and the piano-luthéal in L’enfant et les sortilèges (1920) in the original piano-violin version of Tzigane (1924). The luthéal is an attachment for the piano that employs different registrations that the pianist engages by pulling stops above the keyboard. One of the registrations creates the sounds of a cembalo, a commonly used instrument for the Austro-Hungarian gypsies.

Ravel had an unmistakable taste for percussion: kettledrums, triangle, tambourine, military drum, cymbals, bass drum, two types of castanets, and xylophone all appear in Alborada del gracioso (1905); carillons, mule bells, glockenspiel, sarrusophone, and

celesta supported by a drum roll are used in the comic opera *L'heure espagnole* (1907) and a collection of carillons are found in *La vallée des cloches* (1904-5).³⁹

Ravel was drawn to the metallic, ringing fanfare of the brass section. Ravel's other instrumental preference was the flute, simultaneously capable of sounds, both shimmering, clairvoyant and rustic, which announce the placid entrance of *Une barque sur l'océan* and the rustic and smooth melodies found in *Shéhérazade* in the dances of Daphnis and the Nymphs. Muted trumpets were another favorite of Ravel's, as the sounds and techniques of the jazz and rag age undoubtedly influenced the composers of that time, including Stravinsky and Debussy. Ravel utilized techniques from the sounds he heard from jazz clubs such as nasally sounding effects, *glissando* trombone slides and syncopated rhythms, not to mention lush extended chords or even vulgar harmonies. Vladimir Jankelevitch compares Ravel to Rimsky-Korsakov in his treatment of each instrument as a virtuoso soloist. The hierarchy of one particular instrument group over another is no longer set in stone as he describes how “the families of instruments are emancipated and give up totalitarian unison; the violin is no longer king, and sometime it is even treated as a mere harp or a banjo.”⁴⁰

Ravel clarified the tonal colors and the focus of the characteristic sound of each section by designating the notes of each family of instruments at the keyboard in his creative process of orchestration.⁴¹ Many confuse the concept of orchestration as opposed

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to instrumentation. However, for Ravel, his orchestration technique can be largely explained in a statement he made to a student, Manuel Rosenthal:

Instrumentation is when you take the music you or someone else has written and you find the right kind of instruments - one part goes to the oboe, another to the violin, another to the cello...But orchestration is when you give a feeling of the two pedals at the piano: that means that you are building an atmosphere of sound around the music, around the written notes - that’s orchestration.42

While instrumentation is an artist's color palette, the manipulation of the colors and textures must create a uniform idea that moves an audience emotionally and sensually. To Ravel, an orchestrator's job was to reinterpret the written notes, creating a world that did not previously exist.

Ravel’s meticulously crafted form and construction came first while orchestration was his last consideration. The foundations were laid in the balance of the separate sections.43 Ravel was fully aware of the meaning and context of orchestration.

As a master craftsman, he could convincingly orchestrate his own piano works, such as Ma mère l'oye, Une barque sur l'océan, and could just as convincingly orchestrate other composer's works such as Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. Ravel's transcription technique was strict, never superfluous in any way. With the potential for orchestral colors and sheer added volume, Ravel clarified the shapes and effects in a way that is not

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possible with the piano. The large-scale rhythmic and textural layering that was previously left to the pianist, now carefully assigned to orchestral groupings with appropriate dynamic markings and accents. A “symbiotic relationship” between the piano and orchestral realizations illustrates how Ravel's piano scores imitated different instruments, translating pianistic virtuosity into orchestral and instrumental virtuosity. Furthermore, one could argue that even his orchestral scores recreate pianistic elements. This relationship will be explored further in the comparison of Ravel's orchestral and piano works.

Between the years of 1905 and 1908, Ravel harnessed his creative energy and enjoyed a prodigious output. The works from these important years include *Sonatine*, *Miroirs*, *L'heure espagnole*, *Rapsodie espagnole*, *Ma mère l'oye* and *Gaspard de la nuit*. One such work that Ravel transcribed to orchestra from piano is *Une barque sur l'océan* from his *Miroirs* suite. When comparing Ravel and Constant's orchestrations in relation to *Gaspard de la nuit*, a brief study into Ravel's own transcription of *Une barque sur l'océan*, orchestrated in 1906, serves as a strong example, particularly in relation to the water-themed *Ondine*.

A Comparison of Select Orchestral Arrangements by Maurice Ravel

*Une barque sur l'océan (A Boat on the Ocean)*

The programmatic setting of *Une barque sur l'océan* conjures certain nautical thematic materials: water, boats, horns, lighthouses, wind, and waves. The “flood of little notes”, that characterize the aquatic settings of Ravel's works must be clear and brilliant. The cadences, amid a flurry of sound, are no longer vague, but epitomize the paradox of
something that is both elusive and precise, a particularly “impressionistic” quality. Pianist Vlado Perlemuter describes the sound of kettle-drums is needed (in Example 3.1), and how a brassy tonal quality from the left hand is required (see Example 3.2), which characterize the sections. Further, in referring to the counter melody of Example 3.3, Ravel told Perlemuter, “Doux, mais comme un appel,” in the piano score. “Softly, but like a bugle call”, reveals much to the pianist as to the subtle balance of dynamics and timbre that are required to achieve this imaginative setting, with perhaps the sound of a muted brass instrument. There are three clear layers in the piece: the accompanimental cascading left hand figure indicative of a harp; an inner counter melody indicative of a horn and perhaps imitating a wind instrument; and the melody, which is in two voices, floating above the texture. For a pianist approaching this work, the layering and voicing require delineation; therefore the interplay of varying instrumental sounds becomes paramount.

Example 3.1: m. 28, *Une barque sur l'océan* Maurice Ravel piano score

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Example 3.2: m. 29, *Une barque sur l’océan* Maurice Ravel piano score

Similarly, we can see how Ravel realized the orchestral version.

Example 3.4: mm 1-3, *Une barque sur l’océan* Maurice Ravel orchestral score
Example 3.5: mm. 1-3, *Une barque sur l’océan* Maurice Ravel orchestral score

Example 3.6: m. 4-5, *Une barque sur l’océan* Maurice Ravel orchestral score

Example 3.7: m. 5, *Une barque sur l’océan* Maurice Ravel orchestral score
One important aspect to consider is how the same melodic material is passed from instrument to instrument and the ensuing effect it creates. The counter melody in measure 4 of the orchestral score, established by the oboe, is later stated by a muted trumpet in measure 16. See Example 3.8.

Example 3.8: m. 16, *Une barque sur l'océan* Maurice Ravel orchestral score

Ravel was aware of how distinctly loud and bright the trumpet sound is compared to the oboe. In order for this to work contextually in this subtle color change, the first counter melody stated by the oboe, is notated *mf*. Later, the trumpet is notated *p espressivo*. The muted trumpet gives the effect of a far away sound, perhaps an echo of the initial statement by the oboe. Ravel expertly takes the same material and gives it depth, context and color changes, that are both subtle and contrasting, all of which create an auditory soundscape for a listener.

Another effective transformation occurs in a section leading to the climactic point of the work. The oscillating right hand figure of the piano version seen in Example 3.9 is orchestrated with the 1st violin section playing harmonics, as seen in Example 3.10. The scintillating effect of harmonics lends a crystalline transparency to the accompanimental figure. The muted trumpet returns to the melody is, once again, lonely and ever more
distant, and is notated pp très expressif. Ravel's brand of orchestral transcription not only enhances the aural spectrum for a listener, but creates a narrative, with careful notations denoting a hierarchy of dynamics, qualities of sound, and a variety of coloristic effects. Roland-Manuel described how Ravel “with Stravinsky, [is] the one man in the world who best knows the weight of a trombone-note, the harmonics of a cello or a pp tam-tam in the relationships of one orchestral group to another.”

Example 3.9: mm. 89-91, Une barque sur l ‘océan Maurice Ravel piano score

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Example 3.10: m. 83, *Une barque sur l'océan* Maurice Ravel
Muted trumpet and 1st Violins

*Alborada del gracioso* "The Morning-Song of the Jester"

In 1902, Ravel, with his friend and pianist Ricardo Viñes, joined *Les Apaches*, “The Ruffians”, a group of literary, musical and artistic contemporaries which were comprised of the critic M.D. Calvocoressi, the artist Paul Sordes, the composers de Falla, Schmitt and Stravinsky, the writers Léon-Paul Fargue and Tristan Klingsor, and the conductor Inghelbrecht. *Les Apaches* was undoubtedly a source of great inspiration and education for Ravel that went much further than his education at the Conservatory. With this artistic comradery also came the *avant-garde* and symbolist ideas that defined the *fin-de-siècle* generation. *Alborada del gracioso*, which is part of Ravel's *Miroirs* suite written between 1904 and 1905, was inspired by Spain and was in large part a reaction to the impressionistic style seen in his earlier works of *Miroirs*, including *Une barque sur*
l'océan, Oiseaux tristes and Noctuelles. Alborada del gracioso belongs to a period and group of works including Rapsodie espagnole, Daphnis et Chloe, and Gaspard de la nuit, that maintained the characteristics of flexibility of form and a certain rich and lush magnificence in the basic harmonies while keeping the eccentricity of the smooth and compact melodic lines.\(^{47}\) While these works capture the beauty of nature and water themes, Alborada del gracioso embodies raw Spanish-inspired dance rhythms, “arriving like a meteor from its colorful country of origin.”\(^{48}\)

Ravel orchestrated Alborada del gracioso in 1918. It is scored with a large percussion section including timpani, crotales, triangle, tambourine, military drum, castanets, cymbals, bass drum, and xylophone. Once again, Ravel's “emancipation” of instrumental families is apparent in his orchestration of Alborada del gracioso. He achieved this by his use of wide chord clusters in the recitative section: a divisi with the first and second violins divided into six parts, violas into five, cellos into four, and double basses into three. The wide spacing of strings notated with harmonics, creates a clear, light texture underlying the subtle pulsations of the moving rhythms.

A humorous, albeit ironic, dedication of this work reveals Ravel's awareness and intention with regards to virtuosity and the performer's role. Ravel dedicated Alborada del gracioso to music critic, friend, and compatriote in Les Apaches, Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi. M.D. Calvocoressi was not a virtuoso pianist, hardly even a good pianist, and described himself as one of the “less expert players, the worst of whom was certainly


myself.” The irony of this dedication is that according to the status quo of music history, dedications frequently were made to the performer of the work's premiere, one who was a virtuoso in his own right. When Les Apaches gathered for score readings, Ravel and Ricardo Viñes were responsible for reading. Ravel's dedication of Oiseaux tristes went to Viñes, which seems completely backwards. Ravel told Calvocoressi that he found it “fun to inscribe to a pianist a piece that was not all “pianistic”.\textsuperscript{50} Despite this tongue-in-cheek quip, Ravel undoubtedly recognized Viñes for his pianistic abilities, as he was the one to premiere the work in 1906.

A perfect example of the translation of technical virtuosity from piano to orchestral occurs in Alborada del gracioso's iconic repeated note section. Ravel indicated to pianist Vlado Perlemuter in the study of the piano work, to play the passage “lightly, like a flautist, recalling the orchestra.”\textsuperscript{51} Interestingly, Ravel pairs the muted trumpet with the flute in this passage, giving the repeated note initial gesture to the trumpet while the glissando flourishes are given to the flute and first harp. In the repeated notes of the transition, the trumpet is joined by the French horns as can be seen in Example 3.11. Later, in an extended repeated note section, the flute is given the spotlight, shown in Example 3.13, with the harp rhythmically matching. The passage shown in Example 3.11, requires the trumpet and horns to execute triple tonguing, in order to successfully create the articulation and speed that is appropriate for the music. Alborada del gracioso is notoriously difficult for the orchestral musicians who must switch to a soloistic approach.


Ravel translates the virtuosity of executing the repeated notes of the piano with that of the vibrant timbre of the trumpet, the brassy yet subtle sound of the stop muted horns, and the ease and grace of the flute. Ravel’s changing instrument choices and their ensuing, subtle timbral shifts reveal the progression of this phrase. The use of these brass instruments played naturally and with mutes lend an edge that is rounded out by the lightness and grace of the flute's triple tonguing. This raucous celebration with castanets in Spanish rhythms, pizzicatos flying from the strings, and glissandos leading to full orchestral fireworks characterize the energy of the section. This reveals much to the pianist in terms of how much energy, weight, and clarity is needed in executing this passage, and how the whole section is defined in its thickening and thinning of texture dictated by the rise and fall of the phrase.

