

DEBUSSY'S *SONATA FOR FLUTE, VIOLA, AND HARP*:
AN ANALYSIS AND OVERVIEW OF THE
FLUTIST'S ROLE IN CHAMBER MUSIC
FROM THE 18TH TO 20TH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I analyze *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* by Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and contextualize the role of the flute in chamber music from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries in order to better understand how my instrument has functioned in chamber music for the past three centuries. The analysis of this sonata identifies how Debussy used the flute in his early twentieth-century compositions. I explain the different compositional techniques Debussy uses in this piece with respect to six motives, as well as harmonic ambiguity, rhythmic complexity, and expressive indications. Some of the techniques Debussy utilizes in this sonata are unique to his compositional style, setting him apart from other composers of his time.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In this thesis, I will analyze Claude Debussy's (1862-1918) *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*, and contextualize the role of the flute in chamber music from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. The purpose of this thesis is to understand how the flute functions in chamber music; this will further my abilities in both performing and teaching this genre. Since chamber music includes a wide variety of flute repertoire, my research will benefit me throughout my collegiate and performance career.

I started this research as a project for an Honors Contract Course for History of Music and Analysis II. This project consisted of researching the basics of chamber music from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries and analyzing movement one of Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*. As the time drew near for me to start thinking of a thesis topic, I decided to continue my research and analysis of this piece since I had grown so fond of it.

Chapter 1 includes an introduction and a history of chamber music from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Chapter 2 presents biographical information about Claude Debussy and background information about *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*. Chapter 3 is my analysis of the piece. The last chapter is my conclusion.

Chamber music, by definition, is instrumental music played by a small ensemble, with one player to a part. Compositional techniques and instrumentation vary through the centuries. The Classical period was the “Golden Age of Chamber Music,” during which this genre was very popular for both string and wind instruments. Chamber music experienced innovations in the nineteenth century with new instruments and concert venues. During the twentieth century, music transitioned from the concert hall to the radio; more people listened at home instead of going to concerts.

Claude Debussy was one of the most important composers of the twentieth century; his compositions won many awards and accomplishments such as the *Prix de Rome*. As France’s leading Modernist composer, his chamber music shows the transition from a nineteenth-century style to a twentieth-century style. His *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915) is a clear representation of Debussy’s use of nontraditional tonality, non-pulsatile rhythm, and expressive indications.

The Classical Period

The Classical period, saw a tremendous explosion in the chamber music repertory, in part because of refinements in chamber music instruments, and in part because of the insatiable desire for chamber music in general.¹ In this period, chamber

¹ Mark A Radice, *Chamber Music: An Essential History* (Michigan, 2012), 24.

music repertory was dominated by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827).

One of the most common chamber music configurations in this period with flute was the wind quintet, whose representative composers included Anton Reicha (1770-1836) with twenty-four quintets, Franz Danzi (1763-1826) with nine quintets, and Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832).² Another popular chamber music instrumentation was the string quartet. The practice of arranging large-scale orchestral works for a small ensemble was later an important aspect of nineteenth-century camerata.

Most chamber music in the classical era was performed in an intimate, salon-like setting. Some pieces were designated as a “serenade,” which refers to the venue in which this music is performed, as well as to its emphasis on winds.

The origins of the wind quintet stem from the sextet that flourished in the early classical period, usually two oboes, two horns, and two bassoons.³ Later, flutes, basset horns, and other wind instruments such as clarinet, were added. Guiseppe Maria Gioacchino Cambini (1746-1825) elevated wind ensemble music to the level that previously achieved by the string quartet. Among Cambini’s modifications to the sextet was his breaking apart pairs of instruments. The resulting wind quintet was unique for its instrumentation including solo flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon.

² Radice, 86.

³ Radice, 83.

Representative examples of wind quintets are *No. 1 in B-flat major*, Op. 56, by Franz Danzi, *Quintet for Wind Instruments* by Paul Taffanel, and *Twenty-four Wind Quintets*, Opp. 88, 91, 99, 100, by Anton Reicha. Representative chamber pieces with flute include *Sinfonico*, Op. 12 by Anton Reicha, *Grand Trio* by Kuhlau and *Three Grand Trios* by Kuhlau.

The Nineteenth Century

Chamber music in the nineteenth century was marked by innovation and expansion, especially in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. In those cities, chamber music found its most welcoming home in salons. These include gatherings of intellectuals, artists, composers, etc., who communed in private homes for music and conversation. In the nineteenth century much of the chamber music repertory is still dominated by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The increase in the chamber music repertory and the insatiable thirst for this music was a direct result of the ever-expanding middle class, whose salons allowed them to show off their acquisition of musical culture. This created a great demand for new music. Some chamber music in the nineteenth century continued to imitate the styles of the Viennese classical composers. In the first half of the nineteenth century, popular chamber music works included those by Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), Giulio Briccialdi (1818-1881), Franz Schubert (1797-1828) and Albert Doppler (1821-1883).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the predominant chamber music genres with flute were the wind quintet and sonatas for two instruments, often for violin or flute with piano. Some salons specialized in what Christina Bashford describes as “serious” chamber music, such as Beethoven’s late string quartets. Others presented lighthearted compositions, often songs and piano pieces.⁴ Composers like Schumann and Mendelssohn performed in these venues with the purpose of trying out their new compositions.

Sonatas for two melody instruments and piano, including those by Beethoven, Jan Kalivoda and Louis Spohr, continued to be popular. Representative compositions include *Duo for Flutes in G Major* by Beethoven, *Introduction and Variations* by Franz Schubert and *Serenade* by Antonín Dvořák.

The Twentieth Century

In the early decades of the twentieth century chamber music entertainment was available to consumers beyond the salon or concert hall; in this new technological age people began to listen to the radio and had access to sound recordings, perhaps less often than they experienced live music. Despite this shift, chamber music was still played in the home for small gatherings. Very often this music was newly composed. Other groups with amateur musicians and students continued to play repertory by J.S.

