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The Impressionistic Guitar

Is there a mutual influence between the Spanish guitar and the Impressionist masters?
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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation on the influences that the Spanish Guitar and the traditional music from Spain had on the impressionistic composers of the late 19th century and early 20th century. I have also inquired on the opposite influence, the impressionistic influence on Spanish composers. It contains a description of the characteristics of the two musical genres, informations on their most renowned composers’ composing style and an analysis on two relevant pieces of the guitarist and orchestral repertoire.

I found out a very strong link between the two genres, with Impressionism being very influenced by the traditional Flamenco style and the guitaristic idiomatic language and on the other hand the Spanish composers including in their compositions the new Impressionistic composing techniques and its new research on colors and timbres.

Keywords: Debussy, Impressionism, De Falla, Classical Guitar, Ravel, Scott, Mompou, Flamenco, De la Maza, Poulenc
1. Introduction

The idea behind this degree project is to research and present a repertoire about the mutual influence between the classical guitar, main instrument of the traditional Spanish music, and the Impressionistic musical movement. The classical guitar cannot be linked to only one repertoire, so more specifically I will be referring to the Spanish Classical guitar, the one invented and developed in Spain which has become the modern classical and flamenco instrument. In Spain the instrument has always been considered both a traditional instrument to play folk music and an “art” instrument, so the repertoire composed for this instrument contains, most of the times, two spirits: the folk and the western art music ones. So when I talk about the influence of the guitar on impressionism, I am referring to the instrument that has become the icon of the music of a country and the music it is so deeply linked to.

When I studied the “Homenaje pour le tombeau de Debussy” by M. De Falla, an authentic masterpiece of the guitar repertoire, I was fascinated by its Spanish Habanera form and its Impressionistic language which led me to look for further composition in the same style. Inside the “Homenaje” I could find nuances of the typical Spanish traditional music along with whole tone scales and the coloristic approach that defined the music of the impressionist composers. That piece also includes a quote taken from “La soiree dans Grenade” by Debussy. I decided that I wanted to know more about that and I discovered an essay written by De Falla on Debussy’s piano works and his Spanish influences. There De Falla writes about three particular pieces being very much influenced by flamenco and the traditional guitar styles of Spain: La soiree dans Grenade, La serenade interrompue, La puerta del vino. I read about how he felt charmed by Spain and its Arabic influences. In those compositions one can really feel how Debussy tries to recreate the typical phrasing and tone of a classical guitar being played in the flamenco style. He was very charmed by Spain even if he did not visit it more than once and for a very short period. The same thing happens with a series of works written by Ravel called “Miroirs” and his most famous Bolero.

None of these composers ever wrote a piece specifically for guitar even if their tonal and composing idea often came from there. Poulenc, one of the Groupe des Six composed a piece for guitar, dedicated to the very famous french female guitar player Ida Presti

On the other hand many guitarists and composer moved to France in the 1920s to learn from the impressionist masters and to live in the very lively French artistic scene.

Authors and composers such as “Heitor Villa Lobos”, “Manuel De Falla”, “Eduardo Sainz de la Maza”, “Cyrill Scott”, “Federico Mompou” wrote many compositions inspired by Debussy and Ravel, dedicating a lot of those works to the great guitarist Andres Segovia who was revolutionizing and
ennobling the guitar bringing it to an always growing worldwide audience. The list of the music I am going to perform includes:

Cyrill Scott: 1st Movement from “Sonatina for guitar”
F. Mompou: Suite Compostelana
M. De Falla: Homenaje a Debussy
F. Poulenc: Sarabande
E. Sainz de la Maza: Homenaje a Tolouse Lautrec
E. Sainz de la Maza: Homenaje a la guitarra
C. Debussy: Reverie (Transcription for two guitars)
T. Takemitsu: Equinox
N. Jappelli: Light Frameworks

1.1 Background

I was born in a family of musicians where my father and grandfather were both pianists, organists and composers. I began playing the violin when I was 5 and at 13 I started playing also the piano taking classes with private teachers and my father. When I was 14 I started playing guitar and taking classical guitar lessons, later on I switched to electric guitar and started playing in rock bands while taking electric guitar lessons. I recorded some albums and toured Europe with some bands and in the meanwhile I began working also with acoustic guitar, folk bands and singer-songwriters.

Later on I decided to deepen my understanding of music and explore the polyphonic possibilities of the guitar, so I took classical guitar lessons with M° Paolo Viscardi who helped me getting accepted in my city’s conservatory where I got a bachelor degree in classical guitar with the great Italian guitarist M° Luigi Attademo. After graduating I studied for two years in two academies in Milan and Rome with the world renowned guitarists M°Andrea Dieci and M°Carlo Marchione. In 2015 I decided to make a change to my life and I applied for Royal College of Music in Stockholm and I got accepted, so I moved to Sweden the same year to continue my studies in a master degree program. In my house we’ve always listened to classical and jazz music and many of my father’s students came to our home for their lessons so many of my days since my childhood were filled with the piano music, my absolute favorite being the impressionist repertoire.
2. Aim

My aim is to show how the sound of the classical guitar and the traditional flamenco music from Spain has greatly influenced the Impressionistic musical movement, looking for connections between the coloristic approach of the composers and the tonal colors of the guitar, the intimacy of its sound and the extremely various colors of the traditional music from Spain.

I will also look into the music written for guitar in the 1920’s and afterwards to show how on the other hand the impressionistic language, the use of broken melodies, atonal harmonies, extended chords, exotic and whole tone scales have influenced a lot of Spanish guitar composers in the same period.

2.1 Method

The way I’m going to realize this project is both a concert and a written essay and analysis.

- Performance of a selection of Impressionistic pieces both written originally for guitar and transcriptions as well as contemporary pieces inspired by those authors.
- Discussion with experts in the interpretation of that musical movement to build a more accurate interpretation of the music I’m going to play, both guitarists and pianist.
- Analysis on some relevant compositions that can show the connection I’m looking for. I will take some excerpt from “Ibéria” of C. Debussy and I will analyze it looking for the flamenco and Spanish guitar inspiration and imitation.
- Analysis of the same kind on guitar music looking for whole tone scales, coloristic and chromatic approach, extended chords, modality and multi-tonality, absence of strict harmonic rules and broken melodies.
- Study of some essays about the styles of the composers, such as De Falla’s essay on Debussy’s style, and the essay “The piano works of Debussy and Ravel” by Maureen Zoltec, Claude Debussy” by Paul Roberts, “The piano works of Claude Debussy” by E. Robert Schmitz and “Llobet chitarrista dell’impressionismo” by B. Tonazzi, “Debussy’s Iberia” by Matthew Brown
3. Impressionism

3.1 The Impressionistic Period (1870-1920)

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the fine arts entered a new era: called "Impressionism", it lasted only a few decades into the twentieth century. French artists such as Monet, Manet, Renoir and Degas first applied the term, "Impressionism", to paintings. Around 1870, a group of young artists abandoned the accepted school of realism in favor of a new movement in painting, which was dedicated to ideals considered revolutionary by their contemporaries. These artists maintained that for their purposes, realism played now part in achieving an artistic result. They concentrated on the "manner" in which a picture was painted, and were completely unconcerned with subject matter. Their chief aim was to reproduce the general "impression" of the moment made by the subject on the artist. They tended to look at nature with an "innocent eye", seeing the world in a continual state of change with its outlines melting into haze. They would contrast bits of pure color on the canvas, leaving it to the eye of the beholder to do the mixing. Impressionist painters were repelled by the heroic themes of the Romantic painters. The hero of the Impressionist was not man, but light. They chose as subjects dancing girls (ballerinas), picnics, boating, cafe scenes and nature. Their art is the reflection and impression of a magical city: Paris. These were years of intense speculation about the relationships between different art-forms, where artists spoke freely of sounds as colors, paintings as symphonies and poetry as music. In literature and especially poetry, Impressionism was translated into a movement called "Symbolism".

The Symbolists wished to free-verse techniques to achieve fluidity. Poetry's new function was to suggest or evoke, but not to describe. Rejecting realism, these poets chose to express their immediate reactions to a subject by means of symbolic words, which were arranged for their emotional values. They would also often include musical connotations in their poems. An excerpt from Paul Verlaine's Claire de Lune reads “Playing the lute and dancing, and almost sad beneath their whimsical costumes, even as they sing in minor mode...” and a phrase from Stéphane Mallarmé L'après-midi d'un faune reads “...murmurs no sound of water but that which my flute pours into the groove of sprinkled chords...”

The painter James Whistler gave musical titles to his paintings such as Nocturne in Blah and Gold and Symphony in White, and in an interview for L'Echo de Paris in 1895 Eugène Gauguin stated:

“I obtain symphonies, harmonies that represent absolutely nothing real in the vulgar sense of the word, with arrangements of lines and colors given as a pretext by any subject whatsoever from life or nature. These do not express any idea directly but should make one think the way music makes one think, without the help of images, simply by the mysterious affinities between our brains and such arrangements of color and line”
The basic theories of the Impressionists were most wonderfully expressed in the sonorous art of music. Since music is essentially an abstract art, it was ideal in projecting Impressionism's vague images. The Impressionist composers had two favorite mediums: the orchestra because of its variety of color and the piano. The piano fit well as an impressionistic instrument because many of its peculiar characteristics: the width of the extension, covering more than seven octaves, the ability of creating different dynamic layers and melodic levels, being able to give different timbres to different voices and the damper pedal, which permitted vibrating harmonies to "suspend in mid-air". The Impressionist painters, as we have seen, tried to capture the movement of color and light. Music is predominantly the art of abstract movement. For this reason, the favorite images of the Impressionist painting (the play of light on water, clouds, gardens in the rain, sunlight through the leaves) lent themselves readily to musical expression. Such descriptive titles as "Reflections on the Water", "The Snow is Dancing", "Sounds and perfumes Swirl in the Evening Air", reveal composers as poets and painters in addition to being musicians.

