

**A Symbolist Melodrama:  
The Confluence of Poem and Music in Debussy's *La Flûte de Pan***

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**Research Project submitted to the  
College of Creative Arts  
at West Virginia University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**Doctor of Musical Arts**

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**Morgantown, West Virginia  
2004**

**Keywords: Claude Debussy, Symbolist Poetry, Music Analysis, Melodrama, *Syrinx*,  
*La Flûte de Pan***

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## **Abstract**

### **A Symbolist Melodrama: The Confluence of Poem and Music in Debussy's *La Flûte de Pan***

**Laurel Astrid Ewell**

Composed by Debussy in 1913, as incidental music for *Psyché*, a dramatic poem by French symbolist poet and playwright Gabriel Mourey, the work for solo flute known today as *Syrinx*, has since become a standard of the solo flute repertoire. Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, editor of a new edition based on a recently recovered period manuscript, has challenged traditional conceptions of the work's compositional context. Debussy's original title for *Syrinx* was *La Flûte de Pan* and appeared as a musical component of a *mélodrame* within the play, just prior to the death of Pan. The recovery of a probable primary source manuscript plus information gathered from Debussy's correspondence invites a new look at this piece, taking into consideration connections between Mourey's Symbolist poetry and Debussy's compositional procedures. The analysis of the poem and music reveals a process which represents or analogizes the symbolist associations and techniques of the concurrent text thereby creating a convergence between poem and music. This document contains analyses of the relevant portions of the poem, the music, and performance suggestions which enhance this unique confluence between word and music.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Dr. John Crotty who has inspired, advised, and encouraged me throughout this project as well as the other members of my committee, Joyce Catalano, Dr. John Weigand, Dr. Virginia Thompson and Alison Helm-Snyder. I also offer a special thanks to my family for their patience and cooperation without which this project would not have reached completion.

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## Chapter 1

### Compositional Genesis and Source Manuscripts

*La Flûte de Pan*, is one of only a few completed compositions by Claude Debussy for the theatre. Robert Orledge's chronology of Debussy's works intended for this medium, indicates that only a few projects were finished, leaving an abundance of incomplete or rejected projects.<sup>1</sup> Debussy's work for unaccompanied flute is unique among this genre in that, as incidental music it conjoins melody with spoken words in a melodrama. *La Flûte de Pan* was to be performed as part of a scene from *Psyché*, a dramatic poem by Gabriel Mourey.

Debussy and Gabriel Mourey attempted but failed to complete several projects before their successful collaboration on *Psyché*. Mourey presented to Debussy in July, 1907, a libretto for an opera in four acts titled *Le Roman de Tristan*. The composer immediately began work on the composition, but a dispute over the exclusive rights for a theater adaptation prevented its completion. All that remains of Debussy's effort is contained in a letter to a publisher that includes one of the themes. The poet then suggested three projects, *Houn de Bordeaux*, *Le Marchand de Rêves*, and *Le Chat Botté*, but Debussy rejected them all. In 1913 Mourey contacted Debussy again about composing incidental music for his three-act dramatic poem, *Psyché*. According to Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, the poem recounts the myth of *Psyché* as told by the Latin author, Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, inserting the story of the death of Pan, according to Plutarch's version, in Act III.<sup>2</sup> Mourey stated in a later article that the request was for

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982): 305 -329.

<sup>2</sup> The title, *Metamorphoses*, is found on extant manuscripts, however Augustine who studied Apuleius' work earlier than the dates of these manuscripts identifies it as *The Golden Ass*. Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, ed. *La Flûte de Pan ou Syrinx pour flûte seule 1913* (Malmö: Autographus Musicus, 1991): 2.

“the last melody Pan plays before his death” performed from the wings of the stage.<sup>3</sup> A program of the event lists three dates, December 1, 3, and 4, 1913, for performances of the dramatic poem.<sup>4</sup> The program also indicates the inclusion in Act III of a composition for flute titled *La Flûte de Pan* by Claude Debussy.

The flutist named in the program is Louis Fleury, a prominent soloist who concertized throughout Europe. Fleury’s participation in the event was not unusual given his reputation as a performer and promoter of contemporary music. For example, the flutist appeared in performances of *Pierrot Lunaire* under the direction of Arnold Schoenberg and several prominent composers of the era wrote works dedicated to him such as Albert Roussels’s *Krishna* from *Joueurs de Flûte*. Fleury appears to have possessed the only score of the Debussy work since he is the only flutist associated with the composition prior to its publication. He often performed *La Flûte de Pan* on his concert tours, bringing the composition to a larger audience.<sup>5</sup>

The flutist expresses his admiration for the piece in a 1922 article from *Music and Letters* titled “The Flute and Its Powers of Expression.” The article cites several compositions as evidence of the wide range of musical expression capable by the instrument. Included among the examples is Debussy’s *La Flûte de Pan* which Fleury describes as reaching “piquant melancholy by the very simplest means.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Mourey, “Memories of Claude Debussy,” *Musical News and Herald* (London, June 1921): 747.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of portions of this program is included in the Novello edition, Trevor Wye, ed. by Michael Stegemann and Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, *Claude Debussy Syrinx (La Flûte de Pan) für Flöte solo* (London: Novello, 1994): 2, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, ed. *La Flûte de Pan ou Syrinx pour flûte seule 1913* (Malmö: Autographus Musicus, 1991): 2.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Fleury, “The Flute and Its Powers of Expression,” *Music and Letters* (1922): 388.

### Source Manuscripts

Jean Jobert published a piece for solo flute by Debussy in 1927, following the death of Fleury. The eminent flutist, Marcel Moyse, was asked to edit the source manuscript which is no longer extant. The publisher's inscription "à Louis Fleury" in the Jobert edition was apparently intended to recognize Fleury's intimate association with the composition. However, the publication contained the title *Syrinx*, a different name from the work popularized by Fleury. The alteration may have been done by the publisher to avoid confusion with another Debussy piece also published by Jobert, *Chansons de Bilitis*, containing a movement titled "La Flûte de Pan."

Since the source manuscript was lost, the Jobert edition has been the only original source for Debussy's incidental music for Mourey's *Psyché*. However, recent research by Anders Lunjar-Chapelon and Michael Stegemann has turned up a manuscript located in Brussels in the private collection of Madame Hollanders de Ouderaen. The manuscript, which is signed and dated November, 1913, is inscribed with cues from Mourey's poem and may be the score from which Louis Fleury played at the December, 1913 performance.

In his notes for the Weiner Urtext Edition, Michael Stegemann writes "in spite of all the superficial resemblances to Debussy's handwriting style in musical notation, closer investigation reveals numerous discrepancies which point to another hand having written the manuscript."<sup>7</sup> A comparison between the manuscript and an autograph manuscript of the *Piano Preludes Book II* (1910-1912), reveals handwriting differences

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<sup>7</sup> Trevor Wye, ed. by Michael Stegemann and Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, *Claude Debussy Syrinx (La Flûte de Pan) für Flöte solo* (London: Novello, 1994): 15.

in clefs, flat signs, key signature notation, and letter formation. The most significant discrepancy lies in the signature *Novembre 1913/Claude Debussy* which is written under the final line of music. According to Stegemann, the handwriting does not resemble other examples inscribed on autograph letters and manuscripts of the time.

Doubts about its authorship do not negate the significance of the manuscript. Stegemann goes on to point out that the inclusion of excerpts from the Mourey text, indicating the exact point where the piece should occur within the body of the scene, suggests that the manuscript may be a copy probably used by Louis Fleury in stagings of the drama. The manuscript itself contains lengthwise folds as though it may have been fitted into a flute case. Unfortunately no documented manuscript in Fleury's handwriting is available to verify his possible authorship. However, the apparent haste with which Debussy completed the composition could explain why Fleury may have penned his own copy.

In a letter dated 30 October 1913, Debussy asked Mourey to postpone the premier of the play.

Would it be possible for Mme. Mors to postpone the dates you gave me until the month of December? Here is why: it is materially impossible that the music will be ready, and don't forget that rehearsal time must also be included. Further, on reflection, the few moans uttered by the choir will appear ridiculous if this is all the music necessary during the second act, for the simple reason that they will be connected to absolutely nothing!

Do you not see that it would be more reasonable to stick to your first idea of *La Flûte de Pan*? On 14 November I must be in Lausanne to rehearse and conduct a concert which takes place on Monday 17th. So you see how little time is left.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre*, p. 254.

As of November 24, Debussy stated in another letter to Mourey that he had not completed the composition. Since the work was still unfinished by late November, and Debussy was scheduled to depart for Russia at the end of the month, a performance copy may have been prepared by Fleury either from sketches by the composer or in hurried collaboration with Debussy. Two lines where the music extends beyond the edge of the printed staff further suggest hastiness in drafting the manuscript. Michael Stegemann concludes that while uncertainties remain regarding the authenticity of this manuscript as a Debussy autograph, there is sufficient evidence to regard it as a primary source, most probably used by Fleury in staged performances.<sup>9</sup>

A comparison of the Brussels manuscript with the Jobert edition reveals very few differences. In fact, the authenticity of the Brussels manuscript is supported by its remarkable resemblance to the Jobert edition. The differences are: 1) a title of *La Flûte de Pan* instead of *Syrinx*, the same title Fleury used describing this composition in *Music and Letters*; 2) an inscription indicating *Act III, scène première*, as the location for the music within the play; 3) two handwritten cues from the spoken text; 4) three commas or breath marks, far fewer than the Jobert edition; 5) a diminuendo in m. 34 instead of an accent; 6) *en animant peu à peu* in m. 22; 7) a tie in m. 3, connecting the first and second beats; and 8) dynamic marks missing from mm. 1 and 6. There are no discrepancies in pitch or rhythm.

The Brussels manuscript specifies *Act III, scène première* of *Psyché* as the location of the music within the play. Cues from the text are included in the score at the

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<sup>9</sup> Trevor Wye, ed. by Michael Stegemann and Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, *Claude Debussy Syrinx (La Flûte de Pan) für Flöte solo* (London: Novello, 1994): 16.

beginning and then later between mm. 8–9. These specifications challenge a long-held assumption that the piece occurred at the point of Pan’s death in the final scene of Act III.<sup>10</sup> As Hellmut Seraphin first pointed out in his 1964 dissertation, the opening of Act III is a more appropriate location.<sup>11</sup> The lengthy passages uttered by Pan just prior to his death do not provide a logical pause for the character to play the flute. Furthermore, the text in the final scene does not contain any reference to the presence of music. In contrast the text from scene 1 of Act III explicitly refers to the sounds of Pan’s “syrinx.” Roy E. Ernst and Douglass Green in an article for *Flute Talk* also cited the inappropriateness of this location, noting “the sensuous quality of the piece would, in itself, make this seem unlikely; a death scene would seem inappropriate.”<sup>12</sup> The inscriptions notated in the Brussels manuscript, indicating both location and textual cues from Act III, scene 1, support these conclusions.

In the Brussels manuscript, commas are indicated only at mm. 2, 4, and 14, in contrast to the seventeen commas included in the Jobert edition. The additional commas were probably included by the editor, Marcel Moyse, as breath marks. The alteration of the *diminuendo* in m. 34 to an accent, the elimination of *en animant peu à peu* in m. 22, the insertion of dynamic marks in m. 1 and 6, and the tie in m. 31 also appear to be editorial changes or oversights, opening these and the added commas to interpretive challenge.

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<sup>10</sup> Walfrid Kujala cites this location in the article, Walfrid Kujala, “A Performance Checklist for Debussy’s *Syrinx*” *The Instrumentalist* 30 (February, 1976): 44.

<sup>11</sup> Hellmut Seraphin, *Debussys Kammermusikwerke der mittleren Schaffenszeit: analytische und historische Untersuchung in Rahmen des Gesamtschaffens Berücksichtigung des Ganztongeschlechts* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1964): 83.

<sup>12</sup> Roy E. Ernst and Douglass M. Green, “Performance Guide: Interpreting *Syrinx*,” *Flute Talk* 10:6 (February, 1991): 13.

In conclusion, the piece we know today as *Syrinx* was actually titled *La Flûte de Pan*. Evidence from the recently located Brussels manuscript confirms that the work appeared as a musical component of a *mélodrame* within the play. The clear connection between music and word shown by the Brussels manuscript invites a comparative analysis of Debussy's *La Flûte de Pan* and its concurrent poetic text, shedding light not only upon its symbolist associations but its musical conception, quite different from the solo composition Fleury popularized.

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## Chapter 2

### Analysis of Concurrent Text

It is not *description* which can unveil the efficacy and beauty of monuments, seas, or the human face in all their maturity and native state, but rather evocation, *allusion*, *suggestion*.<sup>1</sup>

Stephan Mallarmé's confession, expressed in his *Crisis in Poetry*, conveys some sense of symbolist poetry. Language has the ability to ignite our cognitive capacity, permitting the evocation rather than the mere naming or depiction of things, so that the true beauty of existences may be uttered. The power to evoke enables language to extend the scope of written expression beyond the physical world into the interior regions of thought, emotion, and dreams. Paul Valéry observes:

...that these well-known things and beings—or rather the ideas that represent them—somehow change in value. They attract one another, they are connected in ways quite different from the ordinary; they become (if you will permit the expression) *musicalized*, resonant, and as it were, harmonically related. The poetic universe, thus defined, offers extensive analogies with what we can postulate of the dream world.<sup>2</sup>

The first scene from Act III of Mourey's *Psyché* creates a poetic universe that imagines the passage from the physical realm into the dream world. The scene is a representation of a seduction that alludes to death as the means of that passage. On the surface at least, the connection between seduction and death is unfamiliar, making them, in the words of Valéry, "harmonically related." This harmonious relationship presumes

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<sup>1</sup> Stephan Mallarmé, "Crisis in Poetry," reprinted in the Norton Critical Score of Debussy's *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun,"* ed. William W. Austin (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Valéry, "The Art of Poetry," trans. by Denise Folliot, *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, ed. Jackson Matthews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 59.



that these two “well-known things” are dissimilar. The coherence between them is produced by a change in their value or meaning, producing connections through extraordinary means.

Seduction is usually perceived as a manifestation of physical desire and is associated with objective reality. It is the process or act of leading a subject astray from proper conduct, behavior, or duty. This action requires a displacement of the object’s conscious world, where reason imposes boundaries of conduct and behavior, by the unconstrained spaces of the subconscious will, comprising emotion and dreams. This displacement might be analogized to the passage from life through death into a kind of pagan Arcadian “heaven.” This other state of being is unfettered and boundless, infinite and eternal. Thus the analogy between seduction and death provides the means for creating a poetic universe, as described by Valéry, which postulates the dream world.

An analogous relationship between sexual passion and death is not unique to Mourey’s play. Poetry set to music by sixteenth-century madrigal composers frequently employed death as a metaphor for human sexual climax. One example is a poem by Marquis Alfonso d’Avalos set to a madrigal, *Il bianco e dolce cigno*, by Jacques Arcadelt. The type of death described in the poem alludes to sexual climax. The act of dying is so pleasurable it becomes an object of desire to be repeated numerous times.

The white and gentle swan  
Dies singing, and I,  
Weeping, approach the end of my life.  
Strange and diverse fates,  
That he dies disconsolate  
And I die happy.  
Death, that in the act of dying  
Fills me wholly with joy and desire.  
If in dying I feel no other pain,

---

I would be content to die a  
Thousand times a day.<sup>3</sup>

Richard Wagner, in describing the Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, analogizes the realms of death and sexual passion. Wagner observes that the human longing for a perfect sexual union is unfulfilled within a mortal existence because once completed desire always returns. A perfect and perpetual sexual union may only be obtained in death.

So just once, in one long-articulated impulse, he let that insatiable longing swell up from the timidest avowal of the most delicate attraction, through anxious sighs, hopes and fears, laments and wishes, raptures and torments, to the mightiest onset and to the most powerful effort to find the breach that will reveal to the infinitely craving heart the path into the sea of love's endless rapture. In vain! It's power spent, the heart sinks back to languish in longing, in longing without attainment, since each attainment brings in its wake only renewed desire, until in final exhaustion the breaking glance catches a glimmer of the attainment of highest rapture: it is the rapture of dying, of ceasing to be, of the final redemption into that wondrous realm from which we stray the furthest when we strive to enter it by force. Shall we call it Death? Or is it the miraculous world of Night, from which, as the story tells, an ivy and a vine sprang of old in inseparable embrace over the grave of Tristan and Isolde?<sup>4</sup>

In Mourey's poetic universe the allusion to death is metaphorical. Just as Tristan and Isolde could only obtain complete gratification in another domain, the seduced subject from Act III of *Psyché* must pass to another realm to find fulfillment.