⁴ Christina Bashford, “Chamber Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Bach and string quartets by Viennese composers of the of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵

Among the most significant composers of twentieth-century chamber music with flute is Claude Debussy (1862-1918), whose chamber music pieces show the transition from a nineteenth-century style to an early twentieth-century one. Other late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century composers, among them Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck and Maurice Ravel, also participated in this stylistic shift. According to Radice, these composers drew on “Renaissance modality, Baroque sectional contrast and toccata-like configuration, Classical three-movement layout, and Romantic collection of themes.”⁶ In particular, composers used a kind of modal-tonal harmony to affect colors in their ever-expanding harmonic palette that is characteristic of much twentieth- and twenty-first-century chamber music.

Other prominent composers of chamber music with flute include Béla Bartók and Malcolm Arnold. Representative compositions include *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp* by Debussy, *Three Pieces for Flute, Clarinet and Bassoon* by Walter Piston, *Three Shanties* by Malcolm Arnold, and *Pierrot lunaire for Voice, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano* by Arnold Schoenberg.

⁵ Bashford.

⁶ Radice, 182.

Chapter 2

Biography

French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was among the most important, innovative and revered composers of the twentieth century. He was born in Paris and began piano studies at age seven. At ten, Debussy was admitted to the Paris Conservatory, where he studied both piano and composition. Rimsky-Korsakov was Debussy's primary compositional influencer; Debussy encountered Korsakov's works while he studied with Meck at the Paris Conservatory. As a devoted man, he even journeyed to hear one of Wagner's operas in 1888. In 1884, Debussy won the prestigious *Prix de Rome* in composition, after which he temporarily resided in Italy to study music. He was known for his use of non-traditional scales, chromaticism and parallelism; he was also known for his use of smaller form and small instrumentation. He was an Impressionist who was influenced by movement in art; this translated directly into his compositions. His first published compositions were songs. In 1902 Debussy's reputation as a major composer was established with his groundbreaking opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

Debussy is considered France's leading Modernist composer. His major works include the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, his symphonic pieces, *Jeux*, *Prélude to the "Afternoon of a Faun,"* *Nocturnes*, *La mer* and *Images*, and his many piano pieces. Debussy was diagnosed with cancer in 1909 and passed away in 1918.

Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp

Claude Debussy wrote *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* in 1915, near the end of his life. The first performance was given privately in the home of Debussy's publisher, Jacques Durand, on December 10, 1916. The first public performance was given at a charity concert three months later on March 9, 1917. Originally Debussy wrote this piece for flute, oboe and harp; he subsequently changed the instrumentation because he thought the timbre of the viola and flute would be a better combination.⁷ Debussy's first idea was to compose six sonatas for "diverse instruments"⁸ as on the title page (see Figure 1).

Each of the sonatas is considered a masterpiece and are staples of the chamber music repertory. Part of Debussy's inspiration for these pieces was stimulated by his patriotism; because of his cancer, he was unable to actually participate in the war movement, and in these works Debussy said he wanted to affirm French culture.⁹ As he explained: "I want to work not so much for myself, but to give proof, however small it may be, that not even 30 million 'boches' can destroy French thoughts."¹⁰ Debussy signed each of the six sonatas "Claude Debussy, musician Français."¹¹ Debussy completed only three of them: the *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp*, the *Sonata for Cello*

⁷ Walker, 17.

⁸ Durand, *Six Sonatas for Diverse Instruments*, accessed on IMSLP.
[http://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_for_Flute,_Viola_and_Harp_\(Debussy,_Claude\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Sonata_for_Flute,_Viola_and_Harp_(Debussy,_Claude)). Accessed January 3, 2016.

⁹ Walker, 18.

¹⁰ Joseph Way, "Sonata No. 2 for Flute, Viola and Harp," *Sierra Chamber Society Program Notes*, 1997. Accessed 23 March 2016. Available from <http://www.fuguemasters.com/debussy.html>.

¹¹ Durand, 1.

and Piano, and the *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, which he finished in 1917, the year before his death.¹² In a letter to Swiss journalist Robert Godet, Debussy wrote, "[The music is] so terribly melancholy that I can't say whether one should laugh or cry. Perhaps both at the same time?"¹³

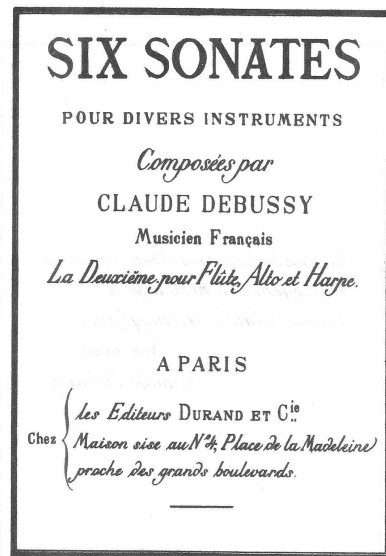


Figure 1. Title page, *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*

¹² These pieces were not well received. Some critics viewed the pieces as an indication of Debussy's diminished creative capacity.

¹³Rodda, Dr. Richard E. "Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp." *The Kennedy Center*. 1990-2016. Accessed 14 April 2016. Available from <https://www.kennedy-center.org>.

Chapter 3

“Pastorale”

The first part of this chapter is an analysis of the first movement of Debussy’s *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*. This analysis focuses largely on six motives introduced in mm. 1-25. The analysis also draws attention to ambiguous harmony, complex rhythm, expressive markings, and motivic material used throughout.

The first movement, “Pastorale,” is in ternary form: A (mm. 1-25), B (mm. 26-53), A’ (mm. 54-83). Although notated in the key of F major, much of the movement centers around C. As in many of Debussy’s instrumental works, frequent shifts in tempo and meter create music that sounds fluid and seamless which is characteristic of Debussy’s later pieces.

Harmonic ambiguity refers to a lack of a clear pitch center. Two explicit examples of harmonic ambiguity occur in mm. 12 and 21. The harmonies in m. 12 are coloristic, meaning they are meant to create a specific mood, and not to establish a key. There, after a series of parallel chords in the harp (mm. 4-11), the harp left-hand juxtaposes an open F major chord as a pedal, above which sounds an open fifth on Eb. This allows the flute to slither in a virtuosic passage above. The pitch organization falls into G minor, but is broken by the appearance of an Ab. In m. 21, the harmonies are again non-functional, with the harp part in parallel motion playing a thick chordal texture in the right hand that accompanies motive six.

