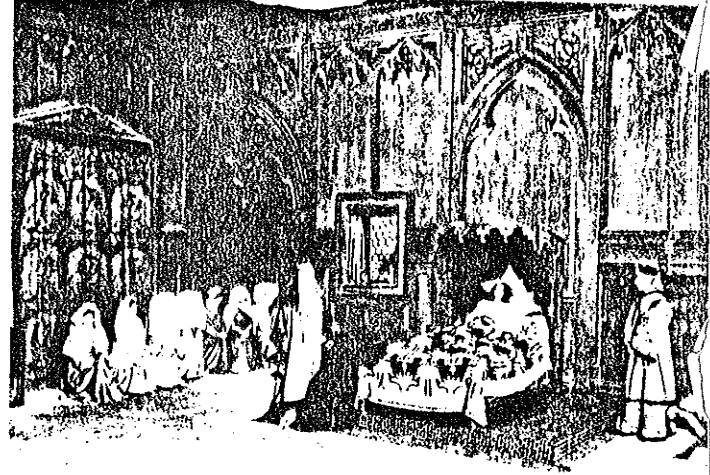


La damoiselle élue



GD



CLAUDE HAUSSY

LA MER

NOTE: This course is divided into two contrasting portions. The first, Sessions 1-15, is in lecture format and deals with early Debussy and his intellectual and aesthetic world: Debussy up until about 1900-02. It includes listening assignments, several brief readings, and a few written projects. The second, Sessions 16-25 (the "Seminar"), is devoted to a group reading and an in-class critical discussion of Roy Howat, Debussy in Proportion (which is concerned with proportional/golden-section analyses of "Reflets dans l'eau," "L'isle joyeuse," La mer, and other works). During this time you will also be preparing a (ca. 15-pp.) Term Paper (due on 11 December) on "Issues and Problems in Mature Debussy: The Current State of Research into \_\_\_\_\_" [Probably either "L'Isle joyeuse" or Jeux]. There is no final exam, but there are three brief, largely "factual" quizzes throughout the semester. CLASS ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY, particularly during the "Howat" sessions, in which you will often be called on to participate and to respond to questions.

#### REQUIRED PURCHASES

Lockspeiser, Edward. Debussy. 5th ed. Rev. Richard Langham Smith. London, 1980.

Howat, Roy. Debussy in Proportion. Cambridge, 1983.

Debussy, Claude. Three Great Orchestral Works in Full Score. New York, 1983.

Besides the required-purchase reading you are expected to become familiar with SEVERAL BRIEF ADDITIONAL READINGS (listed in the ASSIGNMENTS, pp. 3ff below), many of them literary (generally poetic or dramatic texts) or concerned with the visual arts. In the third and fourth weeks of the course you will be asked to write a brief essay linking some of these readings and artistic images.

Your final grade will be based on the results of several requirements; 3 25-MIN. QUIZZES (together, 30%); the "STATE OF RESEARCH" TERM PAPER, (30%); the results of several LISTENING I.D. QUIZZES and evidence of punctual completion of the assignments (assigned listening, reading, the short essay, etc.) (10%); a RESEARCH WORKSHEET, which asks you to become acquainted with some of the principal tools and products of modern Debussy research; a library project (10%); and your preparation for and participation in the Howat discussions (sessions 16-25) (20%). Failure either to write the paper or to read Howat and to prepare for the "seminar" discussions results in an automatic NE. Each component of the final grade is to be the result of individual work--no collaboration. The honor code governs all work for the course. (Exception: it is permitted to study together for the quizzes.)

This course will introduce you to some of the main lines of current Debussy research and discussion; it should provide you with a relatively secure basis from which you may continue to explore, analyze, or evaluate Debussy's output. In particular, we shall:

- (1) acquaint ourselves with the basic facts of Debussy's life and the environment of "symbolism," "aestheticism," or "decadence," with which so much of his music seems inextricably linked. At the very least this involves absorbing and retaining several "literary" texts and requires close attention in the early lectures to the subtleties of an essentially literary aesthetic.
- (2) consider the principal elements of his compositional style and their progressive change throughout his career up until ca. 1905. Almost every lecture will contain a substantial analytical--or at least musically descriptive--component; the Howat sessions (16-25) will deal almost exclusively with questions of musical technique and structure.
- (3) become aurally familiar with a representative sample of Debussy's works (the assigned listening).