Example 3.11: mm. 48-50, *Alborada del gracioso* Maurice Ravel orchestral score

1st Trumpet, 2nd trumpet then joined by French horns
By effectively delineating the contrasting sections of the work, a performer allows the listener to experience the form. In entering the free, lyrical B section of *Alborada del gracioso*, Ravel creates orchestral effects that clarify these contrasts. In Example 3.14, Harp I is marked with *près de la table*, which instructs the harpist to play near the base of the strings, which produces a nasal and metallic sound. This nasal and metallic sound can be associated with the strumming of a guitar, while the strings provide a cushion of sound aided by sustained harmonics, creating a suspended, distant sound. The combination of these sounds reflects the concept Ravel communicated to Vlado Perlemuter. In the piano version of *Alborada del gracioso*, as shown in Example 3.15, Ravel specifically instructed it to be played with a remote sound and not too fast, like a distant murmuring. The rhythmic freedom of this section is seen in the melody of the recitative section, see
Example 3.16. A wailing recitative found in flamenco, or a *copla*, is implied here, as *expressif en recit* makes a clear indication for a free, expressively spoken and full-bodied tone. An interesting observation by Perlemuter about the transformation of the piano version to orchestra is how “the high register of the piano is less accommodating than when one is writing for orchestra, where expressive quality is much more easily displayed at these pitches.” The expressive quality in this range comes very easily to the bassoon, as seen in Example 3.17, which is known for its warm, dark timbre that is comparable to a male baritone voice. A pianist, despite the less accommodating circumstance of the instrument, must strive to create the length and breadth of phrasing and expressive weight on each note in order to approximate the bassoon timbre.

Example 3.14: mm. 76-77, *Alborada del gracioso* Maurice Ravel orchestral score
Harp 1 and 2

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Example 3.15: m. 75-78, *Alborada del gracioso* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 3.16: mm. 71-74, *Alborada del gracioso* Maurice Ravel piano score
The two works, *Une barque sur l'océan* and *Alborada del gracioso* form an integral part of the work *Miroirs*, which stylistically, technically and philosophically prepared Ravel for the conception of *Gaspard de la nuit*. Ravel's own orchestrations not only reveal the big picture, but also the most minute details that make the difference in providing a performance that is convincing. The gems that are Ravel's own transcriptions communicate to a pianist his intentions. The choice of instrumentation, the layering, texturing, and added orchestral effects are all part of the interpretive arsenal for a pianist. One of the most creative approaches to attaining both inventive and artistic reverence for Ravel's music is by studying a contemporary transcription to his seminal work, *Gaspard de la nuit*. A study and comparison of Marius Constant's orchestration of *Gaspard de la nuit* to that of Ravel's stylistically corresponding orchestrations reveals the qualities of Ravel's orchestrations that Constant adopted while still achieving a highly original and “Constantian” work. This is particularly important in understanding how Ravel could have envisioned *Gaspard de la nuit* for orchestra.
CHAPTER FOUR
MARIUS CONSTANT AND HIS ORCHESTRATION

Background and Style of Marius Constant

Marius Constant (1925-2004) was a Romanian born composer and conductor who, upon studying and settling in France, adopted a French citizenship. He is most famously known for writing the iconic theme music for the CBS show “Twilight Zone” in 1959. Constant began working with Radio France during this time, which led to an offer from CBS Television in the United States to write stock music. This theme was a unification of two of his works *Etrange* No. 3 and *Milieu* No. 2 with the unconventional instrumentation of electric guitar, bongo, saxophone and French horns. Constant did not receive any screen credit or royalties for his composition, as the work’s rights were solely owned by CBS. 53

Regardless of the unfortunate truth in the way the music business selfishly conducts matters like these, he was honored as both a composer and conductor in a number of media. Much like Ravel, he studied piano, harmony and composition, first at the Bucharest Conservatory, where he was awarded the Enescu prize in 1945. Upon relocating to Paris under a French government scholarship, he began his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. There he studied under Tony Aubin and Olivier Messiaen, while privately studying with the legendary Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger. Constant enjoyed a lifetime of awards and distinctions, winning the Koussevitzky Prize in 1962, the

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Marzotto Prize in 1968 and the *Grand Prix National de la Musique* in 1969. Later he served as professor of composition at the Conservatoire from 1974 to 1988.\(^54\)

Constant led the charge for new music in France in the mid-twentieth century. In 1952 he first joined Pierre Shaeffer’s “*Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète*”, and later in 1963 he founded and conducted his own Ars Nova ensemble which became the official new music ensemble for Radio France, and is still alive and well to this day. Ars Nova was created as a reaction to other new music ensembles in Paris at the time that were in large part limited to serial works. With the inception of his ensemble, Constant sought to broaden the new music repertoire to include non-serial works. Interestingly, Constant stylistically avoided the serial movement that was characteristic of much of the 1950s and 1960s with composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Karl Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez.\(^55\)

Constant's close collaboration with ballet began in 1952 with his work, *Le joueur de flûte*, which included electronic tape. After the work won the Italia Prize in 1952 and the Grand Prix du Disque in 1956, it was choreographed.\(^56\) Clearly, Constant understood the effective medium of dance, and furthered his close collaboration with ballet as musical director of Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris starting in 1958, and as director of dance at the Paris Opéra for five years, beginning in 1973. Several of his ballet works include a cabaret pastiche, *L'ange blue* (1985) for the Deutsche Opera, Berlin, a mimed version of


\(^55\) Ibid.

\(^56\) Ibid.
Candide for the Hamburg Staatsoper (1970) as well as nine ballets for his own Roland Petit in Paris.\textsuperscript{57}

Constant's name quickly became synonymous with experimental composition with the genesis of his group Ars Nova. His orchestral works rose to distinction, beginning with his work *Préludes*, which was premiered under the baton of Leonard Bernstein in 1959. His style is characterized by his use of unconventional timbral combinations, exploration into electro-acoustic music, and the colors and effects of Debussy and Ravel, which he stylistically incorporated into his work *Turner-Three Essays for Orchestra*. Constant's particular experimentation with timbral combinations focused on particular groups within the orchestra, as found in his works *Winds* (1968) and *Strings* (1972), or with the combination of timbral interaction such as in *Moulins à prières* for two harpsichords and electronic tape (1969), *Choruses and Interludes*, which was a horn concerto with an orchestra and jazz quartet (1987), and a barrel organ concerto (1988).\textsuperscript{58} As a musical explorer, Constant traveled backward and forward in time, creating an anachronistic approach to instrumentation that not only created unconventional timbral combinations, but also combined musical eras.

One can undoubtedly hear the influence of Messiaen in the music of Marius Constant, particularly in his orchestral work, *Turner-Three Essays for Orchestra*. Notable features are his use of extreme timbral ranges, and the juxtaposition of high flutes with low strings and brass. His eerie blending of instruments is indicative of Bartok’s *Music for Strings Percussion and Celesta* and Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*.


\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
Percussionist Jonathan Haas, known for his United States premiere of Marius Constant's work, *14 Stations*, remarked on the nature of Constant's orchestration style, stating that he "was the consummate orchestrator. His ability to create original melodies was augmented by his vast knowledge of the inner workings of the instruments that he used in his orchestrations. *14 stations* utilizes the instruments of violin, electric guitar, harpsichord, trombone and cello...Strange orchestrations, but brilliant in the sonic combinations."\(^{59}\)

In 1981, Constant adapted Georges Bizet's opera as *La Tragédie de Carmen*. This was in collaboration with director Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière. Brook intended to draw on the style of the original story by Prosper Mérimée. Peter Brook commented on their conception of the project:

Marius Constant, the musical director, Jean-Claude Carrière, and I decided on a very interesting experiment. We were going to find a way to make Carmen live in our conditions at the Bouffes du Nord theater...We tried not to go back entirely to the Mérimée story, but to go back to the nature of Mérimée’s style. His style was something very simple—not a word wasted. And we found that the most sensitive, pure music is connected with the pure, central line of the story.\(^{60}\)

Even though it was described as an adaptation of Bizet's opera, it was, in fact, more of an adaptation of the original Mérimée storyline. The underlying idea that fueled Constant, Brook, and Carrière was that by staying true to the “lean and clean” style of the

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\(^{59}\) Jonathan Haas, emailed to author, February 21, 2014.

original storyline, their creation was actually an improvement over the earlier version. It's apparent that Constant himself, in allegiance with contemporaries of his time, was concerned with staying true to the original work of a dramatic and musical recreation, while making innovations unabashedly true to himself and his colleagues. Constant also collaborated with Peter Brook on a re-orchestration of Claude Debussy's *Pelléas and Melisande* with his *Impressions de Pelléas* in 1992. Despite Constant's Romanian heritage, he was clearly attracted to French culture and musical heritage, with his orchestrations of works by Berlioz, Satie and Ravel. Marius Constant orchestrated Ravel's work *Gaspard de la nuit* in 1988. Regarding Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* in particular, there is very little information as to why Constant took on this orchestration. However, one only has to look at Constant's parallels with Ravel to see this relationship deeply embedded in French style and nationalism.

**Comparison of *Gaspard de la nuit*'s Orchestral Version to Piano Version**

Perhaps one of the most common occurrences a pianist encounters is playing an orchestral reduction accompaniment part. When approaching an accompaniment, I have found it very effective to first listen to the orchestral recording. Most often, the piano part is a reduction to the orchestral part. Tremolos in the piano part will often come from the string parts, and there is a focus on harmonic and melodic content. The first step is determining the instrumental group, the effect of that particular usage, and how it reflects on the section formally. One should determine whether the instrumental group belongs to a *tutti* section, melodic material, or harmonic layering. For example, a pianist can begin to determine the amount of space given to each note or notes based on the timbral space of
the instrument, being quoted, and based on the articulation appropriate to the orchestral version. With each instrument, there are a number of effects available in the orchestrator's palette, which can create variation and often may formally define each section.

The building blocks of instrumentation, layering, texture, and added orchestral effects are what create this orchestral interpretation by Marius Constant. Constant's choices inform a pianist much in the way that one would listen to a transcription for orchestra by the composer himself. In order for a performer to portray the work convincingly, the performer must have a very clear idea of what he/she wants to express, which, in this particular case, is a combination of an interpretive approach to orchestration as well as “playing what is written”, in the words of Ravel. In the interpretive spirit, there is also the issue of how a conductor and an instrumentalist decide to interpret these elements. One excellent recording of this example offers a convincing interpretation of Constant's orchestral rendering is the 2013 recording by the Duisburger Philharmoniker with conductor, Jonathan Darlington.61

Structure and layering is very clear in orchestrations, as one can see groupings of instruments and percussive effects that delineate the layers. Often, this is not the case when looking only at a piano score, where one must determine all the effects intuitively. There will be a focus on the similarities and differences between Ravel's orchestration and those of Constant.

Practically speaking, a clear understanding of Ravel's work is the goal of this study. As one investigates Ravel's brand of orchestration, there are certain expectations of instrumentation and structure that arise in the mind of an inquisitive musician. These

expectations are determined by interpretive choices in the piano score alone, as well as by the coloristic shifts that shape and characterize each movement of *Gaspard de la nuit*. In Chapter Five, these choices in the piano score will be explored.