Some of the main musical characteristics of the movement are:

*Phrases:* They tend to be fragmentary and speckled with color, fluid in character and with the tendency to overlap. Rhythm tends to be vague and free, with cadences being not so clearly defined.

*Overall search for what sounds beautiful to the ear:* heading away from the restrictive rules of counterpoint and of traditional composition techniques.

*Modal Influences:* The medieval modes were attractive to composers who sought to escape the "tyranny" of the major/minor sound. Emphasized were primary intervals of octaves, fourths, and fifths in parallel motion. This resembled a medieval procedure known as "organum", where a melody was harmonized by another which ran parallel to it at a distance of a fourth or fifth.

*Whole-Tone Scale:* Claude Debussy heard the musicians of the Far East (Java, Bali, and Indo-China). He was fascinated by the music of the native orchestra, the gamelan, with percussive rhythms and bewitching instrumental colors. The music of the Far East makes use of certain scales, which divide the octave into equal major/minor system and leads to obscured fluidity.

*Pentatonic Scale:* The pentatonic (five-note) scale is popularly associated with Chinese music, but is even more familiar to us through Scottish, Irish and English folk tunes

*Impressionist Harmony:* Impressionist composers regarded the chord as an entity by itself, a "thrill" that hit the ear with a style all its own. Impressionism released the chord from its function as harmony to movement within the melody.

*Parallel Motion:* In Classicism, tension was produced by moving voices in a contrary fashion. Impressionism, on the other hand, vied chords as melodic entities and didn't feel parallel movements as wrong if needed for a particular coloristic expression.
Escaped Chords: Harmonies which gave the impression of having "escaped" to another tonality not following the traditional schemes of cadences. Such chords are neither prepared for, nor are they resolved in any traditional sense, they simply appear and evaporate.

There was little room in Impressionism for the "heaven-storming" climaxes of Romanticism. Instead, there is a veiling of sonority and delicate texture. Impressionism is "opalescent" and "transparent", shimmering from time to time with showers of sound. Within the orchestra, flutes and clarinets are used in their dark lower registers. Violins reach for upper sonorities while trumpets and horns are muted. There is much use of the harp, celeste, triangle, glockenspiel and cymbal (usually brushed with a drumstick). The overall feeling is similar to the way an impressionistic painting is explored by a viewer, gone through jumping with the gaze from one color spot to the other.

What can be considered the biggest innovation of this musical movement is the departure from a timeline of narration, there is no longer a story with a beginning, an evolution, a climax and a final. The pieces mainly sound as a series of episodes, correlated but not necessarily developed one from another.

3.2 Impressionist Composers

In this section we will present some of the impressionist master composers that had some relation with the Spanish musical world and/or with the Spanish guitar.

3.2.1 Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918) is generally considered the dominant figure in the transition from the late romantic style to that of the twentieth century. Born in St. Germain de Fleurville, France in 1862, Debussy studied at the famous Paris Conservatory from the age of ten to twenty-two and awarded the Prix de Rome in 1884. Debussy's principal influences included the music of Russia, the exotic colors of Asian music (which he first heard at the Paris International Exposition in 1889), and the ideas of writers and poets like Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, and Charles-Pierre Baudelaire. Following the production of his opera Pelléas et Mélisande in 1902 and the completion of his popular orchestral work La Mer (The Sea) (1905) Debussy was soon recognized as a leading composer of early twentieth-century.

Due to certain aspects of Debussy's style, his music is usually classified as a musical counterpart to the artistic movement known as impressionism. Like the paintings of Claude Monet (1840-1926), Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), and Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Debussy's music (and musical impressionism in general) conveys a feeling of vagueness rather than sharply defined articulation. For example, the exotic tone colors, sensuous harmonies, imperceptible metrical pulse, and tonal ambiguity, all
characteristics of Debussy's style, seem to accurately reflect the spirit of ethereal paintings like Monet's Impression, Sunrise (1874). In Debussy's music, clearly delineated harmonic progressions, melodies, and rhythms are purposely avoided to evoke mood and atmosphere rather than concrete images. In the work entitled La Cathédrale engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral), Debussy utilizes a compositional device known as parallel chords (or planing) to dilute the sense of directed motion found in traditional progressions. It should be noted that it took a while for the critics and the listening public to warm up to this new and bold experiment in harmonic freedom.

### 3.2.2 Maurice Ravel

Joseph Maurice Ravel (7 March 1875 – 28 December 1937) was a French composer, pianist and conductor. He is often associated with impressionism along with his elder contemporary Claude Debussy, although both composers rejected the term. In the 1920s and 1930s Ravel was internationally regarded as France's greatest living composer.

Born to a music-loving family, Ravel attended France's premier music college, the Paris Conservatoire; he was not well regarded by its conservative establishment, whose biased treatment of him caused a scandal. After leaving the conservatoire Ravel found his own way as a composer, developing a style of great clarity, incorporating elements of baroque, neoclassicism and, in his later works, jazz. He liked to experiment with musical form, as in his best-known work, Boléro (1928), in which repetition takes the place of development. He made some orchestral arrangements of other composers' music, of which his 1922 version of Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition is the best known.

As a slow and painstaking worker, Ravel composed fewer pieces than many of his contemporaries. Among his works to enter the repertoire are pieces for piano, chamber music, two piano concertos, ballet music, two operas, and eight song cycles; he wrote no symphonies or religious works. Many of his works exist in two versions: a first, piano score and a later orchestration. Some of his piano music, such as Gaspard de la nuit (1908), is exceptionally difficult to play, and his complex orchestral works such as Daphnis et Chloé (1912) require skilful balance in performance.

Ravel was among the first composers to recognise the potential of recording to bring their music to a wider public. From the 1920s, despite limited technique as a pianist or conductor, he took part in recordings of several of his works; others were made under his supervision.

### 3.2.3 Cyrill Scott

Scott was essentially a late romantic composer, whose style was at the same time strongly influenced by impressionism. His harmony was notably exotic. Scott wrote around four hundred works and his style includes ever-shifting harmonic colors and wayward inflections of phrase and mood,
capturing perfectly the way the mind shifts, backwards and forwards, between reminiscence, regrets, and self-assertion.

Most of his pieces were harmonically adventurous for their time and easy to play; they circulated widely in many countries of the world, in contrast to his more ambitious works, none of which received more than a handful of performances.

Scott was called the "Father of modern British music" and was also appreciated by Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, his close friend Percy Grainger, Richard Strauss and Igor Stravinsky and he used to be known as "the English Debussy". The "Sonatina for Guitar"(1927) commissioned by Segovia was thought lost and had acquired almost legendary status among guitar historians. Rediscovered in 2001, it was hailed by Angelo Gilardino, director of the Segovia Museum as "one of the summits of the guitar’s repertoire of the 20th century".

3.2.4 Francis Poulenc

Francis Jean Marcel Poulenc was a French composer and pianist. His compositions include melodies, solo piano works, chamber music, choral pieces, operas, ballets, and orchestral concert music and only one piece for guitar written for the famous French guitarist Ida Presti.

His wealthy family intended Poulenc for a business career and did not allow him to enroll at a music college. Largely self-educated musically, he studied with the pianist Ricardo Viñes, who became his mentor after the composer's parents died. Poulenc soon came under the influence of Erik Satie, under whose tutelage he became one of a group of young composers known collectively as Les Six. In his early works Poulenc became known for his high spirits and irreverence. During the 1930s a much more serious side to his nature emerged, particularly in the religious music he composed from 1936 onwards, which he alternated with his more light-hearted works. His music, eclectic yet strongly personal in style, is essentially diatonic and melodious, embroidered with 20th Century dissonances. His Sarabande dedicated to Ida Presti is a small work, only one page long, that has a religious and meditative spirit and could be almost considered to be a neo-baroque piece, written in the style of a baroque with 20th century's harmonies.
4. Impressionism and Spain

Audible interaction between “modern” Spanish and French music reaches back well before the mid-nineteenth century. Bizet's *Carmen* is a clear example of the fascination felt in France by the Spanish atmospheres and rhythms. We should also mention that both Albéniz and Falla conceived many of their most “Spanish” masterpieces in France and both of them were close friends of Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Dukas and Ricardo Viñes. Ricardo Viñes was a great Spanish pianist who premiered most of Debussy's and Ravel's new piano works in the decade 1903-1913 and he's believed to have played a significant part in Debussy's piano writing from the *Estampes* onwards. I chose to investigate on the influence of Spain on Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel because they were the ones that, among the impressionist composers, wrote a bigger and important corpus of compositions inspired by the traditional Spanish musical language.

