

Overall, *Thinking About Harmony* provides a complete view of harmonic theory and the fledgling discipline of harmonic analysis in the nineteenth century, with no significant omissions and only a few minor ones. There is no separate chapter on cadences, which are treated in Chapter 4 along with other harmonic progressions, harmonic function theory (*Funktionstheorie*), and scale-degree theory (*Stufentheorie*). In the opening chapter on chord identification, André's system of geometric symbols for chord labelling is described (pp. 22–3), but unfortunately no visual example is provided. A strange omission from the bibliography is Damschroder's own earlier and more detailed version of the last section of Chapter 3, 'Schubert, Chromaticism, and the Ascending 5-6 Sequence'.⁵ The use of dashes versus hyphens to distinguish between horizontal and vertical collections of notes is too visually subtle, especially since much of the commentary regarding examples from primary sources is set in small type. Moreover, the beginning of Chapter 1, which immediately follows the explanation of symbols, uses three vertically stacked small capital letters to represent harmonic triads, which is both inconsistent and awkward on the page.

As noted, however, the above caveats are fairly trivial. *Thinking About Harmony* is a useful resource that provides a clear understanding of the origins of many of the theoretical systems and analytical conventions now taken for granted. In addition, through the breadth of writers and perspectives it represents, the book demonstrates that our current systems of harmonic analysis are not necessary or essential, but represent only a few of multiple possible viewpoints. Damschroder has continued this project with similar studies focused on the music of particular composers: *Harmony in Schubert* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), *Harmony in Haydn and Mozart* (in preparation), and promised future volumes on Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Brahms and Liszt and Wagner. Teachers and scholars of analysis and the history of theory will surely find these to be likewise helpful and worthwhile contributions to the field.

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doi:10.1017/S1479409811000103

Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2009). xvi+400pp. \$45.00.

Writing a book that seeks to give an exhaustive account of a major composer's *œuvre* is a task fraught with difficulties, and one that might discourage even the most tenacious of scholars, especially if such a book were to be multifaceted in its approach (i.e. analysis, the relationship to performance, a study of historical precedence, etc.). To expand such a project to include *four* composers, even if the study were confined only to one genre, might seem overly ambitious to say the least. This, however, is what Roy Howat has attempted to do and, for the most part, he succeeds admirably. It is no exaggeration to say that *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* is destined to become one of the standard texts dealing with a repertory (especially Chabrier) which is often neglected by the scholarly mainstream. Nonetheless, in spite of the book's many outstanding qualities, there are a few issues that need to be addressed, and I will get to these in due course.

⁵ David Damschroder, 'Schubert, Chromaticism, and the Ascending 5-6 Sequence', *Journal of Music Theory* 50/2 (2006): 253–75.

The text is divided into four main sections followed by a set of appendices. 'Part 1: The exactitude of musical "impressionism"' has a two-pronged emphasis: that of analysis, and also the relationship between musical structure and the visual arts. 'Part 2: Musical roots and antecedents' explores the music's connections with the past, its connections with other national traditions, and its connections with Romanticism. 'Part 3: Fresh perspectives' deals with metric and hypermetric organization in Ravel and Chabrier, as well as elements of overall form. There is also a discussion of newly discovered repertoire by the four composers under discussion and their contemporaries (Gounod, Dukas, Satie *et al.*). 'Part 4: At the keyboard' deals with the performance of this music by the composers themselves, in addition to others who may have had direct contact with them; the problems intrinsic to the creation of an Urtext edition are also discussed.¹ Based upon research of the composers as pianists, Howat also offers advice to pianists as to the best way to approach this repertoire. Finally, there are five appendices: 1) "'Facilement, facilement'": finding technical ease'; 2) 'Glosses on titles and musical allusions'; 3) 'Composers' surviving instruments and recordings'; 4) 'Brief summary of critical editions'; 5) 'Locations of musical manuscripts discussed', followed by 31 pages of extensive endnotes (some of which probably could have been incorporated into the text) and a 12-page bibliography of books, dissertations, articles, catalogues, conference papers, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, liner notes for recordings, historic editions, CD-ROMs, films and internet sources. All of this material is contained in a mere 400 pages (including the index, but not the Table of Contents, Acknowledgments or Introduction), which means that the book, as it stands, is probably too short. Parts 1 and 2 could certainly have been complete books in themselves, and, given the excellent insights Howat brings to this repertory, it is unfortunate that this is not the case.

In the first chapter of Part 1, 'Painting in Sound', Howat gives an interesting twist to the common practice of analogizing Debussy's harmonies with the colours in Impressionist paintings:

A key technique of Impressionist (and post-Impressionist) painting was a new awareness of colour relationships, following discoveries about optics that showed how our perceptions are manipulated by the juxtapositions of light and colour. Equivalent sonorous explorations emerge from Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, whose opening flute arabesque (at first unaccompanied) then returns twice at the same pitch, 'illuminated' by different harmonies each time. This matches Monet's varied portrayals of a subject in different lighting ... Similar shifts can be heard in some of Debussy's Preludes (p. 4).

The colouristic treatment of Debussy's harmonies in analysis is commonplace, but the notion of 'harmonic illumination' is intriguing and is certainly a useful way to think of what is often termed 'non-functional harmony'. Howat extends the metaphor later on when he uses the term 'modal refraction' (p. 6) to describe the technique of shifting modal colouring of three parallel motives in Debussy's *Hommage à Rameau* (*Images*, 1re série, 1905).

¹ Roy Howat was a member of the editorial committee of *Claude Debussy Œuvres Complètes*, published in Paris by Durand et fils with the support of Musica Gallica, the CNRS, and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and was responsible for critical editions of the composer's piano music in vols. 1, 2, 3, and 5 of that series. In addition, he has produced numerous critical editions of the piano music of Gabriel Fauré for Peters Edition London.