**Table 4.1: Sound Characteristics of Woodwind Instruments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piccolo</td>
<td>bright, clear, penetrating&lt;br&gt; <em>piano:</em> delicate, sweet&lt;br&gt; <em>forte:</em> forceful, shrill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>airy, ethereal, graceful, penetrating, sighing, clear, brilliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto flute</td>
<td>Mellow in its lower register&lt;br&gt; Tone quality changes at A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>clear, bright, reedy, insistent&lt;br&gt; <em>low:</em> thick, melancholic&lt;br&gt; <em>middle:</em> idyllic romance, tranquility, lamentation, loneliness&lt;br&gt; <em>upper:</em> G6, A6 biting, shrill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English horn</td>
<td>mellow, full, sonorous&lt;br&gt; <em>low:</em> compared to stopped horn sound, warm, intense&lt;br&gt; <em>middle:</em> sentimental, nostalgic&lt;br&gt; <em>upper:</em> acerbic, insistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-flat Clarinet</td>
<td>bright, biting, devilish, piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-flat Clarinet</td>
<td>rich, warm, gentle, vocal, throaty, dramatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Clarinet</td>
<td>mellow, round, sonorous, melancholy, somber&lt;br&gt; known for being able to play extreme soft dynamics: <em>ppppp</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>smooth, velvety, warm, smooth&lt;br&gt; <em>low:</em> dark, serene, peaceful&lt;br&gt; <em>middle:</em> ideal for blending, more intense, sonorous, melancholy, eerie&lt;br&gt; <em>upper:</em> squeezed, apprehension, distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrabassoon</td>
<td>dark, somber, rumbling, buzzing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.2: Sound Characteristics of Brass Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horn</td>
<td>Full, warm, mellow, brassy, metallic, regal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet</td>
<td>intense, brilliant, powerful, stately, dark in low register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>powerful, solid, dramatic, brassy, round low: weighty, somber, sinister middle: $p$: mysterious $f$: heroic, metallic upper: intense, brilliant, mellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>mellow, warm, sustaining, resonant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Sound Characteristics of String Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>lively, singing, sensuous, lustrous, solemn, sweet, dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>dark, singing, muffled, veiled, somber A string: penetrating, can express sentimental moods and pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>mellow, warm, sustaining, solemn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td>heavy, earthy, rasping,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.4: Sound Characteristics of Percussion Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xylophone</td>
<td>Hard, wooden, precise, dry&lt;br&gt;Highest pitched in orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glockenspiel</td>
<td>Silvery, bright, bell-like, piercing&lt;br&gt;Highest pitched in orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubular bells</td>
<td>Bright, eerie, metallic, rich in overtones, distant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotale</td>
<td>Ringing, piercing, bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snare drum</td>
<td>Bright, rattling, sharp, dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambourine</td>
<td>Festive, glistening, sparkling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass drum</td>
<td>Dark, sonorous, menacing, rumbling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cymbals</td>
<td>Piercing, brilliant, undulating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tam-tam</td>
<td>Majestic, mighty or threatening and booming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>Penetrating, bright, piercing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slapstick</td>
<td>Resembles crack of a whip, abrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodblock</td>
<td>Hollow, wooden, pitched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castanets</td>
<td>Clicking, rapping, rattling, evocative of Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind machine (aeoliphone)</td>
<td>Swooshing, howling wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celesta</td>
<td>Warmer and rounder than glockenspiel; compared to piano: dynamic range is limited, lower notes resound longer than high notes, low register: rich and warm, high: bright Celesta is generally used mostly for soft and gentle passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harp</td>
<td>Gentle, glittering&lt;br&gt;Low: often used to replace bells, full, resonant&lt;br&gt;Middle: brilliant, warm&lt;br&gt;Upper: bright, hard, penetrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratchet</td>
<td>Clicking and rattling sound,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The orchestration of *Gaspard de la nuit* by Marius Constant is scored for a large orchestra, including piccolo, flutes, alto flute, oboes, English horn, petite clarinet, clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoons, contrabassoon, horns, trumpets, trombones, tubas, harps, celesta, strings, and 18 types of percussion instruments including timpani, ylophone, glockenspiel, tubular bells, crotales, snare drum, tambourine, bass drum, suspended, ride, and crash cymbals, tam tams, triangle, slapstick, woodblock, castanets, wind machine, and geophone. Incidentally, this instrumentation is almost identical to that of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, plus the unconventional use of a wind machine. The use of the geophone is attributed to Constant's teacher at the Paris Conservatory, Olivier Messiaen. The geophone is a percussion instrument, invented by Messiaen for use in his large composition for piano and orchestra entitled *Des canyons aux étoiles...* (“From the canyons to the stars...”). It is a drum filled with thousands of small lead pellets, and is played by swirling it around slowly so that the noise of the pellets resembles the sound of dry shifting earth.

The percussion choices change with each setting as each movement progresses. The use of chimes in *Le gibet* is highly appropriate to represent the tolling bells, while the movement and syncopated dance rhythms of *Scarbo* make castanets a highly appropriate choice. For example, in Ravel's orchestration of *Alborada del gracioso*, castanets are used tastefully and graciously as a responsorial effect to large explosive moments, taken from the Spanish rhythms established at the beginning of the piece. The castanets provide a
certain world indicative of a Spanish dance setting. The bells represents an integral part of nineteenth century piano music, particularly that of Liszt's music including his works *Les cloches de Genève*, *La campanella*, and *Cloches du soir*. This is representative also of Ravel's own keen interest in time, bells, and chimes, even Eastern influenced gamelan sonorities, as in his compositions *Vallée des cloches*, and his short, comedic opera *L'heure espagnole*.

**Constant's Orchestration of Ravel's *Ondine***

In order to illustrate how Constant organizes the instrumentation and the ensuing effects, this study will look at his arrangement within the literary framework of each movement. In the opening, the unveiling of the scene of *Ondine* is set. The first, second and third stanzas of the poem are told in the first person, as Ondine describes her idyllic life in her watery kingdom. The words of *Ondine*’s lover, quickly inform her of his disinterest upon hearing her song, occur in the last two stanzas.

Constant begins with interchanging flutes and the celesta dancing and shimmering with the opening thirty-second note pattern. Constant gives the voice of *Ondine* to the dark, sustained timbre of the B-flat clarinet, which is akin to a *mezzo-soprano* or *alto* voice. The transparent texture of *Ondine* is supplemented by the use of a woodwind section of flutes, oboes and clarinets alternating with the melody. The strings alternate with the melodic lines, carefully orchestrated within the *divisi* parts, also abound with thirty-second note ostinatos and harmonic colorations.

Instrumental shifts establish the development of the themes. Much in a Ravelian brand of orchestration, Constant identifies the instrumental groups with colorations aided
by subtle textural additions. At the entrance of the B section of the Primary Theme in measure 10, a string *divisi* reinforces the melody for the first time, joining the woodwind trio. Constant gives us a taste of the strings, which gives birth to a full fledged *tutti* string doubling with the woodwinds and harp in the Primary Theme's brief return to "A" in measure 14. The Transition of measure 16 marks the first entrance of the brass. The warm, surging effects of horns, harps and *celesta* using *glissando*, create a restart in the thinning of the texture and reestablishment of the clarinet as the primary voice of Ondine, now lightly supported with Violin I's. Strings and woodwind pairings dominate the melodic material through the beginning to measure 31, spanning the length of the poem's first stanza. Stanza II, which begins at measure 30, marks a shift to a more soloistic blending of the clarinet and English horn. Shortly thereafter, the melodic texture proceeds to thicken to a woodwind quartet comprised of oboe, English horn, and two bassoons. See Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Instrumentation Map of *Ondine* orchestral score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Measure #</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza I (0-29)</td>
<td>Primary:</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: (2-9)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: (10-13)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segment A: (14-15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza II (30-41)</td>
<td><strong>Transition</strong></td>
<td>16-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>30-41</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza III</td>
<td>A: (42-44)</td>
<td>42-66</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retransition:</td>
<td>62-65</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>66-71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
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<td>72-79</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>Man's reply: 84-87</td>
<td>84-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza IV-V</td>
<td>Ondine’s laughter and descent into water: 88-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(84-91)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
The section concludes with a dovetailed addition of the French horns and Violin II. The French horns lend warmth to the texture, which Constant utilizes very sparingly and tastefully. This warmth provides a cushion of sound that, in a way, allows the listener to land safely before embarking on to the next section of Stanza III, at measure 42.

With the Development, beginning at measure 42, there is a descent into the harsh reality of Ondine's romantic endeavors, a sharp contrast to the lofty, peaceful, and utopian setting of the beginning. In measure 42, notated with the directions of *pp espressivo ma non troppo vibrato*, (very soft, expressive but not too much vibrato), the principal viola is featured with a two measure solo, joined in the next two measures by the violins. The instruction of “not too much vibrato” maintains undulations in sound to a more constant, grounded effect. Going deeper into the ever-growing darkness of the development, the melody is given to the bass clarinet and cellos, which are supported harmonically and
coloristically by the bassoon, French horns, and double basses. The Development is
dominated by a foundation of the string family, alternating melodic content between
higher and lower strings. In the sections leading to the climax of the piece, Constant pairs
the strings with woodwinds, often starting with a solo wind instrument pairing, adding
wind instruments as the dynamics and layering builds. Measure 57 marks the beginning of
a large-scale build to the programmatic whirlpool climax in which the thickest textures in
the piece occur. This effect is given to the woodwinds: piccolo, flute, oboe and clarinet.
The trio of woodwinds that play on the first beat, including the piccolo, flute, and oboe,
add a brightness and weight to the downbeat. The isolation of instrumental families here
is apparent, as even the typical doubling of piccolo and violins is not used. As the passage
descends, the sparkle and brilliance in the sound of the piccolo is passed to the bright
reedy sound of the oboe. The contrasting thematic and melodic material emerging from
the depths is stated by the bass clarinet, French horns, and violin II, while the harmonic
support is provided by the corresponding lower instrumental parts of the bassoon,
contrabassoon, trombones, tuba, violas and cellos.
Example 4.2: mm. 56-58, *Ondine* Marius Constant orchestral score

An interesting development and variation of the melodic content from measures 57-60 occurs in the horn section. The horn is paired with the bass clarinet as the melody is played by the solo first horn with the bass clarinet. The entire horn section follows this. See Example 4.3. The melody then makes a transition into a similar section of cascading thirty-second notes, with the horns utilizing the nasal effect of stopped horn.

Example 4.3: mm. 57-58, *Ondine* Marius Constant orchestral score

Example 4.4: mm. 59-60, *Ondine* Marius Constant orchestral score
The Recapitulation bursts forth at measure 66 within the climax of the movement with tutti orchestra, featuring the brightest and highest instruments of their families; flutes, oboes, trumpets, horns, glockenspiel, and first violins playing the melody, and supported by a whirlwind of sound mass contributed by the remainder of the full orchestra. For the celesta, Constant maintains the virtuosity of this climactic moment, with a note-by-note transcription of the right hand part from the original piano score.

As the waters gradually calm, the melody is made more singular by the thinning texture and there are instrumental pairings featured with each statement of the melody; each one stated an octave higher, leading to the long glissando of measure 72. This section exhibits a striking example of Constant's pairing of the soloistic colors of specific instruments, uncharacteristic of their registral class.

In the first statement of mf in measure 68, the clear, singing sound of the bugle announces the coming of calmer waters. The bugle is paired with the bassoon in its high register, which with this pairing takes any edge off the metallic timbre of the bugle, creating a warm and round sound. In the octave higher and p of measure 69, the bassoon and cello share a duet while the piccolo and oboe fly high above with a doubling. With the bassoon in its highest register, a shrill and brighter timbre is the result while the cello also plays uncharacteristically high in register. In the final statement at measure 70, the piccolo, muted horns, and violas share the melody. Rather than score this last section for the solo violin, Constant chose to capture the higher A-string range of the viola, which contrasts in character notably from the other strings, in that it can create sounds that are penetrating and nasal, conjuring emotions of sentimentality and pain. By specifically notating "solo" parts for the violas as opposed to simply the highest part (piccolo), this
poses a challenge for the orchestra to balance. As the melody travels by octave higher and higher with each measure, the color is specifically modified from light to darker and light again with these careful arrangements. For an observing pianist, Constant clearly wanted a type of sound, perhaps even a theatrical process with the passing of these solos. With the sound combinations, the raw nature of the individual instrumental timbral boundaries are utilized while they create a three dimensional soundscape with the melody alone.

The crystalline world returns with the bubbling of the waters, a new beginning, in measure 72. See Examples 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7.

Example 4.5: m. 72, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.6: m. 72, *Ondine* Marius Constant orchestral score

Clarinets
What begins as a short chirp from the clarinets in *ppp* becomes audible within the texture when placed above the strings and harps on *glissando*. This luxurious section of strings, in Example 4.7, which Ravel called the “soul of the orchestra”, carry the weight of the melody, while the winds gracefully passing along what is notated in the piano part as *glissando*. This seamless pass-along is aided by the timbral shifts from flute, oboe, clarinet to bass clarinet. Finally the dream sequence ends with the glissando flourish, not only played by the harp, but also traveling from flute and ending with piccolo, like a bookend.