4.1 Debussy and Spain

Debussy left three solo pieces in explicitly Spanish character, *La Soirée dans Grenade*, *La sérénade interrompue* and *La puerta del Vino*, plus the two-piano work *Lindaraja* and the orchestral piece *Ibéria* from *Images pour Orchestre*. If *'La soirée dans Grenade'* points towards Devussy's friendship with Albéniz and Viñes, his later prelude *'La sérénade interrompue'* (1910) strongly echoes Albéniz's *Iberia*, especially *'El Albaicín'* suggesting a quiet tribute to Albéniz (died in May 1909) and to his too short life. According to De Falla, *'El Albaicín'* fascinated and almost obsessed Debussy to the point that he planned to orchestrate it and make a free transcription of it for orchestra. The idea remained unrealized but *'La serenade interrompue'* may be its distilled remnant.

Debussy's friendship with Manuel De Falla reached its most artistically intense phase around 1912 when he helped Falla recast *La vida breve* in its final two-act form. *'La puerta del vino'* composed in late 1912 seems to be Debussy's synthesis of Falla's style, with its Habanera rhythm and *Cante Jondo* melodies. The Habanera is a Spanish dotted dance rhythm coming originally from Cuba (the *Havanera*) while the *Cante Jondo* is a vocal style typical of Flamenco. It comes from the gypsy populations of the middle east, has a melismatic and microtonal character, it has ancient and primitive origins and is taught orally. Manuel de Falla was the organiser of the *'Concurso de Cante Jondo'* in Granada.

So we can say that *'La sérénade interrompue'* is to Albéniz what *'La puerta del vino'* is to Falla.

Debussy's fluency in Andalusian musical idioms, which Manuel de Falla ascribed to the Parisian Expositions universelles of 1889 and 1900, may owe particular debts to the nocturnal gipsy performances *'L'andalousie au temps des Maures'* De Falla commented also on the Scherzo of Debussy's
1893 String Quartet saying that it could pass as 'one of the most beautiful Andalusian dances ever written.

Another Habanera appears in *Lindaraja*, a piano-duo left unpublished. In *'La soirée dans Grenade'* the habanera rhythm is going on steadily almost throughout the whole piece, while the melodic part in the beginning uses an eastern scale and is written to sound like a Flamenco *Cante Jondo* with a big usage of the interval of semitone (the closest way for a piano to imitate the microtonal embellishments of the Arab singing), long notes and ornamentation.

References to the flamenco guitar style are present throughout his Spanish influenced compositions. We can find some flamenco-like episodes in pieces like *Masques* or *'Pour les arpèges composés'* and in *Lindaraja* where the pianos do fast arpeggiated chords like guitarists using the *rasgueo* technique (hitting all the strings with each finger in a sequence) or the *tirando* where one finger of the right hand goes strumming all of the six strings downwards or upwards. The other characteristics he borrowed from the guitar and which he was fascinated from was the chromatic shifting one can easily obtain on the instrument as well as the research of different timbres.

### 4.2 Ravel and Spain

Ravel was born in the Basque town of Ciboure, France, near Biarritz, 18 kilometres from the Spanish border. His father, Pierre-Joseph Ravel, was an educated and successful engineer, while his mother, Marie Delouart, was Basque but had grown up in Madrid. Ravel's was a Spain he had felt in an idealised way through his mother so, similarly to the expatriate Chopin and his idealized Poland, Ravel could paint his idealized Spain in sound while breathing its idioms like a native. Most explicit in *'Alborada del gracioso'*,' *Rapsodie espagnole'* and *'L'heure espagnole'* this is balanced by the asymmetrical Basque *zortzico* rhythms that open Ravel's Piano Trio and his early Violin Sonata of 1897 - besides the fanciful associations of the antique Spanish infantas in the *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*.

Ravel's friend, student and biographer Roland-Manuel enlarged on this from Ravel's own memories: describing Ravel as a Basque for whom Spain is another homeland, and for whom the Pyrenees do not exist”, he quotes the Basque Eduardo López Chavarríis assertion (echoing Falla) that Ravel, Debussy and Stravinsky, stimulated by Gypsy music, didn't 'make music in the Spanish style, like Bizet, but in the Spanish tongue, or more correctly, in the tongue of Andalusia.

Ravel's adolescence was enormously marked by his friendship with the young prodigy Ricardo Viñes who arrived from Barcelona with his mother to study in the Conservatoire piano class of Charles de Bériot. Their family both being Spanish native speakers became close friends and Ricardo Viñes read all Ravel's piano works as soon as they were completed. This background, together with Falla's observations about the vital interaction between new Spanish and French music, helps explain Ravel's present stature as a national icon throughout the Basque region (French and Spanish), even throughout Spain where most conservatories boast a Sala
Mauricio Ravel. He may have partly earned this through his unrealized plan for a piano concerto on Basque themes. Spanish musicians tend to consider all Ravel's music Spanish-tinged, even more than Debussy's overtly Spanish works, with the tenderly ironic humour that dreamt up a title like *Pavane pour un Infante défunte*; the quixotic, melting sensuality of the *Miroirs*, redolent of Antoni Gaudi's architecture; the wilder sensuality that ends *Rapsodie espagnole, Alborada del gracioso, La valse* and *Boléro*. All suggests a temperament nearer Spanish art, humour and literature of the time. We can also find flamenco elements pervading 'Scarbo' or bolero elements both in the famous *Boléro* but in the finale of his *Concerto in G* where the rhythm goes almost half normal bolero speed. Most revealing of all is to view Ravel beside his friend Falla, two self-consciously small music giants who infused their music with explosive emotional energy, from the fiery hismanicism of the mid-1900s to the concentrated classicism of their late works. Under the contrast between Falla's piety and Ravel's determined agnosticism – considered as 'the difference between an Andaluz and a Basque' – lie two similarly intense temperaments. In the course of balancing Ravel's 'subtly genuine Spanishness' with his 'strong French character', Manuel de Falla shows a very clear understanding of his friend on his book *On music and musicians* (pp 9-7):

“Ravel's style, so firm and delicate in its boldness, so clear, orderly and precise, offers us another outstanding quality: the absence of vanity. This virtue is the more noteworthy if we recall that Ravel composed most of his work at a time when, under foreign influences, music was required at least to affect a certain haughty aspiration to what was thought to be transcendental. I think that the composer's refusal to yield to such requirements reveals a rare discernment”
5. Spanish Traditional Music - Flamenco

The Iberian peninsula has had a history of receiving different musical influences from around the Mediterranean Sea and across Europe. In the two centuries before the Christian era, Roman rule brought with it the music and ideas of Ancient Greece; early Christians, who had their own differing versions of church music arrived during the height of the Roman Empire; the Visigoths, a Romanized Germanic people, who took control of the peninsula following the fall of the Roman Empire; the Moors and Jews in the Middle Ages. Hence, there have been more than two thousand years of internal and external influences and developments that have produced a large number of unique musical traditions. Dealing with all of them would be beyond the purpose of this essay which more connected to the specific role and soundscape of the Spanish guitar, so we will concentrate on the most famous guitar-centered genre coming from the southern regions of Spain, Flamenco.

Flamenco in its strictest sense, is a professionalized art-form based on the various folkloric music traditions of Southern Spain. In a wider sense, it refers to these musical traditions and more modern musical styles which have, themselves been deeply influenced and become blurred with the development of flamenco over the past two centuries. It includes cante (singing), toque (guitar playing), baile (dance), jaleo (vocalizations), palmas (handclapping) and pitos (finger snapping). The oldest record of flamenco dates to 1774 in the book Las cartas Marruecas by José Cadalso. Flamenco has been influenced by and become associated with the Romani people in Spain, however, unlike Romani music, its origin and style is uniquely Andalusian.

The various styles of flamenco are called Palos and are classified by criteria such as rhythmic pattern, mode, chord progression, form and geographic origin. There are over 50 different Palos, some of which are sung unaccompanied while others are accompanied by guitar or other instruments, some of them are danced and some are not. Among the various categories of Palos the most serious is known as Cante Jondo (serious singing).

A typical flamenco recital with voice and guitar accompaniment includes a series of pieces (not exactly 'songs’) in different palos. Each piece includes a set of verses called copla, tercio or letras which are punctuated by guitar improvised interludes called falsetas. The guitarist provides also a short introduction which sets the tonality, compàs (rhythm) and the tempo of the cante. In some palos these falsetas are also played with specific structures; for example the typical sevillanas is played in an AAB pattern, where A and B are the same falseta with only a slight difference in the ending.

The harmony used in flamenco is mainly modal, built on a Dorian or most of the times Phrygian mode (called the Flamenco mode) in addition to the major and minor scales commonly used in modern Western Music. The
Phrygian mode occurs in palos such as soleà, bulerías, siguiriyas, tangos and tientos.

An example of a descending Phrygian E scale in flamenco music, with common alterations in parentheses, can be found in the picture below.

![Phrygian E Scale](image)

Some characteristics of the melodies of Flamenco singing were established by Dionisio Preciado in the ‘Rivista de folklore’ and can be summed to:

1. **Microtonality**: intervals smaller than the semitone, typical of the Arabic singing.
2. **Portamento**: frequently the change from one note to another is done in a smooth transition rather than using discrete intervals.
3. **Short tessitura or range**: Most traditional flamenco songs are limited to a range of a sixth (four tones and a half). The impression of vocal effort is the result of using different timbres, and variety is accomplished by the use of microtones.
4. **Insistence on a note and its contiguous chromatic notes** (also frequent in the guitar playing)
5. **Baroque ornamentation** with an expressive rather than merely aesthetic function.
6. **Apparent lack of regular rhythm**, especially in the siguiriya: the melodic rhythm of the sung line is different from the metric rhythm of the accompaniment.
7. **Most styles express sad and bitter feelings**.
8. **Melodic improvisation**: flamenco singing is not, strictly speaking, improvised, but based on a relatively small number of traditional songs, singers add variations on the moment.