The ability of erotic love to overcome the individual, driving them to a specific action, is a theme of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer whose writings were widely read during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Among those who studied his works was Richard Wagner, and it was the philosopher's writings which contributed to

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<sup>3</sup> Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music; Music in Western Europe, 1400–1600* (New York and London: W. W. Norton Company, 1998), p.430.

the theme of *Tristan and Isolde*. For Schopenhauer, the mind is “an organism adapted to the ends of living, and is split between the conscious, knowing, and seemingly unworldly self... and the unconscious natural will which seems alien but is truly what drives us on.”<sup>5</sup> In the act of seduction consciousness, governed by rational thought, is overcome by the internal subconscious will which ultimately propels our behavior. It is this process which is depicted by Gabriel Mourey in the first scene, Act III, of *Psyché*.

The action for the scene takes place in Pan’s grotto. The description of the stage setting gives visual clues to corresponding themes in the poetry (Appendix A). The surroundings are mysterious as the moon floods the landscape in front of a black cave. A stream, “dying” away into the distance to form a small lake, creates a tableau of still peace and quiet. Nymphs, dressed in white, dance to silent music, while picking flowers; admiring themselves, they do not interact with each other. Their self-absorption gives the setting a detached and distant quality, immune to the base passion.

For late nineteenth-century French poets, images of a lake, a moon, dancing, flowers, and water evoke “not so much death, which after all is the result of organic decay, as of a virginal, prenatal, or otherworldly state.”<sup>6</sup> The intention is to express a “way of being at once lifeless but not death-like, sensible but impalpable,...a paradox proper to the divine.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Wagner, *Richard Wagner’s Prose Works*, translated by William Ashton Ellis, Vol. 8 (London, 1899), p.386-7, reprinted in Norton Critical Score of Wagner’s *Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan And Isolde*, ed. by Robert Bailey (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985), p.47-48.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Janaway, *Schopenhauer, A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): p.119.

<sup>6</sup> John Porter Houston, *French Symbolism and the Modernist Movement: A Study of Poetic Structures* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980): p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> John Porter Houston, *French Symbolism and the Modernist Movement: A Study of Poetic Structures* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980): p. 32.

A naiade, or river nymph, has come to the grotto in the evening where Pan is residing in a cave. A dialogue ensues between the naiade and an oreade, or mountain nymph. The naiade is fearful but the oreade encourages her to listen to the sound of Pan's flute, assuring her that when she does she will no longer be afraid. As Pan begins to play the naiade is seduced by the song and surrenders herself without fear.

The entrance of the flute following line 53, written in the Brussels manuscript, divides the scene into two sections. The first half is a conversation between the naiade and oreade which concludes with the sound of the flute playing from the wings. The phrase *Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer* [But hark, Pan begins to play his flute again] (line 53) is inscribed as a cue. The second half consists of an extended speech by the naiade, with flute accompaniment and separated by a single comment from the oreade. *Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute* [Be silent, contain your joy, listen] (line 65), spoken by the oreade, is written in the manuscript between mm. 8 and 9. The scene ends with a lengthy monologue by the naiade.

### **Analysis of the Text**

#### **Part I Lines 1–53**

##### **Suggestion of Expectation (line 1)**

The oreade's initial question *Ainsi, tu ne l'avais encore jamais vu?* [So you still have never seen him?] (line 1) invokes an aura of both temptation and expectation. The word *encore* [still] sets the tone for the scene, implying that Pan should be an object of intense desire for the naiade.

### **Encounter with a Desirable Object (lines 2–14)**

The naiade's response is an exposition of her initial state of being. Contrasting images are symbolic of the interwoven consciousness and subconscious will. For example, lines 3–10 contrasts a valley and a high rock, a florid spring and dried up banks, fear and beauty, radiance and dread. The *gardant l'humble source fleurie* [guarding of a lowly florid spring] (line 4) speaks to the naiade's spiritual purity and contrasts with the sheep that are beasts whose base instincts of thirst and hunger have *ont desséché les bords et ravagé le lit* [dried up the banks and ravaged the bed] (line 6). The passage concludes with the naiade describing the passionate night, intoxicated by the sound of Pan's flute. Her word *enivre* (line 14), meaning to intoxicate or to elate, suggests an emotional state of excitement and enticement as happens when first encountering an object of intense desire.

### **Temptation and Initial Resistance (lines 15–17)**

The oreade's beckoning *entrons* [enter] (line 15) to the naiade is the essence of temptation. Once an object becomes the subject of desire, temptation follows. The naiade's response is to resist, expressing her fear.

### **Contrast in State of Mind Between Naiade and Oreade (lines 18–29)**

In response to the oreade's question of *peur de quoi?* [Afraid of what] (line 18) the naiade says she is fearful of Pan because he is everywhere as the vivid and sinister contrasts between darkness and light in this passage attest. Pan lurks in a corner in the dark gloom as well as in a beam of light that prowls across her shoulders. The naiade's references to Pan as both darkness and light reinforce her perception that he is

omnipresent, an allusion to the psyche that, according to Schopenhauer, is also divided by two opposing entities, consciousness and the subconscious will. Though the conscious, rational self imposes order upon the psyche, the will continually threatens to emerge, unbidden, as a dream while asleep or a daydream. An image of Pan lurking or prowling across her shoulders alludes to this threat. Upon succumbing to temptation or at the point of death, consciousness vanishes, releasing the subconscious will of emotions and dreams.

The oreade's response in lines 28–29 reflects her different state of mind. References to darkness and light by the oreade are evoked by *C'est l'ombre de ces feuilles* [the shadow of the leaves] (line 28) and the *la brise du matin proche* [approaching morning breeze] (line 29). The imagery is blurred and gray as in the boundary of a shadow or the haze of the pre-dawn hours. A gentle movement, which the oreade describes as leaves caressed by a breeze, shows the psychological disparity between the two nymphs. The hazy reality encompassing the oreade's perceptions contains no threat, therefore evoking a dream-like state. The oreade's actions are governed by her inner will.

#### **Weakening of Naiade's Resistance (lines 30–37)**

The naiade's response in lines 30–36 presents the inevitability of her situation. Since Pan is everywhere (line 19), there is no place she can hide or run away (line 36). Her words, *je défaille* [I swoon] (line 30) implies fainting away or decay and symbolizes her weakening resistance as the inner will encroaches upon consciousness. Her comment that *L'air brûle et je me sens glacée* [the air scorches and I feel frozen] (line 31) reinforces the conception of decay as though she were ice melting away in warm surroundings.

The oreade's answer entices her further by a description of Pan's *voix grave et tendre* [deep and tender voice] (line 39). The naiade is afraid of Pan's *regards* [gaze] (line 34) from which she cannot escape. A "gaze" or a "deep and tender voice" are perceptions, emanating from the subconscious will. In contrast to the naiade, the oreade asserts a perception of Pan's voice with positive qualities, making him more alluring.

### **Temptation Intensified by the Oreade (lines 42–53)**

A remembrance of Syrinx and Echo, two mythological characters associated with Pan, leads to the oreade's longest speech. Throughout the scene her words function as the voice of enticement, progressively gaining strength. The number of lines given the character in the first section expands as though they were gaining momentum; a taunt in line 1, an invitation in line 15, reassurance in lines 37–41 and liberation in lines 44–53. A comparison in the number of lines for each character in consecutive order reveals the oreade's gradual increase in strength of voice and the weakening of the naiade's.

**Table 2.1. Number of Lines for Oreade and Naiade**

<b>Oreade</b>	<b>Naiade</b>
Line 1 (1)	Lines 2–14 (13)
Line 15 (1)	Lines 16–17 (2)
Line 18 (1)	Lines 19–27 (9)
Lines 28–29 (2)	Lines 30–36 (7)
Lines 37–41 (5)	Lines 42–43 (2)
Lines 44–53 (10)	

The oreade cites the story of Syrinx from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (lines 45–52) to explain her envy:

And Mercury broke off the story  
 And then went on to tell what Pan had told her,  
 How she said *No*, and fled, through pathless places  
 Until she came to Ladon's river, flowing  
 Peaceful along the sandy banks, whose water  
 Halted her flight, and she implored her sisters  
 To change her form, and so, when Pan had caught her  
 And thought he held a nymph, it was only reeds  
 That yielded in his arms, and while he sighed  
 The soft air stirring in the reeds made also  
 The echo of a sigh. Touched by this marvel  
 Charmed by the sweetness of the tone, he murmured  
*This much I have!* And took the reeds, and bound them  
 With wax, a tall and shorter one together,  
 And called them Syrinx, still.<sup>8</sup>

The Ovidian myth mingles sexual and spiritual themes. Pan's sexual pursuit of Syrinx results in her transformation to hollow reeds which then yield in his arms. Pan, who thought he held the nymph, instead possessed the means for creating his own music. By playing upon the nymph, who was now a bundle of reeds, Pan's spirit—his breath—transforms her. It is this transformation that the oreade cites as the source of her envy. In recounting the myth, the oreade's words describe a transfiguration, not a literal death, coveting the same fulfillment as Isolde who obtained in death an eternal union with Tristan.

The verb *répandu* (line 46), meaning to spill out, shed, scatter, or diffuse, describes the way in which Syrinx "poured out her life," as though she were a liquid released from the confines of a vessel. Pan's breath was then able to give it flight. This is

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<sup>8</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955): p.24-25.



not the physical flight of her body but rather the flight of her soul. As her soul ascends it is liberated from physical confinement into spiritual infinity where she enchants the stars and gods.

The music of Pan's flute *Qui font germer dans le coeur des hommes la joie?* [which sprouts joy in the hearts of men] (line 49) symbolizes rebirth. *Germer* (line 49) means to sprout or to germinate as when a plant breaks free from the hull of a seed, expanding from the dark earth into the light of the sky. Syrinx, moving from the depths of "dark ether" to the height of "the stars and gods," alludes to movement into another realm. The imagery suggests what might occur at the point of death when the soul passes from a dark, enclosed capsule like the body into a bright place of infinite proportions. Movement from the depths to the heights parallels the naiade's initial movement at the opening of the scene where she fled from the valley to a high rock. However, while the naiade's motion was confined within the limitations of the physical world, Syrinx is released into an infinite space. This transfigured life, described by Wagner for Isolde, is "the blessed fulfillment of ardent longing, eternal union in measureless space, without barriers, without fetters, inseparable."<sup>9</sup>

Musical references by the oreade to the *Aux sons ailés, aux rythmes d'or* [winged sounds and golden rhythms] (line 48) created on the hollow reeds culminates with Pan beginning to play his flute.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Wagner, *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, translated by William Ashton Ellis, Vol. 8 (London, 1899), p.386-7, reprinted in Norton Critical Score of Wagner's *Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan And Isolde*, ed. by Robert Bailey (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985), p.47-48.

**Part II**  
**Lines 54–98**

**Disruption of the Naiade's Psyche (lines 54–65)**

With the sounds of an unseen flute drifting from the wings, the naiade describes the night and stars. Her references to melody, songs, and a lyre coincide with the continuing music of the flute. The sound of Pan's flute is weakening the naiade's resolve. The oreade's remarks about Syrinx in lines 44–53 and the subsequent response by the naiade contains matching images, reflecting a change in the naiade's state of mind in a way similar to the oreade.

The naiade, similar to Wagner's Isolde, speaks of the night which *ait dénoué sa ceinture et qu'en écartant ses voiles elle ait laissé, pour se jouer sur la terre tomber toutes les étoiles...* [has loosened her girdle and in shedding her veils has let fall to play upon the earth all of the stars] (lines 54–57) where *mélodieusement elles s'épanouissent* [melodiously they bloom] (line 59). The reference to stars, released from the confines of the day, parallels the oreade's words regarding Syrinx who ascended to the stars. The allusion is not only one of seduction, as when Salomé shed her veils, but also of revelation. As the veils are shed a mysterious and unknown realm is gradually unveiled.

The stars blooming correspond to the germination of joy spoken of by the oreade. Liberated stars have caused fields of silence to bloom. This transformation, or rebirth of a field of silence into melodious blooming symbolizes an activation of the subconscious will, causing a disruption in the governance of the naiade's state of mind.

The strings of the lyre analogize the story of Syrinx; for just as Syrinx was plucked from the hollow reeds to form Pan's flute and become music, the strings of the

lyre are now plucked to create a song. Certain empirical sights, sounds, or smells may elicit emotional or dream-like responses, such as when a particular smell may cause a remembrance of things past. The song Orpheus played moved Eurydice, against her better judgement, to turn and lovingly but tragically gaze upon her lover. The song caused an emotional response which momentarily activated Eurydice's subconscious will, disturbing the balance within her psyche.

### **Assertion of the Subconscious Will (lines 66–98)**

The opening phrase, *Si tu savais quel étrange délire* [If you but knew what strange rapture] (line 66) expresses the naiade's surrender and subsequent emancipation into another psychological state. *Délire* can also be translated as "delirium," or a disordered state of the mental faculties, resulting from a disturbance in the cognitive functions of the brain.<sup>10</sup> The naiade describes the night as bewitching her. The psychology evoked by *affoler* [to bewitch] (line 70) is of infatuation, distraction, and insanity as when mentally disturbed. Such a condition has the potential consequence of bringing down the boundaries of consciousness and allowing access to the passions of the subconscious will. *Éperdûment* [to abandon] (line 75) connotes distraction or bewilderment as when one has lost (*perdu*) one's mind. The disorientation resulting from this bewilderment allows the naiade to abandon her body.

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<sup>10</sup> This definition is found in the Oxford English Dictionary.

The naiade describes two other nymphs mentioned in the setting for the scene who are seen dancing in the distance. In contrast with the sheep in line 6, these nymphs are not imprisoned by their animal instincts. Their actions are evidence of a transcendent sense of joy, happiness, and freedom. This opposition is outlined in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Contrasting Imagery Between Part I and Part II**

<u>Part I</u> <u>Sheep</u>	<u>Part II</u> <u>Nymphs</u>
<i>Ont desséché les bords</i> Dried up the banks (line 6)	<i>Au bords des calmes eaux</i> Along the banks of calm waters (line 80)
<i>Et ravagé le lit</i> Ravage the bed (line 6)	<i>Se roule sur ce lit de rouges hyacinthes...</i> Roll upon this bed of red hyacinths (line 88)

The opposing images of a moonbeam and a dark gloom contained earlier in the scene (lines 19–27) represents the duality within the psyche. The naiade’s description later in the narrative of four nymphs dancing in the clearing in front of Pan’s grotto contains only images of light, expressing a change in her state of mind Table 2.3 lists these images.

**Table 2.3. Images of Light in Part II**

Line 78	<i>Elève vers le ciel là-bas</i> Lifts toward the sky
Line 81	<i>Où elle se reflète, un grandoiseau</i> Reflected in the water
Line 82	<i>Impatient de la lumière</i> Impatient for the light
Line 85	<i>Aux lèvres de la lune</i> The lip of the moon
Line 85	<i>à baiser ses seins blancs</i> Kissed by white breasts
Line 90	<i>Enticeler, telles deux taches</i> Sparkling like two spots
Line 91	<i>De soleil, dans la frondaison de ses cheveux</i> Sun in the fronds of her hair
Line 93	<i>un feu divin</i> Divine fire

The images of light correspond with the orade's description of Syrinx ascending from darkness or consciousness into the light provided by the subconscious will. In the beginning of the scene the naiade perceived the night as gloomy and dark. Now she describes images flooded with light. This change in perception expresses the ascendancy of her inner will as it challenges the governance of consciousness.

The references suggest growing intensity, moving from the neutrality of the sky, to the cool moon, to the hot sun, and culminating in *un feu divin* [divine fire] (line 93) whose unimaginable brilliance beyond sensation.

### **Emergence of the Subconscious Will (lines 93–98)**

The *feu divin* [divine fire] (line 93) is reminiscent of the *L'air brûle* [air that scorches] (line 31). However, the source of its power to inflame love for Pan emanates from an existence beyond the phenomenal world. A fire, “divine” in nature, suggests unquenchable power and heat of eternal proportions. The emergence of the subconscious will, unbounded by consciousness, produces the same effect, releasing the individual into an unlimited realm of emotion, dreams and passion. The naiade’s exclamation that the *la même ardeur s’insinue en mes veines* [same ardor spreads through my veins] (line 95) completes her passage.

The emergence from of the subconscious will from the confines of the naiade’s psyche produces hazy perceptions, placing her in the same state of mind as the oreade (lines 28–29). Two different words describing intoxication at the beginning of the poem and at the conclusion reflect the alteration in the naiade’s state of mind. At the opening of the scene the naiade described the night as being *enivré* [intoxicated ] (line 14) by the sound of Pan’s flute. By the end of her narrative she describes her state of mind as *griser* [to gray] (line 97) suggesting an intoxicated state as would occur when perceptions are blurred or dulled. The haziness of the naiade’s perceptions at the conclusion of the scene is the same as the oreade’s, indicating her transformation into another state of being governed by her subconscious will.