By the final statement of the Recapitulation and Primary Theme, the singing tenor voice of the cello section paired with the highly pleasing horn section in measures 80-82, creates an almost commanding, masculine take on this last statement of the familiar theme. This could perhaps be a literary reference to the man telling the Ondine that he is
in love with another woman, as determined by Constant. I have interpreted the man to be
the singular voice that occurs in measures 84-87, despite the instrumentation of flute in
alto range. The choice of flute is a very interesting choice in context, as I initially
envisioned the flute opening the theme of the beginning and would find the clarinet to be
very appropriate for the sustained, heavy nature that the line seems to imply in this
section. Constant's choice of flute lends an unsettling feeling, particularly with his \textit{poco
vibrato} direction, yet there is a sense of naiveté that accompanies this uncertainty. In
essence, with the instrumentation of flute, the theme is exposed, with nothing to weigh it
down. Ondine's very clear cut reply soon follows in measure 91, with waves of sound
traveling throughout the full orchestral gamut, descending within instrumental groups,
particularly the winds, while the highest instrumental parts drop out to give way to the
darker, lower instruments. \textit{Tutti} strings reinforce the quarter note tetrachord arpeggio,
very much a clue to the important notes and required resonance of piano pedaling. It is
important to note that starting at measure 88 of the piano and orchestral score, there is a
discrepancy in measures as Constant regroups measures in the orchestral part, notating
quintuplets on sixteenth notes with two measures of 3/4 the measure after measure 88.
Ravel treats the section in the piano part as a cadenza, without delineations in meter,
which is simply not possible in an orchestral score. For the final five measures, Constant
also amends the thirty-second notes in the piano score to sixteenth notes in the orchestral
score. As the Coda and the movement come to a close, from measures 99 to the end in the
orchestral score, and measure 94 to the end in the piano score, Constant creates an
absolutely magical blending of colors. Constant captures the almost childlike naiveté of
Ravel, like in his work \textit{Ma mère l'oye}, with the scoring of the final measures, with the
celesta and harps alone laissez vibrer very simply, and solely sustaining a I 6/4 harmony. At the speed which Constant carefully notated as quartet note = 108-116, the celesta, paired with the round sound of the harp, creates a sound reminiscent of a toy piano with the attack and bell-like quality of each note. With the glisten of the showering water on the narrator's blue stained glass windows, the movement closes.

Le gibet

The lush and rich texture of Ondine gives way to the stark and barren atmosphere with which Le gibet is fraught. The tolling bell is orchestrated with two sets of tubular bells, the lower voice given the option of a church bell. Rather than notate the bells as octaves using both sets of bells, Constant instead chose the harp playing on harmonics, and later without harmonics for the lower octave note for the repeated octave pattern. Due to the resonance of the bell, this creates a striking color with the harp as well as a cleaner balance of sound that is consistent throughout the movement with this ostinato figure.

Constant achieves a heavy sound effect for the opening chordal gesture, which brings to mind Ravel's orchestration of The Old Castle from Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. Aside from the similar imagery of a medieval time of hangings and tolling bells, the plodding ostinato figure in The Old Castle is reminiscent of the tolling bells of Le gibet. Constant creates this chordal gravitas with his instrumentation of full sections of bassoons and horns, supported by the double basses. The bassoons lie primarily in the middle register, ideal for their blending with the horns, and notable for an intense yet melancholic sound. The bassoons have the ability to create both a mellow yet voluminous sound even in the pp setting. Ravel also chose to produce this blend of
bassoons with low strings, to set the somber tone of *The Old Castle*. The second set of bells play at the "and" of beat two of measure 2 of the opening bells statement, shown in Example 4.8. This creates an agogic inflection on the beats in which the B-flat is doubled by both bells.

Example 4.8: mm. 1-3, *Le gibet* Marius Constant orchestral score

Table 4.6: Stanza Map of *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanzas</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure #s</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>20-27</td>
<td>28-34</td>
<td>35-43</td>
<td>44-52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Formal Map of *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>23-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28-33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41-43</td>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>40-41</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43-44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>48-50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The bassoons and horns create a somber and static texture, stern yet eerily unemotional. The flute, English horn and muted trumpet in measures 6-7, respond to this initial statement. The blend of the English horn with the flute gives the sound just enough of a darker tone to supplement the mellow middle register of the flute. With the addition of the muted trumpet, the resultant timbre creates the effect of unease, a sort of underlying sound of static electricity and trepidation. There is a restrained timbre within this sound combination, which contrasts strongly with the Gregorian chant-like opening statement. The oboes, bass clarinet and bassoon in measure 10 play a second response to the stern bassoons and horns. With the oboes in the highest part, and in their middle register, a tranquil yet lonely blend ensues with bass support from the bassoon and bass clarinet.

A marked textural change occurs, beginning at measure 12, which also marks the beginning of Stanza II. With the addition of strings sitting within the inner harmonies of the smooth moving chords, there is a semblance of movement, a density of texture that could perhaps represent the “cricket singing, hidden in the moss and the sterile ivy...”

A characteristic of *Le gibet* is the constant contrast of the dirge-like chordal textures in fourths and fifths and the surging melodic gestures. Measures 15-16 feature for the first time in the movement the colors and weight of *pp* trombones and tuba paired with bassoon. It brings to mind Roland-Manuel's thoughts on Ravel and how “he...with Stravinsky, was the one man in the world who best knows the weight of a trombone-note, the harmonics of a cello or a *pp* tam-tam in the relationships of one orchestra group to another.” It is apparent that Constant was keenly aware of this relationship.

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Example 4.9: m. 20-21, *Le gibet* Marius Constant orchestral score
Theme D, Divisi in two: violin I, II, viola, cello; bass

Example 4.10: m. 21, *Le gibet* Marius Constant orchestral score
Theme D: Flutes, clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoons

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Example 4.11: mm. 20-22, *Le gibet* Maurice Ravel piano score

Theme D: Piano version

The strings, as shown in Example 4.9, particularly the violins in the high register in *pp*, create a glossy, ghostly effect. At the winds’ entrance on the second half of measure 21, Constant further seeks to contrast the groups by notating *tenuto* markings in the clarinet and bassoon parts. Although this is within the jurisdiction of *legato* phrase markings, the *tenuto* markings give the section a marked feel, with slight re-articulations on each descending harmony, sliding deeper and deeper into the deathly questions pondered in the poem.

Stanza III poses a potential answer in the form of a question as to what the narrator is seeing around the gallows: “Could it be a fly hunting and sounding its horn around
those ears that are deaf to the slaughterer’s triumph? It is perhaps not a coincidence that Constant chose to pair the second appearance of the descending ghostly string section reply with a horn section, labeled pp espressivo.

The first solo appearance occurs in measures 28-30. The piano score is marked “a little outside, but without expression.” Constant accordingly marks the muted trumpet solo as “Always muted, expressive, without vibrato”.

Example 4.12: mm. 28-30, Le gibet Maurice Ravel piano score
Theme E excerpt

![Example 4.12](image1)

Example 4.13: mm. 28-30, Le gibet Marius Constant orchestral score
Theme E excerpt, Trumpet solo-muted

![Example 4.13](image2)

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The muted trumpet creates a sound from afar, objectively and emotionally devoid much like a bugle call: serving purely to announce a call for a utilitarian use. In this case, the announcement is a mystery. An opening of texture and sound follows this solo, as the oboe and cello share a solo in light of the octave doubling of the melody in the piano part. In spite of the cello's directions, “expressive but not too much vibrato”, it provides warmth to the oboe's expressive melodic line of yearning. An interesting instrumental shift occurs in the B-flat bell ostinato figure. The celesta replaces the bells, and oboe and cello solo section, occurring in measures 28-33. Another aurally revealing instrumental choice occurs in the grace notes immediately prior to the downbeat of measure 30. Constant employs a bass pizzicato and harp on C-sharp and F (E-sharp), whose buoyancy and resonance propel the impulse to the downbeat harmony.

The beginning of Stanza V and Theme C at measure 35, establishes the last surge of sound and direction of the movement. With a surge of energy, the strings carry this section that extends two extra measures from previously stated chordal material. The B-flat bell ostinato figure finds a wider resonance with the addition of the first two horns by joining the ostinato figure with the direction, “effect of a bell”. This is a direction for a different treatment of the repetitive figure, a thicker, slower attack and wider approach to a more resonant B-flat repeated octave ostinato. Perhaps the most dramatic effect leading dynamic rises and falls through this passage occur between phrase markings. The bowings for the strings and phrases for the winds are often dovetailed so the phrase is always connected between the string and wind phrase markings. This, for a pianist, is another challenge altogether, as the decay of each note begins upon attack.
An instrumental variation of the harmonies in Theme D at measures 40-44 as “a spider, embroidering a length of muslin as a scarf for that strangled neck,”\textsuperscript{69} descends with the brighter timbred flutes, piccolo, clarinets, and celesta sound combinations. The final appearance of Theme B takes on a menacing transformation with the effect of stopped muted horn section, shown in Example 4.14.

Example 4.14: mm. 41-42, Le gibet Marius Constant orchestral score
Theme B, Stopped muted horns

Example 4.15: mm. 41-42, Le gibet Maurice Ravel piano score
Theme B

Finally, with the last stanza, “It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a town beyond the horizon, and the corpse of a hanged man that glows red by the setting sun”\textsuperscript{70}, the final statement of Theme A is given exclusively to the lower strings of the violas and cellos. The leaning middle voice features the alto flute, a favorite of Ravel’s, particularly in his work, \textit{Daphnis et Chloé}. The breathy, mellow tones of the alto flute paired with the clarinet create the quiet, sustaining, unfaltering final sighs.

**Scarbo**

In Constant's orchestration of *Scarbo*, there lie many similarities to Ravel's own orchestration of his piano work *La valse*. In *La valse*, there is a sense of "fatal whirling" imposed on the waltzes, a sort of unhinging into controlled chaos that fuels and characterizes the work. Ravel makes ample use of harps, percussion, and *tutti* sections predominated by families of instruments. In *Scarbo*, the woodwinds and brass are melodically active, and as in *La valse*, the strings are given the effects of *glissandi*, *col legno*, and *ponticello*, that create sounds both round and jagged. The orchestration is much like the poem itself, swelling and diminishing in the blink of an eye. Both works feature expansive *tutti* sections which are preceded and followed by solo and chamber-like exchanges of melodic material. Swells of clashing and triads crashing down played by trumpets, violins and winds characterize many climactic points in both works.\(^7\)

In orchestrating this infamously difficult movement of *Scarbo*, Constant unleashes a pyrotechnical arsenal of percussion instruments. This includes timpani, tam-tams, bass drum, thundersheet, ratchet, glockenspiel, triangle, sizzle cymbals, crash cymbals, xylophone, wind-machine, geophone, castanets, whip, and woodblock. Constant draws on specific instrumentation (castanets from *Alborado del gracioso*) as well as a plethora of standard and atypical percussion instruments also featured in *Des canyons aux étoiles...* by Constant's teacher, Olivier Messiaen. Constant's orchestration of *Scarbo* is the sort of scoring one would hear in a horror film vignette: a night in the life of a neurotic victim of a mischievous goblin's antics.

From the depths, demonic rumblings of the contrabassoon set the tone for the storytelling of Scarbo. The two groups of repeated notes from measures 2-6 and measures 9-13 undergo a slight instrumental progression from one to another. Amid the difference of registers from the sustained chord by the horn section, in both repeated note groups, Constant also interprets the repeated notes in a sort of linear progression of timbral shifts. The cello section is notated ponticello, and the timpani, with coloring from the tam-tam, establish this soft, percussive intensity from the start. The timpani are then joined by the bass drum and double basses on ponticello. Two horns, trombones and tuba now maintain the sustained harmony.

With the sinister entrance of the contrabassoon, the listener is jolted to another feeling and scene. This is a dark place, suggestive of an accused person on the gallows, with drums and horns from afar, serving as a warning of impending doom. The combined sound is distant, as the timpani is required to use semi-hard mallets, creating the energy of the thirty-second notes with a continued aura of sound maintaining a linear, horizontal direction. The effects of the following swell of sound are notable for Constant's use of tremolos in the strings at measure 17. The tremolo does not occur until measure 23 in the piano score, but by giving this effect in the orchestration earlier in the passage, musical motion is implied, leading into Constant's instruction of Precipitando in measure 18 and Assez vif in measure 19. The bright and piercing timbre of the piccolo peaks the swell, as immediately the strings and winds reestablish the subito pp at measure 23. An unexpected timbral color emerges from Constant's fff swell, (just ff in the piano score), as the brightness and sheer volume of the sound from horns 1 and 2, plus three trumpets, create a
menacing effect in the alto register, contrasting greatly from the screaming winds, glockenspiel and violins.