Compás is the Spanish word for metre or time signature, it also refers to the rhythmic cycle or layout of a palo. The compás is fundamental to flamenco, it is mostly translated as rhythm but it demands far more precise interpretation than any other Western style of music. If there’s no guitarist available, the compás is rendered through hand clapping.

Changes of chords emphasize the most important downbeats. Flamenco uses three basic counts or measures: Binary, Ternary and a form of a twelve-beat cycle that is unique to flamenco.

Some of the specific techniques of the flamenco guitar include:

**Tirando**: Ordinary plucking of the strings with index, middle and ring fingers when playing falsetas.

**Picado**: Single-line scale passages performed by playing alternately with the index and middle fingers, supporting the other fingers on the string immediately above. Alternate methods include using the thumb rapidly on adjacent strings, as well as using the thumb and index finger alternately, or combining all three methods in a single passage.

**Rasgueado**: Strumming done with outward flicks of the right hand fingers, done in a variety of ways. A nice rhythmic roll is obtained, supposedly
reminiscent of the bailador’s (flamenco dancer's) feet and the roll of castanets. The rasgueo can be performed with 5, 4, or 3 fingers.

*Alzapúa:* A thumb technique which has roots in oud plectrum technique. The right hand thumb is used both up and down for single-line notes and/or strumming across a number of strings. Both are combined in quick succession to give it a unique sound.

*Arpegio:* In flamenco, both 'ordinary' – up the strings from lower notes to higher; and 'reverse' – down the strings from higher notes to lower; or the two together – up the strings then back down from lower notes to higher notes and down again on the lower notes.

*Ligado:* Using only the left hand fingers to 'hammer' down on a string in successive ascending frets to sound notes from lower to higher, while the right hand is held off the strings; also 'pulling' off a string i successive descending frets to sound notes from higher to lower.

*Tremolo:* Rapid repetition of a single treble note, often following a bass note. Flamenco tremolo is different from classical guitar tremolo, it is usually played with the right hand pattern p-i-a-m-i which gives a 4 note tremolo. Classical guitar tremolo is played p-a-m-i resulting in a 3 note tremolo. It may be used as an ornament to a chord, in which case it is done on the highest chord string finishing with a thumb across all the strings that make the chord. This creates a very quick trill followed by a full bodied thumb.

*Glissando:* While holding a finger down on a note at one fret, sliding the finger up the frets of that string to glide the finger through a series of notes up or down (lower to higher of higher to lower); occasionally also used in flamenco.

*Seco,* or sometimes referred to as *'Sorda'* (literally 'quiet', but here meaning 'muffled'; as opposed to *'Fuerte' – 'Strong'*): A technique where the left hand damps the strings at the chordal tonic and the right hand plays purely rhythmic components. This creates a chugging like sound that greatly accents the rhythm, allowing the singer or dancer to play off the beat, creating a strong contra-tempo feel.

*Golpe:* Percussive finger tapping on the soundboard at the area above or below the strings. This requires a golpeador (tap-plate) to protect the surface of the guitar.

Flamenco guitar employs a vast array of percussive and rhythmic techniques that give the music its characteristic feel. Often, eighth note triplets are mixed with sixteenth note runs in a single bar. Even swung notes are commonly mixed with straight notes, and golpes are employed with the compas of different types of rhythms (i.e. bulerias, soleas, etc.) as is strumming with the strings damped for long passages or single notes.
5.1 Spanish guitar composers

In this section we will present some of the most important Spanish composers who wrote music for guitar inspired both by their native land and traditional music and the current French impressionistic movement.

5.1.1 Federico Mompou

Federico Mompou was a Catalan composer and pianist. Mompou studied piano under at the Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu before going to Paris, to study at the Conservatoire de Paris, which was headed by Gabriel Fauré. Mompou is best known as a miniaturist, writing short, relatively improvisatory music, often described as "delicate" or "intimate." His principal influences were French impressionism, Erik Satie and Gabriel Fauré, resulting in a style in which musical development is minimized and expression is concentrated into very small forms. He was fond of ostinato figures, bell imitations and a kind of incantatory, meditative sound. All of these elements have a bearing on the Suite Compostelana, his only work for guitar. The suite pays tribute to the Spanish cathedral city of Santiago de Compostela where for many years Andres Segovia held his annual summer school.

5.1.2 Manuel De Falla

Manuel de Falla y Matheu was one of Spain's most important musicians and composers of the first half of the 20th century along with Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados.

After studying piano music and composition in Madrid, Falla spent the years 1907 to 1914 in Paris, where he met a number of composers who had an influence on his style, including the impressionists Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy and Paul Dukas.

His "Homenaje"Pour le tombeau de Debussy is widely considered as one of the most important pieces ever written for guitar. Benjamin Britten, after hearing Julian Bream perform Homenaje, is reported to have said that the piece is only four minutes long but there is twenty minutes of music in it. The genesis of Homenaje is to be found in the death of Claude Debussy, when Henri Prunierers, editor of the Parisian music journal, Le Revue Musicale, asked numerous composers among them Stravinsky, Satie, Bartok and Falla to compose musical tributes in honor of the late composer. No wonder, then, that, as part of his charge to pay tribute to the French composer, Falla drew inspiration from Debussy's own music, in particular a piano piece called “La Soirée dans Grenade,” which is the second part of a three-movement work, Estampes, that Debussy wrote for solo piano.

At the top of his score of “La Soirée…” Debussy notes, “Mouvement de Habanera” and the rhythm of the Habanera is the rhythm that Falla employed in his homage to Debussy written, as a further tribute, in Granada.
5.1.3 Federico Moreno Torroba

Federico Moreno Torroba (3 March 1891 – 12 September 1982) was a composer, conductor, and theatrical impresario. He is especially remembered for his important contributions to the classical guitar repertoire, becoming one of the leading twentieth-century composers for the instrument. He was also one of the foremost composers of zarzuelas, a form of Spanish light opera. In addition to his vocal works, he is well known for his compositions for the classical guitar, many of which were dedicated to either Maria Angélica Funes or Andrés Segovia. While he took distances from the impressionistic and neoclassical movement not taking a part in the french-russian versus german debate and preferring a more nationalistic and personal style, in several occasions he stated that he deeply admired Ravel, and though his music doesn't sound like Ravel's, the harmonic language in his guitar works exhibits flourishes revealing an awareness of innovations from the north of the Pyrenees and across the Atlantic. Indeed another influence on Torroba's music came from jazz, assimilated through the Broadway musicals he loved so much.

5.1.4 Eduardo Sainz de la Maza

Eduardo was both a successful guitarist and important composer born in January 1903. He was the 4th of six children: Aurelia, Regino (guitar player), Francisco (painter), Eduardo, Angelita and Mariano (violin player). Eduardo started his music studies at 6 years of age with Landeche, the choir director of the Burgos cathedral. Shortly after his family moved to Madrid and there, with his brother Regino he started guitar studies with Daniel Fortea, student of Francisco Tárrega. Years after his family moved to Barcelona (in 1916) where he continued receiving classes with Miguel Llobet, also student of Tárrega. After performing some guitar concerts he started studying cello, which with time after he made chamber music in trio or quartets performing all over Spain. In the 30s he stopped playing cello to play exclusively guitar, at the same time he was composing, and he wrote more than 20 guitar pieces played all over the world. In 1961 he won a price from the French Television for his piece “Homenaje a la guitarra”. Eduardo is well known for his arrangements of Spanish folk songs, however his original works are seen as most significant today. His musical language is described as eclectic, combining impressionistic influences with Spanish musical traditions. Jazz and impressionism were also an influence, although much of his music is described as intimate and lyrical. The “Platero y yo” suite is one of the most notable compositions for the guitar of the 20th Century, within this unique collection of works. Eduardo’s portfolio of compositions is widely recognized internationally, but the best known pieces are Habanera, Campanas del alba and Platero y yo. He died in Barcelona in 1982.
5.2 Guitar and Impressionism

In the beginning of the 20th century many composers were inspired and influenced by the new emerging composing style coming from France and many of them were fascinated by the wild dreamlike landscapes of Spain, but more by the Hispanidad, a legendary image of the land of gipsies and flamenco, than by the actual Spain. In those years a young guitarist from Spain, named Andrés Segovia, had begun his rise to success, playing classical, baroque and renaissance art repertoire on the guitar, bringing the instrument to classical and wider audiences. Following his fame a lot of composers such as Torroba, Ponce, Tansman, Scott, composed music for him in the current French/Spanish style.

There are also some reports that Debussy may have written a piece for Miguel Llobet, an important guitarist and composer from Spain, after having heard him perform in Paris. According to Bruno Tonazzi in his short book 'Miguel Llobet, Chitarrista dell’Impressionismo', Andrés Segovia claimed to have been told by Emma Debussy that Llobet discouraged Debussy from writing a piece for him. Tonazzi admits to doubting the truth of this story. While he finds the chance of a Debussy guitar work intriguing, he finds it difficult to fathom why Llobet would have so rejected Debussy, whom he was known to have admired. In fact, Janie Villiers-Wardell, in her book Spain of the Spanish, refers to a concert of Debussy's music in which Llobet sat next to Madame Debussy, and they discussed a Debussy guitar work. It is likely that Debussy considered writing such a piece for Llobet and must have known the guitarist; Llobet spent time in Paris and was a good friend of the noted Debussy interpreter Richard Viñes. It is thus unlikely that Llobet would have discouraged Debussy, in view of his eagerness to perform works by other major composers. His transcriptions of formidable works by Bach, Beethoven, Bizet, Brahms, Chopin, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schumann, and Wagner, and his years of asking de Falla for an original guitar composition are well documented. His association with Albéniz, Ravel, and Debussy and the refined artistic world he inhabited were a decisive influence on his intellect.

6. Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the Impressionistic language and the Spanish traditional music mutually influenced each other through an analysis of two masterpieces of the guitaristic and orchestral repertoire where this contamination is mostly evident: M. De Falla’s “Homenaje” and Debussy’s Suite for orchestra “Iberia”.

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6. Analysis

6.1 M. De Falla – ’Homenaje’ pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy

Originally written for the 1920 issue of La Revue Musicale, this little piece, barely three minutes long, was a Tombeau dedicated to the memory of Claude Debussy, one of Falla's dear friends and supporters during his stay in Paris. If Debussy had a cosmopolitan aesthetic outlook and interests, Manuel de Falla was very narrowly focused on the Spanish folk tradition, notably cante-jondo (the deep song), as opposed to the later “civilized” and “westernized” versions of the Iberian folk song form. De Falla's involvement in the study and revival of this ancient folk son resulted in organizing the first competition of cante jondo in Granada in 1922 with the help of Garcia Lorca. Although the earlier generation of Spanish composers (Albeniz, Granados) had an unmistakable flavor of the deep song, their music was massively filtered through classical formal and aesthetic formulas while Falla's own research of and closeness to the folk material is raw, as shown by the typical structure, the use of rhythm and modes.

La sérénade interrompue provides a reference to the melody of the piece, but not the rhythmic patter upon which it is built. It is also not accidental that Falla uses this Prelude as the melodic “prime mover” for the piece (note the quasi guitarra indication at the very beginning of the piece). In both pieces we can recognize the melodic line moving into a semitone distance. That's also a reference to the small microtonal intervals which are a big characteristics of the cante jondo.

Ex.1 Debussy: La sérénade interrompue

Ex.2 First three bars of the Homenaje

The dance of habanera, on the other hand, provides a rhythmical impetus for the piece. Among Debussy's examples of the form, here comes an example from La puerta del vino (ex.3)

Ex.3 Habanera Rhythm in “La puerta del vino”
In the first four measures of the *Homenaje* we can find the very essence of *cante jondo*, a repetitive melodic patter and the *habanera* rhythm which, amplified by the arpeggio, remains one of the constant important features of the piece (ex.2)

Here's another example of an analogous phrase between another *habanera*, *La Soirée dans Grenade* and *Homenaje* (bars 3-4)

Ex.4

Ex. 5

The one literal quote in Falla's piece is from *La soirée dans Grenade*. Brought towards the end of the work, the quote appears as an illuminated “flashback” onto Debussy's work in an otherwise dreamy and opaque composition.

Ex. 6

Ex. 7

The rhythmic structure:
While looking at the following table of the variants of the rhythmic motif A (Ex. 7), two apparent types of motivic metamorphosis are easily discernible even at first sight. One is the process of motivic transformation by addition
while this type of transformation elongates or shortens the motifs, the process of commutation varies motivic cells, while preserving their respective places in the overall structural metric framework. An example of a commutative cell exchange can be seen in the next page (Ex. 8).

In Homenaje, patterns 1, 2, 4 and 5 (Ex. 7) preserve the motif, while transforming the second cell, whereas the patterns 3 and 8 transmute the motif into a rhythmic pattern, while preserving the structure of the second cell.

Ex. 9 shows similar processes at work. The seed of the "arpeggio motif" B(1) which is already contained in the first bar of the piece (see Ex. n.2), gets spelled out in a quintuplet motif in the second bar (2), then further elongated (3) or varied (4 and 5) in its subsequentials versions. Although patterns 6, 7 and 8 belong to the middle section of the piece, they seem on a closer
inspection to be derived from the same "arpeggio motif" but with slower rhythmic values and continuous movement.

Ex. 8

Ex. 9

The melodic and harmonic roots of the piece are entirely modal, which points to ancient sources of *cante jondo*'s melodic content. The melodic line begins with a slow movement of a semitone around the f note, and through addition it builds up to an interval of a sixth. Careful analysis shows four rhythmic cells (Ex. 10) and on the level II it is possible to strip down the structure to only one melodic cell built on the interval of a second, with two transformed figures such as the inversion a1 and the transposed original a2. The level III however shows melodic structure interpreted by the rhythmic profile of the motifs. The resultant phrasing contour outlines a slightly different pattern. On this level, motif b (consisting of three notes) is alternating with motif c. In the second phrase, the last three-note motif b2 turns out to be a transposed version of the initial motif b.
Note that the motif B1 (Ex. 12) is built on descending arpeggios, whereas the motif B2 is built on its ascending form (inversion). The motif B3, although not used for the same purpose, is obviously related to the previous two. Through gradual transformation (B2-6), the “arpeggio motif” becomes “emancipated” into an accompanying full-blown ostinato pattern, on which the whole middle section is built.
The final example (Ex.13) shows the relationship between the “arpeggio” motif, the thirty-second-note scale-wise passage and the principal motif (D4/E3) of the middle section. It is plausible that this motif is a synthesis between motif A and the scale-wise passage (E1). In any case, we are again confirmed in our assumption that all the motifs of this piece are very closely related and present very unified and coherent building blocks of the composition.

Ex.13

The harmonic structure is essentially mode-based, and Falla transposes the modes creating modulating shifts in the harmonic structure of the piece. In the following chart we can see that in example h we have a transposed version of the mode 2C (example d), from C to Db. Another notable melodic device that Falla uses in this piece is a transformation of the upper and
lower tetrachords of the mode with the same Tonic. Consequently one of the most original and interesting features of this piece is the synthetic aspect of its genesis: while relying on Eastern modal systems, Falla introduces western technical devices, such as transposition, modulation and exchange of lower and upper tetrachordal structural characteristics. No doubt these are also used to create Impressionistic idiomatic features (harmony used as color and texture)

Ex.14

In the next example we will see how, like in eastern modal music, the modes develop from a small cell or interval discovering the real mode only through time and development and addition. As we can see in the following chart we have little clue about the nature of the mode when the piece starts, it is revealed only gradually note by note until it eventually becomes clear what particular scale we are dealing with. Although the piece starts with the low register of the instrument, the melody is built on the upper tetrachord instead of the lower.
Ex. 15

Ex. 16 sums up all the tetrachords we have seen so far

Similarly to what happens in eastern modal music the descending and ascending forms of the modes sometimes differ. The descending form is not a scale but it's more of a collection of melodic patterns. The next segment from the piece shows the chordal structures that Falla built *Homenaje* on. While some chords derive from guitar tuning and idiomatic use of guitar in Flamenco and *cante jondo* tradition, others are structured according to modal and occasionally tonal reference systems. Beside these types of chords, other chordal structures, also typical for Debussy's music and impressionism in general, abound. Quartal and quintal harmonies show up very often. Triadic chords, such as dominant thirteenth seem to be used only for their color rather than for their dominant functions.

The overall form of the *Homenaje* follows a tripartite ABA form, which is characteristic of much funeral march formal outline. Section A contains another tripartite segment. A is based on the upper tetrachord of the mode D, while the section b reveals the entire 1D mode. The next section is a sort of development of the previous material, transposing the mode to C. The final fragment of the A section returns to the tonic but with the mode 1C (major third).

The B section brings in contrasting material, although the building blocks remain derived from the same source. The arpeggio motif is used to connect the two major sections, and it represents a bridge that is fragmentary and
intermediary in its character. The contrasting section is constructed out of both the emancipated arpeggio motif and a synthesis of motif A and the scale passage which is motif D.
The A1 final section is a truncated version of the beginning A section. A quote from *La soirée dans Grenade* in this guitar version presents a “flashback” motif from this piece by Debussy. As it were a sudden conscious realization in the middle of a dream, this fragment reminds us of the reality of Debussy’s life and work. The piece ends with a rhythmically augmented version of the principal motif of the *Homenaje*. Here is, in this last example, the form of the piece.

Ex.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>2+2+3+2+3+3+2+1+3+2+2+1+3</td>
<td>1+1+1+2+2+1+2+3+2+1+3+2+2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.2 Claude Debussy – Ibéria

*Ibéria* is the second of three pieces Debussy composed between 1905 and 1912 that are included in the set titled *Images pour Orchestre*, the first being Gigues, the last Rondes de printemps. *Ibéria* was conceived in 1903 but was not finished until 1910. It is composed of three movements ‘Par le rues et le chemin’, ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’ and ‘Le Matin d’un jour de Fête’ as diverse as to make possible the idea that they could have been thought as separate pieces united only later in a whole composition.

Debussy composed *Ibéria* over a seven-year span, after he was commissioned in 1903 a series of twelve *Images*. The first three movements - ‘Reflets dans l’eau’, ‘Hommage à Rameau’ and ’Mouvements’ - were eventually published as *Images*, set 1 in 1905. The second three –’Ibéria’, ‘Gigue Tristes’ and ’Rondes’ became the *Images* for Orchestra.

The whole composition is an hommage to Spain in all of its peculiar musical characteristics: melodic design, harmonic progressions, rhythmic profiles and instrumental texture.