### Summary

The naiade's words throughout the first section allude to empirical perceptions associated with the phenomenal world of consciousness. Although the subconscious will comprising emotions and dreams surfaces briefly, rational processes retain control. The first section of the passage (lines 1–53) represents this intermingling of consciousness and the subconscious will through connections of contrasting imagery; a valley and a high rock, a florid spring and dried up banks, fear and beauty, radiance and dread.

The oreade's words in the first section evoke a different state of mind from the naiade's. Instead of sharply delineated contrasts, a clouded vision, such as the shadow of the leaves in the approaching morning, evokes a dream-like state. Just as Kundry the temptress who serves her master Klingsor in the seduction of Parsifal, the oreade serves Pan in enticing the naiade to succumb to her deepest desires.

The second section is a monologue spoken by the naiade depicting, through transformation of imagery from earlier in the scene, the inner will displacing the phenomenal world of consciousness, thereby obtaining control of her psyche. The opposition between light and darkness in Part I is replaced in Part II by pure light, culminating in a divine fire that burns apart from the rational and phenomenal world. This poetic fire, symbolic of sexual arousal, would exist only in a place transcending physical existence.

## Chapter 3

### Analysis of the Music

In a letter of November 17, 1913, regarding the incidental music for *Psyché*

Debussy writes:

“So far I have not found what is needed...because a flute singing on the horizon must at once contain its emotion! That is, there is not time for repetitions, and exaggerated artificialness will coarsen the expression since the line or melodic pattern cannot rely on any interruption of colour. Please tell me, very precisely, after what lines the music starts.”<sup>1</sup>

The date and content of the letter suggest that it was written during the early stages of composition. His frustration for “not [having] found what is needed” and a request for the precise placement of the music suggests the genesis of *La Flûte de Pan* evolved in close association with the corresponding text. Cues, inscribed in the Brussels manuscript before m. 1 and after m. 8, confirm the location of *La Flûte de Pan* within the narrative of the scene. Figure 3.1 contains mm. 1–9 of the manuscript, as shown in a photocopy contained in the Weiner Urtext Edition. The first cue, *Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer*, is inscribed above m. 1 and the second cue *Tais toi, contiens ta joie, écoute*, is in the empty measure between mm. 8–9.

During mm. 1–8 of the music, the naiade recites ten lines (lines 54–64) before the second cue, “Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute” (line 65). This is a supplication by the oreade for the naiade to be silent and listen. Her request (line 65) would only make dramatic sense if the flute played while the naiade spoke. In order for the musico-poetic association implied by the Brussels manuscript to work, *La Flûte de Pan* must be a melodrama.



*Psyché*  
Acte III, scène première

*Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence à jouer.*

Très modéré

m. 1

m. 3

Retenu

*Tais toi, contiens ta joie, écoute*

*un peu mouvementé mais très peu*

m. 6

m. 9

**Figure 3.1. Cues in *La Flûte de Pan* as shown in Brussels manuscript (mm.1–9)**

According to the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, a melodrama is “a musico-dramatic technique in which spoken text alternates with instrumental music or ... is recited against a continuing musical background.”<sup>2</sup> This method of performance presents music and words as two parallel entities interacting simultaneously. The music intensifies the dramatic component of the words while the content and structure of the narrative shapes the composition. Given this musico-dramatic context, the narrative and music are interconnected, each functioning as a reciprocal or complementary expression of the other.

<sup>1</sup>Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, *La Flûte de Pan ou Syrinx pour flûte seule*(1913) (Malmö: Autographus Musicus, 1991): p. 2

<sup>2</sup>*The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), p.481.

### Poetic and Compositional Structural Coherence

During the course of this scene the oreade gradually tempts the naiade until in a speech (lines 55–98) accompanied by Debussy's *La Flûte de Pan* she succumbs.

Beginning in line 55, the naiade describes a progressive change in her state of mind as she is seduced by Pan's flute, so in spite of her better judgement she yields to the allure of the music. The poem depicts this seduction as a process divided into three stages. Initially the balanced state between the conscious realm of reason, conduct and behavior and the subconscious will, comprising emotion and dreams, (lines 54–64) must be disrupted. The disturbance is followed by an assertion of the inner will (lines 65–92), resulting in the emergence of the unbounded realm of emotion and dreams (lines 93–98).

The seduction begins with an initial disruption in the psyche between the conscious realm and the inner will of the subconscious. As discussed earlier, a brief disturbance in the balance between the two is common, as in the remembrance of a dream. Aspects of the inner will may emerge briefly, but consciousness subsequently imposes a return to the normal phenomenal state of affairs. However, in the seduction process, the source of the disruption becomes increasingly dominant, upsetting the balance and ultimately displacing the consciousness with the realm of the will. The seduction is complete when the psyche is dominated by the fully revealed or emerged subconscious will.

References to musical images in lines 54–64 coincide with the sounds of the flute coming from the wings of the theatre. When the flute begins, the words of the naiade (lines 54–64) portray a disruption in the balance between consciousness and subconsciousness as she describes a field of silence transformed into melodious blooming

(line 58–59). This transformation or rebirth is symbolic of the activation of her subconscious, allowing it to briefly emerge. The naiade's reference to the songs of Eurydice's lover, an allusion to Orpheus, (line 60–63), also stimulates her subjective thought, causing an emotional response.

The music then pauses as the oreade continues her temptation of the naiade, entreating her to be quiet and listen (line 65). At this point the naiade could resist, thereby restoring the artificial governance of emotion and dreams by her consciousness, or she could succumb, allowing the inner will to take control. The oreade's interjection in both music and words throws into relief the drama of the naiade's predicament.

As the naiade's monologue (lines 66–92) proceeds her response is to follow her most inner needs, causing the disruption of her conscious state of mind to intensify. The loss of rational control is an opportunity for the subconscious will to assert itself. As the will imposes a mounting pull on rational consciousness, the naiade describes her mental state as disordered and irrational. The poetic symbol of dancing with feet beating the ground (line 72) is both violent and sexual. The fierce image of feet beating the ground alludes to the battle between the two sides of her psyche. However, the pounding of these same feet in a dance also suggests an intense state of being such as in a state of ecstasy. The disorder, resulting from the conflict produces a type of delirium which the naiade describes as the mad abandonment of oneself (line 75). Her desire to be in an unconstrained state of mind like the other nymphs (lines 75–92) conveys her weakening resistance.

The emergence of the interior realm of emotion and dreams which gain control of the naiade's thought processes is depicted by a progression of images symbolic of light.

Beginning in line 54, light is released from darkness as the night loosens her girdle so that the stars may fall. As the narrative unfolds these images become increasingly more intense, moving from the neutrality of the sky (lines 75–92) to the heat of a “divine fire” (line 93). This fire, alluding to sexual arousal, emanates from outside the phenomenal world and symbolizes the emergence of the will. The naiade is completely immersed into an unfettered existence governed by emotion and dreams. In this state of mind she is rendered powerless and succumbs wholly to Pan.

The three stages described in lines 54–98 are given a musical representation in *La Flûte de Pan*. Table 3.1 shows the three-part division of both the poetry and music. Two signs in the score, a double bar (m. 8) and a *fermata* extended by a half-note (mm. 24–25), correspond to both the structure and imagery of the poetry. They reveal: 1) the disruption (green) in the psyche between the conscious realm and inner will of the subconscious, 2) the assertion of the inner will (red mixed with green), followed by 3) the emergence of the inner will as the controlling member of the psyche.

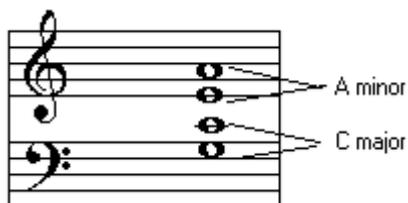
**Table 3.1. Three-part Division of Poem and Music**

Disruption	Assertion	Emergence
Lines 54-65	Lines 66-92	Lines 93-98
mm. 1-8 (double-bar)	mm. 9-24 (fermata)	mm. 25-35

The double-bar separating mm. 8–9 elucidates both musical and poetic processes. The sign articulates in the music the interruption of the oreade’s single sentence (line 65), confining the music to only the naiade’s monologue. As will be shown later, the double-bar also indicates in the score the conclusion of the exposition (m. 1–8) from which the remainder of the composition will unfold. The *fermata* linked to a half-note (m. 24) suggests an indeterminate length of pitch, paralleling the limitless proportions of the subconscious realm. The “divine fire” described in line 93 symbolizes the ascension of the inner will.

### **The Musical Realization of Disruption, Assertion and Emergence**

The tonal organization of this three-part process unfolds through a double-tonic complex of B $\flat$ /D $\flat$ . Robert Bailey describes a double-tonic complex as the pairing together of two tonalities a minor third apart that “goes beyond merely beginning in a minor key and concluding in its relative major.”<sup>3</sup> The two elements coexist in the tonal complex, with one taking the primary position while the other is subordinate. Bailey describes a double-tonic complex of A and C for the first act of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*. The duality of the complex is embodied in a chord (Figure 3.2) from Act 1 which alludes to both A minor and C major.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3.2. Double-triadic Sonority in *Tristan and Isolde***

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bailey, *Richard Wagner Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan and Isolde*. (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985) p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 124.

In *La Flûte de Pan* the dual nature of a double-tonic complex becomes a musical metaphor of the coexistent relationship between consciousness and the subconscious will. The composition begins with a tone center of B $\flat$ , representing consciousness, as the primary member and D $\flat$  as the secondary member or the will. The members of the double-tonic complex at the outset are linked through two whole-tone scales (Figure 3.3), encompassing the entire chromatic aggregate: WT1 with B $\flat$ , and WT2 with D $\flat$ .



**Figure 3.3. Primary and Secondary Whole-tone Scales and Tone Center**

Debussy's copious placement of *tenutos* highlights the melodic motion linking the two whole-tone scales. The pitches so marked, when separated by the double-bar and fermata, reveals a three-part construction analogous to the construction of the underlying drama (Figure 3.4).



**Figure 3.4. Movement from WT1 to WT2**

Figure 3.4 shows the pitches with *tenutos* divided into three sections by the double-bar (m. 8) and *fermata* (m. 24). More importantly however, each section begins with a descending motion from B $\flat$  to A $\flat$  within WT1 and concludes with an *arrival* on a



diatonic progression where B $\flat$  indirectly represents E $\flat$ , another member of WT2. The third section (emergence) is a type of resolution, completing the shift from B $\flat$ /WT1 to D $\flat$ /WT2 by chromatic motion.

### Disruption: Measures 1–8

The exposition of the double-tonic complex occurs in the opening phrase (m. 1–2) of *La Flûte de Pan* (Figure 3.6).

The figure shows a musical score for the opening phrase of *La Flûte de Pan*, measures 1 and 2. The music is in 3/4 time. Two whole-tone scales are interlocked: WT1 (circled in green) and WT2 (circled in red). WT1 consists of the notes B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , C $\flat$ . WT2 consists of the notes D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ . A 'Subsidiary Tone Center' (circled in red) is indicated by a bracket under the first two measures, centered on B $\flat$ . A 'Principal Tone Center' (circled in green) is indicated by a bracket under the first measure, centered on D $\flat$ . The phrase concludes with a half-note on B $\flat$  in measure 2.

**Figure 3.6. The Double-Tonic Complex (mm. 1–2)**

The two whole-tone scales are interlocked in the initial theme which expresses the double tonic complex of B $\flat$  and D $\flat$ . B $\flat$  has primacy here as indicated by its immediate assertion, metric emphasis on the downbeat of both measures, and the fact that it concludes the phrase. As shown in Figure 3.6, other pitches of WT1 (B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , G $\flat$ , E $\flat$ ) are also metrically prominent. The other member of the tonic complex, D $\flat$ , is subsidiary to the primacy of B $\flat$ . Although D $\flat$  occurs on a weak portion of the beat, giving it an apparent fleeting prominence, it is the goal of a directed melodic descent and the lowest pitch of the phrase. Moreover, the pitches from WT2 are all placed in weak metrical positions similar to D $\flat$ . The half-note on beats 2–3 of m. 2 is in contrast to the subdivisions of the beat in m. 1 and the first beat of m. 2. The result is a natural metric pause on B $\flat$ , providing a sense of melodic closure.



The theme in m. 1 contains two tetrachords, one associated with the principal tonal center, B $\flat$ , and the other with D $\flat$ .

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure is labeled 'm. 1'. The melody consists of four groups of notes, each with a fermata. The first group is B-flat, A, G-flat, E-flat, with a bracket above it labeled 'WT1/Tritone'. The second group is G-flat, F, E-flat, D-flat, with a bracket below it labeled 'D $\flat$  Major Tetrachord/ Perfect Fourth Obscured by E $\flat$ '. The E-flat note in the second group is circled in red.

**Figure 3.7. Tetrachords in the Double-Tonic Complex (m.1)**

The upper tetrachord of WT1 contains four descending pitches (B $\flat$ , A, G $\flat$ , E $\flat$ ) spanning a tritone. Each member of the tetrachord is rhythmically prominent so that WT1 articulates the primary tone center of B $\flat$ /WT1. The descending tetrachord from G $\flat$  to D $\flat$  spans a diatonic perfect fourth and alludes to the lower tetrachord of the D $\flat$  major scale. However, displacing the diatonic E $\flat$  with the chromatic E $\natural$  obscures the scale's identity and hides an unambiguous diatonic reference to D $\flat$ . Inclusion in the ambiguous tetrachord of pitches on strong beats from WT1, specifically G $\flat$  and E $\natural$ , gives melodic and rhythmic weight to the scale.

The *fermata*, along with a comma at the conclusion of m. 2 (see Figure 3.6), points to the compositional significance of the first two measures. This type of sign is found in other Debussy scores such as the *Piano Preludes*. In *Prelude VI "General Lavine"* from *Book II* (Figure 3.8) the comma and *fermata* separate two distinctly different passages of thematic material.

Theme 1

VI. "Général Lavine"—excentric

Dans le style et le Mouvement d'un Cake-Walk

The image displays a musical score for Debussy's 'Général Lavine' from Piano Preludes Book 2. It is divided into two main sections. The first section, labeled 'Theme 1', begins with the tempo instruction 'Dans le style et le Mouvement d'un Cake-Walk'. The music is in 2/4 time and features a 'strident' piano (*p*) melody in the right hand and a 'sec' (staccato) accompaniment in the left hand. A 'Comma with Fermata' is placed at the end of the first phrase. The second section, labeled 'Theme 2', is marked 'Spirituél et discret'. It features a 'dim.' (diminuendo) piano (*p*) melody in the right hand and a 'pp' (pianissimo) accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *ff p*, and *ff sec*, as well as performance instructions like 'm.d.', 'm.g.', and 'S.M.'. The piece concludes with a 'S.M.' (Sotto voce) marking.

Theme 2

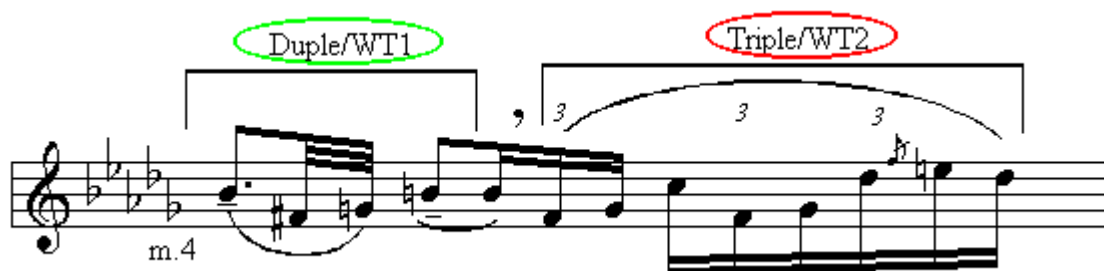
**Figure 3.8. Separation of Thematic Material by a Fermata and Comma**  
**Debussy, *Piano Preludes Book 2, General Lavine* (mm. 1–15)**

The two sections are seminal in that they are the exposition of the primary thematic material. The comma and *fermata* separate these important fragments and clarify their significance to the performer. The same sign at the conclusion of m. 2 in *La Flûte de Pan* (Figure 3.9) also delineates the expository phrase, containing the primary theme and unfolding tonic complex from which the composition evolves.



**Figure 3.9. Expository Phrase Highlighted by Comma and Fermata (mm. 1–2)**

The initial disruption between consciousness and the subconscious will described in lines 54–64 has its musical counterpart in m. 4 (Figure 3.10). A brief disturbance in the tonic complex is delineated by a change from duple to triple rhythm, corresponding to a shift from WT1 to WT2.



