

Two Roads Converged in a Wood: The Intersection of Fairy Tales and Western Piano Music

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Abstract

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The history of fairy tales is long and complex, extending back to shadowed origins in ancient cultures. The stories have been used for a kaleidoscope of purposes across centuries—for cultural identity and cohesion, for education in morality, for social interaction, for skill-building in speech and rhetoric, for psychoanalysis, for publishing and commerce, for film, visual arts and music. Historically, fairy tales had sporadic and effusive bursts of popularity, especially in the Italian Renaissance, during seventeenth-century France, and across nineteenth-century Europe and America.

Western European and American composers were caught up in the enthusiasm for folktale and fairy tale collections published throughout Europe beginning with Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's first edition of tales in 1812. This dissertation focuses on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers who wrote fairy tale-based piano music in four countries: France, Norway, America and Germany. The highlighted composers and their folklore-influenced works include Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Edvard Grieg, Edward MacDowell and Franz Liszt. These composers' works demonstrate the multi-national, deep current of

attraction that existed toward the tales, a genre which was not particularly suited to children until relatively recent history. The elasticity of the stories made them adaptable to many musical settings, including opera, symphonic works, and ballet, as well as the solo piano works represented in this document.

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Introduction & Acknowledgements

As a child, I gravitated to the corner of the public library filled with “stories of other lands,” the folktales and fairy tales of countries from around the globe. The books themselves were magical, but even the entrance to the library children’s room had an enchanted quality, with a lobby floor constructed of pearly, palm-sized glass tiles, translucent and brightly lit from beneath. The folklore selections in my local library were eventually exhausted, and I continued with the literary fairy tales of George MacDonald, Lloyd Alexander, and Madeleine L’Engle. In his “Essay on Fairy-Stories,” J.R.R. Tolkien observed that readers either have a predisposition toward fairy tales or they don’t, but if they do, the taste for these stories doesn’t evaporate with age. I found this to be true in my case, buying Andrew Lang’s multi-colored Fairy Books as a teenager and as an adult.

While living in Hong Kong, I browsed the British bookstores, purchasing and reading the folktales and myths of Asia. The stories gained a burst of new life when I read them to my children. As a doctoral student, I checked out anthologies of fairy tales from the Seattle Public Library and kept them on my nightstand (somewhat sheepishly) stacked underneath more impressive late night reading.

The stories are brisk and refreshing for a brain saturated with intellectual facts. Fairy tales compress life into essential elements—struggle, anxiety, hope, despair, love and triumph. Weak and ordinary characters persevere and overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The supernatural element admits the reality of things not seen, an overlay of cosmic qualities embracing physical mundane existence. Exposition, trials, and denouement all tie together in an imaginative, brief, and accessible package. Love and happiness prevail, the stories speaking to

subconscious dreams and wishes. Tales with protagonists pursuing impossible tasks aligned themselves with my own quest for a doctoral degree.

I understood my own lifelong pull towards fairy tales, but I became curious why adult male composers were drawn to the tales, apparently not viewing the stories as children's fare. The charm of the tales seemed to renew innocence and candor in the adult reader. "When I was ten," wrote C.S. Lewis, "I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am fifty, I read them openly. When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up."¹ Friedrich Nietzsche remarked, "We think that play and fairy tales belong to childhood—how shortsighted that is! As though we would want at any time in our life to live without play and fairy tales...The brevity of life ought to preserve us from a pedantic division of life into different stages..."²

In regard to the title of this paper—"Two Roads Converged in a Wood"—I have deliberately misquoted Robert Frost's popular poem, "The Road Less Traveled." The wood is a common setting of fairy tales, sometimes symbolizing danger, anxiety and fear and at other times representing pristine sylvan beauty and its living breath of encircling warmth and protection. I can personally identify with Frost's oft-repeated original lines:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the road less traveled by...

As an adult returning to school at the same time that my own children were in college, this "road less traveled" has been filled with immense challenges and fulfillment. I wish to express my utmost thanks to Dr. Robin McCabe for her never-ending patience and

¹ C.S. Lewis, *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Harcourt, 2002), 45.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Complete Works*, vol. 7, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. Paul V. Cohn (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1913), 135.

encouragement. Dr. McCabe is not only a stellar example of skillful teaching and poetic performing, but is also a model of kindness and humor in her tailored approach to students.

A million thanks are due to my graduate committee—Dr. JoAnn Taricani, Dr. Steven Morrison, and Dr. Michael Shapiro—for dissertation reading and advice in the midst of demanding schedules. To my two author sisters, Susan H. Gray and Ann Heinrichs (writers of nonfiction children’s books), thanks for prodding me to finish this dissertation.

To my daughters, Lauren and Samantha Hsieh, thank you for your many energizing talks and for your “proud of you, mom!” text messages. I am grateful as well for the example of my mother, Louise Heinrichs, who had the courage to begin her college freshman year at age fifty-six, in an era when the non-traditional student was rare. To all of you, I owe my profoundest gratitude.

Chapter 1

Chronology of the Fairy Tale



Kay Nielsen, "The Three Princesses in the Blue Mountain,"
from *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, 1914.

Fairy tales permeate the 21st-century commercial environment. Television for children and adults, films, books, theater, musicals, and the visual arts are a fraction of the genres depicting fantasy and fairy tale worlds. The list expands with the business and marketing success of children's toys, clothing, themed products, and music publishing. But if the dazzle of contemporary commercialism can be set aside, it is possible to track the evolution of the fairy tale backward through literally thousands of years to ancient narratives in Greece, Egypt, Rome and China. "Puss in Boots," for example, has traces of the Egyptian worship of cats.³ The Chinese version of "Cinderella" reflects the fetish of the tiny, alluring foot, clad in jeweled slippers. "Beauty and the Beast" rises from the Greek story of Cupid and Psyche. Archeologists have identified evidence of storytelling from cave drawings, tombs, pottery and other artifacts. Sumerian and Babylonian stories and fables written on clay tablets originate around 800 B.C. and were circulated in an oral tradition in Greece by 600 B.C.⁴

Centuries after these early civilizations, great flowerings of tales occurred in the Italian Renaissance, in Arabia, and Louis XIV's France, the stories and variants swirling into "a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity."⁵ Nineteenth-century fairy and folktale collecting took on a nationalistic, somber hue when war-ravaged countries searched for their lost identities, sifting through stories and songs of the peasantry. Literary fairy tales paralleled the separate oral tradition, with authors Hans Christian Andersen, Goethe, E.T.A. Hoffmann, George MacDonald, and Oscar Wilde producing their own original stories.

³ Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 6.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. (London: Granta Books, 1991), 72.

Experts find it difficult to “unravel the intricately knotted and ramified history of the branches on the Tree of Tales,” wrote J.R.R. Tolkien. “It is closely connected with the philologists’ study of the tangled skein of Language.”⁶ Tolkien elaborated:

It is plain enough that fairy-stories (in wider or in narrower sense) are very ancient indeed. Related things appear in very early records; and they are found universally, wherever there is language. We are therefore obviously confronted with a variant of the problem that the archaeologist encounters, or the comparative philologist; with the debate between *independent evolution* (or rather *invention*) of the similar; *inheritance* from a common ancestry; and *diffusion* at various times from one or more centres. Most debates depend on an attempt (by one or both sides) at over-simplification; and I do not suppose that this debate is an exception. The history of fairy-stories is probably more complex than the physical history of the human race, and as complex as the history of human language. All three things: independent invention, inheritance, and diffusion, have evidently played their part in producing the intricate web of Story. It is now beyond all skill but that of the elves to unravel it.⁷

Tolkien’s observation regarding the over-simplification of fairy tale origin is reflected in contemporary folklore scholarship. A current controversy exists between scholars who believe that the tales came out of an untraceable oral pool of worldwide storytelling and those who favor an origin in the earliest commercial centers of printing and publishing.⁸ The latter minority view argues that “cheap print for leisure reading existed in large amounts in the first century of print—in the late 1400s and early 1500s...low price, their brevity, and their emphasis on action differed fundamentally from high literature of the day.”⁹ Fairy tales were common in this flood of inexpensive printing. Ruth Bottigheimer doubts the oral “polygenesis” theory of the tales—the idea that similar stories originated from multiple continents. “Polygenesis allows, even claims,

⁶ J.R.R. Tolkien, “On Fairy-Stories,” in *Tree and Leaf* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1964), 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁸ An outspoken proponent of the oral tale origin is Jack Zipes, professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Minnesota. The primary advocate for the printing center theory is Professor Ruth Bottigheimer of Stony Brook University.