The sounds associated directly with literary elements in the poems reflect in Constant's orchestration. In the first stanza, as the music flows temporally to the poem, the orchestral effects are exaggerated as “the moon glitters in the sky like a silver shield on an azure banner strewn with golden bees.”

The tremolo effects in the strings and brass, and particularly the horns, could arguably be replications of the sound of buzzing bees.

Further, a surge of sound in the phrasing in the Exposition, preceding a drastic change in texture and rhythmic feel, occurs in measures 22-25. The octave melody is orchestrated for piccolo, flutes and oboes, and violins 1 and 2. The left hand figure of the piano part features difficult ascending and descending figures. This figure is divided between the bass clarinet and clarinets 1, 2 and 3 in measures 22-23 and switches to the bassoons in the lower registers in measures 23-25. Harps 1 and 2 follow a regular pattern of ascending and descending arpeggio patterns dovetailed into one another. The harps’ arpeggiated glissando creates ease of momentum as well as a smooth connective material for the exchange between swirling woodwinds.

Constant consolidates the four bar phrase from in Example 4.18 in addition to an adjustment in the time signature to create a larger overarching phrase. It gives a clear instruction to the players to push through the phrase, as seen in Example 4.17.

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Measure 28 in the orchestral score marks the first statement of a motive, $q$, that finds itself shifted, diminished and augmented much in the way the goblin of Scarbo disappears and reappears in the blink of an eye, while pirouetting in a demonic waltz reminiscent of Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*. In the section from measures 28-43, Constant divides the instrumental groups in distinct roles; the motoric accompaniment and rhythmical ostinato figures, normally played by the left hand of the pianist, are
predominated by the lower strings. The strings utilize a number of effects including *spiccato, pizzicato* and *col legno*, to create an edge and character to each section. Representative of the mischievous pirouettes of the goblin, motive *q* is given to solos in the brass family, specifically the horns, utilizing stopped mutes, and trumpets. The woodwinds serve as mid-range layering to this trifecta, as transitional responсорial material. Constant will often merge two instrumental groups immediately prior to new sections, such as in measures 34-35 in the orchestral score, doubling the trumpet solo *q* with the piccolo and flute for variation and as a way of warming our ears to the next section, one melodically predominated by the woodwinds. The switch of this motive from stopped muted horn to trumpet creates a dramatic effect for the listener. Although they are playing identical notes, the timbre is quite different. The nasal, grotesque, and accented stopped horn solo, seen in Example 4.19, is notated as *violent*, and gives way to the brilliant, fleet-footed nature of the trumpet.
Example 4.19: mm. 28-29, *Scarbo* Marius Constant orchestral score
Solo horn with stopped mute, violas *spiccato*, violin 2 *pizzicato*

Example 4.20: mm. 52-56, *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.21: mm. 65-69, *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score
In Examples 4.21 and 4.22, a short melodic interlude occurs, followed by an abrupt fermata of silence. Here the representative qualities of the oboe take on a very active, scrambling quality. At the height of the ff, a trombone glissando from B to D interjects and overpowers the oboes momentarily. This provides a curious interpretation of voicing for a pianist: rather than leading the momentum of the figure and accent to the highest note and voice, Constant, instead carries the momentum of the left hand triplet to an accented D, which is part of the inner, alto voice.

Part of what makes Constant's orchestration successful and effective is his manipulation of variation. This not only takes on the task of varied instrumentation but also of articulation, which occasionally, such as in measure 35, shown in Example 4.23, will differ from the original piano score. The short interjection in the right hand, shown in Example 4.22, is clearly legato, which in many ways implies a crescendo and immediate diminuendo hairpin. In the orchestration, the violas are notated with spiccato, which requires the bow to lightly bounce upon the string. As each note is also notated with accents in the viola part, a detached jagged sound is produced. With this re-articulation, we see past the written page even on a micro level with this small motive.

Constant's imaginative reworking push the boundaries of the sonic capabilities for a pianist. In the second and third beats of measure 79 of the piano score, Ravel displaces
the motive from measure 78 by octaves. Constant has the flutes flutter tongue on E octaves and D octaves while the octave leap joins the violins with harmonics on a glissando in Example 2.24. By pushing the boundaries of what is “possible” for the instrument, and what is “creatively possible” in the context of the music itself, we challenge the listener to vanquish their expectations.

Example 4.23: mm. 78-79, Scarbo Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.24: m. 35, Scarbo Marius Constant orchestral score
Violas spiccato, violins pizzicato followed by glissando to harmonics
Ravel creates shapes and articulations to effectively musically portray the images and sounds of “rolling through the room like a spindle” and “fingernails grating”. The rolling effect of a “spindle” is apparent even in the piano score, with its ascending and descending motion, traveling in a consistent range, as seen in Example 4.25. With Constant's orchestration, there is a spinning, swirling, within the woodwinds, adding the celesta in measure 38. See Example 4.26.

Example 4.25: mm. 80-84, *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.26: mm. 35-38, *Scarbo* Marius Constant orchestral score

Piccolo, Two flutes, Three oboes, Three clarinets
The start of the tonal and harmonic complexity begins at measure 121 in the piano score and measure 47 of the orchestral. This also marks a point in which the use of percussion instruments such as the xylophone, and glissando to harmonics effects is particularly sparse. The quick scampering chords of measures 131-132 in the piano score, are divided by instrumental families in the piano sections of the orchestral score, first the brass including trumpet and trombone at measures 49-50, and later with the winds, including the oboes, clarinets and bassoons in measures 54-55. Measures 121-155 in the piano score, represents a point of stasis in the music, as one could imagine moving shadows and some semblance of a creature, while the narrator, nervous and still, perceives with eyes, darting from side to side. With the key change in measure 156 and a transition to a new, but related ostinato figure, there occurs the first interruption of the stasis at measure 159. Here, in measure 58 in the orchestral score, the winds and brass join forces in the melodic chordal content while Constant employs the use of the wind-machine, an instrument familiar to Ravel in *Daphnis et Chloé* and *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. The wind-machine adds another layer to the orchestral *crescendo*. Notated in one measure in the orchestral score, this lends orchestral envy to any pianist, but also puts into perspective how a pianist could potentially use the dramatic augmentation of time to create the illusion of a *crescendo* of the sustained, tied chord at measures 159-161.

One manner in which Constant uses varied instrumentation to bring articulations into the foreground are through the isolation of select instruments, and in this case, the bassoon, trombone and snare drum.
Example 4.27: mm. 168-171, *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.28: mm. 60-61, *Scarbo* Marius Constant orchestral score
The last six sixteenth notes of measure 61 are all notated *staccato*. Due to the
natures of the bassoon, trombone, and particularly the snare drum, they cut directly
through the texture of the motoric ostinato played by the cellos and basses. This same
figure in measure 171 can be extremely fleeting for a pianist, if allowed. The placement of
the figure in Example 4.28 is achieved with a bassoon, trombone, and snare drum. The
accented articulations bring attention to the figure within the texture and is also a variation
of the interruption found in Example 4.27.

As the tension slowly builds, the melodic and motoric roles shift to the strings.
The warmth and support of the sustaining *tutti* strings carry the section from measures 60-
76 (piano score: measures 168-213) into the Development. The violins and violas create a
consistent, sustained timbre while the energy of *vibrato* propels each held harmony
forward, building tension, while the basses and cellos create a nightmarish, repeating,
whirling effect.

Constant chose to notate the violins and violas with *forte*, as opposed to Ravel's *pp*
instruction in the corresponding section of the piano score. For a pianist (and conductor),
the dynamic marking of *forte* in a long phrase is in context to sustaining the sound mass
for longer period of time. Constant was concerned with the intensity of the sound, rather
than merely the volume. The *forte* marking certainly creates the feeling of the section
hitting the ground running, like a large object in motion, without the ability to hold back.
Even as this section progresses and builds, the melodic material is reinforced with the
winds and brass in the climactic points.

Transitional sections, for Constant, are opportunities for unconventional
colorations and effects. Just as a climactic point is established, the sound world must
literally shift to another. As in measure 76 of the orchestral score, and measure 206 of the piano score, the ground shifts with the geophone. Paired with the bass drum, this effect is a foreign sound to a listener, who is hearing it for the first time in the work and possibly for the first time ever.

With the beginning of the Development and return of the q motive, at measure 79 in the orchestral score and measure 214 in the piano score, the instrumentation switches to a darker tone using the trumpet, trombone and tuba for the motive, implying a macro-
diminuendo and darkening for the section. An exchange commences between the q motive sections and a hairpin passage, at measure 83 of the orchestral and measure 228 of the piano score, beginning ppp, growing to f and disappearing as quickly as it appeared. The winds and celesta are responsible for the passage itself, starting with the piccolo and flutes and working its way down to the contrabassoon. Once the passage has peaked in dynamic level, a series of glissandi starting with the cellos, harps, remainder of strings, trombone, tuba, and bassoons gather momentum upwards, in ascension. Cymbals with diminuendo add to the shimmering effect of this somewhat reverse dynamic and registral relationship. With the re-entrance of the q motive, the winds assume the solo role, specifically the oboe marked marcato, then to the piccolo paired with the xylophone. A suspended weightless effect is given to the first statement of q, as the violins sustain harmonics, sounding A6 and G6. The musically cinematic representation of fear arrives unexpected with Constant's manipulation and placement of instrumental effects.

Measures 256 to 313 encompass a section of great technical difficulty for a pianist. The section is riddled with one-measure interruptions in texture and direction, keeping a performer from any sense of feeling grounded in the sort of motoric pulse Ravel
establishes in earlier sections. Shifts in register, large leaps, sweeping wide arpeggio, and repeated notes, all within the context of one of the most rhythmically playful sections in the movement, characterize this as truly "horrific" section for a pianist. Constant transfers this required virtuosity and a bit of humor to the orchestral version. The castanets, in their characteristic off beat rhythm, paired with the snare drum, immediately evoke a lively Spanish scene. The virtuosity of the repeated note sections and the use of castanets can be likened to Ravel's orchestration of *Alborada del gracioso*. See Example 4.29.

Example 4.29: m. 92, *Scarbo* Marius Constant orchestral score

Trombone solo, snare drum, castanets

The repeated notes are assigned to a number of solo and instrument combinations including, in order, the trombone, bassoon duo, muted trumpet duo, cello section, violas-cellos-horns, English horn, piccolo-flute- oboe-English horn, and horn section. The combinations of instruments are often assigned to sections with octaves displaced with
repeated notes such as in the section shown in Example 4.30 and its corresponding orchestral section, shown in Example 4.31. Constant does not isolate the repeated note gestures to one instrumental class, and with this he assigns solos to instruments with characteristically dark timbres, with few exceptions.

Example 4.30: mm. 295-298, *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score

Example 4.31: mm. 102-103, *Scarbo* Marius Constant orchestral score
Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 1 English horn
Measures 95-97 in the orchestral score and measures 268-276 offer a sweeping contrast to the Spanish dance. The harp is responsible for the left hand arpeggiated rising and falling legato movement as the repeated note dance fragment is given to the piccolo, flutes, and oboes. This lightly timbred figure meets with the octave legato figure played by the clarinets and horns. The combination of clarinet and horns in octaves produces a mellow but full sound.

The next full section, starting in measure 108 in the orchestral score and measure 314 in the piano score, derives material from the melodic surge found in measure 110 in the piano score. This melody, which now is enshrouded in the sound of the bass clarinet and horns, adopts a wide, rounded, hushed and expressive, “from the depths” sound. In this section, the timpani contributes the most to this rumbling sound, in and out on the bass note of F-sharp. As the timpani’s lasting, rumbling, natural resonance clouds the melodic line, this effect mirrors the uncertainty of the narrator's questioning and the beginning of a large climactic build: “Do I think him vanished then?” 73 This section in the orchestra is scored for the combinations of bass clarinet-horns, English horn-bass clarinet-low strings, English horn-violins-violas, English horn-horns-violins-violas. Instruments are added in two to bring about the climax of measure 124 in the orchestral score and measure 366 in the piano score. The repeated note gestures are primarily given to the brass, specifically the trumpets.