**Figure 3.10. Shift in Primary Whole-tone Scale and Rhythm (m. 4)**

Following a restatement of the first phrase in duple rhythm (m. 3), a new theme in triplet rhythm is presented (m. 4). A comma inserted between B $\flat$  and B $\sharp$  in m. 4 divides the two motives. The *tenutos* on B $\flat$  and B $\sharp$  in m. 4 articulate the shift from WT1 to WT2 (see Figure 3.4). Introduction of a new rhythmic motive and a new primary scale (WT2) disturbs the stability in the hierarchy of the two tone centers and corresponds, in the technical sense of symbolist poetry, to the disruption of the naiade's state of mind portrayed in the narrative.

In a departure from the Jobert edition (see Chapter 1) the Brussels manuscript contains three commas. The discrepancy between the two versions suggests a purpose other than mere breathing. The first comma at the conclusion of m. 2 is inscribed together with a *fermata*. The remaining two commas in *La Flûte de Pan*, m. 4 (Figure 3.11) and m. 14 (Figure 3.12) are placed at points of change in rhythmic motives, separating a duple from a triple motive.



**Figure 3.11. Commas Separating Duple and Triple Rhythm (m. 4)**

**Figure 3.12. Comma Separating Duple and Triple Rhythm (m. 13–15)**

Examples of such commas, separating different thematic motives, are similarly found in the *Piano Preludes*, as for instance in *Prelude VI, Des pas sur la neige*, from *Book I* (Figure 3.13).

**Figure 3.13. Commas Articulating Thematic Motives**  
**Debussy, *Piano Préludes Book 1, Des pas sur la neige* (mm. 1–7)**

A comma appears between mm. 2 and 3 dividing thematic motives, one in duple and the other in triple rhythm, indicating to the performer a slight pause, highlighting their differences. Similarly another comma, inscribed at the end of m. 7, has the same effect of isolating the fragment containing a triplet.

In *La Flûte de Pan*, changes in rhythmic motives correspond to a shift in the primary whole-tone scale. The change from duple to triple motive in m. 4, articulated by a comma, corresponds to the change from WT1 to WT2. Additionally, a reinterpretation of G<sub>b</sub> to F<sub>#</sub> in m. 4 (Figure 3.14), followed by an ascending perfect fourth, form a correlative opposite to m. 1. The result of these two changes disrupts the double-tonic complex by a temporarily shifting WT2 to the primary position.

Figure 3.14 shows the  $G\flat$  in m. 1 (circled in blue) which conjoins the  $B\flat$ – $G\flat$  span and the descending perfect fourth,  $G\flat$  to  $D\flat$ .

**Figure 3.14. Elements in m. 1 (m. 1)**

**Figure 3.15. Reinterpretation and Correlative Opposite to m. 1 (m. 4)**

Figure 3.15 shows the reinterpretation of the descending major third,  $B\flat$ – $G\flat$ , from m. 1 becoming  $B$  to  $F\sharp$  in m. 4. This alteration is followed by an ascending perfect fourth, from  $F\sharp$  to  $B\sharp$ , outlining members from the upper tetrachord of the B-minor scale. The ascending perfect fourth is the correlative opposite to the implied perfect fourth ( $G\flat$  to  $D\flat$ ) in m. 1. Unlike m. 1, the perfect fourth in m. 4 is not obscured by the inclusion of chromatic pitches outside a diatonic scale. An unobscured tetrachord from the B-minor scale is formed by the pitches  $F\sharp$ ,  $G\sharp$ , and  $B\sharp$ . Unlike m.1 where  $D\flat$  major is hidden by the inclusion of  $E\sharp$ , this tetrachord does not include any chromatic pitches from outside of B-minor thereby stressing  $B\sharp$ , a pitch from WT2. The motion of  $F\sharp$  to  $B\sharp$  is like the process

shown in Figure 3.5, where a linear expression of V–I projects an arrival on  $B\sharp$  from WT2. The arrival on a pitch from WT2 disrupts the tonic complex by the change of the subordinate scale to a primary position.

The disorder in m. 4 is temporary, as happens when the realm of the subconscious will briefly emerges when recollecting a dream. A psyche governed by consciousness immediately returns to a normal state, enclosing this will within the boundaries of consciousness. When the naiade briefly recalls the music of Orpheus' lyre, she activates her inner will, but quickly regains conscious control, returning to rational thought and the physical world by engaging the oreade with a question of "Is this not so?" (line 64).

A return to duple rhythm in mm. 6–8 (Figure 3.16) restores the hierarchy of the complex with  $B\flat$  as principal tone center and  $D\flat$  as subsidiary.

The figure shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure is labeled 'm. 6'. The notation includes a descending line of notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note G4, and finally a half note F4. Two tetrachords are outlined with brackets above the staff: WT1 (green) spans from G4 to D4, and WT2 (red) spans from F4 to D4. Below the staff, two boxes indicate the scales: 'D-flat major Hidden by C-flat' and 'B-flat minor Diatonic'. The notes G4 and F4 are circled in red and green respectively, corresponding to the tetrachords.

**Figure 3.16. Restoration of Double-tonic Complex (mm. 6–8)**

Two implied tetrachords are outlined in these measures. The inclusion of both diatonic and whole-tone elements defines the primary and subsidiary tonal centers. In m. 1 the descending tetrachord,  $G\flat$ – $D\flat$ , was hidden by inclusion of  $E\sharp$  from WT1 (see Figure 3.14). In mm. 6–7,  $A\flat$  to  $D\flat$ , the upper tetrachord of the  $D\flat$  major scale is hidden by

inclusion of C<sub>b</sub>. The descending perfect fourth from E<sub>b</sub> to B<sub>b</sub> (m. 8) implies the lower tetrachord of the B<sub>b</sub> minor scale. Similar to m. 4 (see Figure 3.15), the perfect fourth alludes to a tetrachord derived from a diatonic scale, thereby stressing a primary tone center (in this case B<sub>b</sub>). The relationship between WT1 and WT2 is restored as well. WT1 (A<sub>b</sub> and B<sub>b</sub>) encloses WT2 (C<sub>b</sub>, D<sub>b</sub>, and E<sub>b</sub>). The conjunct succession of B<sub>b</sub> to A<sub>b</sub> from WT1 in m. 1 is answered at the conclusion of the first section by the opposite motion, A<sub>b</sub> to B<sub>b</sub>, separated with intervening pitches.

The opening eight measures of *La Flûte de Pan* are a type of exposition, presenting the basic material and processes of the composition while also prefiguring its tripartite construction. The opening theme (mm. 1–2) introduces the double-tonic complex of B<sub>b</sub>/WT1 and D<sub>b</sub>/WT2. The temporary emergence of the subsidiary scale, WT2, associated with D<sub>b</sub> briefly disrupts the initial balance within the complex, introducing a contrasting motivic element in triple rhythm (mm. 4–5). The conclusion of the first section (mm. 6–8) restores the internal balance within the tonic complex, while the return of a duple rhythm is suggestive of the opening phrase.

#### **Assertion: Measures 9–24**

Mm. 9–24 correspond to the transformation and assertion process in the poem. A disordered state of mind expressed by the naiade in her accompanying monologue (lines 66–92) contains imagery which has evolved from material introduced earlier in the scene. Each image begins with a barren, stagnant quality of “dried up banks” and “ravaged beds” to become representations of fertility and fluidity by “banks of calm waters” and to “roll upon a bed of red hyacinths” (see Table 2.2 Chapter 2). This change in imagery represents the activation of the subconscious will where emotions and dreams enliven the



sterility of every-day human existence, transforming its previous role from a passive to an active state.

Just as the poem depicts the will transformed from a subdued to an active state, the role of WT2 is changed from subordinate to primary. Elements such as rhythmically prominent pitches and a descending tritone derived from WT2 transfers the scale from a passive to an assertive role, taking control of tonal process as the will assumes control over the naiade. In the music, WT2 becomes the scale bearing B $\flat$ , as a member of the tonic complex. A change from duple to triple rhythmic motive prefigures the shift in primacy within the tonic complex expressed by the shift from WT1 to WT2. The assertion process begins in mm. 13 and 14 (Figure 3.17).



**Figure 3.17. Beginning of Assertion by WT2 (mm. 13–14)**

In these measures, members of WT2, A $\sharp$  and E $\flat$ , occur on the beat forming a tritone. Similar to m. 1 (see Figure 3.7), the tritone elucidates the primary scale of WT2. The comma in m. 14 articulates the duple rhythmic motive (mm. 9–13) from the triple rhythmic motive (mm. 15–24, see Figure 3.12). Just as in m. 4, the change in rhythmic motive indicates a disruption in the tonic complex by a shift to WT2 as the new primary element. However, unlike the disruption in m. 4, the new primary element is also expressed by a tritone derived from the scale.

Lines 78–93 in the poem trace a progression of symbols associated with light. The advancement of increasingly intense light sources which move from neutrality, to heat, to “divine fire,” represents the growth of the subconscious will over rational control. The culmination of this progression in a divine fire symbolizes the naiade’s altered state of mind totally governed by this will.

As the images of light intensify in the poem so does the new primary element, WT2. The nine measures (mm. 15–24) of triple rhythm after the comma exceeds the preceding five measures of duple rhythm (mm. 9–13). This expansion of thematic material in triple rhythm corresponds to the increasing strength of the subconscious will over consciousness depicted in the narrative.

The concluding lines (lines 89–92) relate a transformation. The nymph, described by the naiade, as one who “no longer sees with eyes sparkling like two spots of the sun in the fronds of her hair which envelope and hide her” has been so altered that she no longer understands her perceptions. The emerging will has blinded her so that now emotion and dream control her vision. The normal function of her sight has been altered.

This process is conveyed musically through a transformation in the function of the two whole-tone scales in which WT2 displaces WT1 as the defining associative element for  $B_b$ , the primary tone center. Mm. 6–8 from the exposition of the tonic complex are transformed in mm. 20–21 so that the primary tone center,  $B_b$  expressed by WT1 (mm. 6–8) is transformed to  $B_b$  expressed by WT2 (mm. 20–21). The change in function for WT2 results from the shifting of diatonic versus whole-tone elements in the implied tetrachords from these measures.

In mm. 6–8 (Figure 3.18) WT2 is subsidiary, subsumed within WT1 and encapsulated within the whole tone  $A_b$  to  $B_b$ . Note that the ascending tetrachord from the  $D_b$  major scale is obscured by the inclusion of  $C_b$  (circled in pink) derived from WT2. A descending perfect fourth from  $E_b$  to  $B_b$  has diatonic properties by alluding to the lower tetrachord of the  $B_b$  minor scale.

The diagram shows a musical staff for measures 6-8. A large bracket labeled 'WT1' spans the entire passage. A smaller bracket labeled 'WT2' is nested within it, covering measures 7 and 8. A pink circle highlights the notes  $C_b$  and  $D_b$  in measure 7. Below the staff, two boxes are present: the left one is labeled 'D $_b$  major Hidden by  $C_b$ ' and the right one is labeled 'B $_b$  minor Diatonic'. The measure number 'm. 6' is written below the first measure.

**Figure 3.18. Diatonic and Whole-tone Elements in Tetrachords (mm. 6–8)**

Mm. 20–21 (Figure 3.19) correspond to the earlier measures (mm. 6–8). The relationship between the two whole-tone scales remains the same with  $A_b$ – $B_b$ /WT1 enclosing pitches from WT2.

The diagram shows a musical staff for measures 20-21. A large bracket labeled 'WT1' spans the entire passage. A smaller bracket labeled 'WT2' is nested within it, covering measures 21 and 22. A pink circle highlights the notes  $C_b$  and  $D_b$  in measure 21. Below the staff, two boxes are present: the left one is labeled 'D $_b$  Major Diatonic' and the right one is labeled 'B $_b$  Minor Obscured by  $C_b$ '. The measure number 'm. 20' is written below the first measure.

**Figure 3.19. Shift of Diatonic and Whole-tone Properties (mm. 20–21)**

However, the properties of the two tetrachords implying D<sub>b</sub> major and B<sub>b</sub> minor are reversed. The ascending perfect fourth A<sub>b</sub>–D<sub>b</sub> is diatonic, filled in with pitches from D<sub>b</sub> major forming a pentatonic scale. The perfect fourth E<sub>b</sub>–B<sub>b</sub> is filled in with pitches from WT2. The C<sub>b</sub> which embedded whole-tone elements in the D<sub>b</sub> tetrachord in m. 6 (Figure 3.18), shifts to the B<sub>b</sub> minor tetrachord in m. 21 (Figure 3.19).

In mm. 20–21 and mm. 6–8, B<sub>b</sub> is the primary tonal center, articulated by the whole step A<sub>b</sub>–B<sub>b</sub> from WT1. Shifting C<sub>b</sub>, a member of WT2, to the implied tetrachord of B<sub>b</sub> minor elevates the status of WT2, asserting its primacy. Thus the primary element defining the principal tone center of B<sub>b</sub> becomes B<sub>b</sub>/WT2.

### **Emergence: Measures 25–35**

The naiade succumbs to her inner will when she says “the same ardor spreads through my veins” (line 95). Her reference to “the same ardor” indicates that the naiade now is the same as the nymphs described in lines 71–92. The sound of Pan’s *syrinx*, “like a wine” (line 96–97) has placed her in a hazy, intoxicated state, and she has lost all means of resistance. The unrestricted realm of her subconscious mind has overtaken the sobriety of her consciousness. The naiade’s final words “Pan, I no longer fear you, I am yours” (line 98) indirectly express her joy and the removal of all moral obstacles which her consciousness imposed, completely immersing her into a place where only emotion and dreams rule.

In the final measures of the composition D<sub>b</sub>, the subsidiary tone center representing the inner will, gains primacy, symbolizing the naiade’s transformation. Following the assertion of WT2 as the defining element for B<sub>b</sub> (mm. 9–24), the tonic complex begins to unravel. Beginning with a restatement in m. 26 of the opening theme

from m. 1 which introduced the tonic complex, motives from this theme are transformed sequentially from duple to triple rhythm. This change to the rhythmic motive associated with  $D_b$  dismantles the relationship between the two tone-centers of the double-tonic complex.

The three beats of m. 1 (Figure 3.20) comprise two motives in duple rhythm.



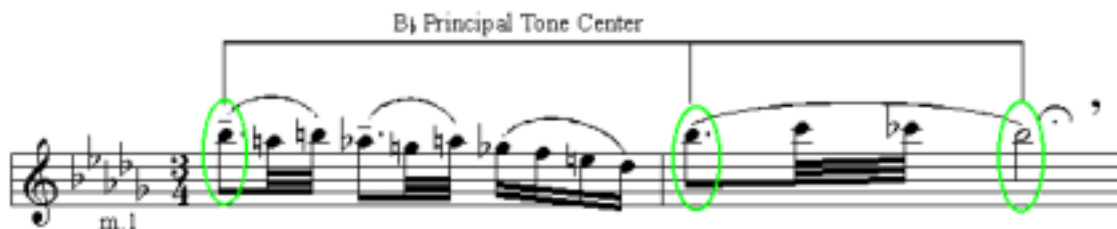
**Figure 3.20. Duple Motives in Initial Phrase (m. 1)**

In mm. 29–30 the first two beats are transformed to a triplet motive (Figure 3.21).



**Figure 3.21. Transformation of Duple Motive to Triplet Motive (mm. 29–31)**

This change in rhythm gives greater rhythmic prominence to pitches from WT2. The thirty-second notes in m. 1 become sixteenth-notes, equal in length to those of WT1. The four sixteenth-notes of the third beat in m. 1 are also transformed to a triplet in m. 31. The  $D_b$ , given fleeting prominence in m. 1, is changed to a quarter-note, becoming the pitch of longest duration in these two measures.  $D_b$ , the terminus of the melodic descent in m. 1, is fully revealed as the primary tone center in the concluding measures of the composition. Like  $B_b$  in the opening measures (Figure 3.22)  $D_b$  is stressed durationally in mm. 31–32 (Figure 3.23).



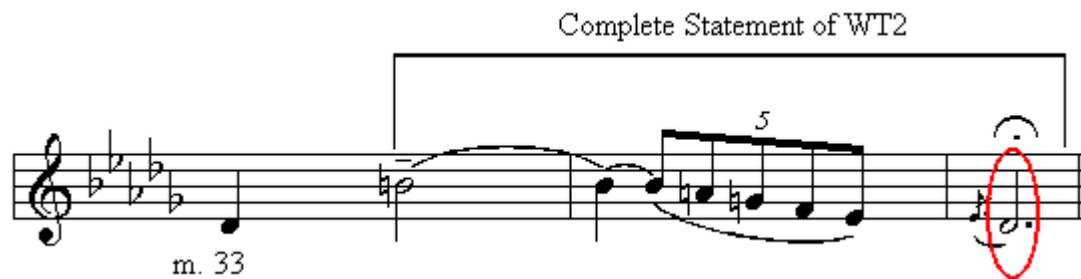
**Figure 3.22. B $\flat$  Principal Tone Center (mm. 1–2)**



**Figure 3.23. D $\flat$  Principal Tone Center (mm. 31–32)**

In mm. 1–2 the primary tone center B $\flat$  was placed on the first beat of each measure as well as the concluding two beats of the phrase. In mm. 31–32, D $\flat$  occurs on the all the principal beats.