Spanish music gains much of its distinctive character from the use of particular textures and timbres, these sounds stem in large part from the use of folk instrument such as the *guitarra* (guitar), *banduria* (a member of the mandolin family), *salterio* (a type of dulcimer), *gaita* (bagpipe), castanets, cymbals and tambourines.

Although Debussy’s early Spanish works are not scored for native instruments, they attempt to recreate the appropriate sounds by the subtle use of texture, configuration an articulation markings. The sound of the guitar is imitated through parallel sonorities, broken chords, arpeggios and the signs of staccato carefully used to imitate the sound of a guitar picking line.

When composing *Ibéria*, Debussy was able to use the enormous resources of the orchestra to recreate a broad spectrum of Hispanic textures and timbres. The most, perhaps, obvious way was including native instruments besides the familiar arsenal of traditional percussion sounds. He calls for
castanets and tambourine especially in the outer sections of 'Par les rues et les chemins'. Elsewhere, however, he uses pizzicato strings to recreate the strumming of guitars and banduria. These effects are most prominent at the start of 'Par les rues et les chemins' and in the main theme of 'Le matin d’un jour de fete'. In the latter case Debussy even instructs the violin and viola player to hold their instruments under the arm, 'Quasi Guitarra'.

We will now have a closer look at the three movements that compose Ibéria.

6.2.1 Par les Rues et les chemins

At first glance, 'Par les rues et les chemins' seems to be the most straightforward movement of Ibéria, experts usually accept that it is some sort of modified ternary form. The opening section introduces the main sevillana (traditional dance and melodic design of Sevilla and its region) theme in the overall tonic G; the central session then presents a new theme in the local tonic Eb; the retransition combines the sevillana and the Eb themes; the reprise restores the sevillana theme to its original tonic G and the coda brings the movement to a close.

Debussy’s mastery of formulaic composition is evident from the very first notes of this movement. As shown in the following example (Ex. 18) the main theme treats the formula from bars 8-9 consequentially in bars 10-11 and ends with a descent V-I. The melody also contains a triplet turn, very typical of the sevillana dance. Several other themes from Ibéria have formulaic tendencies. Example 18 also gives the B theme which is built from variantes of two formulae, marked x and y.

Ex. 18

---

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The same gestures appear in other subordinate themes as well as in authentic Spanish tunes.

Although *Ibéria* does not include any extended passages of *cante jondo*, several traces of its influences can nevertheless be found throughout the whole composition, repeated tones and ornamentation clearly recall the style of the traditional Flamenco singing style. A second area in which Spanish influences can be felt is in Debussy’s harmonic vocabulary. Although Hispanic music includes a wide range of harmonic idioms, several distinctive traits are especially obvious. For one thing Spanish music tends to have strong modal qualities; minor modes, as the Dorian and Phrygian, are particularly common, as are those of a more exotic Arabic flavor. We find plenty of so-called Andalusian of Phrygian cadences (IIb − I) right at the beginning of the composition after a Phrygian transposition of the main theme and we find stacked fifths chords moving in a parallel way built to sound like the chords played on the Spanish guitar.

Ex.19 *Par le Rues et les chemins* structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Analytical element</th>
<th>Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1–177</td>
<td><em>sevillana</em> theme</td>
<td>1–40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>sevillana</em> theme</td>
<td>41–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B pedal, motif w</td>
<td>54–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chordal figure</td>
<td>90–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>truncated <em>sevillana</em></td>
<td>94–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>106–9, 114–17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x</td>
<td>110–13, 118–20</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>truncated <em>sevillana</em></td>
<td>122–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x</td>
<td>128–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>truncated <em>sevillana</em></td>
<td>130–43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x</td>
<td>136–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif y</td>
<td>140–4</td>
</tr>
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<td>truncated <em>sevillana</em></td>
<td>144–77</td>
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<td>motif x</td>
<td>147–8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif z</td>
<td>169–77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>178–233</td>
<td>B theme</td>
<td>178–201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadence/fanfare</td>
<td>178–81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ostinato/counter-melodies</td>
<td>186–201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B theme</td>
<td>202–33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadence/fanfare</td>
<td>202–12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ostinato/counter-melodies</td>
<td>213–33</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chordal figure</td>
<td>238–41, 246–9, 262–9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B theme</td>
<td>254–61</td>
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<td>272–312</td>
<td><em>sevillana</em> theme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B theme</td>
<td>285–9, 290–3</td>
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<td>chordal figure</td>
<td>294–9</td>
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<td>300–3, 309–12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrygian cadence</td>
<td>304–9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>313–354</td>
<td>allusion to <em>sevillana</em> /B theme</td>
<td>318–29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x</td>
<td>322–4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrygian cadence</td>
<td>328–9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rhythmical pattern of the *Sevillana* and of the *Seguidilla* are exposed throughout the whole piece: the movement begins by establishing a fast triple meter, when the main theme enters Debussy plays off duple and triple groupings; although the theme is basically duple, he adds a triplet turn in the tune along with the triplets in the accompanying winds and tambourine. A similar interplay occurs on the metric level: often while the accompaniment articulates bars of 3/8 the theme almost forms patterns of 2/8.

Besides being very different in character, Debussy’s two main themes are used in different ways and for different purposes. The *sevillana* theme for example is introduced in the opening A section and uses it to initiate three contrasting tonal spans. The first one presents the complete theme within a large-scale progression from I to V. The tonic is established by a short introduction, a complete statement of the *sevillana* theme, and a return to the introductory material. Having arrived on the dominant, Debussy develops fragments of the introduction and the main theme. Harmonically he prolongs the dominant by a brief passage of whole-tone harmonies that lead to a V of V chord that resolves later on the dominant. The second span begins like first, but develops the *sevillana* in a new way transposing it and adding a triplet rhythm at the end while moving from the tonic to the mediant.

The character of the third span is quite unlike that of its predecessors. Once again Debussy transforms the *sevillana* theme truncating it and omitting the
final descent. The harmony moves to a local tonic of A and it reaches C# after a sequential progression of whole tone chords.

In contrast to the A section, which relies almost exclusively on the *sevillana* theme and its progeny, the middle section focuses on the B theme and a variety of counter-melodies. It has two parallel parts. In the first, Debussy begins by using the B theme to set up a cadence in Eb, he then treats the B theme as a four-bar ostinato adding a pedal of G and various counter melodies on top. The second part starts like the first, Debussy again uses the B theme to prepare a cadence in Eb. This time he recomposes his material in several ways: he compresses the B theme into a two-bar ostinato, adds an Eb pedal, and rewrites the counter melodies.

In the reprise Debussy creates a strong sense of repose by recalling the complete *sevillana* theme in the tonic G. The reprise ends with the truncated *sevillana* theme and also summarizes the main harmonic events of the entire movement before closing with two cadences, a Phrygian cadence and a perfect cadence.

The coda consists of a long tonic pedal, broken just once by a Phrygian cadence. The upper line settles on a rising figure that resembles both the main theme and the B theme and as the music fades away we have a last taste of the first half of the B theme while the inner parts through chromatic movements reach the final tonic chord.

### 6.2.2 Les Parfums de la nuit

This second movement is structured in the following way: Introduction, A section, Central episode, A’, Coda.

From a thematic perspective these main sections are delineated by three main types of material, two of which are derived from the first movement. The introduction, the central episode and the coda begin with a motif which is a modified version of a theme coming from ‘Par les rues et les chemins’. Debussy takes this motif and he transforms it into a *habanera* at the start of ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’ and presents two more rhythmic transformations in the central episode.

The opening A section and the second half of the reprise are marked by a series of closely packed chords in the lower strings. These chords recur twice in the opening A section and once in the middle of the reprise (A’). The latter is the only section that does not start with the initial motif or the low strings chords; instead it brings back the complete *sevillana* theme. It is a reprise in the sense that it does eventually bring back the closely packed chords. The central episode recalls the themes and harmonies of the introduction. It begins with long cover note G (harps, cello, harmonics, flutes) and sustained whole-tone chords. Debussy even brings back the initial motif in augmentation. The mood dramatically changes with the entry of a new motif, whose passionate violin melody played by violin subsequently resolves with three cadences. All of them anyway avoid tonal closures and phrases are left hanging in the mid-air. The section closes with a return to the dominant for a *cante jondo* flourish.
Ex. 21 *Les Parfums de la nuit* structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Analytical element</th>
<th>Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1–22</td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>1–4, 9–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $x$</td>
<td>8, 10, 13–14, 21–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>23–51</td>
<td>7th chords</td>
<td>23–36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $x$</td>
<td>25–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $y$</td>
<td>27–30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7th chords</td>
<td>37–51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>59–61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central episode</td>
<td>52–91</td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>52–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $v$</td>
<td>67–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadences</td>
<td>71–74, 75–76, 77–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>80–1, 84–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $v$</td>
<td>88–9, 89–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprise ($A'$)</td>
<td>92–123</td>
<td>oscillating theme</td>
<td>92–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $v$</td>
<td>99–104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadences</td>
<td>103–4, 103–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7th chords</td>
<td>112–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $z$</td>
<td>114–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>118–23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>124–31</td>
<td>motif $w$</td>
<td>124–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $w'$</td>
<td>127–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif $w''$</td>
<td>129–31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ex. 22 *Les Parfums de la nuit* themes
The reprise finally arrives on the tonic F#. It has two main parts. The first starts with the sevillana from the previous movement which merges seamlessly into the violin motif. Debussy repeats then the last two cadential patterns and the cante jondo. The second part begins with cello chords on the tonic F#, after a short interpolation of the following lyrical motifs, Debussy transposes them to the tonic heading straight into the coda. This one is a short section that recalls the initial motif of the movement and interpolates it with a modified version of the same theme creating an anticipation of the next and final movement.