Perhaps the most extreme imagery in the poem occurs when “the dwarf grows between the moon and me like the belfry of a gothic cathedral, a golden bell shakes on his

pointed cap!\cite{74} \textit{Tutti} orchestra states these explosive chords as the percussion reveals some of the most telling phrasing direction. A bass drum and timpani hit on the downbeat of measure 124. The sizzle cymbal and snare drum \textit{tremolo}, building to the downbeat bass drum and timpani hit on the downbeat of measure 126 in the orchestral score. \textit{Retenu} is specified for measure 124 in the orchestral score, to \textit{Précipité} at measure 125, and finally \textit{Retenu} at measures 126-127. In the piano score, Ravel, at the beginning of the section only specifies \textit{un peu retenu}. Constant determines the pacing of each part of the phrase, creating an elongation of time, but almost too abrupt to warrant a comparison to a rollercoaster. As soon the momentum has built to the downbeat of the next measure, it is held back.

As the waves of expansion start to subside, Constant scores the trill of measures 382-388 for timpani. The octaves marked \textit{expressif} jump out of nowhere with the menacing sound combinations of stopped muted horns with violas and cellos. The timpani is marked literally and specifically to \textit{crescendo molto to forte} and then to drop again to \textit{mf}, to once again build to the entrance of the octaves.

Example 4.32: mm. 134-135, \textit{Scarbo} Marius Constant orchestral score, (mm. 382-385 Maurice Ravel piano score)

A magical moment occurs briefly, in measures 135 in the orchestral score and measures 389-394 of the piano score, as surprising, lush, consonant harmonies amid the clashing grotesqueness that predominates the work whisks the listener off to a land reminiscent of the instrumentation and harmonic makeup of *Ondine*. See Example 4.32. With an active woodwind section starting *tutti* and then cascading from the piccolo to the bassoon, the passage once again finds itself back in the Recapitulation, and into the hands of the sinister contrabassoon.

In the first two appearances of the motive *p* in the Recapitulation, Constant decides to not orchestrate the lower pitches of A-A-sharp-E-sharp from the piano score in measures 395 and 402. By the third appearance of *p* at measure 152, these lower pitches are given to the two harps, while the double basses and the tam-tam marked *tres grave*, join the contrabassoon for the upper voice that is motive *p*. The tam-tam creates an aura of sound, much like a plume of smoke entering the scene. For the repeated notes of the left hand in the piano score, the effect of *ponticello* is given to the cello section in the orchestral score. *Ponticello* on cello produces many high overtones and will often cause the notated pitch to nearly disappear. The sound effect is a nasal and metallic sound, gritty in nature. Constant instructs the timpanist to play the repeated notes “articulated” starting in the third *p* appearance in measure 154 of the orchestral score.

The swirling sixteenth notes that make the transition into the section of measure 164 in the orchestral score and measure 430 in the piano score could have easily been scored for low winds. However, the instrumentation of *divisi* double basses sets up the next section dramatically for the flute to emerge as the initial solo. At measure 167 in the orchestral score, the clarinet plays the solo part while exchanging with the flute on off
beats. A moment of suspension occurs in measures 169-170 as violins play trills and violas utilize sustained harmonics on the upper trill note pitches. The celesta is given the notated descending sixty-fourth note piano passage of measure 436 in the piano score.

The orchestral score, leading into measure 182, takes on a very sparse approach highlighting the sounds of the celesta, harp, pizzicato cellos, and dancing flutes, including the alto flute. This combination of sounds is shiny, sparkling, and perhaps a representation of the imagery of Scarbo's golden bell on his pointed cap and the line of the poem: “But soon his body becomes blue, translucent like the wax of a candle”. The sounds created by Constant's choice of timbres conjure the colors of gold and blue and the quality of translucence. Now, rather than of deep reds and purples, there emerges instruments that feature high overtones, which, when played very quietly, create enough sparkle to conjure points of light, like stars in the sky.

This wonderland the listener finds himself or herself in starts to unravel, as patterns of chromatics in seconds become increasingly active and as winds predominate the texture. The pairing with horns warms the alto range as the texture continues to thicken, adding wind parts, and muted trumpets, as the accelerando carries the momentum to the addition of two harps and xylophone in glissando, to full brass. An exchange between instrumental families occurs in measure 194 of the orchestral part, which is measure 460 in the piano score. Within the span of one piano measure to the next, the exchange occurs between the trumpets and the full wind section, including the E-flat clarinet, which makes a rare appearance. The string section then leads the exchange back and forth, specifically the violins, to the disintegration and a surprise reappearance of

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Theme 4. This section differs from previous instances in that the left hand of the piano part now has a “galloping” feel for the ostinato. This appearance of Theme 4 contrasts with the initial statement in that the timpani plays relentlessly on the bass note of the second and third beats of the piano part starting measure 478. The winds and brass actively engage in a dialogue. The strings, in addition to stirring up the texture, double the brass or winds separately, until the final build in measure 227 of the orchestral score also corresponding to measure 563 of the piano score.

The culmination of the entire movement takes place at the start of the Coda in measure 230. Tutti orchestra announces the two clashing chords, while two harps and tutti strings on tutta forza tremolos are interspersed by waves of glissandi. String glissandi moving to harmonics provide variation and an edge to the timbral range.

The strings lead the final statement of Theme 1 primarily, while oboe, clarinets and trumpets join in to reinforce the overreaching line. An augmented form of q, a shadow of the sparkle from the contrasting middle section notated “marked” is executed by English horns and horns on stopped mute. A characteristic instrumentation occurs in measures 247 to 250, measures 602-616 in the piano score, as the wind-machine and geophone return. The strings are notated ricochet, implying a slight articulation and separation despite the harps in legato arpeggios. As Scarbo's “face pales like the wax of a candle end”, at measures 251-252 in the orchestral and measures 616-622 in the piano score, the flutes are given the right hand tremolo figure. The regal horns, violas and cellos sustain but with a quiet intensity. The final five measures of the piano score quickly scurry downwards, and as Constant scores this scurrying down in the orchestral score using flutes to oboes to clarinets to violas to cellos. The horns momentarily pop in the descent with a
fluttering on a short stopped eighth note *tremolo*, like a flickering candle. The lasting sounds are the flutes, clarinets, harp on harmonics, and sizzle cymbal, activated with the fingers. The sizzle literally creates the sound of fire sizzling out as Scarbo extinguishes like a flickering light.

Each characteristic in each movement in *Gaspard de la nuit* is brought out by the instrumentation and manipulation of combinations and context by Constant. The pianist's role is to create a semblance of contrasting instruments and colors with various techniques afforded by the dynamic and timbral capabilities of a modern grand piano. By determining the effects that enhance a performance for an orchestral work, the pianist can begin to interpret the piano score in a way that transcends the written page. In the next chapter, I will discuss how these effects Constant so effectively produces with the orchestration, can be utilized by a pianist in performing *Gaspard de la nuit*. 
CHAPTER FIVE

PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Perspective

For there is, and doubtless there always will be mischief in M. Ravel: his mind is a sorcerer which, even when emotional, still beguiles with a prestigious skill…in each of the three [pieces] the writing is so tightly woven, so meticulous, so ingenious, that each note brings with it surprise and joy. M. Ravel is a stylist…

_Gaspard de la nuit's_ difficulty not only lies in matters of technique, but also on the level of sophisticated imagination and precision with which Ravel constructed the work.

The nature of precision that embodies Ravel’s music is rooted in the French school of piano playing. Several important pedagogues and pianists in this school were Frédéric Chopin, Émile Decombes, Alfred Cortot, and Marguerite Long. The French School evolved from the earlier French _clavecín_ composers such as François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau. In his book _L’art de toucher le clavecín_, Couperin stated the importance of keeping the fingers as close to the keyboard as possible. Rameau stated that the wrist must always be supple, along with the fingers. The hand serves to guide the fingers around the keyboard and “each finger must have its own action, independent of others. In all positions, and the largest jumps, the hand obeys the fingers, the wrist-joint obeys the hand, and the elbow obeys the wrist; the shoulder must never have anything to


do [with playing].”

Clarity, elegance and temperance of expression were the key elements of these treatises.

As a leading interpreter of French music, Alfred Cortot stressed the importance of a relaxed wrist and flat, cushioned fingers in creating broad, singing melodies. Fast and brilliant passages require an arched hand position. For Cortot, the pedal served to offer color and shading, used sparingly and precisely, like “flashes of light”.

It is important, particularly in the preparation process of learning such a work as *Gaspard de la nuit* that difficulties of execution are nothing compared to the nature of Ravel’s musical thought—what he communicates. The performer is left with the artistic role of communicating many feelings; surprise and joy, as well as desperation and fear. In executing these elements of existence, a pianist’s motions form an intrinsic part of the work, in how they show units and define characteristics. The visual aspect of watching a pianist perform a work can portray the space and breadth of a phrase.

Perhaps the movement that most challenges the pianist's natural movements is *Scarbo*. Ravel so ingeniously wrote each movement in reflection of its literary background, as *Ondine* flows organically, as even its most difficult passages flow seamlessly to and fro. The eroticism of *Ondine*, although not a human herself, reflects a longing that remains very humanistic. Ravel, telling Bertrand's story through a virtuosic yet idiosyncratic style of Liszt, also adopts this cloak of “sexual charisma” for which Liszt was so well known.

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78 Ibid, 36.

79 Ibid, 117.


81 Ibid, 87.
Le gibet requires a stillness from the performer, but not monotony. The necessary qualities in giving an effective performance of Le gibet exist on both a micro and macro level. On a micro level, with a steady sense of pulse, emphases within phrases must work so that on a macro level, they may unfold in time.

With Scarbo, Ravel introduces a plethora of technical hurdles all at once. It is crucial for a pianist to be two steps ahead of the variations, interruptions and series of scenes that encapsulate the whole gamut and variation of movement. Much like a car racing to brake suddenly and take off once again, the physical and muscular reaction times must be minimal, not to mention the mental control that is required. Much like the narrator's neuroticism involved with overcoming his fear, or at least in understanding it, a pianist must find a way to portray these elements, rather than succumb to them.

It is important to note that a piano score of Gaspard de la nuit is required as a reference to the measure numbers listed in the following performance guide.

Performance Guide

Ondine

Ravel's sense of pulse is an important part of his compositional pragmatism, and it must be treated strictly. Perhaps some of the best training for a pianist is to play in an orchestra or percussion ensemble. Solo pianists too often have the tendency to take time when the composer has in fact, very clearly and intentionally written these moments into the music organically. One of Ravel's tenets was to keep the unity of time intact. This is something to keep in mind in Ravel's music as a whole, and particularly in the lush, temptingly expressive, work of Ondine.
Measures 2-13: The lively and bright entrance of flutes and celesta in Constant's orchestration set the stage. In order to create this effect of glistening water dancing within the internal rhythms of the thirty-second note pattern, there should be a very light and direct attack into the keys, with an emphasis on the release of each note or chord. The groupings listed in Chapter Two, seen in Examples 2.4-2.6, list the multiple groupings that can be assimilated into practice. One can establish a number of agogic inflections and practice in the various groupings. A quick, light-fingered approach in the right hand is key in creating the even and horizontal motion of the passage. This is a very subtle affair, as an abundance of dynamic edges can create an unwanted sharpness foreign to the movement of water.

On matters of pedaling, Ravel spoke to pianist Ricardo Viñes recommending “using pedal in high registers, so as to create, rather than clarity, the blurred impression of vibrations in the air”.\textsuperscript{82} In this particular instance, the vibrations of air become the undulations of water in \textit{Ondine}.

The rich mezzo-soprano timbre of the clarinet asks the pianist to sustain as much as possible, \textit{legatissimo}, in Ondine's theme starting measure 2. In order to create this sustaining, singing effect, a flatter fingered approach with a consistent, slow-motion approach to a flexible wrist can be of assistance. It is important to achieve this despite the multiple hand crossings that are inevitable due to the close-quarters of the two elements: Ondine and the water.

Measure 10 is marked \textit{toujours pp}, yet there is intensity in Ravel's phrasing. Within this measure, the phrase reaches a note above its opening note, implying a longing

and impetus for the following three measures. Constant's scoring for strings here adds warmth to the sound that a pianist can capture, while still maintaining a soft, yet supported sound.