As the naiade utters, “Pan I no longer fear you, I am yours,” she submits to a new master and passes into another state of being. With the confines of consciousness subdued the will of the subconscious world emerges. At the conclusion of *La Flûte de Pan* the relationship within the tonic complex is reversed, and the subsidiary tonal center becomes the primary tonal center. The naiade’s passage into a realm of infinite proportions coincides with a complete statement of WT2 (Figure 3.24).



**Figure 3.24. Complete Statement of WT 2 (mm. 33–35)**

Just as the boundaries of the subconscious are undefined, this scale of equidistant pitches without a leading-tone is a metaphor of the unlimited possibilities associated with emotion and dreams.

## Chapter 4

### **The Confluence of Word and Music in Performance.**

The confluence of two rivers is a convergence, unified through a blending and alignment of their properties so that they flow together. Similarly, a melodramatic confluence of poetry and music blends both elements in order to proceed as a cohesive whole. When properties of both elements, such as the imagery and semantic meaning of the poem and the underlying compositional process of the music engage each other, an intelligible work of art is the result which in turn enhances comprehension of the drama by the audience. Since *La Flûte de Pan* was crafted as a component of a melodrama, a performance with spoken poetry reflects how the conflux between word and music operates.

### **Blending of Compositional Process and Poetry**

*La Flûte de Pan* is a musical metaphor of the narrative's imagery and drama. The double-tonic complex with its inherent duality alludes to the nature of the psyche as described by Schopenhauer, comprising consciousness and a subconscious natural will. A disturbance and subsequent transformation of the naiade's state of mind so that she is controlled by her inner will parallels the disruption of the double-tonic complex in the music. The two tone-centers comprise B $\flat$  associated with consciousness and D $\flat$  with the subconscious will. As the subconscious will of the naiade subdues her consciousness, emerging as the controlling side of her psyche, D $\flat$  is likewise transformed into the primary tone center.

The confluence of music and poem begins with an exposition of the tonic complex in mm.1–2 (Figure 4.1). The *fermata* and comma at the conclusion of m. 2



creates a cessation in the flow of the music. An immediate pause, after only two measures, draws attention to the thematic material from which the composition will unfold. In performance, the *fermata*, should be long enough to create a dramatic silence.



**Figure 4.1. Pause Following Presentation of Double-tonic complex**

Beyond articulating the exposition of the double-tonic complex (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.6), the *fermata* and comma also facilitates the logical progression of the narrative. According to the Brussels manuscript, the cue *Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence a jouer* [But hark, Pan begins to play his flute again] (line 53) is spoken by the oreade before m. 1. There is no instruction or cue indicating where the naiade begins to speak again once the music has started, but imagery in the poetry suggests that narrative may have begun following m. 2.

When the flute enters following line 53, the naiade begins her monologue with an exclamation of *Prodige* [Marvel] (line 54). The naiade's expression of marvel is a reaction to the music of Pan's flute. Before the sound of the flute is heard, the nymph was fearful and defensive (lines 30–36 and 42–43), expressing the desire to hide or disappear (line 36). Once the music begins, the naiade's words express an abrupt change of attitude. The transformation seems to be attributable to the sound of Pan's flute, since from line 54 to the end of the scene she embraces her surroundings, describing the night releasing the stars (lines 54–57) into fields where they melodiously bloom (lines 58–59).

Therefore, the confluence of music and poem in mm. 1–2 are the exposition of both the double-tonic complex and stimulus for the disruption of the naiade’s psyche.

Figure 4.2 shows how a performance with poetry should proceed with mm. 1–2, occurring before the naiade begins to speak. The oreade’s sentence before m.1 is located according to the Brussels manuscript. The naiade’s sentence, not shown in the manuscript, is placed after m. 2. The music in m. 3 may begin at any point following *Prodige*.

**Oreade:** *Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence a jouer*

Presentation of Double-Tonic Complex and Principal Tone Center

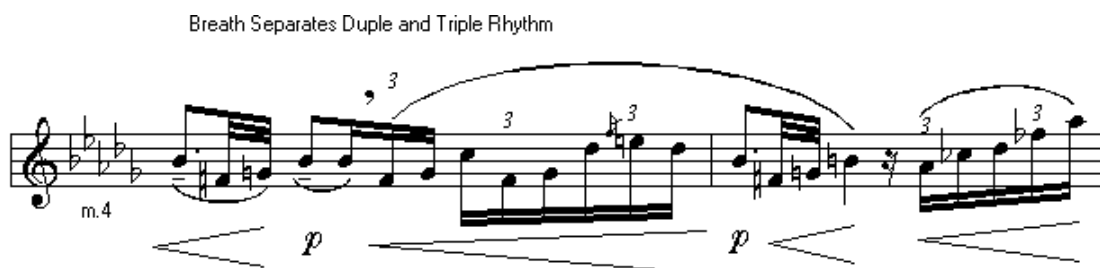
m. 1    *mf*

**Naiade:** *Prodige! Il semble que la Nuit ait dénoué*

**Figure 4.2 Placement of Music in Poetry (mm. 1–2)**

Other signs in the score reinforce the blending of music and poem. The commas in mm. 4 and 14 articulate important changes in motivic construction, stressing the switch from the duple rhythm associated with WT1 to the triple rhythm associated with WT2 (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.11 and Figure 3.12). A brief interruption in the music arising from a quick catch-breath, even if not physically required, articulates the shift in the primary whole-tone scale. Walfred Kujala recommends elimination of the comma in m. 4 (Figure 4.3) if a breath is not necessary before the natural pause of the sixteenth-note rest

in m. 5.<sup>1</sup> However, this would obscure the separation of two significant rhythmic motives, that is the change from duple to triple rhythm.



**Figure 4.3. Comma Separating Duple and Triple Rhythm (mm. 4–5)**

Kujala does go on to rightly point out that the numerous breath marks in the Jobert edition were probably not Debussy's and can therefore be ignored. In light of the rediscovered manuscript (see Chapter 1), his speculation was correct with the exception of the commas in mm. 4 and 14.

Two other differences between the Brussels manuscript and Jobert edition occur in mm. 31 and 34. In both cases the manuscript reflects more clearly on the unfolding compositional process in the music, making it the better reference for conveying the confluence of music and poem.

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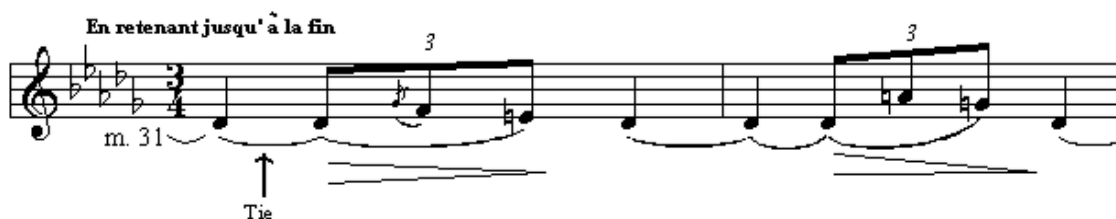
<sup>1</sup>Walfred Kujala, "A Performance Checklist for Debussy's *Syrinx*." *The Instrumentalist* 30 (February, 1976): 45.

In m. 31, the Jobert edition (Figure 4.4) places a comma after the first beat.



**Figure 4.4. Comma in Jobert edition (mm. 31–32)**

However the Brussels manuscript (Figure 4.5) ties the first and second beat together, eliminating the possibility of a breath.



**Figure 4.5. Tie in Brussels Manuscript (mm. 31–32)**

A breath between the first and second beat of m. 31 obscures an important change in the rhythmic motive, derived from the presentation of the tonic complex in m. 1. In mm. 29–31 motives from m. 1 are transformed sequentially from duple to triple rhythm. The first two beats of m. 1 are altered to a triplet in mm. 29–30 and in m. 31 the four sixteenth-notes of the third beat of m. 1 become a triplet motive (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.20 and 3.21). Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7 show how the tie linking mm. 30–31 connects the transformation of the duple motive from m. 1 to a triple motive in m. 31. Figure 4.6 shows the two duple motives (pink and blue) from m. 1.



**Figure 4.6. Duple Rhythm on Third Beat (m. 1)**

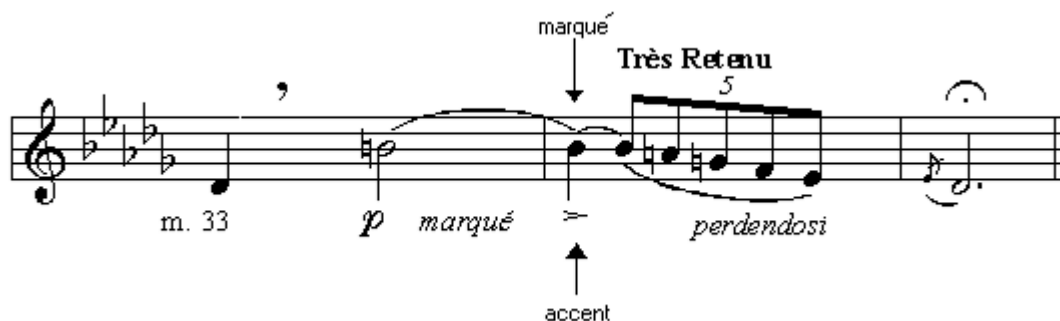
Figure 4.7 shows the first motive (pink) transformed into a triplet in m. 30. The second motive (blue) is repeated on the third beat of m. 30 in duple rhythm and then transformed through the tie on D $\flat$  to a triplet rhythm in m. 31.



**Figure 4.7. Tie Connecting Transformation From Duple to Triplet Rhythm**

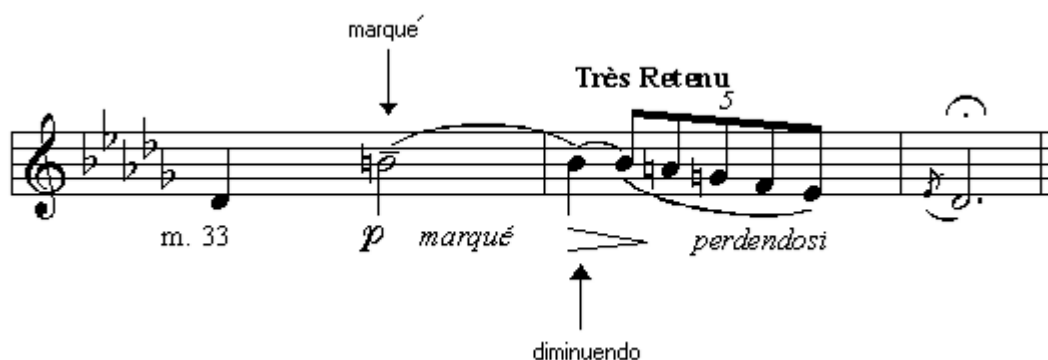
The tie on D $\flat$  in the Brussels manuscript, eliminating a breath between the first and second beat links the change in rhythm together, making the transformation audible and intelligible.

Another discrepancy between the Jobert edition and the Brussels manuscript found in m. 34 challenges a popular interpretation. The Jobert edition (Figure 4.8) places an accent beneath the first quarter-note of m. 34.



**Figure 4.8. Marqué and Accent in Jobert Edition (mm. 33–35)**

The Brussels manuscript clearly shows a diminuendo (Figure 4.9). A popular interpretation has been a breath accent occurring in the middle of the tie on the first beat of m. 34.



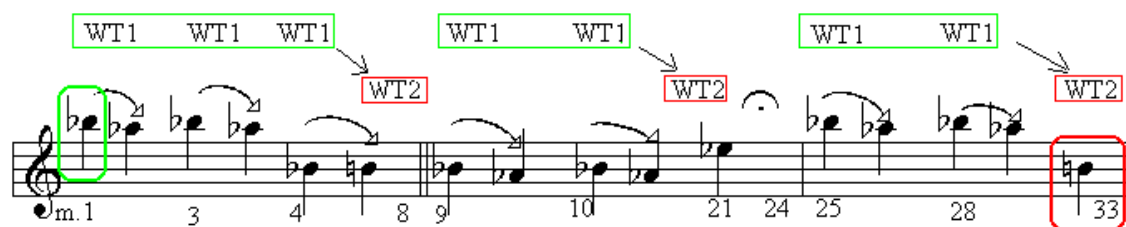
**Figure 4.9. Marqué and Diminuendo in Brussels Manuscript (mm. 33–35)**

Jean-Pierre Rampal describes the effect as the “final exhalation” of Pan.<sup>2</sup> According to Rampal, the word *marqué* also refers to the accent on the first beat of m. 34 (see Figure 4.8). The instructions for a breath accent on this beat are based upon the assumption that the music was placed at the death of Pan later in the scene. He goes on to describe the descending whole-tone scale in m. 34 as a musical description of Pan’s final collapse. The cues in the Brussels manuscript dispel this notion and support the conclusions of Helmut Seraphin, locating *La Flûte de Pan* earlier in the scene. (see Chapter 1) In light of

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre Rampal, “Jean-Pierre Rampal on Syrinx: Another point of view” *Flute Talk* 10:7 (March, 1991): 12-13.

the recovered manuscript, the breath accent is a mistake. The diminuendo found in the manuscript prompts Trevor Wye to implore flutists to “stop playing that silly hiccough before the end of this wonderful piece.”<sup>3</sup>

The inscription, *marqué*, probably refers to the B $\natural$  half-note in m. 33, stressing the first pitch of the new primary whole-tone scale, WT2 (see Figure 4.9). The instruction also emphasizes the conclusion of an ongoing tonal procedure, indicated by the *tenuto* on the same note. The *tenuto*'s are placed on pitches throughout the composition as a means of bringing out the movement between the two whole-tone scales. Figure 4.10 shows this movement between WT1 (green) and WT2 (red) with the first and final pitches circled.



**Figure 4.10 Order of Tenutos**

The B $\natural$  in m. 33, circled in red, is the completion of this movement. Therefore, the *marqué* in m. 33 stresses the arrival on B $\natural$  before a complete revelation of WT2 in m. 34. The placement of a breath accent on the first beat of m. 34, though descriptive of a “final exhalation,” illuminates neither the drama nor compositional process.

### **Association of Music and Poem**

The various articulation signs in the score assist the performer in conveying important aspects of the music's structure. However, the melodramatic context from which *La Flûte de Pan* was conceived invites more metaphoric connections between the

<sup>3</sup>Trevor Wye, “Syrinx or La Flûte de Pan.” *The Flutist Quarterly*. 21:2 (Winter, 1995/96): 69.

poem and music. Though a melodrama, unlike a song, does not require precise correlation between spoken phrases and music, the resulting interaction between the two entities generates an intensified dramatic presentation in which the music adds to the interpretation and understanding of the poem.

Similar to word painting in a song, Debussy appears to associate poem and music in *La Flûte de Pan* by incorporation of music whose characteristics illustrate the literal meaning of certain phrases or words. The word references and corresponding music are shown in Table 4.1 with the relevant word underlined.

**Table 4.1. Word Reference and Musical Illustration**

Line of Poem	Word Reference	Measure
63	<i>Les cordes d'airain de sa <u>lyre</u></i> [On the strings of his <u>lyre</u> ]	m. 5
75–76	<i>Eperdûment livrer mon corps A la force <u>ondoyante</u> et rythmique des choses!</i>  [Madly abandon my body to the <u>undulating</u> and rhythmic power of things!]	m. 15
88	<i>Se <u>roule</u> sur ce lit de rouges hyacinthes...</i>  [ <u>Rolls</u> upon this bed of red hyacinths]	m. 22
90–91	<i><u>Enticeler</u>, telles deux taches De soleil, dans la frondaison de ses cheveux</i>  [ <u>Sparkling</u> like two spots of the sun in the fronds of her hair]	mm. 23–24
96–97	<i>O, Pan, les sons de ta syrinx, ainsi qu'un vin Trop odorant et trop doux, <u>m'ont grisée</u>'</i>  [O Pan the sounds of thy syrinx, like a wine too fragrant and too sweet, have <u>intoxicated me</u> .]	mm. 29–30



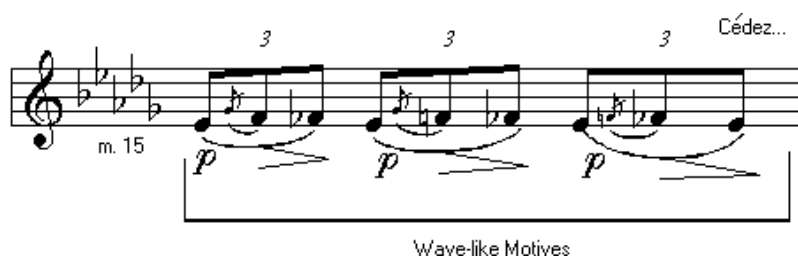
In m. 5 (Figure 4.11) the ascending triplets mimic a glissando across the strings of a lyre.