Parallel chords are a compositional device in which intervals or chords are played in parallel motion, or planing. These chords often lack a dominant function that leads to a key. Debussy's use of parallel chords demonstrates this ambiguity; for example, the harmonies do not always pull to a particular tonal center (harp, mm. 9-11). Another device includes his use of pedal (harp, mm. 36-40). Here, the harp sustains an Eb while the flute alternates between Gb and D, and the viola alternates between A and E. This creates a quartal harmony that is accompanied by dissonance in the harp.

Throughout this movement, the rhythm often appears as ambiguous as the harmony by masking the pulse, a rhythmic style that Debussy scholars describe as non-pulsatile.¹⁴ This is partly the result of frequent metric shifts (9/8, 7/8, 8/8, 18/16, 6/8, 3/4), as well as syncopated passages (with ties across the barlines). The first 83 measures of the piece shift between these meters nine times (9/8 used three times, 7/8 used twice). Rhythmic ambiguity is also the result of irregular subdivisions of the beat (harp, mm. 21-22; flute, m. 69), and frequently changing tempo and expressive indications.

Debussy fills the score with explicit expressive indications such as *leggero*, *sul ponticello*, and *mélancoliquement*. These specific markings direct and instruct the performers how to play the piece in order to uphold Debussy's ideals. Table 1 includes an alphabetical list of the expressive indications marked in "Pastorale" along with each marking's language of origin, the definition, the measure(s) and instrument in which it

¹⁴ Walker, 24.

occurs, and its characteristic.¹⁵ I divide the expressive indications into five characteristic categories that refer to how a marking is used: mood, tempo, dynamic, articulation, and instruction.

Table 1. Movement one, “Pastorale,” expressive indications and definitions

<u>Expressive Indication</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Measure(s) of occurrence and Instrument</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>
<i>affretando</i>	Italian	Hurrying, rushed, pressing on	16 (F, V, H) 59 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>animando</i>	Italian	Becoming lively and faster	18 (F, V, H) 21 (V, H)	mood, tempo
<i>arco</i>	Italian	Use the bow	80 (V) 82 (V)	instruction
<i>cédez</i>	French	Slow down and become softer	78 (F, V, H)	tempo, dynamic
<i>crescendo</i>	Italian	Becoming louder, swelling	61 (F, V, H)	dynamic
<i>delicatissimo</i>	Italian	Daintily, elegantly	76 (H)	mood
<i>diminuendo</i>	Italian	Becoming softer	20 (F, V, H) 46 (F, V) 53 (H) 62 (F, V)	dynamic

¹⁵ Some expressive indications are described with more than one characteristic.

<i>dolce</i>	Italian	Sweet, smooth, gentle	1 (F, V, H) 14 (F) 48 (H) 57 (F) 78 (F, V, H)	mood
<i>doux</i>	French	Soft, gentle, smooth	3 (V) 52 (F)	dynamic, mood
<i>en dehors</i>	French	Outside	14 (F) 39 (H) 57 (F)	mood
<i>et pénétrant</i>	French	Keen, acute, sharp	4 (V)	mood
<i>en retenant</i>	French	Holding back	8 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>en serrant</i>	French	Becoming quicker	7 (F, H)	tempo
<i>glissando</i>	Italian	A glide from one note to the next	52 (V)	articulation
<i>gracieux</i>	French	Graceful, elegant	31 (F, V, H)	mood
<i>léger et rythmé</i>	French	Light, quick, and measured, in precise rhythm	39 (H) 43 (F, V)	articulation, tempo
<i>leggierissimo</i>	Italian	As lightly and nimble as possible	69 (F)	mood
<i>leggiero</i>	Italian	Lightly, nimbly	2 (F)	mood
<i>lento</i>	Italian, Spanish	A slow tempo	1 (F, H)	tempo
<i>marqué</i>	French	Marked, accented, emphasized	32 (H) 46 (V)	articulation

<i>mélancoliquement</i>	French	Sad, mournful, plaintive	1 (F) 50 (F)	mood
<i>molto</i>	Italian	Very, much	24 (F, V, H) 47 (F, V)	mood
<i>molto diminuendo</i>	Italian	Much softer	71 (V) 76-77 (H)	dynamic
<i>molto ritardando</i>	Italian	Much slower	24 (F, V, H) 65 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>nettement rythmé</i>	French	Clearly, plainly, distinctly and measured, in precise rhythm	26 (V)	articulation, tempo
<i>ôtez</i>	French	Remove	25 (V)	instruction
<i>più</i>	Italian	More	6 (V) 25 (H) 36 (F, V) 50 (V) 53 (F, V, H) 56 (F, V) 70 (F) 79 (V) 80 (F, V, H)	mood, dynamic
<i>più lento</i>	Italian	More slowly	78 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>pizzicato</i>	Italian	Plucked	79 (V) 81 (V)	articulation

<i>poco</i>	Italian, Spanish	Little, a bit	61 (F, V, H)	mood
<i>poco meno</i>	Italian	A little less	72 (F, H)	mood, dynamic
<i>poco stretto</i>	Italian	A little accelerated, faster	74 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>ritardando</i>	Italian	Becoming slower	17 (F, V, H) 20 (F, V, H) 53 (F, V, H) 56 (F, V, H) 71 (F, V, H) 77 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>rubato</i>	Italian	Taking a portion of the value from one note and giving it to another note within the same measure, without altering the duration of the tempo as a whole	1 (F, H)	tempo
<i>sempre</i>	Italian	Always, continually, throughout	66 (H)	instruction
<i>sostenuto</i>	Italian	Sustained	17 (F) 60 (F) 78 (F, V, H)	instruction

<i>sourdine</i>	French	Mute or damper	1 (V) 25 (V)	instruction
<i>soutenu</i>	French	Sustained, held	9 (V)	instruction
<i>subito</i>	Italian	Suddenly, immediately, at once	31 (F, V)	instruction
<i>sul ponticello</i>	Italian	Close to the bridge, producing a nasal, brittle tone	14 (V)	instruction
<i>tempo</i>	Italian	Time, rate of speed	21 (V, H)	tempo
<i>vif et joyeux</i>	French	Lively, animated and happy, lighthearted	26 (F, V, H)	mood