Measures 14-15: The most telling of Constant's additive orchestration reveals to what point the build must occur. It is important to differentiate this short statement of Theme A. This can be done with a slight swell into the downbeat of measure 15 with the left hand melodic line. Sustaining a legato sound can also help control the generally pp nature of the section. It would be effective for the right hand to remain unfazed by any expressive swells that the left hand pursues.

Measures 16-29: The thirty-second note arpeggiation of the left hand and right hand should have the delicacy and sparkling sonority of harps and celesta. At measure 17, the left hand voice D-sharp to B should have the depth and weight of sound supported by a brass timbre. The contrast from measure 16 to 17 is supplemented by the accent on the D-sharp, however, it should not be rushed, giving a sense of the "aural space" between two instrumental groups. The D-sharp sound is not "brassy" however, as it more related to the warmth a horn section can provide. The layering of the arpeggiation versus the melody should be distinct.

Measure 22: The right hand transition must vary from the previous two measures. It is imperative for a pianist to delineate what melodic material lies in the main thematic area and what serves as a transition. Ravel gives very clear dynamic and phrasing markings,
however, it is important that the treatment of the sound world shifts to another instrumental class, i.e. winds to strings.

Measures 30-41: On the macro level, each new appearance of Ondine's thematic material should invoke the development of Ondine beseeching a man to be her husband in her underwater palace. With this in mind, the entrance in measure 32, although still pp should have the quality of duo instruments as opposed to a solo. With the restart of each section, the pacing for which doublings, triplings and quadruplings of instrumental solos must capture with each entrance this representative characteristic of the breath-like rise and fall of the melodic lines within the phrase (micro) and the slow build to the climax of the movement (macro).

Measures 42-66: In Constant's orchestration, the melody in measures 42-44 is given to a viola solo. With this instrumental choice, Constant implies a foreshadowing of the Development, as the instrumentation falls deeper and deeper into the darker realms of low winds, low strings and low brass. With this model, while keeping the pulse intact and unified, one can draw from the color of a viola notated with pp espressivo, ma non troppo vibrato. There is a dichotomy of the flat-lined coldness of less vibrato with the sustained quality of an alto-voiced bowed instrument that should set this transitional functioning thematic material into the proverbial Orpheus-like descent.

Measures 45-46 and mm. 47-49 must continue the juxtaposition of dark and light as low strings and upper strings engage in a dialogue analogous to a question-answer model. The pianist should consider a dramatic hairpin in measure 45 and 50, and more in measure 50 with the effect of more insistence. This can aid the pianist in creating a more
dramatic diminuendo in the melody of measure 45 from E-flat to D-flat and quickly disappearing with the right hand figure into the C major, flat-sixth sonority of measure 46.

Isolating the melody of measures 52-54 in the manner of a flute solo is imperative for creating the effect of *le chant bien soutenu et expressif*. This is a section in which choreography of arm movement can be very helpful. One must be careful to pace the arpeggiated right hand and left hand parts to accommodate the sustained and ever so slightly restrained effect of the melody. Even with this floating, out-of-body experience provided by the accompanimental figures, they should be subservient to the melody, moving or sustaining when the melody determines it.

One of the technical landmarks in *Ondine* occurs from in the descending thirds, fourths and fifths of measures 57-61. This passage requires a rotation of the right hand thumb, as the hand must efficiently cross over to the new position, which is grouped for the first three chords, then subsequently every four chords. The voicing of the top line should have the clarity and brilliance of a distant piccolo sound. See Example 5.8.

Example 5.1: m. 57, *Ondine* Maurice Ravel piano score

Horns and low strings characterize the lower theme in these measures. The notated *pp* should be treated with this darker color in mind. Constant notated the horn section *mf crescendo* to *forte* hairpins in the measure-long phrases. Because of the

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register, a pianist must be careful not to overdo the dynamics, however, a deep and sustained sound must be produced, which may be closer to a *mf espressivo*.

Measures 66-71: The culmination of the large-scale build throughout the movement occurs at this explosive section, where the entirety of the keyboard is spanned. The downward line carries a flurry of notes characteristic of their uneven groupings between the right hand and left hand. For example, the pianist must ground a seven against six-note group in the right and left hand, respectively. The augmentation of time is inevitable at this point, as in order to sustain the melody notes, they must actually be physically held longer. The goal of each measure phrase is the E-sharps of the right hand. Despite a slower tempo, there must always be direction to these notes in measures 67 and 68. As the waters calm and subside, each entrance of the melody in measures 68 and 69 must have varied touches to accommodate not only for the registral differences, but for a different solo instrument entrance in each measure.

Measures 72-79: The blending and warmth that results from the strings on the melodic chords of measures 72-73 must contrast with the previous measures' exchange of solos within the winds. The pianist must be very careful to limit any emphasis on the initial point of attack on each chord, imagining the sound going into the piano, as if the sound has started prior to the attack. The left hand must move with ease, a slow and graceful *glissando* that may lead to a brighter sound with the flourish of winds at the highest points of the gestures. In the bubbling waters of measure 76, Ravel clearly stated that he wanted
continuity in the melody in spite of the D-natural and F-natural melodic notes. This is representative of how, formally, the section acts as a bridge to the final statement of the Primary Theme and Coda, in which extra time given will draw attention to the statement, rather than whisking the listener onwards down the stream.

Measures 80-83: The final appearance of the Primary Theme features the cellos and horns, which I describe as a “masculine” transformation of the theme. A certain sense of nostalgia comes from having the Primary Theme stated once again, and in many ways, it is an echo of the initial statement of the theme. In measure 83, it is imperative that no ritardando occurs with the disappearance of the line. Much like Ravel's aquatic setting of *Une barque sur l'océan*, Vlado Perlemuter and Helene Jourdan-Morhange discussed how Ravel's rallentando was created by context, like augmentation would imply a natural sense of rallentando while diminution implies acceleration. His markings are to be taken literally.

Measures 84-91: This section, barren and exposed, has a distinctive speech-like contour. Naiveté and uncertainty abound, in the final question in measure 87. It is a moment of stasis with an overwhelming sense of silence, as the water motive completely ceases to exist. This statement should have a timeless quality, although with a general augmented feel of keeping the pulse intact.

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At the explosive cadenza, Ravel asked pianist Vlado Perlemuter to have the arpeggio begin immediately, without any lean-ins to the two grace notes preceding it.\textsuperscript{85}

In the final three measures and with the sustained quality of the enharmonically spelled D-flat major chord by the strings, the French horns provide the layer of sound that the pedal and finger legato is responsible for sustaining on the piano. Gentle undulations must characterize this ending section, without any hurry, leading to the innocent C-sharp major harmony, lightly touched.

**Performance Guide**

*Le gibet*

Measures 1-5: Ravel stressed in his correspondence with pianists Ricardo Viñes and Vlado Perlemuter that its macabre effect lay in an absolutely strict pulse. The B-flat bell toll must be absolutely consistent and hauntingly relentless throughout the piece. In maintaining this consistency, yet providing the contrast with singular melodic lines and melting chordal passages is a challenge that Hélène Jourdan-Morhange describes as a joining with the great polyphonic technique of Bach.\textsuperscript{86} Once again, we find a dichotomy of elements. On one hand, Ravel refers to a “scaffold theme” in measures 3-4 as “well marked” and the “answer”, in measures 6-7, to be played very *cantabile*.

The phrase grouping for the bell pattern is very clear in Constant's orchestration, as the lower bell marks the start of each grouping. It is important to create a resonance and


direction with a direct attack into the key and immediate release, so to mimic the attack and resonance of a bell.

Measures 6-11: The pianist must come to terms in how *cantabile* and *expressif* are possible while maintaining an unwavering pulse of bell tones in the left hand. One can experiment with creating resistance with the left hand by slightly augmenting the sixteenth notes, feeling the aural space between each note. In Constant's instrumentation, the flute, English horn and muted trumpet characterize the sound of the line. In this sound world, the melody should be clear and sustained, while longer, connective notes in the melodic line (quarter notes) have the direction of an instrument that sustains with breath. The expressiveness of the line is not one of expressive freedom, but of the weight and resistance of oppression. The bassoons and horns follow, chant-like, stern and unmoving in measures 8-9. With the second entrance of the theme in measure 10, an addition of harmony implies a heightening of intensity. It is important to still maintain a lugubrious aura in the sound, while remaining unmoving.

Measures 12-19: As Constant adds strings to the texture here, and the first notated hairpin occurs, the challenge lies in how a pianist can actually create the illusion of *crescendo* on a chord whose sound sustains with pedal but will inevitably decay. A deep, slow attack of the B-flat bass octave can supplement this slow moving gesture. The inner voiced B-flat bell tones need extreme control in order to not get carried away by the desire for connection in the top voice. Resistance once again is an important element in the triplet of measure 13, which is similar to a vocal reiteration of measure 12. It is important to
capture the weight and darkness of the trombones, tuba and bassoon in the measures 15-16 chords in fourth and fifths. There should be a deep and relaxed approach to the chord on the downbeat of each measure. On the third beat, rather than lifting and releasing the tension of the chord, which is typical for a two-note slur, a subtle lift at the end of the sound of the chord will help maintain the weight that still exists in this figure. As a transition section, measure 15 should still carry the resonance from the previous section's diminuendo. Measure 16 can act subtly as an echo of the first statement.

Measures 20-27: A new timbre is introduced with this section while strings like spiders slyly creep downwards. A ghostly timbre is ideal for the highest register particularly, lightly touching the keys, while deriving a connection with any given voice within the span of the chord. A particularly convincing imagery by Olivier Messiaen in this section is of a spider descending, wrapping his fly, deftly, while the extreme registers converge to the middle to cover it and annihilate it. In spite of thee wide voicing of the chords and the subsequent jumps, the section must be played very legato and unemotionally straightforward in pulse. The second half of measure 21 into measure 22, dovetails into this “wrapping” section orchestrated for winds by Constant. Technically speaking, it is easier to sustain the winds section according to the closer proximity of the chord ranges. A sustaining, straight, and cold approach can contribute to this contrast.

Measures 28-34: Elements of Constant's instrumental choice of muted trumpet reveals the distant space around the sound. The sound is straightforward and emotionally devoid.

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Eve with Ravel's specification of “without expression”, pathos still exists in the sound world. With each rise and fall of the phrase, there must be a clear beginning and end. The three measures from measures 28-30 have an implied overarching phrase, touched by colorations in the harmonies that appear in a hallucinatory haze for an instant. In this section, Constant replaces the bells with the celesta. This choice mirrors a lightening of the ostinato figure, to highlight the barrenness of the section.

Measures 35-39: Although there are not explicit dynamic markings, with the downbeat chord of measure 35, the pianist must immediately find warmth and weight, as if he or she was striking a tam-tam broadly, but instead with ample arm and slow attack. Again the strings lead the major surges to the final surge of longing. The strangled man is the subject of this start of Stanza V. Not once does the narrator consider why the man is hanging in the gallows, but only asks what is moving around the gallows. I believe this surge of movement in the strings represents something deep within, a veritable example of the pathos of this man's fate. A voicing of the left hand outer notes in measures 35-39 are necessary for supporting the full range of the swells and clear markings of crescendi and diminuendi.

Measures 40-44: The spider returns, but is met with an interruption to his weaving. Constant utilizes horns with stopped mute for Theme B in measures 41-43, which jumps out of the texture grotesquely, and is foreshadows the sounds of Scarbo. The voicing and legato of the left hand thumb is crucial here, as this mezzo piano section is placed between
two \textit{ppp} sections and for this reason, it warrants a slightly more dramatic sound. It is notable that the loudest dynamic marking in the movement is \textit{mf}.

Measures 45-52: The culmination of the movement lies in the middle voice of this section, the final sighs played by the alto flute and clarinet. The two-note slurs must have weight distributed to the arm traveling through the second finger. With each note in descent, a mellow sound must become increasingly darker, moving from an F-flat, E-flat, D-natural and finally, to a D-flat. As the intervals are reduced to a minor third, the scene is brought to a place just as barren and sparse as the start of the movement.