**Figure 4.11. Illustration of Lyre (mm. 5–6)**

A sixteenth-note rest and dotted eighth-note rest on either side frames the figure. The pause creates a disruption in the continual sound of the flute melody just as the momentary recollection of Orpheus' songs cause a psychological disturbance in the naiade, activating her subconscious.

The repetitive triplets in m. 15 (Figure 4.12) are musical images of the wave-like rhythm described in the poem. Each triplet, marked by a diminuendo creates the effect of a rolling or undulating rhythmic motion.



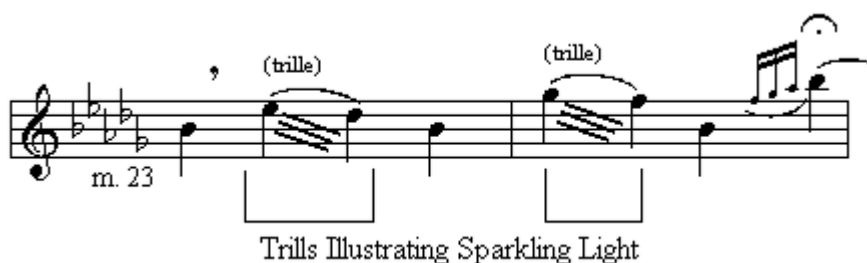
**Figure 4.12 Undulating Rhythm (m. 15)**

An image of rolling upon a bed is projected in m. 22 (Figure 4.13) by figures which begin on B $\flat$  and increase in both the speed of the rhythm and pulse, as indicated by *en animant peu à peu*.



**Figure 4.13. Illustration of Rolling (m. 22)**

And the trills in mm. 23–24 (Figure 4.14) suggest the image of sparkling light.



**Figure 4.14. Sparkling Light (mm. 23–24)**

The 3/4, meter changes to 2/4 in mm. 29–30 and then back in m. 3 (Figure 4.15), creating an illusion of instability like that experienced in a state of intoxication.



**Figure 4.15 Illusion of Intoxication (mm. 29–30)**

In vocal music, a composer is able to connect illustrative passages of music with the appropriate words. However a melodrama does not provide the same control over the recitation. In order for music and recitation to coalesce, responsive interaction is essential between the off-stage musician and the actors on stage. While the precise word and characteristic music need not necessarily occur at precisely the same time, some convergence is necessary or the purpose of the music is diminished.

Michael Stegemann has pointed out discrepancies between the writing found in authentic manuscripts of the Debussy *Préludes* and that of *La Flûte de Pan*. In particular, Stegemann points to differences between certain letters contained in *modéré*, *rubato*, *cédez*, and *retenu* from *La Flûte de Pan* and the same letters inscribed in the *Préludes*. There are no authenticated examples of Fleury's handwriting that might prove he wrote these words in *La Flûte de Pan*. Nevertheless, the differences in handwriting and other observations lead Stegemann to conclude that the Brussels manuscript may possibly be Fleury's own performance copy from the December premiere (see Chapter 1). The possibility that some of the tempo indications may have been written by a performer and not the composer, suggests that these words were inscribed for ease of performance. This may have been the reason for the inscription of *rubato* in m.16 since the flexibility of tempo facilitates the connection between illustrative music and words for the measures which follow.

The music in mm. 16–24 corresponds to the portion of the poem where the naiade describes four nymphs seen in the grotto. The nymphs, first presented in the setting for the scene (see Appendix A), are dancing, moving about in musical poses, picking flowers, and looking at themselves in the water. The naiade describes the nymphs in more detail in lines 77–92. Characteristics from these descriptions are illustrated in the music in mm. 16–24. In the following figures the poetic description for each nymph is listed along with the corresponding measure or measures of illustrative music.

**Nymph 1**

Lines 77–82

**Description**

Celle-ci qui, dans sa grâce légère,  
 Elève vers le ciel là-bas  
 Ses beaux bras,  
 Ressemble, au bords des calmes eaux  
 Où elle se reflète, un grand oiseau  
 Impatient de la lumière...

This one who, with nimble grace,  
 Lifts toward the sky  
 Her beautiful arms,  
 Resembles, along the bank of calm waters,  
 In which it is reflected, a large bird  
 Impatient for the light...



**Figure 4.16. Nymph 1 (mm. 16–18, lines 77–82)**

The ascending eighth-notes underscored by a *crescendo* in m. 16 (Figure 4.16) depicts arms lifted toward the sky. The resemblance follows in m. 18 by a repeat of the same figure.

**Nymph 2**

Lines 83–86

**Description**

Et celle-là que des feuilles  
 couronnent  
 Et qui, si complaisamment,  
 donne

Aux lèvres de la lune à baiser ses  
 seins blancs

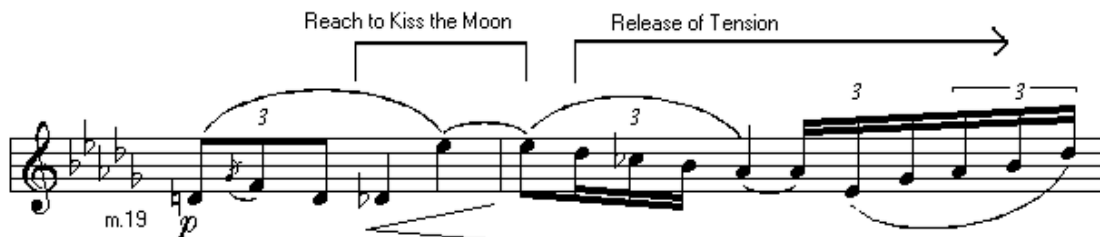
Et l'urne close de ses flancs...

And that one there that leaves  
 crown

Who, so complaisantly, gives

A kiss to the lip of the moon by  
 her white breasts

And closes the urn of her womb...



**Figure 4.17. Nymph 2 (mm. 19–20)**

An ascending leap of a major ninth captures the movement of reaching towards an object, and the *crescendo*, covering the span of the interval heightens the intensity of the music and the sensuousness of the kiss (Figure 4.17). The rapid triplets in m. 20 releases the tension of m.19 as one would feel following an embrace.

### Nymph 3 Description

Lines 87–88

Et cette autre tout près qui, lascive, sans feinte, Se roule sur ce lit de rouges hyacinthes...	And this one nearby, who lasciviously, openly, Rolls upon this bed of red hyacinths
--	--



Figure 4.18. Nymph 3 (m. 22)

As was noted earlier, the speed and pulse of this measure (Figure 4.18) is reminiscent of rolling or tumbling.

### Nymph 4 Description

Lines 89–92

Et cette autre dont on ne voit plus que les yeux Enticeler, telles deux taches De soleil, dans la frondaison de ses cheveux Qui l'enveloppent et la cachent...	And this other one which no longer sees with eyes Sparkling, like two spots Of the sun, in the fronds of her hair Which envelopes and hides her ...
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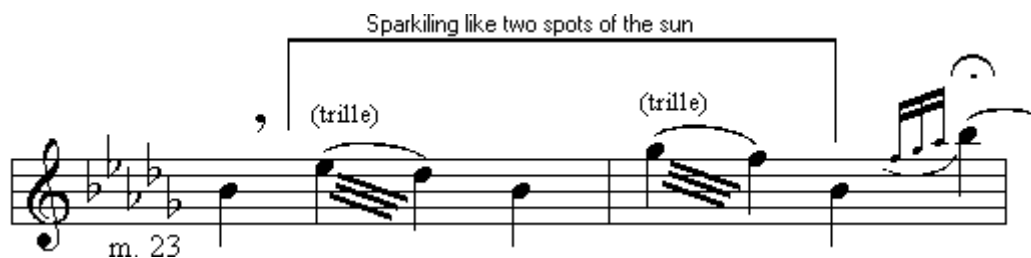


Figure 4.19. Nymph 4 (mm. 23–24)

The trills in mm.23–24 (Figure 4.19) reflect the sparkling of sunlight. The melodic ascent of an  $E_b-D_b$  and  $G_b-F_b$  *trille* is a musical metaphor of a rising flame [From the flesh of all of them a divine fire flows] (line 93) which follows the description of the nymph 4.

In this passage describing the nymphs a total of nine measures (mm. 16–24) correspond to sixteen lines (lines 77–92) of poetry. In Table 4.2, the lines describing each nymph and the number of corresponding measures are given.

**Table 4.2. Lines and Measures of Music for Nymphs**

Nymph	Number of Lines	Number of Measures
1	6	3
2	4	3
3	2	1
4	4	2

The ratio between number of lines and measures for each nymph (6:3, 4:3, 2:1, 4:2) is not proportional. For example, nymph 2 and 4 are both described in four lines of poetry yet the number of corresponding measures is different. However, the greatest number of lines (nymph 1) is given the most measures of music or 6:3 and the shortest number (nymph 3) the fewest or 2:1. A *rubato* tempo, beginning in m. 16, allows for adjustments in performance, compensating for the differing proportions between music and lines of poetry creating a coherent flow.

The *fermata* over the last note of m. 24 also maintains the alignment between the poem and music (Figure 4.20).

**Nymph 3**

And this one nearby, who lasciviously, openly  
Rolls upon a bed of red hyacinths

*en animant peu à peu*

m. 22

**Nymph 4**

And this other one which no longer sees with eyes  
Sparkling like two spots of the sun  
In the fronds of her hair  
Which envelope and hide her

(trille) (trille)

m. 23

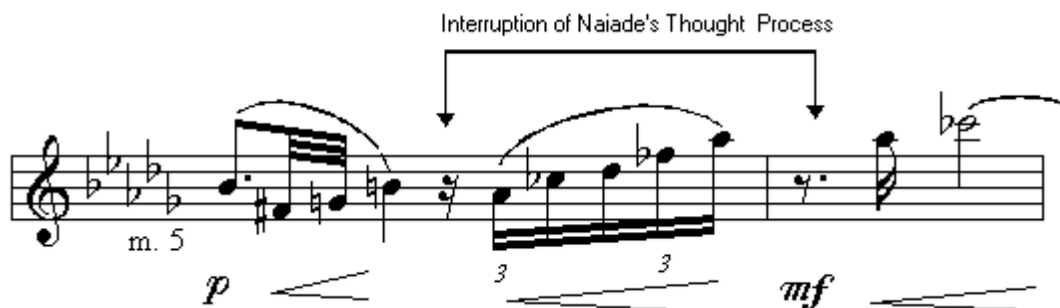
**Figure 4.20. Poetry and Music for Nymph 3 and Nymph 4 (mm.22–24)**

The compositional significance of the *fermata* at m. 24 has already been discussed, however the sign also ensures that the music and words coalesce. Six lines of poetry (lines 87–92) for nymph 3 and 4 correspond with three measures of music (mm. 22–24) at an accelerating tempo, *en animant peu à peu* (m. 22). The pause of a *fermata* on B $\flat$  in m. 24 allows time for the actor to catch up if necessary, realigning the music and recitation.

### **Illuminating the Confluence Through Phrasing and Dynamic Contrast**

Just as a vocalist interprets a song, flutists should allow the imagery and meaning of the poetic narrative to shape their musical performances. In Appendix B the music, notated according to the Brussels manuscript, is given with lines of the poem above the measures. The measures of illustrative music are aligned with the corresponding poetry

shown by underlined text. The remaining lines of the poem are placed above the other measures to suggest a possible flow of music and word. However, a performance of music and poem together goes beyond mere alignment of narrative and illustrative passages. For example, observing the rests in m. 5 and m. 6 (Figure 4.21) images the interruption to the naiade's thought process by the memory of Orpheus' lyre.



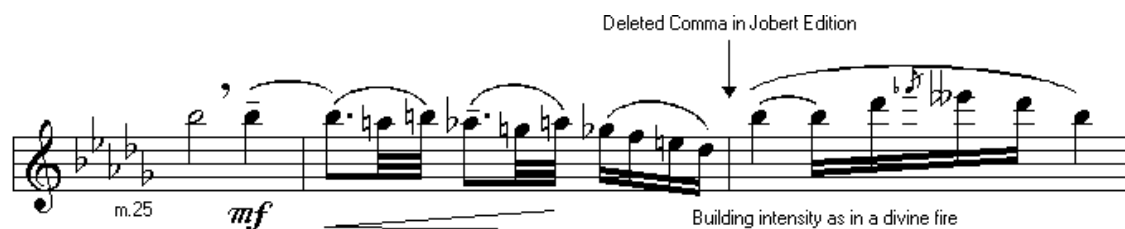
**Figure 4.21. Rests Reflecting an Interruption (mm. 5–6)**

Beyond careful observance of all that is printed on the page, the phrasing, dynamics, and timbre also enhance the confluence between poetry and music.

### **Phrasing**

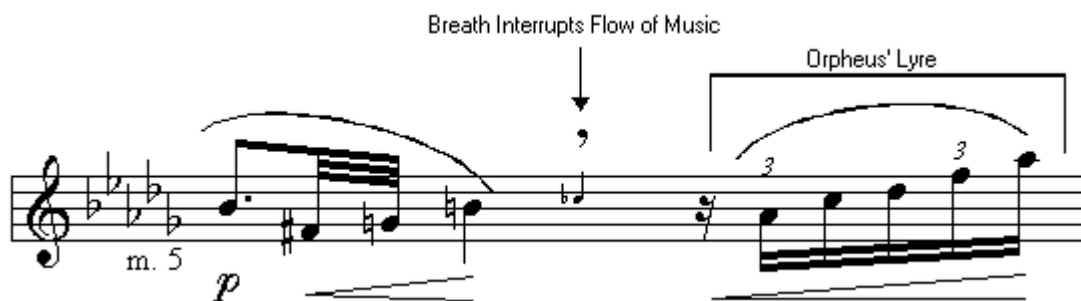
The Brussels manuscript contains commas (mm. 2, 4 and 14) which project aspects of the compositional process. However, other phrasing choices by the flutist can illuminate or interrupt the metaphoric connections between poem and music. For example the Jobert edition shows a comma between mm. 26–27 that interrupts the ascent in dynamic level from the preceding measure. The break in intensity does not follow the poetry which speaks of a divine fire (Figure 4.22). When the comma is removed, the image of a steadily rising flame is created.





**Figure 4.22. Deleted Comma in Jobert Edition (mm. 25–27)**

In contrast, m. 5 of the Jobert edition (Figure 4.23) has a comma between the second and third beat that appears to be redundant, since a rest naturally allows time for a breath. However, taking a small breath at this point ensures a momentary pause in the music, alluding to an analogous interruption in the naiade’s flow of thought brought on by her recollection of Orpheus’ lyre.



**Figure 4.23. Comma Necessary to Reflect an Interruption (m. 5)**

Similarly, the comma at the conclusion of m. 8 of the Jobert edition (Figure 4.24) between the double-bar in m. 8 and m. 9 appears unnecessary. The change of tempo from *retenu* in m.8 to *un peu mouvementé* in m. 9 is a natural point to take a breath. The insertion in m. 8 of a double-bar highlights the first eight measures as a kind of exposition (see Chapter 3). However, a breath in a solo performance is important because it alludes to the oreade’s words, *Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute* [Be quiet, contain your joy, listen] which are inserted between mm. 8–9. The silence created by a

pause in the flow of music highlights the oread's words which are a plea for attentive silence.

Comma indicates end of exposition-type music

Retenu

m. 6

*p*

*L'Oreade: Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute*

Comma alludes to Oreade's interruption

Un peu mouvementé (mais très peu)

m. 9

*p*

**Figure 4.24. Comma Articulates Exposition and Creates Interruption (mm. 6–9)**

The descriptive music for each of the four nymphs, illustrated musically in mm. 16–24, is made clear for the listener when breaths are inserted according to the corresponding measures. Appendix B shows commas in brackets, placed according to phrasing which illuminates the division of the four nymphs.

Following the breath at the comma in m. 14, the *cédez* concluding m. 15 provides a natural pause for a breath (Figure 4.25).

Breath Before Illustration of Nymph 1

Cédez

Rubato

m. 15

*p*

**Figure 4.25. Added Comma to Jobert Edition (mm. 15–16)**

The inscription of *rubato* provides flexibility in the tempo, allowing time for breaths in subsequent measures. A breath between mm. 15–16 (Figure 4.26) should give the flutist enough air to continue through mm. 16–18, completing the illustration of nymph 1 (lines 77–82).