It is interesting that in all the parallels that Howat draws between musical and visual art forms, he does not mention cinema. Rebecca Leydon has done some good work in this area,² and suggests that many of the editing techniques in film (such as cuts, dissolves, etc.) are directly mirrored in Debussy's phrasing and transitions, particularly in the late works. Given the importance of cinema in Paris at this time, the exploration of this emerging art form as it relates to the other three composers might have yielded some interesting results.

Howat's discussion of the Golden Section and the Fibonacci series (essentially a continuation of his previous book on Debussy)³ in Chapter 5 is a fascinating look at how these mathematical proportions, which occur with great frequency in the visual arts, manifest themselves in musical structure. I particularly like his analysis of Debussy's 'Reflets dans l'eau', where he shows that this 'magical proportion' not only partitions the work as a whole in terms of its formal divisions, but also operates on a microcosmic level in how its phrases are structured:

the three-note motive [starting in the opening measure] in the middle of the texture marks out a refracted sequence of 3+2 semitones, surrounded by quietly flowing chords. Debussy reportedly likened this motive to a pebble dropping into water – after which our view of it would be refracted. The surrounding ripples reach their peak after 5 out of a total of 8 eighth-notes; we can thus see and hear how the two opening bars sketch out the piece's large-scale refracted wave form, using the simple Fibonacci numbers 2, 3, 5, 8 (p. 55).

Indeed, the same series is present in the number of actually occurring sixteenth-notes, and the upper line comes to rest on the thirteenth sixteenth-note pulse (in measure 2), making a series of 2, 3, 5, 8, 13. What I found puzzling, however, is that Richard Parks' book, *The Music of Claude Debussy*,⁴ not only has no reference in Howat's discussion of the Golden Section, it is not even cited in the bibliography. Given that Parks' work is probably the most important study of this aspect of Debussy's compositional technique since Howat's earlier book, this is a serious lapse; the fact that Parks reviewed *Debussy in Proportion* in the *Journal of Music Theory*⁵ makes it unlikely that Howat is unaware of Parks' work. Perhaps if a second edition of the present book is published, this omission might be addressed both in the text and the bibliography.

'Part 2: Musical roots and antecedents' has some very interesting insights as to where these composers drew their inspiration. I particularly like the discussion in 'Debussy and the Orient' (Chapter 8) where Howat connects the specific techniques of the gamelan with the layered structure of 'Pagodes' from *Estampes* (pp. 111ff). I find, however, his claim that 'Debussy's instructions and unusual textural balances in "Pagodes" make little sense by Western norms but fall into place when treated as gamelan gestures' (p. 113) to be unnecessarily restrictive. I have played and performed *Estampes* (including 'Pagodes') since I was a teenager, and it has always made complete sense to me even before I had ever

² Rebecca Leydon, 'Debussy's Late Style and the Devices of the Early 'Silent Cinema'', *Music Theory Spectrum* 23/2 (2001): 217–41.

³ Roy Howat, *Debussy in Proportion*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴ Richard Parks, *The Music of Claude Debussy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁵ Richard Parks, 'Review of Debussy in Proportion' by Roy Howat, *Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 29/2 (1985): 323–8.

heard of a gamelan. Be that as it may, Howat's insights are first rate and reflect the understanding of both a scholar and a performer.

Less convincing are some of his speculations as to possible connections to other Western composers. Again, there is much that is very good in his discussion, but his claim, for example, of a relationship between bars 55–56 of 'Paysage' by Chabrier with 'the first solo entry of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*' needs further documentation. His connecting of the opening of Schumann's *Carnival* with French overture (p. 159) also is problematic; not all dotted figures do a French overture make. If there *is* a causal connection between the two, it should be documented in the text. However, there are some excellent insights all through his discussion and on the whole, he does a fine job of putting the composers into historical context.

Howat really shines in 'Part 3: Fresh perspective', and I found his analysis of the 'Menuet' from Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* to be especially compelling:

At first glance its opening eight bars look like a harmless antecedent-consequent 4+4 sequence ... In fact they reverse the classical norm by placing the full close before the modal half-close (bars 4 and 8). Ravel neatly follows through at the end of the Menuet's opening section ... where the melody from bar 1 to 4, initially an antecedent, now returns as a consequent, the full close in its 'proper' place. As the Menuet's recapitulation moves into the coda, Ravel gives this an extra nudge by continuing the opening melody over the transition ... so that the original antecedent-consequent melodic trope now becomes consequent-antecedent, carrying the music gracefully into the coda (p. 177).

Howat is a gifted pianist, so it stands to reason that he would have real insight into the playing of this repertoire. 'Part 4: At the keyboard' contains much in the way of sound technical advice as well as imaginative suggestions as to how the pianist should realize this great music tonally by connecting it to the composers' orchestral palates.

In spite of the above-mentioned caveats, *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* is a book that should be on the shelf of any scholar or musician who has an interest in this fascinating repertory. Roy Howat is to be congratulated for producing a major contribution to musical scholarship and performance practice.

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doi:10.1017/S1479409811000115

Harvey Sachs, *The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824* (New York: Random House, 2010). 225pp. £12.99.

Harvey Sachs is well known for his books on Arturo Toscanini, Artur Rubinstein, and music in Fascist Italy, among other subjects.¹ In a wistful aside early in this book he writes:

I am not an authentic musicologist. I state this fact neither ashamedly nor proudly, but simply to give you an inkling of what lies ahead ... When asked what my

¹ Harvey Sachs, *Toscanini* (New York: Lippincott, 1978); Harvey Sachs, *Reflections on Toscanini* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991); Harvey Sachs, *Rubinstein: A Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1995); Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy* (New York: Norton, 1988).