⁹ Ruth B. Bottigheimer, editor. *Fairy Tales Framed: Early Forewords, Afterwords, and Critical Words*. (Albany: State University of New York, 2012), 8.

that peoples from vastly different cultural experiences would—and did—invent the same narrative, people it with the same characters, and clothe the resulting tales with similar or identical narrative apparel. A book-based history of restoration and rise fairy tales resolves the paradox of monogenesis versus polygenesis.”¹⁰

Classification and Structure

Folklore is a broad term with sub-genres including animal stories and fables, sacred and secular legends, folk tales and fairy tales. Definitions of a fairy tale vary, but in general, writers designate any story with magical or supernatural elements as a fairy tale, regardless of the presence or absence of an actual fairy. Some scholars use the term “wonder tale” interchangeably with “fairy tale”. The term “fairy” itself was not used until Madame d’Aulnoy’s collection *Contes de fées* in 1697, spreading into common English usage by 1750.¹¹

Similar to the thorough study and classification of complete works of individual composers, fairy tales were analyzed and organized beginning in the early twentieth century. Finnish scholar Antti Aarne first classified folktales in his tale-type index of 1910 (cataloguing almost 2000 tale-types), followed by the revisions of American Stith Thompson in 1928 and 1961. A new classification system by Hans-Jörg Uther was published in 2006, retaining much of the earlier Aarne/Thompson system which had wonder tales divided according to magical elements—e.g., “a supernatural adversary”, “a supernatural spouse,” “a magic object.” Vladimir Propp, a Russian literature specialist, catalogued tales using a different method in his 1928

¹⁰ Ruth B. Bottigheimer, “Fairy-Tale Origins, Fairy-Tale Dissemination, and Folk Narrative Theory,” *Fabula*, vol. 47, no. 3/4 (2006): 219.

¹¹ Zipes, 28.

Morphology of the Folktale, in which he isolated thirty-one plot units in a fairy tale. Influenced by Marxist thought and the upheavals of the 1917 Revolution, Propp wrote, “We cannot be guided by the scholarly views of Romanticism, the Enlightenment, or any other trend. We need to create a discipline with the outlook of our own age and country.”¹² Furthermore, Propp believed that “We must find in history the mode of production that gave rise to the wonder tale.”¹³ After 1917, many of the traditional Russian fairy tales were rewritten with socialist themes, making authentic versions of the tales difficult to trace.¹⁴ Rather than classification according to magical elements, Propp’s plot units categorized story segments, such as “one member of family absents himself from home,” “an interdiction is addressed to the hero,” or “villain attempts to deceive a victim.”

Fairy tales are sometimes classified more simply into two broad categories—the restoration tale and the rise tale. The restoration tale begins high with an aristocratic main character, who then loses position and wealth, but overcomes adversity and eventually regains his or her original social status. “Sleeping Beauty” and the Grimm’s tale of “The Goose Girl” both follow this collapse and restoration scenario. Rise tales, on the other hand, begin low with a humble protagonist who encounters opposition, then undertakes challenges and/or quests, and conquers the opposing force at the end. Frequently the main character rises in social class due to securing an advantageous marriage. The structure of the rise tale, with its good versus evil plot, is often inherently “musical,” roughly resembling sonata form in the guise of a story.

¹² Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, trans. Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, lxvi.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Structure of Rise Tale “Cinderella” viewed as Sonata Form:

Exposition	Development	Recapitulation
Theme 1 = Cinderella Theme 2= Stepmother/stepsisters contrasting theme	Cinderella experiences conflict, transforms, struggles with opposition theme	Theme 1=Cinderella gains power, status, marriage Theme 2=Opposing step relations acquiesce to Cinderella’s theme

Chronology of the Fairy Tale

Laurence Harf-Lancner describes European fairy tradition as an outgrowth of the female fates of Greek and Roman mythology. The fates held supernatural powers to control courtships and marriages, to predict the lives of newborns, and to protect children. From Greco-Roman beginnings, variations of the fates appeared in the 12th-century stories of Mélusine and Morgan le Fay as well as in 13th-century tales of a “goddess and mistress of destiny.”¹⁵ Originating in the pre-Christian era in Eastern Europe, the supernatural female character was common in Slavic and Russian tales, most prominently in the figure of the witch Baba-Yaga. Traditionally, Baba-Yaga lives in a hut high in the air propped on a chicken foot; flies in a mortar with a pestle as a rudder; and thirsts for the blood of Russians. The Slavic *Rusalki* were nymphs, mermaids, and forest entities who could be either good or evil in their dealings with humans.

The earliest written collections of European fairy tales were modeled on Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (1354), a grouping of stories within a larger frame tale.¹⁶ (Ten Venetians—three men and seven women—entertain themselves with one hundred stories during their exile from the plague-infested city.) Giovanni Francesco Straparola’s *Le Piacevoli Notti* (Pleasant Nights, two volumes, 1551, 1553) follows a similar frame tale with ten beautiful girls

¹⁵ Zipes, 31.

¹⁶ The stories of Scheherazade within the frame tale of *One Thousand and One Nights* were much earlier than the Italian collections. However, no translation from Arabic into a European language existed until Antoine Galland’s French translation in the early 18th century.

telling stories during thirteen nights of Carnival. Straparola recounted the stories of “Puss in Boots” and “The Pig Prince,” in which a poor girl marries a prince with a pig head –a variation of “Beauty and the Beast.” Fourteen of Straparola’s seventy-four stories can be considered fairy tales and demonstrate a mixture of Indian, Arabic, North African and Hebrew oral traditions.¹⁷

Giambattista Basile wrote *Tale of Tales* in Naples (1634-1636), a set of fifty stories containing “Sleeping Beauty” and “Cinderella.” Unlike the earlier collections with lovely women telling tales, Basile’s storytellers are old women with descriptive nicknames such as Limping Zeza, Big-Nosed Tolla, and Drooling Antonella. Ferdinando Galiani reviewed Basile’s stories in *On the Neapolitan Dialect* (1779), calling the tales so “tasteless, monstrous, and indecent that the very Arabs, the founders of this most depraved fashion, would have blushed for having imagined them.”¹⁸ He claimed that the fairy tales corrupted society, “weakening Neapolitan minds in order to allow despotism to flourish.”¹⁹ Other writers disagreed, seeing the tales as allegories for indispensable life lessons. Carlo Gozzi rewrote one of Basile’s stories in his play *The Love of Three Oranges* in 1761, defending its allegorical interpretations. As early as 1495, Francesco Berni described the symbolic value of fairy tales:

These magic dragons, these enchantments,
 These gardens and books and horns and dogs,
 And wild men and giants,
 And wild beasts and monsters that have human faces,
 Are made to satisfy the ignorant;
 But you, who have healthy minds,
 Look at the teachings that are hidden
 Under these thick, deep covers.²⁰

¹⁷ Zipes, 28.

¹⁸ Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales Framed*, 89.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

Jean Louveau translated Straparola's tales into French in 1560, and *Pleasant Nights* went through sixteen publications in France before 1650. By the end of the seventeenth century, the baton of storytelling had passed from middle class Italian writers to the French female aristocracy. Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, in her *Diverse Works*, a book of fairy tales published in 1696, readily acknowledged that the source of many of her tales came from Italy. Storytelling flourished in the courtly salons, not only as entertainment, but as a competitive display of the speakers' rhetorical virtuosity. Upper class authors such as the Countess de Murat, Charlotte Rose de La Force, and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy all produced written volumes of salon fairy tales at the turn of the century. The women used the stories to advocate the then-radical belief that marriage should be based on the personal emotions and choices of couples and not on pre-arrangement by parents. The stories featured events that could be used as teaching examples of proper courtly etiquette between the sexes. Remnants of rustic, bawdy elements in the Italian tales were swept away in glamorous revisions. Writing about her Italian sources, Mlle. Lhéritier commented, "I believe that those tales are filled with impurities in passing through the mouth of the lower classes, just as a pure water always takes on filth in passing through a dirty channel. If the people are simple, they are also coarse. They don't know what constitutes propriety."²¹

Lhéritier's opinion of the peasant class contrasted dramatically with the beliefs of nineteenth-century fairy tale collectors. In many European countries following the defeat of Napoleon, peasants were elevated as the purest, most essential bearers of national identity. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm carried out an extensive study and publication of folk materials from 1812 to 1857. Asbjørnsen and Moe collected tales from villagers in Norway in 1852; Sven Grundtvig published Danish peasant stories in 1854; Němcová's *Czech Folk Tales and Legends* appeared in 1845-48 and his *Slovakian Fairy Tales* in 1858. Russian fairy tales were published in the early

²¹ Ibid., 152.