The amount of expressive markings in “Pastorale” is astounding. Out of 83 measures, only 35 of them contain no expressive marking.¹⁶ Some of these indications are used upwards of nine times, or as little as one time. Similarly, some markings apply to all three instruments (e.g. *affretando*) while others only apply to one instrument (e.g. *delicatissimo*). Many measures have more than one marking, such as m. 78, which contains five different expressive markings. It is also prominent when some expressive indications bearing opposite characteristics are used in succession. For example, in m. 18, the marking *animando* leads the performer to push forward, but this is cut short by

¹⁶ This excludes any drawn *crescendos* or *decrescendos*.

a *ritardando* in m. 20. This happens again in m. 21 with *tempo animando* followed by a *molto ritardando* in m. 24.

This frequent use of expressive indications is vastly different than in the music of previous centuries. Works by Johann Sebastian Bach, for example, contain few expressive markings. These pieces are more open to a performer's interpretation, as long as they follow the usual performance practice of that time period in which it was written. This reinforces the idea that Debussy knew exactly how he wanted his pieces to be played.

Six different motives occur in the first twenty-five measures (Figures 2-7); these motives appear throughout the rest of the piece like the original or modified. Table 2 lists each motive with its instrumentation at the original appearance, the measure number of first appearance, the characteristics of the motive, and the measures of recurring appearances in movement one, "Pastorale."

The flute introduces three motives, the viola, one, the harp, one, and a flute and viola combination, one. All motives are introduced before any restatement occurs. Motive recurrences modify the original motive; modifications include a fragment, a transposition, or a melodic line that closely resembles the original motive in intervallic or structural comparison. The first instance of a modified motive is in m. 26 in the viola

part. In the remainder of first movement (mm. 26-83), there are sixteen total reappearances.¹⁷ The only motive that does not reappear in movement one is motive six.

Table 2. Motive descriptions and occurrences in movement one, “Pastorale”

<u>Motive</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>	<u>First Appearance</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Recurrences</u>
1	Flute (F)	mm. 1-3	Centered around C, floaty, improvisatory, hazy	mm. 29-30; F mm. 31-34; F m. 39; F mm. 69; F mm. 70; F mm. 72-73; F mm. 74-75; F, V
2	Viola (V)	mm. 4-6	F minor, reaches upward	mm. 28-29; V mm. 48-49; V mm. 50-51; F mm. 54-55; F
3	Harp (H)	mm. 10-12	Parallel Chords	mm. 66-69; H
4	Flute	mm. 14-17	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 57-58; F m. 78; F
5	Flute	mm. 18-20	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 26-27; V mm. 63-65; F, V
6	Flute and Viola	mm. 21-24	Ascending line with repeated figure to unison playing	

¹⁷ This motive does not get restated until movement two, “Interlude.”

The first motive, (mm. 1-3) shown in Figure 2, gives the impression of floating, in part because of the improvisatory-like quintuplets and hazy tonality.¹⁸



Figure 2. Motive 1: Flute

The quintuplets emulate rhythmic ambiguity because it is not divided evenly into equal parts. The flute does not articulate a downbeat until the third measure; this contributes to the rhythmic ambiguity and floaty, ethereal mood. It sounds as if this melody is not tethered to the 9/8 time signature. These three measures contain two sub-motives: a head motive and a tail motive. The head motive begins in m. 1 and ends at the eighth-note rest in m. 2. The tail motive begins on the eighth eighth-note in m. 2 and concludes at the end of m. 3. The head motive features ascending thirds sustaining a C that begin the outline of an Ab-major triad; it fails to clearly project a tonal center. The tail motive is “free,” marked *leggiere* (see Table 1), and suggests an Ab augmented triad. This juxtaposition between two triads, Ab major and Ab augmented, contributes to harmonic ambiguity.

¹⁸ Walker, 30.

The first staff of music is in 2/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a half note B-flat, followed by a quarter note A, a quarter note G, and a half note F. A slur covers the next four notes: a quarter note E, a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a half note B-flat. The tempo marking *pénétrent* is placed below the first measure. The staff continues with a half note A, a quarter note G, a quarter note F, and a half note E. The tempo marking *piu p* is placed below the final measure.

This motive is more rhythmically structured, but is constantly reaching upward like the C to F in m. 4, the E to Ab in m. 5, and the B to E in m. 6. More rhythmically stable than the first motive, this motive lands on strong downbeats 7 out of 9 times within the three measures. Therefore, it is more representative of the 9/8 time signature.

Mouvt 8

pp

9

pp

This motive creates both harmonic and rhythmic ambiguity. The harp begins with a polychord--a D open fifth against a C open fifth--a combination that does not project a specific tonal center. The harp moves in parallel motion to new pitches while still

maintaining quintal harmony. The rhythmic ambiguity results from the use of ties, both within measures and across barlines.

The flute introduces the fourth motive (mm. 14-17), shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Motive 4: Flute

Similar to motive one, this motive ascends from the D to the A, then descends scalar to a C. This motive most closely resembles F major, and is written to sound like a duple meter. This contradicts the 9/8 time signature and sounds like a hemiola.

The fifth motive (flute, mm. 18-20) has both ascending and descending characteristics, shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Motive 5: Flute

The motive starts on a low E, then reaches higher and higher to a B above the staff. After a quick thirty-second-note reach to a D, the whole motive begins to descend, with a *diminuendo* and a *ritardando* at the end that leads to A4. With the B's marked natural, there is no key signature to this motive; however, the B natural could be interpreted as the

leading tone to C major, or as the second scale degree to A minor. This motive also features weak downbeats, again contributing to rhythmic ambiguity; this is further emulated through the use of the grace notes in m. 20. The *animando* (see Table 1) refers to a livelier, more animated sound; this lighter mood change sets this motive apart from the previous motives.