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, 2:50-4:20 or by appointment. Please do not hesitate to bring up any aspect of the structure or content of the course that concerns, puzzles, or interests you.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS (subject to slight variation)

1. 9 Sep The Environment: France after 1870

NURTURING A DECADENT WORLD-VIEW: EARLY LITERARY INFLUENCES

2. 11 Sep Compositions of the Young Debussy

3. 16 Sep The Prince of Darkness: Aestheticism and Arabesques

4. 18 Sep Wagnerism and Pre-Raphaelitism (I)

5. 23 Sep Wagnerism and Pre-Raphaelitism (II); Baudelaire

6. 25 Sep\* Wagnerism and the Baudelaire Songs (25 MIN. QUIZ #1)

7. 30 Sep\* "Take Eloquence and Wring Its Neck"

8. 2 Oct\* Patrons, Finances, and the Bohemian Life (SHORT ESSAY DUE)

TRANSFORMING AN AESTHETIC INTO A STYLE: FIRST MATURITY

9. 7 Oct\* Sleepy Fauns and Elusive Nymphs: Mallarmé's Poem

10. 9 Oct\* Sleepy Fauns and Elusive Nymphs: Debussy's Tone Poem

11. 14 Oct Musical Paintings and "Impressionism"

12. 16 Oct Musical Paintings and "Impressionism" (continued) (25-MIN QUIZ, esp. on readings)

13. 21 Oct Debussy and the Piano

23 Oct NO CLASS (RESEARCH WORKSHEET DUE: IN HISTORY/THEORY OFFICE BY 24 OCT)

FALL BREAK (read Pelléas)

14. 4 Nov\* Maeterlinck's Pelléas

15. 6 Nov Debussy's Pelléas

SEMINAR: ROY HOWAT: DEBUSSY IN PROPORTION (discussion)

16. 11 Nov

17. 13 Nov

18. 18 Nov (PELLÉAS LISTENING I.D. QUIZ)

Assignments, listening,  
etc., to be determined

19. 20 Nov

20. 25 Nov

21. 27 Nov

22. 2 Dec

23. 4 Dec 25 MIN. QUIZ #3

24. 9 Dec

25. 11 Dec (TERM PAPER DUE)

ASSIGNMENTS

N.B. Not listed in the assigned reading below are Lockspeiser's discussions of each of the assigned pieces (pp. 117-231). Clearly, however, you are responsible for everything he says about each of these pieces.

- 9 Sep Listening:  
 Massenet: Manon (1884), Act III, Scene i, complete.  
 Chabrier: From Dix pièces pittoresques (1880), No. 6 ("Idylle"), No. 9 ("Menuet pompeux")  
 Chabrier: Trois valse romantiques (1883), Waltz No. 3 / no score /  
 Franck: Les Béatitudes (1869-79), 6th Beatitude.  
Reading:  
 Lockspeiser, 3-24
- 11 Sep Listening:  
 CD: "Beau Soir" (1883, Cobb dating)  
 CD: Symphony in B Minor (1880)  
 CD: L'Enfant prodigue (1884, rev. 1906-08)  
Reading:  
 Lockspeiser, 25-36  
 Begin the reading assignment for the next class session? (Huysmans?)
- 16 Sep Listening:  
 CD: Printemps (1887, orch. by Henri Dülser, 1913, in the manner of Debussy's 20th-century style)  
 CD: Deux arabesques (1888-91)  
Reading:  
 Lockspeiser, 37-43  
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel" (1847-50, rev. 1856, 1870)  
 /reserve; ask for Rossetti/  
 [In the resplendent afterlife of Heaven, a woman waits for her lover on earth to join her in bliss and imagines how glorious it will be when he can be with her again.]  
 Joris-Karl Huysmans, Against the Grain (1884), Chapter 4 (sometimes numbered differently) beginning, "A carriage stopped late on afternoon outside the home of Fontenay"/reserve; Huysmans/ [The character of Des Esseintes, living in his bizarrely furnished mansion of Fontenay, is a famous and perfect example of the withdrawn aesthete, seeking exotic, artificial, and exquisite thrills. "Little he cared about ordinary emotions or common associations of ideas, now that his mind had grown so overstocked and had no room for anything but superfine sensations, religious doubts, and sensual anxieties." Debussy was certainly aware of this book, and in the 1880s became deeply immersed in a similar sort of "decadent" aestheticism.]
- Also: examine all of the plates in Christopher Wood, The Pre-Raphaelites, on reserve. Pay special attention to the heightened colors and to the women's faces (the Pre-Raphaelite/Symbolist feminine ideal). READ pp. 94-103 and note especially Rossetti's painting for The Blessed Damozel, p. 103. Relate this painting to the poem.

18 Sep Listening:  
 CD: La Damoiselle élue (1887-88; rev. orch. 1902)  
Reading:  
 Spend some time examining the La Damoiselle élue score: focus on the orchestral introduction and climactic section near the end, surrounding the Damozel's vision of the lovers before Christ "Et les anges venus à notre rencontre chanteront.... Ensemble, moi et lui," (Reh. nos. 25-28) What is the significance of the motivic construction? What kinds of harmonies does Debussy prefer?