1860s, with substantial collections from Afanasyev, Khudiakov, and Chudinsky. Giuseppe Pitrè collected and published a 25-volume *Library of Sicilian Folklore* from 1871-1914. Researchers in England, Ireland, Portugal and Italy produced volumes of similar collections.

The goal of folklore research and publication was nationalism and authentic scholarship, not targeted toward gathering literature for children. Although the fairy tale is viewed as a children's story today, for centuries of its history the fairy tale was either adult entertainment or intended for mixed-age listeners. However, coinciding with a burst of English literature for children, nineteenth-century British writers were particularly focused on revising tales for child consumption. Edgar Taylor rewrote the Grimm's tales in a version palatable for children in 1823. Scotsman Andrew Lang began issuing his twelve rainbow-colored volumes of folktales with *The Blue Fairy Book* in 1889 and ending with *The Lilac Fairy Book* in 1910. Lang's volumes are notable because of their worldwide representation, with stories from Africa, Asia, and Native American tribes.

The Aftermath of Fairy Tale Collection

The emphasis on fairy tale collection impacted multiple professions from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Artists George Cruikshank, Richard Doyle,²² Arthur Rackham, Kay Nielsen and Carl Offterdinger made their careers illustrating fairy tale books for children. The earliest film-makers in 1890s Paris created fairy tale films, pushing technological advancements with special effects depicting magical elements in the stories. The fledgling field of psychoanalysis turned to fairy tales in the research of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl

²² Doyle was one of the most successful illustrators of fairy books, beginning with *The Fairy Ring* translation of Grimm's tales in 1846. His nephew was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes mysteries.

Jung (1875-1961). “Actually almost every single major psychoanalyst wrote at least one paper applying psychoanalytic theory to folklore,” wrote Alan Dundes.²³

Freud’s 1913 paper “The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales,” treated the tales “as symptomatic expressions of wish fulfillment. Fairy tales, in other words, play out the usual dynamics of sexual repression and its consequences...Fairy-tale analysis was not simply a by-product of psychoanalysis but rather a key genre through which psychoanalysis was practiced and disseminated.”²⁴ Freud, for example, used the story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” (with its regal monarch parading naked through public streets), as proof of the individual’s subconscious wish of exhibitionism. Freud also analyzed fairy tales as an aspect of uncivilized societies. With a disturbing racial bias, Freud considered Caucasian children to be at the same developmental level as the adult non-Caucasian ‘primitive.’ Influenced by evolutionary theory, he believed that the earliest stages of Western nations—revealed in their folklore--were equivalent to mature primitive cultures.²⁵ Freud’s opinions reflected a dichotomous view of fairy tales: “On the one hand, the folk and their products were celebrated as a national treasure of the past,” Dundes explains, and “on the other hand, the folk were wrongly identified with the illiterate in a literate society and thus the folk as a concept was identified exclusively with the vulgar and the uneducated.”²⁶

Freud actively sought out folklorists whose research would elucidate his own exploration of an individual’s unconscious. In contrast, Carl Jung viewed fairy tales as a path into the collective, not individual, unconscious--the stories populated with symbolic, universal

²³ Kenneth B. Kidd. *Freud in Oz: At the Intersections of Psychoanalysis and Children’s Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alan Dundes and Simon J. Bronner, *Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007), 56.

archetypes. The tales were “spontaneous, naïve, and uncontrived products of the psyche”²⁷ that could appear in societies in multiple continents as an expression of the collective unconscious. The psychoanalytical views of both Freud and Jung depend on an oral tradition basis of folklore; their theories collapse if they are based on a printing center view of the origin of fairy tales.

In the field of music, *Märchenoper* (fairy tale operas) were popular during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in works like Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Weber’s *Oberon*, and Hoffmann’s *Ondine*. Siegfried Wagner (1869-1930) wrote eighteen operas, almost all on fairy tale themes and slanted toward his own Freudian viewpoint.²⁸ The boundaries separating myth, folklore and legend blur in the operas of his father Richard Wagner, whose librettos are not defined as fairy tales, but still demonstrate many of the characteristics of a fairy tale, emphasizing magic and supernatural situations. The stronghold of folklore-like subjects in opera could have been a deterrent for composers writing Romantic piano music. When it came to their programmatic choices, the piano composers more frequently turned to historical and sacred legends as well as to literary sources. In Russia, fairy tale themes also appeared mainly in opera, ballet and symphonic works, e.g. Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, Prokofiev’s *Cinderella*, and Stravinsky’s *Firebird*. The French *opéra féerie* flourished earlier than fairy tale operas in the rest of Europe, but continued into the nineteenth century and became a foundation of ballet repertoire. Rameau’s *Les fêtes de Polymnie* (1745), Grétry’s *Zémire et Azor* (1771) and Duni’s *La fée Urgèle* (1765) established the genre in France. Carafa’s *La belle*

²⁷ Kidd, 10.

²⁸ Peter P. Pachi, “Siegfried Wagner,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed May 1, 2017, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com>

au bois dormant and Isouard's *Cendrillon* are nineteenth-century examples of French fairy tale operas.²⁹

This paper focuses on composers who wrote programmatic piano music with a fairy tale theme, specifically in four countries: France, Norway, America and Germany. The music of Debussy and Ravel is highlighted in chapter two. Ravel is loyal to his French heritage, using seventeenth-century tales from Louis XIV's court, but Debussy, ironically, avoids his French roots entirely and chooses tales from Denmark, England, and Germany. Chapter three delves into the folklore-related piano music of Edvard Grieg, the most nationalist of composers, and yet, a man who revealed a humorous, tongue-in-cheek attitude toward his traditional Norwegian tales. Chapter four demonstrates failure. The American composers, still struggling in the wake of the Civil War, searched for their own version of fairy tales in Native American and African American folklore, but could not establish a convincing and lasting repertoire. Chapter five explores the strong heritage of German fairy tales, beginning with the first edition of stories collected by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. Surprisingly few *piano* works arose from the sustained national attention on German folklore, perhaps due to the above-mentioned concentration of opera works. Franz Liszt, a cosmopolitan composer, lived many years in Weimar, and therefore becomes a centerpiece of this chapter on Germany.

The majority of fairy tale piano music (like the historical fairy tale itself) is not for children. Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, although written for his young neighbors, was too difficult for them to premiere the work. Liszt's "Feux follets" and Ravel's "Ondine" are mammoth

²⁹ M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Opéra féerie," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed May 1, 2017, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com>

challenges for a virtuoso, beyond the realm of any child performer. What characteristics of the fairy tale appealed to adult, predominantly male composers?

The stories could have been attractive to composers and performers because of their fluidity, “their adaptability to different contexts and for different agendas—what French novelist Michel Tournier terms their ‘translucency.’”³⁰ The tales are a microcosm of basic life experiences—good versus evil; despair and hope; perseverance and reward; birth and death; love and loss. Many tales are structured around three siblings and emphasize the lowly position of the youngest child, sometimes presented as a simpleton character. In spite of his or her weaknesses, the third child often exhibits more common sense and kindness than the more talented older siblings. Thus the tales reinforce a satisfying, triumph-of-the-underdog theme; the least likely, flawed individual can overcome great obstacles and ultimately achieve happiness. The relationship between humanity and nature is a frequent theme, and many tales show the rewards of compassionate treatment of animals. The tales resonate with adults because they are a small-scale stew of universal anxieties. The story of “Hansel and Gretel,” for example, bubbles with common social problems—economic collapse of the family, hunger, child labor, maternal death, and child abandonment (not to mention the severity of the “magical” problems generated by the cannibalistic witch). The fairy tale protagonist frequently undertakes quests and seeks solutions to multi-layered problems, reflecting the experience of any real-life adult. The greatest of difficulties are often systematically and painstakingly unraveled, dissolving into the happy endings that give us hope for our own challenges.