The last motive is mm. 21-24 in the flute and viola, shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Motive 6: Flute and Viola

This motive is based on another ascending line, with similar contour to the fourth motive. A key characteristic of this motive is the repeated figure in the viola and flute parts that leads to their unison playing in mm. 23 and 24. This is the only motive that uses two voices. Although this motive moves largely in scalar motion, there is still no tonal center. Marked *tempo animando* (see Table 1), this motive resembles the fifth motive in its character.

Although it begins with material from motive five, much of the motivic material throughout the B section (mm. 26-47) draws from motive one; this motive has the highest number of recurrences in the first movement. The tempo and meter shift here, from 9/8

at the end of the first section, to 18/18 in the second, which is marked *Vif et joyeux* (lively and joyful). The repeated triplet sixteenth-note figure first appears in the flute at the end of m. 29; this begins the almost completely present triplet figure, reminiscent of the quickly-moving notes in the motives. The first motive from section one is used in this second section, but this time in grace notes (mm. 26-27). In m. 30, syncopation contrasts with the clear rhythm at the beginning of the section (m. 26).

The third section (mm. 48-83), a kind of A¹ section, begins with a flute variation of the first motive leading to the second motive in the flute in m. 50. This third section recalls much of the thematic material from the first section. For example, the flute restates motive two in m. 54 but plays an A natural instead of an Ab. The variation in this section occurs in the way that Debussy has the parts interact, slightly different than the opening section.

“Interlude”

This analysis of the second movement compares motivic material with that in the first movement and places particular attention to harmony. “Interlude,” is less ambiguous than the first with respect to harmony featuring long, lush lines in each part. It can be analyzed either as ternary form¹⁹ or a rondo;²⁰ Walker argues that the ternary form is

¹⁹ A, m. 84; B, m. 137; A¹, m. 168

²⁰ A, m. 84; B, m. 137; A, m. 168; (B), m. 178; A¹, m. 107

more feasible because it replicates the form in the first and third movements.²¹ This movement revolves around F minor, a darker, more hollow key than “Pastorale” that is largely in F major. Sections A and B (mm. 84-136 and mm. 137-167) sound similar to “Pastorale” with their motives, fragments of motives, and harmonic ambiguity; the timbre/mood changes at the *Tempo animato* in the C section (mm. 168-199), in which the harp plays continuous scalar or arpeggiated lines beneath long melodies in the flute and viola. This creates a rich, constantly moving harp bass line.

Debussy’s use of colorful harmonies continues throughout this movement. The first phrase demonstrates harmonic ambiguity (mm. 84-87) until an e natural appears in the flute; this begins a pull to F minor, a more melancholy key than F major. Harmonic ambiguity also characterizes the beginning of the B section; there are several notes that cannot be analyzed as one specific tonal center. Here, the flute and viola have a different key signature than the harp. The harp part features harmonics that contribute to the ethereal mood. This section is reminiscent of the C section of movement one where the harp had a rich, thick texture beneath flute and viola melodies.

The use of pedal continues in “Interlude.” For example, the viola begins in m. 84 with a sustained pedal pitch while the flute plays the opening phrase, a modification of motives four and five. Another pedal returns in m. 131 when the viola again sustains on a pedal pitch that leads to the next section in the movement.

²¹ Walker, 44.

Unlike the “Pastorale” in which the meter changed frequently (more than just to introduce a new section) and was often very complex (9/8, 7/8, etc.), the “Interlude” contains only simple meters, in 3/4 and 4/4. These two meters are spread throughout the movement, rather than the quick shifts between different meters in the first movement. The second movement only has five meter changes, while the first movement had nine. Also, the shortest time span between a meter change in the first movement was only two measures, while the second movement has a shortest span of ten measures. The simple meters present in “Interlude” are easier to perceive than the non-pulsatile rhythm in “Pastorale” which created frequent rhythmic ambiguity.

Expressive markings create sections, similar to that of the first movement. Table 3 includes an alphabetical list of the expressive indications marked in “Interlude” along with each marking’s language of origin, the definition, the measure(s) and instrument in which it occurs, and its characteristic. The result is again a strict agenda of how the performer is instructed to play the piece.

Table 3. Movement two, “Interlude,” expressive indications and definitions

<u>Expressive Indication</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Measure(s) of occurrence</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>
<i>animare</i>	Italian	Lively, animated, spirited	153 (F, V, H) 182 (F, V, H)	mood

<i>animato</i>	Italian	Lively, animated, spirited	111 (F, V, H) 137 (F, H) 159 (F, V, H) 178 (F, H)	mood
<i>arco</i>	Italian	Use the bow	108 (V) 150 (V)	instruction
<i>crescendo</i>	Italian	Becoming louder, swelling	111 (F, V, H)	dynamic
<i>delicatissimo</i>	Italian	Daintily, elegantly	168 (H)	mood
<i>détaché sans sécheresse</i>	French	Detached without abruptness	165 (V)	articulation
<i>diminuendo</i>	Italian	Becoming softer	104 (F, V, H) 108 (H) 117 (V) 127 (F, V) 128 (H) 163 (V, H) 184 (F) 186 (V)	dynamic

<i>dolce</i>	Italian	Sweet, smooth, gentle	84 (F, V) 87 (H) 91 (V) 97 (H) 105 (H) 109 (F, V, H) 118 (F) 122 (V) 139 (H) 145 (F, H) 158 (F, V) 160 (H) 168 (H) 171 (H) 177 (H) 187 (H) 190 (F, V) 194 (F)	mood
<i>espressivo</i>	Italian	With expression, with feeling	132 (F) 168 (H) 179 (V) 181 (F)	mood
<i>étouffez</i>	French	Damped	113 (H)	instruction
<i>glissando</i>	Italian	A glide from one note to the next	143 (H)	articulation
<i>graziosamente</i>	Italian	Graceful and easy	105 (H) 109 (F)	mood
<i>legato</i>	Italian	Smooth, even, without any break between notes	168 (H)	articulation
<i>leggieramente</i>	Italian	Lightly, nimbly	101 (V)	mood

