

21M.260: STRAVINSKY TO THE PRESENT

Class 1: February 2

ASSIGNMENT: Due February 4

Reading: Auner, p. 16-34

Anthology work: Claude Debussy, "Pagodes" from *Estampes*

Supplemental: Debussy, *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*  
Debussy, *La mer*, "De l'aube à midi sur la mer"  
Alexander Scriabin, *Prometheus* – see textbook p. 43-45

Before you begin, skim the Grove Music Online article about Debussy.

Listen to "Pagodes" twice all the way through with the score. Make some notes, citing bar numbers, about the following aspects of Debussy's writing in this piece.

the treatment of melody:

the use of the piano:

the mode/scales/harmonies:

the form:

From these observations, what compositional priorities might you attribute to Debussy in this work? That is, what seems *most important* to him?

Which of these priorities seem most innovative?

Write some notes from the textbook's account of Debussy's experience at the Universal Exposition. How may the ideas he took from this experience be seen to manifest in "Pagodes"?

What does "Exoticist" mean, and why might we be skeptical of an Exoticist attitude today?

Briefly compare the differing approaches to "modernity" evident in Mahler and Debussy.

Supplemental listening (option 1: more Debussy; option 2: Scriabin)

Listen carefully with *no distractions* except a notetaking apparatus (pencil/pen/keyboard), to either the two Debussy pieces or Scriabin's *Prometheus*, as assigned. These orchestral works are operating on a very different time and timbre scale when compared to *Pagodes*, despite some shared musical techniques. Write 4-5 sentences below to a) explain the musical commonalities between the piano work and the orchestral work(s) and b) encapsulate how the composer's treatment of orchestral exuberance transforms the impact that these musical techniques have on you as a listener.

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