G.K. Chesterton affirmed the lifelong sustainability of these stories: “My first and last philosophy, that which I believe in with unbroken certainty, I learnt in the nursery...The things I

³⁰ Naomi Wood. “Tracking Breadcrumbs,” Review of Warner, Marin. *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) in *Papers on Language and Literature* (January 1, 2016): 105.

believed most in then, the things I believe most now, are the things called fairy tales.”³¹ Tolkien claimed that his own taste for the tales was innate, increasing rather than decreasing with age. Fairy tales give “a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief. It is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the ‘turn’ [from bad circumstances to good] comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art...”³²



³¹ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 8.

³² Tolkien, 68-69.

Chapter 2

The French Fairy Tale and its
Effect on Debussy and Ravel



Walter Crane, *Beauty and the Beast*, 1875

From the Salons of Louis XIV

French literary fairy tales are the champagne of fairy tales—aristocratic, worldly, witty, and authoritative in their advice on courtship, marriage, and relations between the sexes. Advancement of social class through marriage was a repeating theme in the tales. In contrast to the folktales of surrounding European countries, the most enduring French tales did not arise from lower class peasants and storytellers, but descended in a shower of glitter from courtly salons where noblewomen shared stories as a nightly diversion. Embedded in her book, *Hippolyte, Comte du Douglas* (1690), Marie d’Aulnoy (1650-1705) placed the first written French fairy tale as a mini-narrative within a larger novel. In this story (told to an abbess during a portrait-sitting session), a young prince crosses the boundary into fairy land, falls in love, and later dies upon his re-entry to the human realm. D’Aulnoy was the first of many *conteuses* writing fairy tales between 1690 and 1720, although Charles Perrault later gained the reputation of having founded the French fairy tale in his *Ma Mère l’Oye* of 1697.

During the twilight years of Louis XIV’s reign, the ladies of the court told and wrote their fairy tales for several reasons. They often wove narratives competitively, in peer-assessed contests designed to showcase and sharpen their oratorical and improvisatory skills. An individual speaker could choose to deliver a story as a “soloist,” or alternatively, a series of speakers could improvise serialized segments of a story, much like a book with chapters written by different authors. Fairy tale writing allowed the women writers to express their cultural views within a peripheral literary form without threatening contemporary male writers. In a fairy tale, the women could advocate for female independence regarding courtship and marriage arrangements, and they could determine proper etiquette and morals for men and women of the

court. The external beauty of the protagonists in their tales was almost inevitably considered “a sign of inward virtue and nobility. If there is a lapse from this Platonic ideal, it is usually the result of a magic spell.”³³ Multiple French terms designated a story of this type including *conte*, *conte des fées*, *récit*, *bagatelle*, *fable gothique*, and *peau d’âne* (donkeyskin). This last-mentioned nickname for the women’s stories was taken from Charles Perrault’s “Donkeyskin”, a story of a young girl fleeing her father’s incestuous advances. The French word for fairy—*fée*--derives from the Latin word *fata*, referring to a goddess of fate—a supernatural character capable of determining a human’s future.³⁴ The tales usually expressed a tension between nostalgic longing for a mythical, chivalric past and the simultaneous longing for a utopian future.³⁵ Incest, rape, and child abandonment appeared as frequent topics, making the genre appropriate only for an adult audience.³⁶

The most popular salon tales were published by women authors including Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon (1664-1734)--the niece of Charles Perrault; Catherine Bédacier Durand (1650-1715); Madame de Villeneuve (1685-1755); and Madame Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780). Charlotte Rose de La Force wrote her fairy tale collection *The Tales of the Tales* (1698) while living in the Benedictine Malnour Abbey outside of Paris, where Louis XIV had banished her for her scandalous personal life and irreverent verses.³⁷ Male authors also wrote fairy tales, but the genre was dominated by women, climaxing in the publication of the forty-volume *Le Cabinet des fées* appearing between 1785-1789, a collection of more than 600 stories. Many of

³³ Dorothy R. Thelander. “Mother Goose and Her Goslings: The France of Louis XIV as Seen Through the Fairy Tale” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Sept., 1982): 483.

³⁴ Seifert, Lewis C. *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 198.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁶ For example, in a *Rapunzel* variation, the witch who imprisons Rapunzel discovers that the girl is pregnant in her tower jail cell. An early version of *Sleeping Beauty* relates that the princess is raped by a passing prince, and gives birth to twins named Sun and Moon during her coma.

³⁷ Bottigheimer, 195.

the women's stories had roots in Giovanni Francesco Straparola's collection of tales, *The Pleasant Nights*, published in Venice in 1551 and translated into French in 1560. The romantic element in the French tales was influenced by medieval Italian chivalric romances in addition to Italian fairy tale collections.

In a reaction to the wave of popularity of fairy tale publishing, the Abbé de Villiers (1648-1728) wrote *Conversations about the Contes de Fées and some other works of our time, to serve as an antidote to bad taste, dedicated to the gentlemen of the Académie Française* (1699). He praised the tales of Charles Perrault (a member of the Académie) and lambasted the women writers for their laziness and frivolity: "Everything that requires a little effort tires and bores them; they amuse themselves with a book in the same way they play with a fly or a ribbon. So does it astonish you that tales and little stories are popular?"³⁸ The Abbé continued to rail against the women authors and was quoted in multiple publications. In the wake of these assaults, Charles Perrault eventually emerged as the most recognized source of French fairy tales.

From the beginning of the 18th century, Arabian tales began to trickle steadily into the repertoire of French fairy tales. Antoine Galland (c.1646-1715), a scholar of Middle Eastern languages, worked as secretary to the French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. In addition, Louis XIV assigned Galland the task of collecting Middle Eastern coins and manuscripts for the king's personal museum. Galland first translated the Sindbad stories and later transcribed and translated *The Thousand and One Nights* from Youhenna Diab, a storyteller in Aleppo, Syria. The number "thousand and one" reflects the Arabian idiom of a perfectly symmetrical number, lucky and auspicious, rather than a literal numbering of stories. French editions of Arabian tales appeared from 1704 to 1717; German translations of Galland's editions were produced in

³⁸ Bottigheimer, 208.

Leipzig in multiple publications from 1719 to 1761. In the long term, these translations bore musical fruit centuries later in Ravel's orchestral song set *Scheherezade* (1903), from poems by Tristan Klingsor based on Galland's translation.

In a separate wave of eighteenth-century story collections, publishers in Troyes, France began to issue cheaply-printed fairy tales for the rural public. These editions became known as the "Bibliothèque Bleue" or "blue tales" because they were printed on blue paper.³⁹ An oral tradition of telling tales continued concurrently with the more complex and lengthy literary written versions of fairy tales.

The Influence of Charles Perrault (1628-1703)

Illustrations in the publications of women authors (e.g., D'Aulnoy's 1725 *Nouveaux Contes des Fées*) show upper-class women seated in elegant surroundings, some of the ladies accompanied by their exotic pet monkeys. D'Aulnoy's second volume of fairy tales, also published in 1725, is illustrated with an aristocratic woman at a writing table wearing a helmet like the goddess Athena.⁴⁰ In contrast, Charles Perrault's 1697 volume *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, subtitled *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*, is illustrated with a peasant storyteller, three spellbound children, and their cat in front of a rustic fireplace. Perrault was already editing the most popular stories for a younger audience and also was scouring controversial erotic

³⁹ Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood—A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 97.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth W. Harries, "Simulating Oralities: French Fairy Tales of the 1690s," *College Literature*, vol. 23, no. 2 (June 1996): 104.

elements from the tales.⁴¹ He dedicated his 1697 volume of eight stories to Mademoiselle Elizabeth-Charlotte d'Orléans, who at nineteen years old was hardly the age of the young children depicted in his frontispiece illustration. Perrault's 18-year-old son Darmancour was rumored to be the co-author of *Histoires* because the copyright license had been originally granted to him. However, the son was convicted of manslaughter of a neighbor only a few months after publication, and Perrault needed copyright privileges transferred to himself to generate income for the heavy fines assessed to the family following the murder charge.⁴² Perrault himself was a member of the aristocracy, an employee of Louis XIV, responsible for the upkeep of royal buildings and also acting as secretary to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the minister of finance.