<i>marcato</i>	Italian	Accented, stressed	97 (H) 139 (H) 160 (H) 177 (H)	articulation
<i>marqué</i>	French	Marked, accented, emphasized	151 (V) 152 (V)	articulation
<i>mettez</i>	French	Put, place	188 (V)	instruction
<i>molto</i>	Italian	Very much	131 (V) 163 (V, H) 171 (H) 186 (V)	mood
<i>murmurando</i>	French	Murmured, whispered	137 (H)	mood
<i>perdendosi</i>	Italian	Dying away	196 (F)	dynamic
<i>pizzicato</i>	Italian	Plucked	107 (V) 145 (V) 158 (V)	articulation, instruction
<i>piú</i>	Italian	More	149 (V, H) 164 (H) 165 (V) 175 (F, V) 184 (F) 186 (H) 188 (F) 196 (H)	instruction
<i>poco animando</i>	Italian	A little animated	97 (F, V, H) 121 (F, H)	mood
<i>rallentando</i>	Italian	Becoming slower	185 (V, H)	tempo

<i>ritardando</i>	Italian	Becoming slower	104 (F, V, H) 128 (F, H) 136 (F, H) 163 (F, V, H) 167 (F, V, H) 176 (F, H)	tempo
<i>rubato</i>	Italian	Taking a portion of the value from one note and giving it to another note (usually) within the same measure, without altering the duration of the measure as a whole	150 (F, V, H) 158 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>semplice</i>	Italian	Simple, unaffected	84 (F) 91 (V)	mood
<i>sempre</i>	Italian	Always, continually, throughout	94 (H) 156 (F, V, H) 194 (F, H)	instruction
<i>sensibile</i>	Italian	Sensitive, tender	125 (V) 131 (V)	mood
<i>sfogato</i>	Italian	Let loose, freed	123 (F) 144 (F, V)	tempo, mood
<i>smorzando</i>	Italian	Fading away	197 (H)	dynamic
<i>sospirare</i>	Italian	Sighing, plaintive	133 (V)	mood

<i>sospirato</i>	Italian	Sighing, plaintive	192 (F)	mood
<i>sostenuto</i>	Italian	Sustained	105 (H) 109 (F, V, H) 123 (H) 178 (F) 179 (V) 181 (F)	instruction
<i>sourdine</i>	French	Mute, damper	188 (V)	instruction
<i>stretto</i>	Italian	Accelerated, faster	166 (F, V)	tempo
<i>subito</i>	Italian	Suddenly, immediately, at once	145 (F, H) 158 (H)	instruction
<i>tempo di minuetto</i>	Italian	Tempo of a Minuet	84 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>tenuto</i>	Italian	Held, sustained	84 (V) 111 (F, V) 112 (F, V)	instruction
<i>tristamente</i>	Italian	Wretchedly	190 (V) 191 (F)	mood

Although “Pastorale” contains two more expressive indications than “Interlude” (42 vs. 40), “Interlude” contains more instances of repetition. The most substantial marking is *dolce*, with eighteen occurrences in just the second movement. Also like movement one, the markings can apply to either all three instruments (e.g. *rubato*), or just

to one (e.g. *sospirato*). Of the five characteristics, mood is the most frequent in “Interlude.” This is also true for “Pastorale,” although it is only two repetitions short. Table 4 provides a comparison of the expressive indications between movements one and two.²² It includes the total number different kinds of expressive markings in the movement (see Table 1 and Table 3), the number of measures that contain markings, the number of measures that do not contain markings, the maximum number of repetitions for a given indication, the minimum number of repetitions for a given indication, and the number of occurrences of each kind of characteristic.²³

Although the number of measures that contain expressive indications is higher in the second movement, the first movement has a higher percentage of occurrence at 58%. With 64 out of 115 measures indicating an expressive marking,²⁴ there is only a 2% difference between movements one and two. While both movements have the highest number of expressive indications pertaining to mood, tempo ranks second for “Pastorale” while instruction ranks second for “Interlude.” Like movement one, this second movement contains many instances when there are several expressive indications in one measure such as m. 111: *un poco animato*, *tenuto*, and *crescendo*. These comparisons

²² This data was compiled using Table 1 and Table 3.

²³ The total sum of characteristics will not equal the sum of expressive indications because some of the indications are described using more than one characteristic.

²⁴ This excludes any drawn *crescendos* or *decrescendos*.

further substantiate the idea that Debussy indicated to musicians precisely; it was his way of communicating to students how he was hearing the pieces.

Table 4. Comparison of expressive indications amongst movements one and two

	“Pastorale”	“Interlude”
Total expressive indications (excluding any repetitions)	42	40
# measures w/ expressive indications	58% (48 out of 83)	56% (64 out of 115)
# measures w/out expressive indications	42% (35 out of 83)	44% (51 out of 115)
Maximum repetition occurrence	9	18
Minimum repetition occurrence	1	1
Characteristic: mood	14	16
Characteristic: instruction	8	10
Characteristic: dynamic	7	4
Characteristic: articulation	5	6
Characteristic: tempo	13	6

Motives introduced in “Pastorale” return in this movement, as shown in Table 5 which lists each motive with its instrumentation at the original appearance, the measure

number of first appearance in “Pastorale,” the characteristics of the motive, and the measures of recurring appearances in movement two, “Interlude.”

Many of these recurrences modify the original motives. The second motive is the only one to not return in this movement. Unlike the first movement, the second only contains one instance of the first motive. While the first movement contained seven recurrences of the first motive (the most frequently stated), the second movement restates the fifth motive eight times. Also, the second movement has a total number of 20 motive modifications or restatements, while the first had 16.

The flute entrance in m. 84 is similar to the first motive in its thin texture with the solo flute supported by the viola; it is also reminiscent of the fourth and fifth motives because of the rising and falling contour. An example of a modified motive occurs in m. 182. The flute and viola melodies merge to a unison; this is reminiscent of motive six, in which the flute and viola begin with their own melodic lines and arrive on a unison. Modifications of the fourth and fifth motives return in the viola at the m. 168; the flute then takes over this phrase in a manner similar to the sixth motive.