\section*{Performance Guide}

\textit{Scarbo}

Measures 1-30: Ravel's own orchestral intentions come to light at the opening of \textit{Scarbo} through his writing in Vlado Perlemuter's piano score. The opening three notes of \textit{Scarbo} speak “like a double bassoon” and for the repeated left hand notes of measures 2-6, he notated “like a drum.” 88 \textit{Scarbo} is notably “orchestral” in the piano writing itself, it is no surprise that Ravel related to the performers of his work directly his ideal instrumentation. Measure 1 must encapsulate the weight, growl, and darkness of a contrabassoon's sound.

In measures 2-6, an alternative to playing the chord in the right hand and repeated notes in the left hand is to switch the hands, playing the chord with the left hand, which

works comfortably with 5-4-3-2-1 fingering assigned to each note, played with a low wrist. By switching the hands, the dominant right hand (for most people) can perch with an elevated arm, with fingers extended downwards. I have found using the fingering of 2 and 3 combined on one key, with a loose, bouncing wrist in quick efficient bursts of movement, while remaining within the speed and momentum, will create the rumbling tremolo of a timpani.

In the *accelerando* build to the tremolo section of measure 23, Constant notates his own *Precipitando* in measure 18 and *Assez viv* of measure 19. This interpretation, and specific directions unify the momentum for the orchestra as a whole. By thinking of the whole build-up in one phrase rather than in two-measure phrases, an organic progression of *accelerando* can be achieved. The pianist should not be in the least bit concerned with creating an “ugly” sound at the peak of the swell at measure 27, as the main goal of sound is brightness and sheer volume. Based on the proportion of the build-up, the peak of the swell can be sustained for longer than notated to account for the accumulation of sound and the time needed for it to simmer down.

Measures 32-36: An immediate explosion and flurry of momentum occurs in an instant. A recommendation is to be sure the first and second chords are substantial in sound, enough to reach up and connect to the third beat of measure 32. This section should by no means be strict in time, as that would create a monotonous etude feel. A slight *accelerando* into the third beat of measure 32 can create momentum much like descending and looping around a rollercoaster.
Measure 51: The *un peu marqué staccato* notes should be direct and incisive. With each interruption, the motion from F-natural to G-natural creates the friction of a close intervallic relationship. Therefore, it is ideal to bring these notes out.

Measures 80-84: The “rolling” effect requires a slightly higher wrist, with a subtle counterclockwise 180-degree wrist rotation per measure.

Measures 168-171: Utilize wrist movement, with a slight circular rotation accompanied with a lateral motion with fingering 5-1-3-1-3-1-5

Measure 171: The pianist must give the space and time required to execute the delineation of staccato in light of the momentum gathered in the span of four measures. It is imperative that flexibility of the wrist allows for a momentary shift to a released and separated approach to the keys.

Measures 168-213: The pianist here can interpret Constant's dynamic marking of *forte* as a cue to begin the intensity of the section from the start. It is important for the pedal to create an aura of “whirling” motion, while still maintaining the articulation likened to the sound of scratching bows on low strings: cellos and basses. The sound cannot be light and flitting, it must convey the weight of the cellos and basses in their low register.

Measure 214: With reinforcement on each downbeat, and with Ravel's notated bass stem delineation on each downbeat, an emphasis is implied. Constant goes so far as to accent
pizzicato notes in the violin part and arco in the cello and bass parts. With the addition of a consistent stream of sixteenth notes by the snare drum mirroring the ostinato rhythm, we can also gather the need for a contrast to the initial corresponding section starting measure 52. With respect to Ravel's one measure phrasing in the left hand, a more articulated, quietly violent sound should be attained utilizing a hierarchy of a highly articulated left hand 5th finger, while second and first fingers are less. A slight circular wrist motion will ease the phrasing.

Measures 228-234: The most difficult part of this passage is the ascending arpeggios. This difficulty is largely attributed to the unequal number of notes in the right hand and left hand. The orchestral effects of momentum and shimmering ascent are far more essential rather than calculating the division of the right-hand notes with the left hand notes in a somewhat etude oriented way. One suggestion is to create the same contour with each hand separately with a metronome, strictly for three measures of 3 beats each. The passage can then be approached without subdividing between the hands, while still creating a singular motion when combined.

Measures 256-267: Constant's four-measure groupings (in the piano score) of instrumental solos starting with the trombone staccato and marcato, bassoons staccato and marcato, and trumpets muted and marcato reveal to a pianist how to approach this section. The repeated notes in the piano part are not notated with staccato or marcato, however, with these articulations in mind, it will help to feel the space between the notes, which can be a daunting task as each section can run away from one's fingers. The repeated notes, in
addition to the grace notes, are influenced by a Spanish style of guitar playing. This is evocative of a goblin, debonair, grotesque, yet strangely graceful. The technique here can be likened to that of Liszt’s *Gnomenreigen* and *Mephisto Waltz*. Similar to the somersaults, hops and spins of Scarbo, the pianist must actually “choreograph” the movements across the keyboard. Agility and flexibility of the wrist is paramount over power, as when necessary power must be conserved for the bursts and explosive moments.\(^8^9\) Thus, these explosive moments must be clearly defined.

A close, direct approach to the right hand repeated figurations is recommended, as in the case of measures 260-264, where a clear decision of whether the right hand is above or below the left hand must be determined. A suggestion is to keep a consistent above or below approach per four-measure groupings so as to keep a semblance of a solo instrument consistent as well. The left hand in this four-measure grouping can maintain a high wrist, keeping clear of the right hand, while still flexible, nimble and quickly repositioning to play the fifths.

Measures 268-276: It is important that the two interjectory groups that occur in measure 271 and measure 275 create of feeling of expansion. These moments with *crescendo diminuendo* hairpins, feature clarinets-horns and contrabassoon-tuba. They require the time to create this deviation in time and momentum, to create a “moment in time”. This will also aid in the execution of the interval of an 11th leap, which should by no means interrupt the flow of the small surge.

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Measures 285-288: This passage can be a daunting task without a clear voicing of the melodic line. In the orchestral score, at measure 100, the woodwinds establish a clear line. A visualization of the contour is necessary as the piano score divides the line between the different hands. A helpful suggestion is to isolate the top voice in the left and right hand respectively and play the line legatissimo using whichever fingering is most comfortable, playing the whole melodic line with only the right hand, a process which can be done singularly with the left hand. By aurally and visually establishing the contour of the line, the line can be played legato once again with the notated hand changes, and finally with separations as notated.

Example 5.2: m. 100, Scarbo Marius Constant orchestral score

Measures 291-298, measures 305-308: With each appearance of this repeated-note theme, the varied instrumentation in Constant's orchestration provides a wealth of timbral shifts from one appearance to the next. In these two sections, the English horns (291-298) and horn section (305-308) take on a far more aggressive dynamic and articulation marking in the orchestral score with forte and accent markings on each note. Timbral color changes
can be created with variations in pedaling, including flutter pedaling to create a “wetter” more resonant timbre, and less pedaling for a dryer sound.

Measure 314: Here Constant marks in the orchestral score *Moins vite* with the metronome marking of dotted quarter note equals 60. A slow build must be established from this point on although there is no marked tempo or metronome marking in Ravel's score. This leads to the musical climax and refers to the dwarf growing to the size of a gothic cathedral in measure 366. Ravel was very keen to implying tempo changes. Here the texture changes drastically from a flurry of thirty-second notes to eighth notes. Based on the orchestration, what is most important is to execute the feeling of resistance and uncertainty. A flat-fingered, dramatically *pianissimo* and *legatissimo* approach would be appropriate for executing these effects.

This section can be reduced to the melodic line as shown in Example 5.3.

Example 5.3: *Scarbo* Maurice Ravel piano score
Reduction of melody from mm. 362-365

![Example 5.3: Scarbo Maurice Ravel piano score](image)

Playing through the scalar figure above using one hand only and then tackling it with both hands is the best way of hearing the line. By isolating thumbs in the left and

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right hand respectively, building up speed and security with this passage is crucial in
gaining the momentum for the climax of the work.

Measure 366: Constant's tempo markings in this section create a pacing that organizes
each motivic role. A pianist must not only use power through body and arm weight, there
must be ample time given for the effect of a sustaining a *tutti* orchestral sound. If a pianist
has the opportunity of performing this work on a nine-foot grand piano with ample bass
and treble resonance, the depth of the sound must be addressed in addition to the sheer
volume. It is important for the sixteenth note of measure 366 and corresponding measures
to have a deeper and elongated sound. This sixteenth note with *staccato* and accent in the
context of an expansive climactic section within *un peu retenu* denotes a *pesante*
approach. However, it is important for the momentum of the phrase to not stop on
measure 366 as the real goal for the two-measure phrase lies in the downbeat of the third
measure.

Measures 372-382: As suggested by Constant, this section moves forward, the sixteenth
note chords short, sharp and jagged with a clear and incisive cut off for each eighth and
quarter note.

Measures 382-394: The treatment of the trill should be with timpani in mind. The timpani
rolls can maintain a rumbling sound with a blurry, unintelligible articulation while a
medium to loud volume can also produce a very articulated boisterous type of sound.
With the *crescendo* from measures 382-385, a “wider” more articulated sound can be
utilized to strongly contrast with the *subito* restart in measure 386. The C-D-flat-C motive harkens back to the contrabassoon solo from the very beginning of the movement. It is appropriate for the quality of the sound to capture this menacing appeal, however, one could interpret the transition to a broader, more lyrical flourish that is characterized by measures 390-394. At the height of measure 390, enough time must be taken for the sound to indeed “flourish” into the warmth and aural space to absorb the contrast in harmonic material. This flourishing effect must subside, almost melting away, much like a flower opening only to wilt onto the ground, as something strange and abnormal emerges.

Measures 395-430: Each statement of *p* must be given the amount of space and time to reflect the emerging deep sound of a contrabassoon. The weight of each appearance of this motive must be in context to each other, but not necessarily out of time. Ravel was meticulously astute with his notations, as the augmentation of the motive in measure 409 is not effective if too much time is taken in previous occurrences. Since the left hand is clearly scored for timpani, it is important to note how much pedal will saturate the repeated note figure. Constant's directions of “articulated” for the timpanist in the section in measures 411-421 in the piano score imply a half to 3/4 pedal approach. This gives the effect of something knocking incessantly, while still creating a horizontal forward effect, helping to sustain the chords of the right hand.

Measure 460: In *Scarbo* it is the wrist or even the forearm that strikes the keys as a whole, either by moving up and down or rotating; the thumb is held flat and often strikes two
notes at once, thereby causing Scarbo's remarkable predilection for successive seconds. This writing requires a strong attack, immediate reflexes, and extreme delicacy in termination of phrases. Movements must be quick as lightning and with complete self-control. The keyboard needs both violence and persuasion at the same time, and any clumsiness of stumbling, indecisive, un-choreographed figures would be fatal. The pianist must strive to create the quality of the accents of the oboe, the timbre of the viola, the plucking of the harp and the resonance of the bass drum.
CONCLUSION

Clarity of expression: this is a creative goal Maurice Ravel and Marius Constant shared passionately. With styles deeply rooted in the French national consciousness, their assimilation of previous musical models resulted in extensions of their own artistic integrity and style. With such formal and conceptual organization, Ravel's music encapsulated extremes: the thrilling and subtle, the beautiful and grotesque, the colorful and dreary. His music pushed the boundaries of piano technique and musicality in a way that affected listeners and performers alike. Marius Constant's orchestration mirrors Ravel's original piano score in its meticulous organization. It highlights the literary and dramatic progression of Aloysius Bertrand's original work while clarifying the colors and formal boundaries beyond the listener's expectations. Constant reveals the importance of variation and how effective it can be in the manipulation of the creative process. What it means to "orchestrate" a work can strongly resemble this process by pushing the boundaries of what is possible for the instrument. Constant's atypical instrumental choices, and orchestral effects are juxtaposed, dichotomized, and manipulated in a way that only a composer with just the right amount of finesse and understanding of instrumental combinations could use to create an original and innovative sound world of his own. For a pianist, this pushes the boundaries of interpretation. It begs the interpreter to think of each work from the smallest gesture to the overarching shape, to the tiniest timbral nuances to the overall sound world and the tableau of the movement. These elements may not be sonically possible for a piano to produce, but it opens the ears to another world of variation in sound, that each pianist can explore on their instrument. Even though one may not agree with specific choices in instrumentation in Constant's *Gaspard de la nuit,*
pianists cannot deny the wealth of interpretive tools, clarity of vision and understanding of
the original score that remains true to this work.
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