Perrault's tales were first translated and published in England by Robert Samber in 1729, followed by a French-English children's textbook version of the stories in 1737. Political problems between France and England caused sales of Perrault's books to plummet around 1750, but the books rebounded in popularity after 1769. England already had a robust tradition of fairy stories, in spite of philosopher John Locke's somber warnings in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) regarding the harm done to children who read fairy tales.

⁴¹ Perrault's tale "The Ridiculous Wishes" has a female character with a meter-long sausage for a nose. He had edited and published this story based on Giambattista Basile's Italian tale (1634) about a man with testicles attached to his forehead. [Bottigheimer, 122.]

⁴² Bottigheimer, 164.

The Theatrical Féerie Plays

Throughout the 19th century, the influence of fairy tales did not diminish in French culture, but expanded in popularity through print media, theater, opera, and the first experiments in film production at the end of the century. The féerie, or fairy play, became the rage in Paris around 1800, and continued to fluctuate in popularity throughout the century. These plays were geared to adults as well as children, and used dancing, comedy, and technical stage wizardry to create special effects and transformations. Critic Théophile Gautier described the féerie experience in his 1859 review of *La chatte blanche*, Catherine D'Aulnoy's 18th century story: "What a charming summer spectacle is a féerie! That which doesn't demand any attention and unravels without logic, like a dream that we make wide awake..."⁴³ Other critics of the time reiterated the dreamlike—even druglike--quality of these productions. "The féeries, with their marvelous decors, innocently and soberly represent the mirages of the opium dream," commented Gautier.⁴⁴ Nestor Roqueplan, critic for *Le Constitutionnel*, wrote regarding *La chatte blanche*: "twenty-six tableaux have passed in front of the public's eyes like the facets of a prism, like the chimeras of a dream."⁴⁵

Theatrical féeries used plots from various sources, including the traditional tales of women writers, *The Thousand and One Nights*, and even Jules Verne's science fiction novels. Plots often involved a protagonist's journey through harrowing challenges, carefully searching for his or her niche in society. A torrent of special effects frequently drowned out any coherent plot—onstage portraits yawned within their picture frames; signs detached from the walls and

⁴³ Kristian Moen. *Film and Fairy Tales: The Birth of Modern Fantasy* (I.B. Tauris, 2013), 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

floated or walked about; and pieces of furniture came alive and danced.⁴⁶ Ravel may have been influenced by this stage tradition in his opera *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (premiered 1925) with its waltzing chairs and tea sets. Observers and critics of the time considered the féerie plots to be unimportant. The collaboration of engineers, mathematicians, stage magicians, and set technicians collectively produced a mesmerizing public extravaganza. Louis Ulbach of *Le Temps* remarked, “But, how to name everyone, and especially the true poets: the machinists who bring about all these surprises, the painters who open for us these enchanted perspectives, these profane paradises, these springs, these auroras, these nights, these palaces, these Alhambras of stunning light?”⁴⁷ The French theatrical féeries spilled over into England, where they became known as *pantomimes*. In England, an opening scene would present a fairy tale, and then transform with spectacular lighting effects into a lengthy second scene (called a *harlequinade*) with stock commedia del arte characters. British pantomimes began to spread across the Atlantic, first premiering in New York in 1866.

Georges Méliès (1861-1938) and the Birth of Film Féerie

Fairy tales transitioned from the stage féerie into the cinematic féerie, creating the foundation of the film fantasy genre between 1896 and 1913. Stage magician Georges Méliès used the financial backing of his family’s shoe factory to begin producing the earliest films. Although the films were silent, Méliès made repeated attempts to inject sound into films, and produced colorized, hand-tinted versions of a number of his films. He made more than 500 films (one to thirty minutes in length) between 1896 and 1913, some of which were melted down into

⁴⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 32.

boot heels for the French army at the onset of World War I.⁴⁸ The Paris Exhibition of 1900 featured many of these early works by Méliès as well as the filmmaking Lumière brothers. Full-sized film studios were on display in the “Hall of Machines” at the Exhibition. Paris remained the center of cinematic innovations until the beginning of World War I, when the German invasion utterly obliterated the French film industry. Cinema production then shifted to New Jersey and eventually, California studios.

Georges Méliès produced the first fairy tale film, *Cinderella*, in 1899, and followed it with *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), *Bluebeard*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Kingdom of the Fairies*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, all by 1910. *Cinderella* featured a clock as a central, malleable object in every scene; the clock dances, grows larger, and even harbors gnomes in its inner mechanism. The prominence of the clock foreshadows Ravel’s opera *L’Heure Espagnole*, (premiered 1911) in which large onstage grandfather clocks create hiding places for lurking suitors. The philosophy of these early films overlapped with the ideas of contemporary French painters in their juxtaposition of natural and fantastic scenes. For example, Odilon Redon’s painting *Le soleil noir* (1900) has a face on the sun, similar to Méliès’ iconic shot of a rocket hitting the moon’s eye in *A Trip to the Moon*.⁴⁹ These images perpetuate the idea of inanimate nature having anthropomorphic qualities, a characteristic prevalent in fairy stories for centuries.

Fairy tale films were on the cutting edge of technology in a way that fixed-camera romantic and narrative films were not; magical elements in the films could only be achieved with the latest technical innovations. “Only the churlish and uncurious scorn these spectacles,” critic Remy de Gourmont commented in 1907. “For intelligent people, they are a singular and

⁴⁸James L. Neibaur, review of DVD collection *Georges Méliès: First Wizard of Cinema*, *Cinéaste*, vol. 33, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 67.

⁴⁹Moen, 54.

sometimes stunning achievement.”⁵⁰ Nobel Prize winner Maurice Maeterlinck, the librettist of Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*, successfully navigated the worlds of opera, theater, and film. His fairy tale play *The Blue Bird* was staged multiple times in an international sweep of popularity—Moscow (1907); London (1910); Paris (1911) and Berlin (1912). Maurice Tournier produced the play as a film in 1918, expressing “the evasive values of Maeterlinck, the twilight harmonies of Debussy, the subtle evocations of Verlaine.”⁵¹ The film contains an emotional scene when child characters Mytyl and Tytyl search for the Blue Bird of Happiness. A dreamlike cabin appears in the Land of Memory with the children’s deceased grandparents and their seven dead brothers and sisters running and playing inside. The scene demonstrates the advanced technology capable of producing hallucinatory images mixed with the brutal realism of child mortality during World War I.

Debussy’s attraction to painting and Symbolist poetry has been solidly established, but the composer was also drawn to the art of film, dominated by Parisian fairy tale and fantasy films germinating in the mid-1890s. Richard Langham Smith speculates that Debussy could have related his own compositions titled “Images” to cinematography as well as to painting.⁵² Discussing Strauss’s “Ein Heldenleben”, Debussy had commented, “...it’s a book of images, even cinematography. And one must say that a man who constructs a similar work with such a continuity in the effort is quite near to being a genius.”⁵³ Richard Smith adds, “Debussy wanted his ideas to ‘breathe’, and the expansive images of the cinema, and of the imaginary cinema which he envisaged, had certain qualities which he could strive to translate into musical terms.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 42.

⁵¹ Ibid., 98.

⁵² Richard Langham Smith, “Debussy and the Art of Cinema,” *Music and Letters*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 1973): 69. Monet’s series of haystack paintings could also be considered another cinematic “book of images”—a slow motion “filming” of changing light over a fixed pastoral scene.

⁵³ Ibid., 68-69.