Table 5. Motive descriptions and occurrences in movement two, “Interlude”

<u>Motive</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>	<u>First Appearance</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Recurrences</u>
1	Flute (F)	mm. 1-3	Centered around C, floaty, improvisatory, hazy	mm. 84-87; F
2	Viola (V)	mm. 4-6	F minor, reaches upward	
3	Harp (H)	mm. 10-12	Parallel chords	mm. 91-96; H mm. 101-103; H mm. 121-122; H mm. 129-133; H
4	Flute	mm. 14-17	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 84-87; F mm. 91-94; F, V mm. 97-98; V mm. 129-133; V mm. 168-169; H mm. 190-193; F, V
5	Flute	mm. 18-20	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 84-87; F mm. 91-94; F, V mm. 97-98; V mm. 101-105; F mm. 121-124; F mm. 129-133; V mm. 168-169; H mm. 190-193; F, V
6	Flute and Viola	mm. 21-24	Ascending line with repeated figure to unison playing	m. 178-189; F, V

The C section (mm. 168-199) of this movement is unlike any other in the piece with regards to the constant use of 32nd and 16th notes in the harp. At the *tempo animato* (m.178), the harp plays four-note scales alternating between the right and left hand; this creates a luscious atmosphere. The aural effect implies that the harp does not have notated music; this recalls the rhythmic ambiguity and non-pulsatile rhythm that was ever-present in the first movement. The music in the second movement again recalls the first by ending on C's in multiple octaves, setting the stage for the final movement to begin in F minor.

“Final”

The remainder of this analysis discusses the additional use of harmonic ambiguity, rhythmic ambiguity, expressive indications, and motivic material that Debussy incorporates into the final movement. The beginning of “Final” is distinctly different from previous movements because of its faster tempo and louder dynamic. “Final” is largely in F (minor and major) and has the most structured beginning in this work with regard to rhythm: the metric pulse is easier to discern than in previous movements. This movement is in ternary form. It is the longest in terms of measures, but actually takes the least amount of time to perform. It also contains the least amount of motives that are fragmented or modified.

Harmonic stability is more common than harmonic ambiguity in this movement. Unlike the “Pastorale” in which harmonic ambiguity prevailed, or the “Interlude” where it took several measures to discern a tonal center, “Final” sets a pitch center at the beginning.

Pedal pitches continue in this movement, specifically on F. The constant repetition of fifths in the harp (mm. 200-214) is a pedal that outlines the harmonic function over which the flute and viola play fragmented melodies.

Meter changes in this movement recall those in the previous movements. Just as the second movement oscillated between two meters, “Final” features both 4/4 and 9/8. The 9/8 meter occurs once (mm. 308-310), recalling material from “Pastorale.” Like the first movement, the number of measures between different time signatures in “Final” is very short.

“Final” contains yet more expressive indications like those in the two previous movements. Table 6 includes an alphabetical list of the expressive indications marked in “Interlude” along with each marking’s language of origin, the definition, the measure(s) and instrument in which it occurs, and its characteristic.

Table 6. Movement three, “Final,” expressive indications and definitions

<u>Expressive Indication</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Measure(s) of occurrence</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>
<i>accelerando poco a poco</i>	Italian	Becoming faster, little by little	257 (F, V, H) 281 (F, H)	tempo
<i>allegro</i>	Italian	A fast, lively tempo, faster than allegretto but slower than presto	200 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>arco</i>	Italian	Use the bow	205 (V) 301 (V) 311 (V)	instruction
<i>crescendo</i>	Italian	Becoming louder, swelling	261 (F, V, H) 265 (F, V, H) 281 (F, H) 287 (F, V, H) 289 (F, V, H) 303 (F, V)	dynamic
<i>diminuendo</i>	Italian	Becoming softer	215 (V) 216 (H) 217 (H) 219 (F, V, H) 230 (V) 273 (V, H)	dynamic
<i>dolce</i>	Italian	Sweet, smooth, gentle	275 (F) 277 (F) 308 (F, H)	mood
<i>du talon</i>	French	From the frog end of the bow	242 (V) 244 (V)	instruction

<i>en dehors</i>	French	Emphasized, standing out, accented	219 (V) 277 (H) 279 (V)	articulation
<i>espressivo</i>	Italian	With expression, with feeling	219 (V) 226 (V) 275 (F) 277 (H) 279 (V) 309 (F)	mood
<i>leggiero</i>	Italian	Lightly, nimbly	257 (F, V) 297 (F, V)	mood
<i>lo stesso tempo</i>	Italian	The same tempo	232 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>lontain</i>	French	Distant, soft	243 (F) 245 (F)	dynamic
<i>lusingando</i>	Italian	Caressing, alluring	275 (H)	mood
<i>ma agitato</i>	Italian	But excited, restless	232 (F, V, H) 287 (F, V, H)	mood
<i>marcato</i>	Italian	Accented, stressed	205 (V) 215 (H) 234 (F) 238 (F) 257 (H) 299 (V) 312 (V) 313 (V)	articulation
<i>marqué</i>	French	Marked, accented, emphasized	311 (V)	articulation
<i>meno mosso ma con moto</i>	Italian	Less quickly but with movement	297 (F, V, H)	tempo

<i>moderato</i>	Italian	A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow	200 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>molto</i>	Italian	Very, much	205 (V) 216 (H) 217 (H) 220 (F, V, H) 234 (F) 238 (F) 265 (F, V, H) 273 (V) 274 (H) 287 (F, V, H) 289 (F, V, H) 303 (F, V) 308 (H) 312 (V)	instruction
<i>mouv^t de la “Pastorale”</i>	Italian	Original tempo of the “ <i>Pastorale</i> ”	308 (H)	tempo
<i>più</i>	Italian	More	239 (F) 242 (H) 244 (H) 246 (V) 271 (F, V, H)	instruction
<i>pizzicato</i>	Italian	plucked	249 (V) 299 (V) 311 (V)	articulation
<i>rallentando</i>	Italian	Becoming slower	273 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>risoluto</i>	Italian	Boldly, decisively, vigorously	200 (F, V, H)	mood