The preceding discussion has shown that, although ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’ contains very little thematic or tonal material, Debussy recycles and recombines each gesture in remarkable ways.

6.2.3 Le matin d’un jour de fête

The mood of Ibéria shifts once more for the start of ’Le matin d’un jour de fête’, a movement that at first sight seems to be some sort of ternary form. The introduction establishes the main theme of the movement. This passage leads to the opening A section, where the main theme returns in the tonic C. The central session features a B theme, even though it still centers on C major. The reprise combines then both main themes. The movement ends with a short coda.

Ex. 23 Le matin d’un jour de fête structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Bars</th>
<th>Analytical element</th>
<th>Bars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1–28</td>
<td>main theme</td>
<td>1–4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif #</td>
<td>5–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>main theme</td>
<td>7–10, 11 ff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif y</td>
<td>19–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif y’</td>
<td>21–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>29–65</td>
<td>main theme</td>
<td>29–37, 38–44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif y</td>
<td>41–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif y’</td>
<td>49–58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>main theme</td>
<td>53–6, 59–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif #</td>
<td>54–7, 58–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chordal figure</td>
<td>57–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x’</td>
<td>59, 61–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>new accompaniment</td>
<td>64–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>66–93</td>
<td>motif # new accompaniment</td>
<td>65–93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif s</td>
<td>84–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x’</td>
<td>88–9, 91–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>96–118</td>
<td>main theme</td>
<td>96–106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif # B theme (mvt. I)</td>
<td>107–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motif x’</td>
<td>128–9, 133–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>119–44</td>
<td>B theme (mvt. I)</td>
<td>123–35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadence/fanfare (mvt. I)</td>
<td>133–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrygian cadence (mvt. I)</td>
<td>141–4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On closer inspection, however, ‘Le matin d’un jour de fête’ proves to be a good deal more difficult to comprehend. This suggests that Debussy faced new problems in thematic and tonal composition. These problems stem from the fact that he had to balance local and global needs: he needed to produce a finale which was internally coherent, and which also provided a fitting conclusion to the piece as a whole.
Thematically, Debussy tried to solve these problems not only by deriving the two main themes from motifs found in earlier movements, but also by interweaving these gestures with numerous other cyclic themes. The opening theme is derived from the main theme of the previous movement which is also derived from the *sevillana* of the first movement. Although it serves a minor role in ‘Par les rues et les chemins’ it serves as the main protagonist in ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’. Its rhythmic profile changed greatly during the course of this movement. Next, this motif is converted into the theme of the finale. Finally we have a distinctive rhythmic variant which appears near the start of ‘Le matin d’un jour de fête’.

Ex. 24 *Le matin d’un jour de fête* themes

A similar process can be seen for the B theme. This gesture is a derivative of the motive of the opening A section of ‘Par les rues et les chemins’, then it quickly changed into one of the counter melodies in the B section. While this motif doesn’t appear in ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’, he inserts it in the central section of ‘Le matin d’un jour de fête’.

Similarly, the opening A section not only recalls the main theme, but it also brings back the main motifs and the chordal figure from the first movement. Finally the coda brings back the B theme, the Eb fanfare, and the Phrygian cadence from ‘Par le rues et les chemins’.

Tonally, ‘Le matin d’un jour de fête’ is no less remarkable; each section works out the complex thematic details in novel ways. The introduction begins with the main theme in Eb and after a short insertion of material from ‘Les Parfums de la nuit’ the bass moves up by step from Eb through F to G, the dominant of C. The following A section has three main spans each
of which extends the tonic C. The central section also prolongs the tonic through another long progression from I to V. The reprise comes reworking the main theme: this time, however, Debussy inserts a transposition to Db. The rest of the reprise articulates the dominant; here Debussy recalls material from the B section and the contrasting theme from ‘Par les rues et les chemins’. Instead of resolving this sonority onto the tonic at the start of the coda the harmonies immediately shift to Eb; after climaxing on A, the coda ends with a final Phrygian cadence in G.
7. Conclusions

After this brief research we can say quite clearly that the Spanish Guitar and the exotic landscapes of Spain have had an enormous influence on the impressionistic movement, a fascination that convinced composers to write in the Spanish Moorish style even if their knowledge about Spain was only an indirect one, through imagination, novels and very few first hand experiences. We have seen through direct analysis of the pieces how often the orchestra is used in imitation of the idiomatic Flamenco guitar language with rasgueados, picados, chromatic chord movements, arpeggios and Phrygian cadences. What I came to realize is that the connection between these two worlds has been much bigger than I expected when I first started to research on this topic. The idiomatic language, the tonal qualities and diversities of the guitar have been transfigured and imitated through wise orchestration as we have seen in Iberia.

The impressionistic language on the other hand fits really well the idiomatic characteristics of the guitar, such as different sound timbres, easiness in the performance of chromatic passages and of altered chords, natural and pinched harmonics, and create the intimate and dream-like atmosphere the guitar is famous for. It is a pity that the biggest impressionist composers missed the chance to write for guitar, as the result would have been, in my opinion, outstanding.

In the other analysis on the De Falla’s Homenaje we discover all the characteristics that were borrowed from the impressionistic language and applied to a composition written for guitar in the Spanish style. We came to understand also how De Falla and other Spanish composers got inspired by the impressionistic language and fused it with their background creating a new language that fits perfectly the guitar as an instrument.

The chromatic approach, the coloristic research, the intimacy and the tonal variety of the impressionistic idiom are all contained in this small but incredibly charming and fascinating instrument and the repertoire of this style written for guitar contains some real gems. My hope is that more of this repertoire will be taken in consideration by other guitarists, and included more in their concert programs so that even bigger audiences can enjoy these hidden masterpieces of the guitaristic repertoire.
Appendix A

Claude Debussy and Spain, by Manuel de Falla
Reprinted from "Claude Debussy et L'Espagne [Claude Debussy and Spain]", La Revue Musicale, "Numéro spéciale consacré à Claude Debussy", Paris, France, décembre 1920

“Claude Debussy a écrit de la musique espagnole sans connaître l'Espagne: c'est-à-dire, sans connaître le territoire espagnol, ce qui diffère sensiblement. Claude Debussy connaissait l'Espagne par des lectures, par des images, par ses chants et ses danses chantées et dansées par des Espagnols authentiques.

Lors de la dernière Exposition Universelle du Champs de Mars, on pût voir deux jeunes musiciens français qui allaient ensemble entendre les musiques exotiques que, de pays plus ou moins lointains, l'on venait offrir à la curiosité parisienne. Modestement mêlés à la foule, ces jeunes musiciens remplissaient leur esprit de toute la magie sonore et rythmique qui se dégageait de ces étranges musiques tout en éprouvant des émotions nouvelles et jusqu'alors insoupçonnées. Ces deux musiciens — dont les noms devaient camper plus tard parmi les plus illustres de la musique contemporaine — étaient Paul Dukas et Claude Debussy.

Cette petite anecdote explique l'origine de bien des aspects de l'oeuvre de Debussy: mis en présence des vastes horizons sonores qui s'ouvraient devant lui et qui allaient de la musique chinoise jusqu'aux musiques de l'Espagne, il entrevit des possibilités qui devaient se traduire bientôt en de splendides réalisations. «J'ai toujours observé — disait-il — et j'ai tâché, dans mon travail, de tirer parti de mes observations.» La façon dont Debussy a compris et exprimé l'essence même de la musique espagnole, prouve jusqu'à quel point cela était vrai.

Mais d'autres raisons devaient encore faciliter sa tâche: on sait quel était son penchant pour la musique liturgique; or, le chant populaire espagnol étant basé, dans une grande partie, sur cette musque, il devait en résulter que, même dans les œuvres du maître qui n'ont pas été écrites avec l'intention qu'elles fussent espagnoles, on trouve bien souvent des modes, des cadences, des enchaînements d'accords, des rythmes et même des tournures qui décèlent une évidente parenté avec la musique «naturelle» de chez nous.

Pour en donner une preuve je citerai Fantoches, Mandoline, Masques, la Danse profane, le deuxième mouvement du Quatuor à cordes, qui, même par sa sonorité, pourrait passer, dans sa plus grande partie, pour l'une des plus belles danses andalouses que l'on ait jamais écrites. Et cependant, quelqu'un ayant questionné le Maître à ce sujet, celui-ci déclara ne pas avoir eu la moindre intention de donner à ce Scherzo un caractère espagnol. Tout pénétré du langage musical espagnol, Debussy créait spontanément et je dirai même inconsciemment, de la musique espagnole à rendre envieux — lui qui ne connaissait réellement pas l'Espagne — bien d'autres qui la connaissaient trop!...
Une seule fois il avait traversé la frontière pour passer quelques heures à Saint-Sébastien et assister à une course de taureaux; c'était bien peu de choses! Il gardait, néanmoins, un fort souvenir de l'impression ressentie devant la lumière toute particulière d'une Plaza de Toros: le contraste saisissant de la partie inondée de soleil par opposition à celle qui reste couverte d'ombre. Dans le Matin d'un jour de fête d'«Ibéria», on pourrait peut-être trouver une évocation de cette après-midi passée au seuil de l'Espagne...