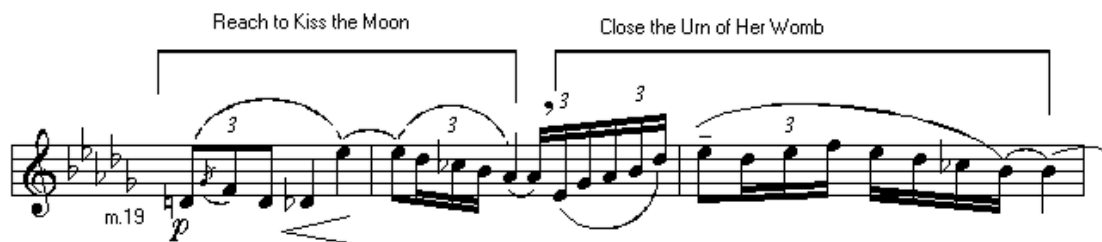
**Figure 4.26. Musical Illustration of Nymph 1 in One Phrase (mm. 16–18)**

The illustration of nymph 2 who gives a kiss to the lips of the moon begins in m. 19, requiring a breath at the end of m. 18 (Figure 4.28). After the sudden drop in dynamic following the *crescendo*, this pause is necessary to separate the musical depiction of nymph 1 from nymph 2.

**Figure 4.27. Breath Separating Nymph 1 and Nymph 2 (mm. 18–19)**

Following the breath at the end of m. 18, the illustrative music for nymph 2 encompasses mm. 19–21 (Figure 4.29). Nymph 2 engages in two actions, reaching to

kiss the moon and the closing of her womb. The comma in m. 20 divides the descriptive measures into two sections in accordance with the imagery in the poetry.



**Figure 4.28. Comma Separates the Actions of Nymph 2 (mm. 19–21)**

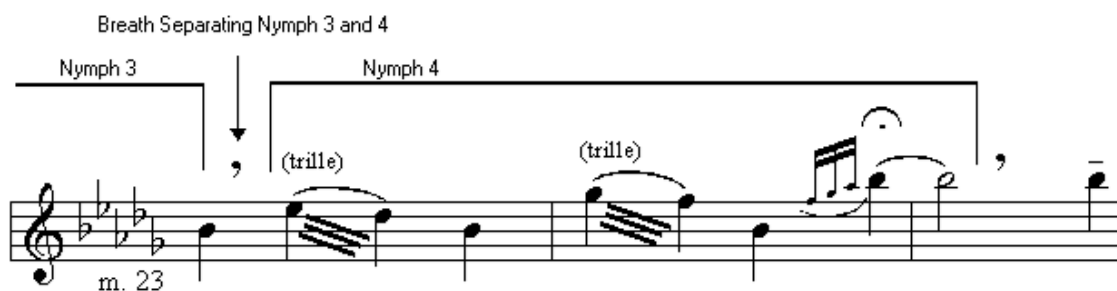
The music for nymph 3 begins in m. 22 (Figure 4.30), but unlike the other musical descriptions, a breath should not separate nymphs 2 and 3. In the poem both are related by their sensual actions. A “kiss to the lip of the moon” by the white breasts of nymph 2 thereby “closing the urn of her womb” precipitates a lustful reaction by nymph 3, so that she “lasciviously... rolls upon a bed of red hyacinths.” The reaction of nymph 3 is depicted by the accelerating rhythmic pulse which emerges and then continues in a rolling melody emanating from the B $\flat$  quarter-note in m. 21.



**Figure 4.29. Emergence of Nymph 3 (mm. 21–22)**

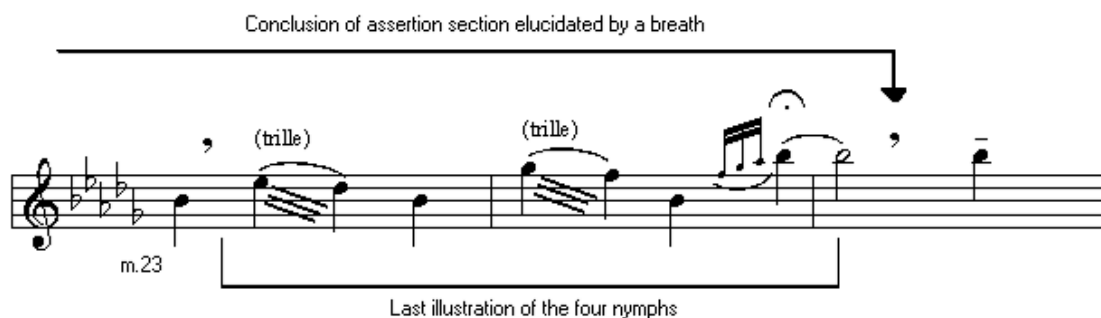
The phrasing from m. 19–24 should contain only one breath in m. 20 (Figure 4.29) separating the kiss and closing of the womb by nymph 2. The lack of a pause between nymphs 2 and 3 reinforces the connection between their actions.

Differentiation between nymphs 3 and 4 is achieved by observing the comma in m. 23 (Figure 4.30).



**Figure 4.30. Comma Separating Nymph 3 and Nymph 4 (mm. 23–25)**

A breath following the *femata* tied to a half-note in m. 24–25, shown in Figure 4.31, is important because it articulates the conclusion of a larger compositional process and a section of illustrative music metaphorical of the poetry. The pause on B $\flat$  in m. 24 represents the end of the assertion section (see Figure 3.1). This measure is also the conclusion of music depicting the four nymphs.



**Figure 4.31. Comma at Conclusion of Assertion Section (mm. 23–25)**

The music that concludes *La Flûte de Pan* completes the shift in tonic primacy to D $\flat$ . The poem also conveys the change in the naiade's state of mind so which is now governed by her subconscious natural will. Choices of phrasing in these measures can convey the connection between both the compositional process and the poetry.

A comma between mm. 28–29 draws attention to the juncture between an intoxicated state which a change of meter implies and the beginnings of the transformation of the opening theme, associated with the double-tonic complex

Figure 4.32 shows a musical score in treble clef. The first measure (m. 28) is in 3/4 time, marked *dim.* and labeled 'Duple'. It contains a melodic line with a comma after the first measure. The second measure (m. 29) is in 2/4 time, marked *p* and labeled 'Triple'. It contains a melodic line with a comma after the first measure. The lyrics are: 'From the flesh of all of them a divine fire flows and all are inflamed with love for Pan and me the same ardour spreads through my veins' and 'O Pan, the sounds of thy symix, too fragrant, too sweet, have intoxicated me'. An arrow labeled 'To' points from the first measure to the second. A bracket labeled 'Duple' spans the first measure, and a bracket labeled 'Triple' spans the second measure. A dynamic marking *p* is placed below the second measure.

**Figure 4.32. Beginning of Intoxicated State and Transformation (mm. 28–29)**

(Figure 4.32). An immediate breath before m. 30 is necessary in order to sustain the long phrase which follows (Figure 4.33).

Figure 4.33 shows a musical score in treble clef. The first measure (m. 30) is in 2/4 time, marked *p* and labeled 'Long Phrase'. It contains a melodic line with a comma after the first measure. The second measure (m. 31) is in 2/4 time, marked *p* and labeled 'Long Phrase'. It contains a melodic line with a comma after the first measure. The third measure (m. 32) is in 2/4 time, marked *p* and labeled 'Long Phrase'. It contains a melodic line with a comma after the first measure. The lyrics are: 'O Pan, the sounds of thy symix, too fragrant, too sweet, have intoxicated me'. A bracket labeled 'Long Phrase' spans the first three measures. A dynamic marking *p* is placed below the first measure.

**Figure 4.33. Breath Before Long Phrase (mm. 30–32)**

Mm. 31–32, similar to mm. 1–2, project the primary tonal center of  $D_b$ . In the same way that mm. 1–2 presented the primary tone center without pause (Figure 4.1), mm. 31–32 should as well (see Figure 3.22 and Figure 3.23).

### **Dynamic Contrast and Timbre**

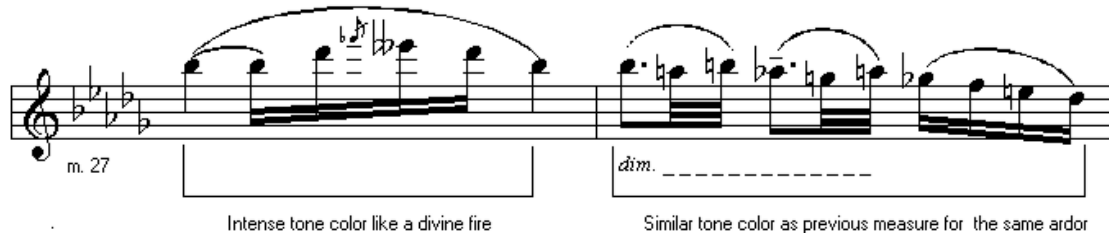
The confluence between poetic imagery and music is also revealed through dynamic contrast and timbre. Variation in dynamics and the degree of timbre allude to the meaning of the words. For example, a relatively loud dynamic level should occur in

m. 27, indicated by *mf* and a *crescendo* beginning in m. 26 (Figure 4.34). These measures correspond to line 93 in which “From the flesh of all of them a divine fire flows.” The timbre here should be intense, with rapid vibrato, such as in the heat of a fire.



**Figure 4.34. Intense Tone Color (mm. 25–27)**

The *diminuendo* in m. 28 should maintain this intensity through line 95: “and me the same ardor spreads through my veins.” If the decline in dynamic level and timbre is too great, the connection between a “divine fire” and “same ardor” is not made clear (Figure 4.35).



**Figure 4.35. Similar Tone Colors Between Dynamic Levels (mm. 27–28)**

In contrast the similar gradation in dynamic, a *mf* followed by a *crescendo*, occurs in mm. 6–7, however the narrative context is different.

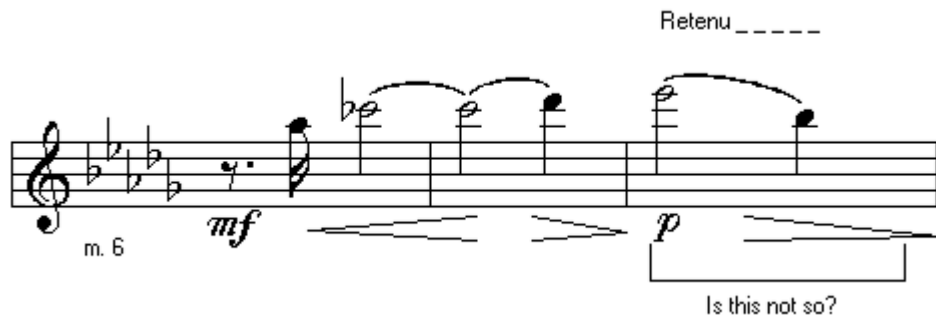
C<sub>b</sub>/WT2      D<sub>b</sub> and E<sub>b</sub>/WT2  
 m. 6 *mf*      *p*  
 Emergence of Inner Will      Retreat of Inner Will

**Figure 4.36. Tone Color and Inner Will Recede (mm. 6–8)**

The *crescendo* in m. 6 (Figure 4.36) alludes to the meaning of the poetry as the memory of Orpheus' lyre and songs causes the naiade's inner will to emerge temporarily. The rhythmic and dynamic stress given the C<sub>b</sub> from WT2 in m. 6–7 also illustrates the imagery. Although the dynamic gradation is the same between mm. 6–7 (Figure 4.36) and mm. 24–27 (Figure 4.34), the timbre of the *crescendo* should be different. The peak of the first *crescendo* in m. 6 is not as intense as the "divine fire" in m. 27, so the vibrato should be less rapid. The subsequent *diminuendo* in m. 7 on D<sub>b</sub> alludes to consciousness returning to control the naiade's psyche. As the inner will recedes the timbre should also begin to diminish on D<sub>b</sub>.

The score also indicates in two locations extreme ranges within *piano*, both at the conclusion of a major section. The first *p*, followed by a *diminuendo*, is before the double bar in m. 8 (Figure 4.37).





**Figure 4.37. Diminuendo with a Clear Tone Color (mm. 6–8)**

The cue from line 65 in the Brussels manuscript suggests that m. 8 correlates with line 64, the question, “Is this not so?” (line 64) uttered by the naiade. A decline to the softest volume creates a musical setting for the oreade’s interruption, “Be quiet, contain your joy, listen,” (line 65) and projects the drama of a hushed voice. In this case the dynamics provide some clue as to the nature of the stage action. There are no stage directions or indications as to the volume or type of delivery for the oreade’s sentence in line 65. The words *Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute* [Be quiet, contain your joy, listen] could be conceived as either a command, implying a strong voice, or a supplication, suggesting softer tones. However, the musical context of *piano* followed by *diminuendo* suggests the latter approach, or an appeal for the naiade to be silent. In m. 8 the *diminuendo* from *piano* requires a tone color reflecting the context of the oreade’s voice. The words of “Be quiet” suggests a hushed voice, however the authority of the words “contain your joy, listen” also requires clarity. The tone color of this extreme dynamic level should be clear.

Another *piano* followed by a *diminuendo* is found in mm. 33–34. However the decline in tone level is followed by the inscription *perdendosi* (Figure 4.38).

Très Retenu

m. 33      *p* marqué      perdendosi

Allusion to a metaphorical death by tone and dynamic level dying away

**Figure 4.38. Tone Color Dies Away (mm. 33–35)**

*Perdendosi* or dying away describes a decline in dynamics to an imperceptible level and alludes to the acquiescence contained in the naiade’s words, “O Pan I no longer fear you, I am yours,” (line 98) and the metaphorical death of sexual consummation. The tone quality of the flute in this passage should reflect this with an open, fuzzy, tone that gradually recedes into nothingness.

During preparation of *La Flûte de Pan*, careful attention to signs and inscriptions will bring out the blending and coordination of music process and the poem. In Appendix B, the music for *La Flûte de Pan* is reproduced along with the relevant lines from the poetry. Further reflection upon the melodramatic context of the music along with Debussy’s compositional procedure enlightens the performer’s interpretation of dynamics and phrasing. Commas for breath marks are inserted with brackets according to the previous suggestions.

### Conclusion

The discovery of *La Flûte de Pan* as a melodrama opens the door for fresh interpretations, connecting the composition to its roots in symbolist poetry and enabling modern performances to reflect on this confluence between poem and music. A reenactment of the original context of solo flute with two actors speaking the lines of the

poem, is the simplest means of realizing this convergence. The passages of illustrative music and the significance of inscriptions such as *rubato* in m. 16 become clear when presented as a melodrama.

Although the melodramatic context is lost in the solo composition, *Syrinx*, this version of the piece is still capable of evoking the poetic-musical confluence. Choice in phrasing can elucidate passages of illustrative music, such as those describing the four nymphs (mm. 16–24). Subtle changes in timbre and dynamics, such as the difference in *diminuendo* in m. 8 and m. 34, are equally effective in molding a rich musical image. The performer becomes in essence a vocalist, intensifying the expressive capacity of the poem.

A performance of *Syrinx*, follows the historical example of Louis Fleury, who included the work as a solo piece on recitals.<sup>4</sup> However, in both public performance and his writings, Fleury demonstrated an understanding of the composition's genesis as part of a melodrama. In concerts he always performed the work from behind a screen, recreating the aural setting from which the piece was first heard.<sup>5</sup> In an article for *Music and Letters* Fleury described *La Flûte de Pan* as “programme music as it is—in fact, a lament was exactly what the composer had to express,” in which he “confines himself to the severest and soberest expression of great mental suffering.”<sup>6</sup> The description of a lament agrees with the dramatic context Mourey first gave to Debussy as the final melody Pan plays before his death. The reference to mental anguish corresponds to the struggle

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<sup>4</sup> The title, *La Flûte de Pan*, is used on programs for Fleury's concerts.

<sup>5</sup> Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, ed. *La Flûte de Pan ou Syrinx pour flûte seule 1913* (Malmö: Autographus Musicus, 1991): 2.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Fleury, “The Flute and Its Powers of Expression,” *Music and Letters* (1922): 388

between the naiade's consciousness and subconscious will in the poem, something which the flutist, as a performer in the play, would have known very well.