How amazingly well in ‘Pelleas’ he had managed the interludes: the musical equivalent of the cinema’s melting of one image into another.”⁵⁴ In 1913, Debussy himself wrote: “There remains but one way of reviving the taste for symphonic music among our contemporaries: to apply to pure music the techniques of cinematography. It is the film—the Ariadne’s thread—that will show us the way out of this disquieting labyrinth.”⁵⁵

Which cinematography techniques were becoming established in Debussy’s world? Contemporary music and film critic Emile Vuillermoz⁵⁶ commented on the way dissolve technique (one image melts away as another emerges) could show dreams and hallucinations.⁵⁷ Other newly-developing techniques include the *fade*, when the screen gradually goes black; the *cut-in*, an instant move to a close-up; quick layering of different camera angles; stop motion, reverse motion, and double-exposure film tricks. Cinematic devices like these may be applicable to compositional techniques in Debussy’s later works. Rebecca Leydon maintains that Debussy used sudden musical contrast similar to “cross-cutting” or “switch-back editing” in his Etude “Pour les agréments” (bars 27-32) and in the Cello Sonata “Serenade” (bars 1-9).⁵⁸ Cinematic cross-cutting alternates unrelated images at varying speeds to manipulate a viewer’s mental perception. (For a clichéd example—quickly alternating camera shots of a speeding train with shots of a victim tied to railroad tracks merge together into a catastrophic situation existing only in the viewer’s mind.)

Emile Vuillermoz urged Symbolist poets to observe cinematic techniques which could link image, sound, and motion into a blending of the senses. Russian painter Léopold Survage

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁵ Rebecca Leydon. “Debussy’s Late Style and the Devices of the Early Silent Cinema,” *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 2001): 223.

⁵⁶ Vuillermoz was also a student and early biographer of Gabriel Fauré.

⁵⁷ Leydon, 223.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 224

arrived in Paris in 1908 and exhibited his work with the Cubists at the Salon des Indépendants in 1913. In a 1914 article, “Le Rythme coloré”, he outlined his project to combine painting with film and music, creating animated Cubist abstract images. “The fundamental element in my dynamic art is colored visual form, which plays a part analogous to that of sound in music.”⁵⁹ Surville advocated the prevailing artistic mindset of the time—including Debussy’s viewpoint—that all the arts were “inextricably linked with one another and with the psychological states of the artist.”⁶⁰

Debussy’s Fairy Tales: “La danse de Puck” and “Les fées sont d’exquises danseuses”

Given the gold mine of fairy tales in French literature and contemporary cinema, it is ironic that Debussy turned to non-French sources for his piano music based on fairy tales. Four of his twenty-four solo Preludes derive from fairy tales—“La danse de Puck” and “Ce qu’a vu le vent d’Ouest”(“What the West Wind Has Seen”) in Book I (1910), and “Les fées sont d’exquises danseuses” (“The Fairies are Exquisite Dancers”) and “Ondine” in Book II (1911-13).⁶¹

Although not composed in the same set of Preludes, “The Dance of Puck” shares common ground with “The Fairies are Exquisite Dancers.” The latter Prelude is titled with a caption from one of Arthur Rackham’s illustrations for J.M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*⁶², a book given to Debussy’s daughter ChouChou by family friend Robert Godet. In this

⁵⁹ Leydon, 239.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *La Cathédrale engloutie* could be classified as a fifth Prelude based on a fairy tale, although it falls more cleanly into the *legend* category of folktales.

⁶² Barrie’s *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* is an unusual variation of the Peter Pan story, describing Peter as a newborn baby—abandoned, naked, and alone in a pond in the Gardens—cared for and clothed by miniature fairies and birds.

imaginative illustration, a tiny fairy dances across a spider web tightrope, accompanied by a cello-playing spider. Rackham also illustrated the copy of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Debussy's library, complete with several illustrations of Puck, the mischievous half-human, half-fairy character. Rackham had a one-man exhibition of his illustrations in Paris in 1912, where Debussy may have become familiar with the breadth of the artist's works.

“The Dance of Puck” and “Fairies are Exquisite Dancers” both contain references to Carl Maria von Weber's (1786-1826) last opera *Oberon* (1826), a fairy tale with interspersed spoken German text.⁶³ The story of Oberon originated as a French romance, *Huon de Bordeaux*, translated into English in 1534.⁶⁴ Oberon was king of the fairies, who (in some folktales) fathered Puck after a passionate liaison with a human housemaid. Oberon's magical horn theme resounds in a leitmotif woven through the overture and three acts:

Example 2.1—Weber, *Oberon* horn motive



The motive sounds as a faraway quote at the conclusion of Debussy's “Fairies are Exquisite Dancers:”

⁶³ Weber's *Oberon* has a different plot than Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although both works have overlapping characters.

⁶⁴ Haldeen Braddy, “Shakespeare's Puck and Froissart's Orthon,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring, 1956): 276.

Example 2.2—Debussy, “Fairies are Exquisite Dancers,” ending

The image shows the ending of Debussy's "Fairies are Exquisite Dancers." It consists of three staves: a vocal line at the top and two piano accompaniment staves below. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a fermata over a whole note, followed by a half note and a quarter note. A dynamic marking of *p* with a hairpin is placed above the first measure. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *pp* is placed above the first measure of the piano part. A fermata is placed over the final measure of the piano part.

Siglind Bruhn identifies an additional horn call from *Oberon* in “Fairies”, beginning in the alto/tenor range of bars 58-64; ascending to the soprano in 67-72; and returning as an unaccompanied solo in 117-120⁶⁵:

Example 2.3—“Fairies are Exquisite Dancers,” soprano horn call, bars 67-72:

The image shows the soprano horn call in Debussy's "Fairies are Exquisite Dancers," bars 67-72. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line at the top and two piano accompaniment staves below. The vocal line begins with the word "Cédez" followed by a fermata, then "Mouvt (caressant)". A blue arrow points to the start of the horn call. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. Dynamic markings include *dim. - - - molto* and *p e cresc.*. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *mf*. A blue arrow points to the start of the horn call in the second system.

⁶⁵ Siglind Bruhn, *Images and Ideas in Modern French Piano Music: The Extra-Musical Subtext in Piano Works by Ravel, Debussy, and Messiaen* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1997), 153.

Example 2.4--Solo horn, 117-120:

“The Dance of Puck” is also filled with horn calls, although not quoting Weber directly. Bars 69-72 contain a L.H. horn call, combined with Puck’s light-hearted, skipping RH dance:

Example 2.5—“La danse de Puck,” mm. 69-72

Bars 32-44 contain a left hand horn trio, while the right hand pulses in a heartbeat-like ostinato, as though a breathless and listening Puck is temporarily motionless:

Example 2.6--Bars 30-35:

The musical score for Example 2.6, bars 30-35, is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line of eighth notes and a bass clef staff with a sustained chord. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble clef and features a bass clef staff with a series of chords, some marked with 'pp' and 'p'.

Horn themes in both preludes could represent the persistent, almost sacred pull of past musical tradition--the voice of authority--contrasted with the energy and spark of modern creativity. In regard to this tug-of-war between traditional composers and the avant-garde, “La danse de Puck” could have been titled “La danse de Debussy.” Horn calls symbolizing musical conservatism reach out to an individual who clearly wants to forge ahead with new experimentation. Playful arpeggios mock the somber, half-diminished Tristan chord in bars 8-12.

Example 2.7—“Puck,” mm. 7-12

The musical score for Example 2.7, measures 7-12, is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a sustained chord. The second system continues the melodic line in the treble clef and features a bass clef staff with a series of chords, some marked with 'p' and 'f'.

Tradition gives way to popular music in the sprightly dance beginning in bar 18, a brief phrase reminiscent of the vaudeville vamp in Debussy's "Golliwogg's Cakewalk".

Example 2.8—"Puck," mm 16-23

Example 2.9—"Golliwogg's Cakewalk," bars 47-52:

Both "The Fairies are Exquisite Dancers" and "The Dance of Puck" imitate whirring fairy wings with trills. Puck erupts in a frenzy of flight beginning in bar 53, perhaps after the shock of seeing Nick Bottom, the donkey-headed character in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Example 2.10—“Puck,” bars 53-56

Puck’s opening dance theme merges with shimmering trills and *expressif* augmentation of the main theme in bars 87-88.

Example 2.11—mm. 86-88

Fairies’ vibrating wings trill against the background of a Waltz by Brahms in “Fairies are Exquisite Dancers.”