<i>ritardando</i>	Italian	Becoming slower	317 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>rubato</i>	Italian	Taking a portion of the value from one note and giving it to another note (usually within the same measure, without altering the duration of the measure as a whole)	219 (F, V, H) 275 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>sempre</i>	Italian	Always, continually, throughout	253 (F, V) 257 (H) 313 (V)	instruction
<i>simile</i>	Italian	Similarly, in like manner	277 (V)	instruction
<i>sostenuto</i>	Italian	Sustained	232 (V) 277 (F) 281 (V)	instruction
<i>staccato</i>	Italian	Detached, with each note separated from the next and quickly released	238 (V) 239 (V) 313 (V)	articulation

<i>subito</i>	Italian	Suddenly, immediately, at once	243 (H) 286 (F) 287 (V, H) 288 (F, V, H)	instruction
<i>tempo 1^o</i>	Italian	Tempo primo	311 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>tempo giusto</i>	Italian	Exact, appropriate tempo	285 (F, V, H)	tempo
<i>tenuto</i>	Italian	Held, sustained	269 (V) 270 (V)	instruction
<i>un poco più mosso</i>	Italian	A little more movement	247 (F, V, H) 303 (F, V, H)	tempo

“Final” contains the least number of expressive indications, which helps to understand it is the least complex movement. Although “Final” is the longest movement in terms of measures, it contains the least amount of measured expressive markings: 35 out of 119.²⁵ *Molto* is the most used expressive indication, usually in conjunction with another descriptive word. It instructs the performer to be excessive: for example, *molto ritardando*, meaning “very much slowing down.” *Mouv^t de la “Pastorale,”* a unique expressive indication in this movement, signals an almost exact restatement of three measures from the beginning of the piece.

Like movements one and two, this movement has expressive markings that are

²⁵ This excludes any drawn *crescendos* or *decrescendos*.

indicated for either all three instruments (e.g. *diminuendo*) or just one (e.g. *espressivo*).

Table 7 compares data of expressive indications in all three movements.²⁶

Table 7. Comparison of expressive indications amongst all movements

	“Pastorale”	“Interlude”	“Final”
Total expressive indications (excluding any repetitions)	42	40	35
# measures w/ expressive indications	58% (48 out of 83)	56% (64 out of 115)	29% (35 out of 119)
# measures w/out expressive indications	42% (35 out of 83)	44% (51 out of 115)	71% (84 out of 119)
Maximum repetition occurrence	9	18	14
Minimum repetition occurrence	1	1	1
Characteristic: mood	14	16	6
Characteristic: instruction	8	10	9
Characteristic: dynamic	7	4	3
Characteristic: articulation	5	6	5
Characteristic: tempo	13	6	12

²⁶ This data was compiled from Table 1, Table 3, and Table 6.

Even with the addition of the third movement data, movement one still has the highest percentage of expressive indication occurrences (58%). Since the last movement is the quickest in tempo, more markings with respect to tempo are expected. “Interlude” still has the most instances of mood, which reflects its melancholy character. Like the first and second movement, the final movement also contains measures that have several expressive markings such as m. 277 with *dolce*, *sostenuto*, *simile*, *espressivo*, and *en dehors*.

In 4/4, “Final” begins with the new material at a fast dynamic and quick tempo. Though this movement features motives from “Pastorale,” there are only fourteen instances. Table 8 lists each motive with its instrumentation at the original appearance, the measure number of first appearance in “Pastorale,” the characteristics of the motive, and the measures of recurring appearances in movement three.

With the most amount of measures but the shortest amount of time, the third movement contains the least amount of motivic material. Like the first movement, there is no restatement of the sixth motive; though unlike the second, it does quote the second motive. “Final” contains the most instances of motive three’s parallel open fifths that communicates harmony more than the other movements.

Table 8. Motive descriptions and occurrences in movement three, “Final”

<u>Motive</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>	<u>First Appearance</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Recurrences</u>
1	Flute (F)	mm. 1-3	Centered around C, floaty, improvisatory, hazy	m. 204 mm. 282-284; F mm. 308-310; F
2	Viola (V)	mm. 4-6	F minor, reaches upward	mm. 205-206
3	Harp (H)	mm. 10-12	Parallel chords	mm. 236-237; H mm. 240-241; H m. 243; H m. 245; H mm. 253-256; H mm. 263-266; H mm. 283-284; H mm. 295-296; H mm. 311-313; H
4	Flute	mm. 14-17	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 271-272; V
5	Flute	mm. 18-20	Ascends to peak, then descends	mm. 249-252; F
6	Flute and Viola	mm. 21-24	Ascending line with repeated figure to unison playing	

Like the second movement, this final movement contains more rhythmic stability than the first. At the *Accelerando poco a poco* in m. 257, Debussy introduces a section

that contains a lot of drive, unlike any previous movement. Here, the flute and viola alternate with scalar sixteenth notes as the harp provides a steady pulse. The result is a passage that communicates motion.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

In a letter to Godet in 1916, Debussy wrote about this piece:

“The sound of it is not bad, though it is not for me to speak to you of the music. I could do so, however, without embarrassment for it is the music of a Debussy whom I no longer know. It is frightfully mournful and I don’t know whether one should laugh or cry—perhaps both?”²⁷

Some scholars have argued that this piece is reminiscent of Debussy’s emotions before he died.²⁸ They propose that the first movement, with the F-major tonality, projects Debussy before he was diagnosed with cancer. “Interlude” represents the time after being diagnosed due to the F-minor tonality as sadness, frequent key signature changes and lush lines as wander, and fragmented motives as confused thoughts. “Final” depicts frenzied thoughts before recalling a happier state in “Pastorale,” ending with a flurry.

From the melancholy first section, to the lively middle section, and finally to the restatement of the closing somber section, Debussy takes the listeners, and the performers, through a fantastical inquiry. It is as if Debussy has asked a question in the first section, tried to answer it in the second, and is finally satisfied with his ultimate answer at the end.

²⁷The Los Angeles Philharmonic. “Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp.” *LAPHIL*. 2016. Accessed 14 April 2016. Available from <http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/>.

²⁸ Way.

Debussy's *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* presents motivic material supported by harmonic ambiguity that has no tonal center and complex rhythms that mask a steady pulse. Debussy's use of meter shifts, parallel chords, pedals, and numerous expressive indications establish his compositional style in this piece.

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