23 Sep Listening:  
 CD: La Damoiselle élue  
Reading: [best to read slowly, out loud]  
 Charles Baudelaire: 6 poems from Les Fleurs du mai (1857) in translation/reserve; Baudelaire/  
 a) "Correspondances" [The key to Baudelaire's--and the later symbolists--contention that all the senses partake of each other, mingle together in intoxication, and symbolize.....a something forever closed to us]  
 b) "Le Balcon" [Memory of an amorous liaison on a balcony]  
 c) "Harmonie du soir" [notice the form of the poem]  
 d) "Le Jet d'eau" [sensuous languor, lassitude]  
 e) "Recueillement" [A meditation]  
 f) "La Mort des amants" [notice the sense/sensual imagery]

Phillipe Jullian, "The Visual Sources of Symbolist Imagery," "The Aesthetic," and "The Setting" in The Symbolists (Oxford, 1973), pp. 11-25 [on reserve]. [also: spend some time looking at the plates in this volume and in Robert L. Delevoy, Symbolists and Symbolism.

SHORT ESSAY (6-7 pp.) DUE 2 OCTOBER: Compare the images, colors, etc. of Pre-Raphaelite Art and Symbolist Art (ca. 1880-1900 only): what is similar and what is different between them? What images also recur in the assigned Rossetti and Baudelaire poems, or in Huysmans? Cite specific paintings and textual lines.

25 Sep Listening:  
 CD: Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire (1887-89)  
Reading: Lockspeiser, 44-53  
 Paul Verlaine: 3 Poems from Fêtes galantes (1869), 2 from Romances sans paroles (1874) 1 from Jadis et naguère (1884)  
 a) "En sourdine" [An even softer, more sensuous voice than Baudelaire?]  
 b) "Fantoches" [evokes the standard characters of puppet-plays performed in 18th-c. France]  
 c) "Clair de lune" [evokes 18th-c., masked figures, garden assignations]  
 d) "C'est l'extase langoureuse"  
 e) "Spleen"  
 f) "Art Poétique" [although Verlaine's credo, it seems to be equally applicable to Debussy. Verlaine asserts that the finest poetry is music, filled with nuances, imbalances, freedom from old rules]

- 30 Sep Listening:  
 CD: Ariettes oubliées (1888)  
 CD: Suite bergamasque (1890; rev. 1905)  
 CD: Fêtes galantes I (1891)  
Reading:  
 Howat, pp. 34-6 (do not concern yourself with the GS proportions at this point),  
 and have a look at pp. 40-45 (try to get the basic idea).
- 2 Oct Listening:  
 CD: String Quartet in G Minor (1893)  
Reading:  
 Austin, 151-54  
 Stéphane Mallarmé: "The Afternoon of a Faun" (1865, rev. 1875, rev. 1876),  
 [This is an extremely famous and difficult poem, but don't despair!  
 Everyone has problems with it. Read it very slowly, out loud, and see how  
 much you can understand. The basic idea: a sleeping faun awakes in line 1,  
 remembers that earlier he came upon two nymphs in the pond, asleep in each  
 other's arms. He recalls that he awakened them with a flute cut from reeds  
 and ultimately, they fled and escaped seduction. But was it all a dream?  
 or were the nymphs real? or does it matter? This is the heart of the poem.  
 We'll discuss virtually every line in the next class.]
- 7 Oct Listening:  
 CD: Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun" (1892-94)  
Reading:  
 J. Hepokoski, "Formulaic Openings in Debussy," 19th-Century Music 8 (1984-5),  
 44-59. (This and other readings will be covered on the 16 October Quiz.)
- 9 Oct Listening:  
 CD: Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun" (1892-94)
- 14 Oct Listening:  
 CD: Nocturnes (1897-99)  
Reading:  
 Lockspeiser, 69-79 (and begin serious work on the research worksheet)
- 16 Oct Listening:  
Nocturnes (1897-99)

21 Oct Listening:  
 CD: "Images oubliées" (1894)  
 CD: Pour le piano (1894-1901)  
Reading:  
 (Continue research worksheet)  
 Maurice Maeterlinck, Pelléas et Mélisande, complete play in translation/  
 reserve/ Maeterlinck/

4 Nov Listening:  
 CD: Pelléas et Mélisande (1894-1902), complete  
Reading:

6 Nov Listening:  
 CD: Pelléas et Mélisande  
Reading:  
 Lockspeiser, 80-90  
 Begin Howat

11 NOV- 9 DEC: AD HOC ASSIGNMENTS GIVEN AT EACH CLASS SESSION:

During this period we shall also read much of the Howat book and perhaps two or three related articles.

Additional Reading:

To be read ca. 25 Nov-2 Dec (before the 4 Dec Quiz)

1. Lockspeiser, 91-114
2. Robert Orledge, "Debussy's Piano Music: Some Second Thoughts and Sources of Inspiration," The Musical Times, 122 (1981), 21-7.
3. Laurence D. Berman, "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun and Jeux: Debussy's Summer Rites," 19th Century Music, 3 (1979-80), 225-38.

Listening:

Those pieces discussed by Howat and (perhaps) a few pieces related to La Mer, if needed.

Preludes for Piano, Books 1 and 2 (1909-13)

Jeux (1913)