Example 2.12—“Fairies,” mm. 79-83

Written-out trills are almost continuous through the opening section (bars 5-19), and twelve full measures of trills signal the approaching recapitulation in bar 101.

Example 2.13--“Fairies,” mm. 5-13

The musical score for "Fairies" (mm. 5-13) is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 5-6) features a bass clef with a *sempre leggerissimo* instruction above the staff. The right hand plays a series of sixteenth-note runs, while the left hand has a *p* *marque* marking. The second system (mm. 7-8) continues the sixteenth-note runs in the right hand, marked with a *p* dynamic. The third system (mm. 9-10) shows the right hand with a *p* dynamic and a *pp* dynamic, with a fermata over the final notes. The left hand has a *pp* dynamic and a fermata over the final notes. The score is in a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature.

“Fairies” and “Puck” also are similar in their use of the sudden high-pitched “flyaway” gesture, a convention of fairy writing from 19th-century composers.

Example 2.14—Conventions of romantic composers’ “fairy writing”

Liszt, “Gnomesreigen”:



Mendelssohn, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, “Scherzo”, flutes:



Berlioz, *Romeo and Juliet*, “Queen Mab Scherzo,” conclusion, violins:

Musical score for Berlioz's "Queen Mab Scherzo" from *Romeo and Juliet*, conclusion, originally for violins. The score is in 3/4 time and features a light, airy melody with a delicate, ethereal quality. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano) and *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo). The piece is characterized by its light, fairy-like quality and intricate fingering.

Tchaikovsky, *Nutcracker*, “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy”

Musical score for Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" from *Nutcracker*. The score is in 3/4 time and features a light, airy melody with a delicate, ethereal quality. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano). The piece is characterized by its light, fairy-like quality and intricate fingering.

Example 2.15--“Flyaway” gestures-- “Fairies are Exquisite Dancers”, bars 88 and 121

The image shows two musical excerpts. The left excerpt is titled "Serrez" and consists of a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes and a bass line with a sustained note. The right excerpt features a treble clef staff with a melody of eighth notes and a bass line with a sustained note, marked with dynamics "p" and "pp".

“Puck”, bars 94-96:

The image shows a musical score for "Puck", bars 94-96. The score is in a single system with a treble clef and a bass clef. It features a rapid, ascending melodic line in the treble clef, marked "Rapide et fuyant" and "pp". The bass line has a sustained note.

The character of Puck, although featured in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, appeared in Celtic folklore long before Shakespeare. Known in Irish tradition as a Pooka or Púca, this dwarfish creature could take any human or animal shape. In Irish stories, the púca frequently changed into a talking horse and rode away with an abducted human.⁶⁷ British stories altered the dwarf's name to Puck, Blackjack, or Robin Goodfellow. The British Puck was often the guardian of castles and estates. Painters, including Joshua Reynolds in his 1789 “Robin Goodfellow,”

⁶⁷ Deasún Breatnach, “The Púca: A Multi-Functional Irish Supernatural Entity,” *Folklore*, Vol. 194, No. 1/2 (1993): 107.

portrayed Puck as a chubby baby, seated on a mushroom. (Mushrooms growing in a circle were considered gathering places for fairies.) Puck was a prankster, “that merry wanderer of the night,”⁶⁸ playing tricks on lovers and misleading night travelers. He was also a master of domesticity: “Located within the landscape of the household, Robin [Goodfellow] becomes intimately associated with pots, cheese and women’s beds. Pinching maids, grinding meal, and scrubbing the kitchen, he makes eroticism and work seem natural allies.”⁶⁹

Debussy’s “Dance of Puck” is in a clear 2/4, but with a sprinkling of more complex rhythms, e.g. bar 43.

Example 2.16—mm. 42-43

The image shows a musical score for two staves, likely piano and right hand. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 2/4. The right hand part features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs, starting with a dynamic marking of *p*. The left hand part has a more rhythmic accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score ends with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a fermata over the final chord.

The piece is organized around the Puck/Oberon story narrative, with altered repetitions of the opening theme interspersed with contrasting episodes in a near-rondo form (ABCBADA). A varied recapitulation begins in bar 63, where the opening dance theme is underscored by soft tremolos and a beautifully simple inner scalar melody.

⁶⁸ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act II, Scene I, quoted in Kevin Pask, *The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 25.

⁶⁹ Wendy Wall. “Why Does Puck Sweep? Fairylore, Merry Wives, and Social Struggle,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Spring, 2001): 76.

“Fairies are Exquisite Dancers” also appears to be organized around musical illustrations of the Oberon story—fairies flying (bars 1-23/101-121); Oberon’s horn calls (58-72/117-127); dancing to Brahms’ Waltz (79-83/94-100); and a languid middle section (32-54). The opening quintuplet flurry has left hand on white keys, right hand on black keys, as do the openings of “Brouillards” and “Feux d’artifice”, the first and last Preludes in Book II. The prelude is an ABA ternary form--Debussy’s favorite form, according to Boyd Pomeroy.⁷⁰ The middle B section has a cluster of themes, some of them related by a descending stepwise line:

Example 2.17—“Fairies,” B section themes

Bars 24-25



Bars 28-29



Bars 32-33



Bars 75-76



Horn calls built mainly of thirds contrast with the above stepwise themes in this middle section.

⁷⁰ Boyd Pomeroy, “Debussy’s Tonality: a Formal Perspective,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 163.

“Fairies” and “Puck” do not fall into rigid, easily-analyzed forms. As Simon Trezise observes, “We love Debussy’s music intimately and yet detailed knowledge of it often seems remote and elusive. Doubtless Debussy would have been delighted, for the realization that he had denied analysts and theorists their quarry and encouraged some writers to assert, metaphorically at least, the unknowable intangibility of his music would have suited him very well, as we know from his dismissive comments about harmonic analysis...”⁷¹

“What the West Wind Has Seen”

Debussy likely turned to Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale, “The Garden of Paradise” for the inspiration of “What the West Wind Has Seen,” the seventh Prelude in Book 1. In Andersen’s story, the mother of the Four Winds welcomes the West Wind back home. He enters her house, smelling of the sea and wielding a mahogany club cut in the American forests.

“Where do you come from?” asked his mother.

“From the forest wildernesses!” he said, “where the thorny creepers make a fence between every tree, where the water-snake lies in the wet grass, and where human beings seem to be superfluous!”

“What did you do there?”

“I looked at the mighty river, saw where it dashed over the rocks in dust and flew with the clouds to carry the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo swimming in the river, but the stream carried him away; he floated with the wild duck, which soared into the sky at the rapids; but the buffalo was carried over with the water. I liked that and blew a storm, so that the primeval trees had to sail too, and they were whirled about like shavings... I have been turning somersaults in the Savannahs, patting the wild horse, and shaking down cocoanuts!”⁷²

⁷¹ Simon Trezise, “Debussy’s ‘rhythmicised time’,” in *Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 232.

⁷² Hans Christian Andersen, “The Garden of Paradise,” in *Stories from Hans Andersen*. Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17860 (accessed April 24, 2017).

In addition to the Andersen source, the West Wind also appears as a character in the Norwegian fairy tale “East of the Sun, West of the Moon,” where a young maiden rides on the Wind in search of her lover. The West Wind in particular figures in European poetic and literary tradition from the 19th century. Tennyson wrote of the “wind of the Western sea.”⁷³ Percy Bysshe Shelley’s poem “Ode to the West Wind” (1819) summons this “destroyer and preserver”:

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing...

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!⁷⁴

Author Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) described the West Wind in imperial terms in his book *Mirror of the Sea* (1906): “Clothed in a mantle of dazzling gold and draped in rags of black clouds like a beggar, the might of the Westerly Wind sits enthroned upon the Western horizon with the whole North Atlantic as a footstool for his feet, and the first twinkling stars make a diadem for his brow.”⁷⁵

Debussy’s “What the West Wind Has Seen” is fierce and sweeping in its extreme dynamics, abrupt dynamic changes, swirling whole tone and chromatic scales. The prelude can be split into ternary form according to its insistent bass pedal tones—low F#’s anchor the outer A sections, while B and D# pedal tones are the repeating basses of the middle B section. Each main section has a collection of themes, with an emphasis on intervals of the second and the tritone.