Despite the revelation of its dramatic context, modern performances of *La Flûte de Pan* as a melodrama are rare. Instead, flutists usually program the Debussy composition as a solo piece entitled, *Syrinx*. This title from the Jobert edition is the most widely recognized by audiences as Debussy's solo work. The dedication, à *Louis Fleury*, is a recognition by the publisher of the connection between the flutist and the work he popularized. However, the title *Syrinx* masks the original musico-dramatic context as incidental music for Mourey's *Psyché* where it was called *La Flûte de Pan*. Until the recent discovery of a probable source manuscript in Brussels, the melodramatic context of this music was unclear. This newly discovered context, along with Fleury's popularization of the composition as a solo, creates two different types of performance settings. The title *La Flûte de Pan (Syrinx)*, given in the Autographus Musicus and Novello edition, acknowledges simultaneously both aspects of the composition's presentation to audiences, first as a melodrama and later as a solo for flute.<sup>7</sup> However, although more historically accurate, the duality of this title fails to highlight the unique contribution made by Fleury in bringing the piece to a wider audience. The use of *Syrinx* for the solo work and *La Flûte de Pan* for melodrama performances clarifies the unique evolution of Debussy's work as incidental music and later as a celebrated solo for flute.

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<sup>7</sup>Trevor Wye, ed. *C. Debussy Syrinx or La Flûte de Pan* (London: Novello, 1994) and Anders Ljungar-Chapelon, ed. *La Flûte de Pan ou Syrinx pour flûte seule 1913* (Malmö: Autographus Musicus, 1991)

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**Appendix A**  
**Act III Scene Premiere from *Psyché***  
**By Gabriel Mourey**

Translated by Laurel Ewell

*La scène représente la grotte de Pan; par sa large ouverture, on aperçoit une clairière au coeur de la forêt touffue. Dans la prairie, un ruisseau passe, formant un petit lac. Rocher blancs au font.*

The scene represents Pan's grotto, from the wide opening a clearing in the heart of the leafy forest can be seen. In the meadow a stream dies away, forming a small lake. White rocks are to the front.

*La lune inonde le paysage, tandis que la grotte demeure dans l'ombre. Dans la clairière, des nymphes dansent, vont et viennent, toutes vêtues de blanc, avec des poses harmonieuses. D'autres cueillent des fleurs, d'autres, étendue au bord de l'eau, s'y mirent. Par moments elles s'arrêtent toutes, émerveillées, écoutant la syrinx de Pan invisible, émues par le chant qui s'échappe des roseaux creux.*

The moon floods the landscape, while the cave remains black. In the clearing some nymphs dance, coming and going, dressed in white with musical poses. Some pick flowers, others remain at the edge of the water, admiring themselves. At times they all stop, astonished, listening to Pan's invisible Syrinx, moved by the song escaping from the hollow reeds.

**Scene I**  
**A Oreade, a Naiade**

*L'Oreade*

Ainsi, tu ne l'avais encore jamais vu?	So you still have never seen him?	1
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*La Naiade*

Jamais. Jamais Pan n'est venu	Never. Pan never came	2
Dans le vallon où jusqu'à ce jour j'ai vécu	In the valley where I abided today	
Seule, gardant l'humble source fleurie	Alone, guarding the lowly florid spring	
Dont les brebis d'Hélios, après l'avoir tarie,	Of which the sheep of Helios, after having tarried	
Ont desséché les bords et ravagé le lit	Dried up the banks and ravaged the bed	
Et j'ai dû fuir	And I must flee	
La-haut, sur ce rocher	Up higher, to this rock	
Je le trouve effrayant et très beau, radieux	I find it frightening and very beautiful, radiant	
Et terrible, et bien tel qu'un dieu	And dreadful and rather like that of a god	10
Avec, autour de lui,	With round about him	
La splendeur de cette miraculeuse	The splendor of this miraculous	
Et chaude nuit	And passionate night	
Qu'il enivre du son de sa flûte nombreuse!	That he intoxicates by the harmonious sounds of his flute!	14

*L'Oreade*

C'est ici qu'il habite; entrons.	It is here where he lives; come in	15
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*La Naiade*

Une autre fois...	Another time...	16
J'ai peur, je te dis que j'ai peur; lâche-moi.	I am afraid, I tell you I am afraid, release me.	

*L'Oreade*

Peur de quoi?	Afraid of what?	18
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*La Naiade*

Mais de lui. Puisqu'il est partout	But of him, seeing that he is everywhere	19
Et qu'il est tout,	And that he is all,	
Qui sait si, dans cette caverne, en quelque coin,	Who knows if in this cavern, in some corner	
Tout en restant là-bas, il ne se blottit point,	While staying there, he is not curled up at all	
Parmi cette ténèbre bleue ou bien	Among this dark gloom or even	
Dans ce rayon qui vient	In this beam which comes	
Si tendrement rôder sur mes épaules nues	So tenderly prowling on my naked shoulders	
Et tiens, regarde, là, quelque chose remue...	Look here, look there, something stirs	
Tu ne peux dire non.	You are unable to speak.	27

*L'Oreade*

C'est l'ombre de ces feuilles	It is the shadow of these leaves	28
Que la brise du matin proche a caressées	That the approaching morning breeze has caressed.	

*La Naiade*

N'importe, ma soeur, je défaille;	Nevermind, my sister, I swoon;	30
L'air brûle et je me sens glacée;	The air scorches and I feel frozen;	
Pan m'épouvante et de penser	Pan terrifies me and the thought	
Que tout à l'heure il me faudra peut-être	That all the time he will perhaps	
Affronter ses regards...	Confront me with his gaze	
Non, non...avant qu'il soit trop tard,	No, no...before its too late	
Où me cacher, où disparaître?	Where to hide, where to disappear?	

*L'Oreade*

Reste; dès que tu le verras	Stay; as soon as you see him	37
De près, dès que tu entendras	Close by, as soon as you hear	
Sa voix grave et tendre,	His deep and tender voice	
Je suis sûre que tu ne pourras te défendre	I am sure you will be unable to defend yourself	
De l'aimer, je suis sûre que tu l'aimeras.	From his love, I am certain that you will love him.	

*La Naiade*

Pan est méchant, cruel...Rappelle-toi le sort  
De Syrinx et d'Echo

Pan is evil, cruel...Remind yourself  
Of Syrinx and of Echo.

42

*L'Oreade*

Je les envie!  
Syrinx surtout, oui. N'est-ce pas du bord  
Des roseaux creux où elle a répandu sa vie  
Que le souffle de Pan donne l'essor  
Aux sons ailés, aux rythmes d'or  
Qui font germer dans le coeur des hommes la joie?  
N'est-ce pas l'âme de Syrinx aui, d'un vol droit  
Et clair, par-delà les confins de l'éther bleu,  
Monte enchanter les astres et les dieux?  
Mais voici que Pan de sa flûte recommence a jouer

I envy them!  
Syrinx above all. Isn't it along the bank  
Of hollow reeds where she poured out her life  
So that Pan's breath gives it flight  
By the winged sounds and golden rhythms  
Which sprouts joy in the hearts of men?  
Isn't it the soul of Syrinx who by a direct  
And clear flight from the confines of dark ether  
Ascends to enchant the stars and the gods  
But hark, Pan begins to play his flute again

44

50

*La Naiade*

Prodige! Il semble que la Nuit ait dénoué  
Sa ceinture et qu'en écartant ses voiles  
Elle ait laissé, pour se jouer,  
Sur la terre tomber toutes les étoiles...  
Oh! comme, dans les champs solennels du silence,  
Mélodieusement elles s'épanouissent!  
Crois-tu que l'amant d'Eurydice  
Faisait vibrer de plus touchants  
Et plus sublimes chants  
Les cordes d'airain de sa lyre  
Non, n'est-ce pas?

It seems that the Night has loosened  
Her girdle and in shedding her veils  
Has let fall to play  
Upon the earth all of the stars...  
Oh! how, in the solemn fields of silence,  
Melodiously they bloom!  
Do you know that Eurydice's lover  
Plays the most touching  
And sublime songs  
On the strings of his lyre?  
Is this not so?

54

60

*L'Oreade*

Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute.

Be silent, contain your joy, listen.

65



## Appendix B

## La Flûte de Pan

Claude Debussy

**Oreade:** *Mais voici que Pan recommence de sa flûte jouer*

**Très modéré**

*mf*

**Naiade:**

*Prodige! Il semble que la Nuit ait dénoué  
Sa ceinture et qu'en écartant ses voiles  
Elle ait laissé, pour se jouer,*

*Oh! comme, dans les champs solennels du silence,  
Mélodieusement elles s'épanouissent!*

*Crois-tu que l'amant d'Eurydice  
Faisait vibrer de plus touchants*

*Et plus sublimes chants*

*Les cordes d'airain de sa lyre*

*Non, n'est-ce pas?*

**Retenu**

*p* *mf* *p* *p*

**Oreade:** *Tais-toi, contiens ta joie, écoute*

**Naiade:** *Si tu savais quel étrange délire  
M'enlace, me pénètre toute!*

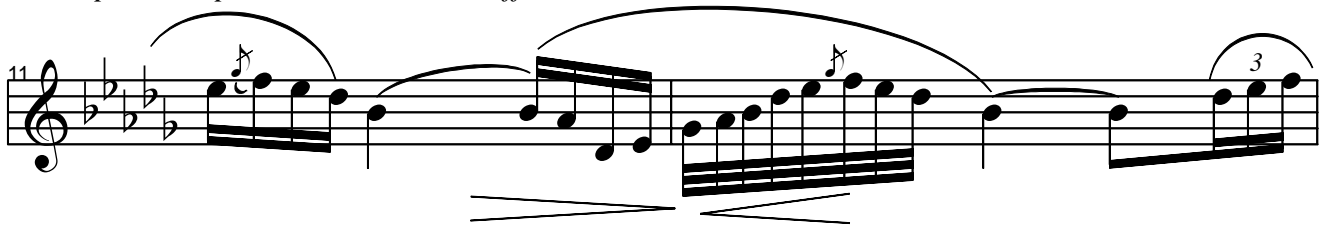
*Si tu savais... je ne puis pas te dire  
Ce que j'éprouve. La douceur*

**Un peu mouvementé mais très peu**

*p*

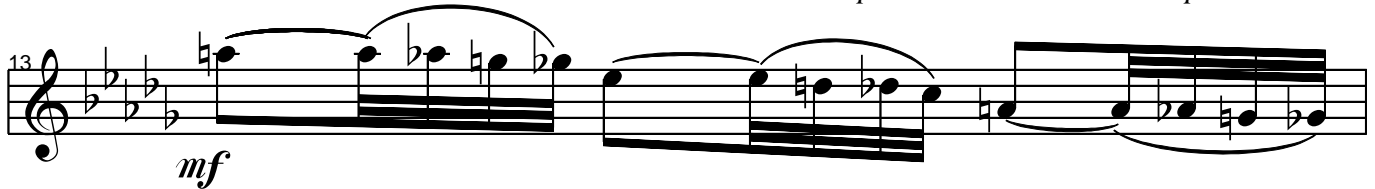
*Voluptueuse éparsé en cette nuit m'affole...*

*Danser, oui je voudrais, comme tes soeurs,*

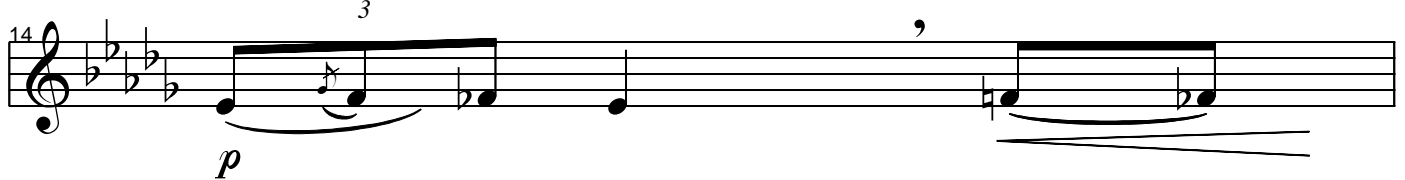


*Danser...frapper de mes pieds nus le*

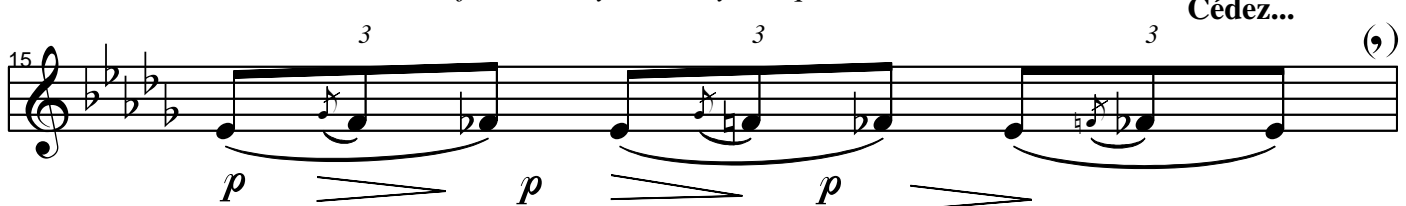
*Avec d'harmonieuses poses,  
Eperdûment livrer mon corps*



*En cadence et, comme elles, sans effort,*



*A la force ondoyante et rythmique des choses!*



*Cédez... (9)*

*Celle-ci qui, dans sa grâce légère,  
Elève vers le ciel là-bas  
Ses beaux bras,*

*Ressemble,  
au bords des calmes eaux*

*Où elle se reflète, un grand oiseau  
Impatient de la lumière...*

**Rubato**



*Et celle-là que des feuilles couronnent  
Et qui, si complaisamment, donne*

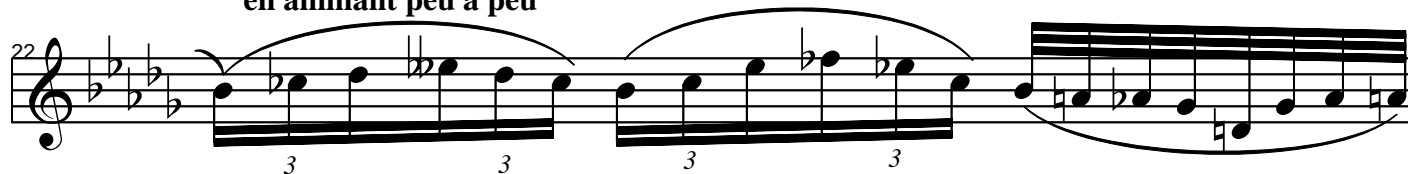
*Aux lèvres de la lune à baiser ses seins blancs*

*Et l'urne close de ses flancs...*



*Et cette autre tout près qui, lascive, sans feinte,  
Se roule sur ce lit de rouges hyacinthes...*

**en animant peu à peu**



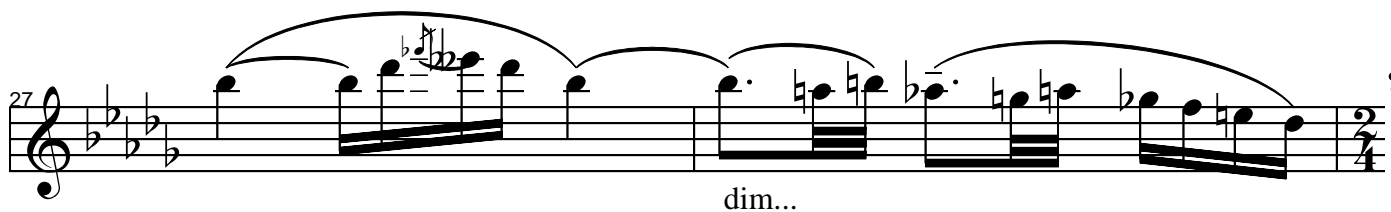
*Et cette autre dont on ne voit plus que les yeux  
Enticeler, telles deux taches  
De soleil, dans la frondaison de ses cheveux  
Qui l'enveloppent et la cachent...*

*Par la chair d'elles toutes coule un feu divin*



*Et de l'amour de Pan toutes sont embrasées*

*Et moi, la même ardeur s'insinue en mes veines;*



*O Pan, les sons de ta syrinx, ainsi qu'un vin*

*Trop odorant et trop doux, m'ont grisée'*



*O Pan, je n'ai plus peur de toi, je t'appartiens!*

**En retenant jusqu' à la fin**

**Très Retenu**



## Vita

Laurel Ewell received her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Washington where she was a recipient of the Brechemin Scholarship award. Subsequently she served as Assistant Principal Flute of the Hong Kong Philharmonic and also as flute instructor for the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. Ms. Ewell has performed with the Seattle Symphony, West Virginia Symphony, Marrowstone Music Festival and Lyric Mountain Music Festival as well as in recitals for the International Double Reed Society conference and the Eastern Regional conference of the Music Teachers National Association. In March, 1999 she presented a paper, "*Syrinx or La Flûte de Pan?* The original performance context for Debussy's work for solo flute," at the Mid-Atlantic conference of the College Music Society. Ms. Ewell was the founder and director of the Morgantown Flute ensemble which performed in local concert series and for the West Virginia Music Teachers Association district conference. Currently Ms. Ewell teaches flute and music theory for the Towson University Preparatory Department and the Trinity Arts Academy.