Cependant, il faut bien dire que cette Espagne-là n'était pas la sienne. Ses rêves le conduisaient plus loin, car c'est surtout dans l'évocation de l'ensorcelante Andalousie qu'il aimait recueillir sa pensée. Par les Rues et par les Chemins et les Parfums de la Nuit, de l'œuvre plus haut citée; la Puerta del Vino, la Sérénade interrompue et la Soirée dans Grenade, en font foi.

C'est d'ailleurs, par ce dernier morceau que Debussy inaugura la série des œuvres que l'Espagne devait lui inspirer; et ce fut un Espagnol, notre Ricardo Viñes, qui, ainsi que pour la plupart des œuvres pianistiques du Maître, en donna la première audition en 1903, à la Société Nationale de Musique.

La force d'évocation concentrée dans les quelques pages de la Soirée dans Grenade, tient du prodige quand on pense que cette musique fut écrite par un étranger guidé presque par la seule vision de son génie. Nous voilà bien loin de ces Sérénades, Madrilênes et Boléros dont les faiseurs de musique soi-disant espagnole nous régalaient autrefois; ici c'est bien l'Andalousie que l'on nous présente: la vérité sans l'authenticité, pourrions-nous dire, étant donné qu'il n'y a pas une mesure qui soit directement empruntée au folklore espagnol et que, nonobstant, tout le morceau, jusqu'en ses moindres détails, fait sentir l'Espagne. Nous reviendrons plus tard sur ce fait auquel j'attache une importance capitale.

Dans la Soirée dans Grenade, tous les éléments musicaux collaborent à un seul but: l'évocation. On pourrait dire que cette musique, par rapport à ce qui l'a inspirée, nous donne l'effet des images miroitant au clair de lune sur l'eau limpide des larges alberca dont l'Alhambra est parée.

Cette même qualité d'évocation nous est offerte par les Parfums de la Nuit et la Puerta del Vino, étroitement liés à la Soirée dans Grenade, par une commune base rythmique, celle de la Habanera (qui n'est en quelque sorte que le tango andalou) dont Debussy aimait à se servir pour exprimer le charme nonchalant des nuits ou des après-midi de l'Andalousie. Je dis des après-midi parce que c'est l'heure calme et lumineuse de la sieste à Grenade que le musicien a voulu invoquer dans la Puerta del Vino.

L'idée de composer ce Prélude lui fut suggérée en regardant une simple photographie coloriée reproduisant le célèbre monument de l'Alhambra.
Orné de reliefs en couleurs et ombragé par de grands arbres, le monument fait contraste avec un chemin inondé de lumière que l'on voit en perspective à travers l'arceau du bâtiment. Debussy ressentit une si vive impression qu'il résolut de la traduire en musique, et, en effet, quelques jours plus tard La Puerta del Vino était composée...

Ce morceau, bien qu'apparenté par son rythme et par son caractère, à la Soirée dans Grenade, diffère de celle-ci par le dessin mélodique. Dans la Soirée, le chant est syllabique — pourrions-nous dire — tandis que dans la Puerta del Vino il se présente souvent enguirlandé de ces ornements propres aux coplas andalouses que nous désignons par l'appellation de cante jondo. L'usage de ce procédé, déjà suivi dans la Sérénade interrompue et esquissé dans le second thème de la Danse profane, nous montre jusqu'à quel point Debussy avait connaissance des variantes les plus subtiles de notre chant populaire.

Cette Sérénade interrompue, que je viens de citer, et que je n'hésite pas à inscrire parmi les œuvres du maître inspirées par l'Espagne, diffère, par la division ternaire de la mesure, des trois compositions du même groupe précédemment mentionnées, où le rythme binaire est employé d'une façon exclusive.

En ce qui concerne le caractère populaire espagnol du Prélude en question, il faut remarquer l'heureux emploi de traits caractéristiques de guitare qui préludent ou accompagnent la copla, la grâce toute andalouse de celle-ci et l'âpreté des accents de défi répondant à chaque interruption...

Cette musique semble inspirée par une de ces scènes dont les poètes romantiques de jadis nous entretenaient souvent: deux donneurs de sérénades se disputant les faveurs d'une belle qui, cachée derrière le grillage fleuri de sa fenêtre, épie les incidents du galant tournoi.

Nous arrivons à Ibéria, l'œuvre la plus importante du groupe dans lequel, cependant, elle fait une sorte d'exception. Cette exception provient du procédé thématique suivi par le musicien dans la composition de l'œuvre; son thème initial donnant lieu à des transformations diverses et subtiles, celles-ci — il faut l'avouer — s'écartent quelquefois du vrai sentiment espagnol qui se dégage des œuvres antérieurement signalées. Mais qu'on ne voie pas le moindre blâme dans ce que je viens de dire; je pense, au contraire, qu'on ne doit que se féliciter du nouvel aspect qu'Ibéria nous offre.

On sait, d'ailleurs, que Debussy évitait toujours de se répéter. «Il faut — disait-il — refaire le métier d'après le caractère que l'on veut donner à chaque ouvrage...» Et il avait bien raison!

Or, en ce qui touche Ibéria, Claude Debussy a expressément dit, lors de sa première audition, qu'il n'avait pas eu l'intention de faire de la musique
espagnole, mais plutôt de traduire en musique des impressions que l'Espagne éveillait en lui...

Hâtons-nous d'ajouter que cela a été réalisé d'une magnifique façon. Les échos des villages, dont une sorte de *sevillana* — le thème générateur de l'œuvre — semblent flotter dans une claire atmosphère où la lumière scintille; l'envivante magie des nuits andalouses, l'allégresse d'un peuple en fête qui marche en dansant aux joyeux accords d'une *banda* de *guitarras et bandurrias*... tout, tout cela tourbillonne dans l'air, s'approchant, s'éloignant, et notre imagination, sans cesse en éveil, reste éblouie par les fortes vertus d'une musique intensément expressive et richement nuancée.

Je n'ai rien dit de ce que ces diverses œuvres nous apprennent par leur écriture harmonique; ce silence était bien intentionnel, car ce n'est qu'en présence du groupe d'œuvres tout entier que cet aspect pouvait être envisagé. Nous savons tous ce que la musique actuelle doit à Claude Debussy à ce point de vue et à bien d'autres encore. Je ne veux pas parler, bien entendu, des serviles imitateurs du grand musicien; je parle des conséquences directes ou indirectes dont son œuvre a été le point de départ; des émulations qu'elle a provoquées, des néfastes préjugés qu'elle a à jamais détruits...

De cet ensemble de faits l'Espagne a largement profité. On pourrait affirmer que Debussy a complété, dans une certaine mesure, ce que l'œuvre et les écrits du maître Felipe Pedrell nous avaient déjà révélé des richesses modales contenues dans notre musique naturelle et des possibilités qui s'en dégageaient. Mais tandis que le compositeur espagnol fait emploi, dans une grande partie de sa musique, du document populaire authentique, on dirait que le maître français s'en est écarté pour créer une musique à lui, ne portant de celle qui l'inspira, que l'essence de ses éléments fondamentaux. Cette façon d'agir, toujours louable chez les compositeurs indigènes (exception faite des cas où l'emploi du document enregistré est justifié) prend encore une plus grande valeur lorsqu'elle est observée par ceux qui — pour ainsi dire — font une musique qui n'est pas la leur. Mais il y a encore un fait à signaler au sujet de certains phénomènes harmoniques qui se produisent dans le tissu sonore particulier au maître français. Ces phénomènes en germe, bien entendu, les gens du peuple andalou les produisent sur la guitare sans s'en douter le moins du monde. Chose curieuse: les musiciens espagnols ont négligé, méprisé même ces effets, les considérant comme quelque chose de barbare ou, tout au plus, en les accommodant aux vieux procédés musicaux; et cela jusqu'au jour où Claude Debussy leur a montré la façon de s'en servir.

Les conséquences ont été immédiates; les douze admirables' joyaux que sous le nom d'*Ibéria* nous légua notre Isaac Albeniz, suffiraient à le démontrer.

J'aurais certes bien d'autres choses à dire sur Debussy et l'Espagne, mais
cette modeste étude d'aujourd'hui n'est que l'ébauche d'une autre plus complète dans laquelle je m'occuperai également de tout ce que notre pays et notre musique ont inspiré aux grands compositeurs étrangers, depuis Domenico Scarlatti — que Joaquin Nin revendique pour l'Espagne — jusqu'à Maurice Ravel.

Mais dès maintenant je veux dire très haut que si Claude Debussy s'est servi de l'Espagne comme base de l'une des plus belles parties de son oeuvre, il a si largement payé sa dette que c'est l'Espagne, maintenant, qui reste sa débitrice.

Manuel de Falla. Grenade, 8 Novembre 1920.

P.-S. — L'Espagne a honoré d'une façon toute particulière la mémoire de Claude Debussy. D'émouvantes séances lui ont été consacrées un peu partout et notamment à Madrid, par Ateneo Científico Litterario y Artístico et la Sociedad Nacional de Música. Le nom du grand musicien français est très souvent inscrit aux programmes de cette dernière Société qui, deux ans avant la mort du maître, avait obtenu de lui la promesse formelle de venir diriger un concert composé de ses œuvres. L'état du grand malade ayant empiré peu de temps après, il ne fut malheureusement pas donné suite à ce projet dont nous avions tous si ardemment souhaité la réalisation.”
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