⁷³ Henry Pancoast, “Shelley’s Ode to the West Wind,” *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Feb. 1920): 100.

⁷⁴ Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind,” Poetry Foundation. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45134> (accessed May 3, 2017).

⁷⁵ Pancoast, 100.

Example 2.18—mm. 7-9, tritone motion in roots of chords, bar 8

Example 2.19--Bars 10-12, black/white key contrast in 2nds

Example 2.20--Chromatic rushes of wind contrast with whole tone sweeps:

Bar 15

Bar 19, whole tone tenor-range scale

A densely-harmonized whole tone melody ends both sections A and B:

Example 2.21—Closing theme, mm 21-22, end of A section

Bars 49-50, end of B section

The bridge to the final A section begins in an ominous rumble of low trills--alternating half steps and whole steps—similar to the mid-register trills used in “The Dance of Puck”.

Example 2.22—“What the West Wind Has Seen,” whole and half step trills, mm. 54-55

“Puck”, mm. 53-56

A dance-like whole tone theme begins the coda, ascending across five octaves before crashing downward to a final fortissimo climax. The coda maintains the tonal tension between D and F#, present from the beginning of this prelude, with D⁷ strummed right hand chords against a left hand centered on F#. The final chord is F^{#+6}, a triad plus major sixth, which Olivier Messiaen later pointed out to be the “perfect chord” foreseen by Rameau and implemented by Debussy.⁷⁶

Debussy and Ravel: A Tale of Two Ondines

Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777-1842) published the novella *Undine* in Germany in 1811. Born of an aristocratic Huguenot family, Fouqué mixed medieval folklore and Norse mythology in his many fictional works. The story of the mermaid Undine was a variant of the Melusina (half woman/half snake) legend originating in northern France during the 14th century. The Swiss writer Paracelsus (1493-1541) had also written a treatise on four nature spirits—one of which is the ‘undine’—who seeks to possess an immortal soul through marriage to a human. Fouqué’s novella, superbly illustrated by Arthur Rackham, became popular throughout Europe and in America. The book was reputed to be clutched in Richard Wagner’s hand as he reread it on the day he died.⁷⁷ Edgar Allan Poe praised *Undine* for “its vigorous and glorious imagination.”⁷⁸ Poe elaborated, “How thoroughly—how radically—how wonderfully has

⁷⁶ Roger Smalley, “Portrait of Debussy 8: Debussy and Messiaen,” *The Musical Times*, Vol. 109, No. 1500 (Feb., 1968):128.

⁷⁷ Barbara F. Fass, “The Little Mermaid and the Artist’s Quest for a Soul,” *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sept. 1972): 293.

⁷⁸ Burton R. Pollin. “‘Undine’ in the Works of Poe,” *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Winter 1975): 65.

‘Undine’ been misunderstood! Beneath its obvious meaning there runs an under-current, simple, quite intelligible, artistically managed, and richly philosophical.”⁷⁹

In works such as Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus*, the mermaid’s story became symbolic of the artist’s dilemma in the world. An artist’s creativity longs toward the world, yet would be destroyed by the world. “The sea maid’s quest for salvation through union with a mortal is analogous to the artist’s desire to come to terms with society. Threatened with an isolated existence in a palace of art, the artist in search of his soul is likely to develop an infatuation for the world of men, to assume the burden of human suffering at almost any cost, drawing back only when the integrity of his work is endangered.”⁸⁰

Fouqué’s *Undine* inspired a myriad of artists, some of whom emphasized the romantic element of the tale, and some of whom concentrated on the philosophical search for an immortal soul. E.T.A. Hoffmann wrote his opera *Undine* in 1818; Hans Christian Andersen published “The Little Mermaid” in 1837; director Otto produced a film *Undine* in 1916; and Jean Giraudoux wrote a successful stage production in 1938. Andersen’s story softened Fouqué’s original ending in which Undine locks her betraying husband in a fatal, final death embrace. Dvořák’s opera *Rusalka* (1901) is based on a Slavic variation of the story, as is Alexander von Zemlinsky’s symphonic poem “The Mermaid” (1905). “Ondine,” a selection from Aloysius Bertrand’s *Gaspard de la nuit* collection of prose poetry, was published in 1842 as another variation of the story. It was later set as the first of three piano solos in Maurice Ravel’s own *Gaspard de la nuit* in 1908. Debussy’s “Ondine” was published in 1913, the eighth selection in his *Preludes*, Book II.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 67.

⁸⁰ Fass, 301.

Ravel's interest in this fairy tale is not surprising. Mimi Godebska (1899-1949), the daughter of Ravel's neighbors Cipa and Ida Godebski, observed:

There was a childish side to Ravel and a warmth of feeling which remained almost invisible beneath his *pudeur*. It was in curious contrast to his face which was energetic, even unyielding, and to his music in which logic and wit did not always succeed in disguising the promptings of his heart. He loved tiny things... At Christmas Ravel used to bring us loads of little toys. He loved surprises and magic and got as much pleasure as we did out of the toys and mechanical objects on sale at the New Year on the stalls of the boulevards. He liked the Rococo and the Baroque and was enchanted by a certain kind of bad taste.⁸¹

He owned a "mechanical box on top of which perched a tiny nightingale singing the most beautiful of all the nightingale's songs," violinist friend Hélène Jourdan-Marhange recalled, "its beak would open, its wings (made of real feathers) would beat and Ravel would go into ecstasies. I never saw him tire of these bouts of admiration."⁸²

The opening right hand figure of Ravel's "Ondine" conjures a watery, nocturnal scene, oscillating with electrical virtuosity against Ondine's left hand song beginning in bar two. The piece is roughly in sonata form, fluid in its total ninety-one measures which contain seven key signatures and forty-nine time signature changes. Ravel introduces and develops four main motives throughout the piece:

⁸¹ Roger Nichols, *Ravel Remembered* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 19-20.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 121. H.C. Andersen's fairy tale "The Nightingale" also featured an exquisite mechanical bird.

Example 2.23—Themes of Ravel's "Ondine"

a) Bars 2-5, l.h.

Two systems of musical notation for the left hand of Ravel's "Ondine". The first system shows bars 2 and 3, with the instruction *très doux et très expressif* written below the bass staff. The second system shows bars 4 and 5. The music features a complex, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand.

b) Bars 16-17, r.h.

Two systems of musical notation for the right hand of Ravel's "Ondine". The first system shows bar 16, marked *ppp*. The second system shows bar 17, featuring a complex arpeggiated texture with fingerings 7, 6, 6, 6 indicated. The music is characterized by rapid, flowing arpeggios.

c) Bars 32-36, l.h.

Two systems of musical notation for the left hand of Ravel's "Ondine". The first system shows bars 32 and 33, marked *pp*. The second system shows bars 34 and 35. The music features a complex, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand.



d) Bars 45-46, l.h.



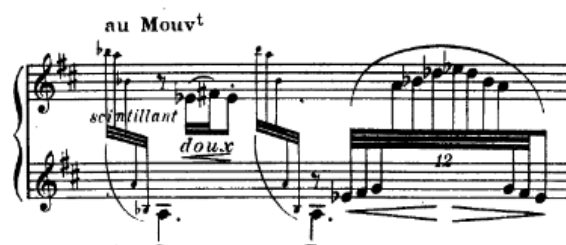
Aloysius Bertrand's five-stanza poem is the siren call of Ondine to the mortal man she loves. She lures the man with tantalizing descriptions of her submerged palace, her regal father, and her sisters who "clasp the green islands in arms of white foam."⁸³ Ravel sets the mermaid's descriptions with intricate accompanying figures—some girlish and delicate, others explosively violent. The mortal man's response to her entreaties—that he loves a human woman—is met with a burst of outrage. "Abashed and vexed, she dissolved in tears and laughter, vanished in a scatter of rain, white streams across the dark night of my window." Man and mermaid remain forever fixed in their separate domains. Many of Ondine's alluring songs are confined to complex, sharp-filled keys in contrast to the man's bare d minor response in bars 84-87. Ondine's final outburst is an unleashed lament of right hand major arpeggios clashing with left hand diminished arpeggios until she melts into soft C# waves, undulating gently as at the opening of the piece.

⁸³ Translations are from a vinyl recording of actor Sir John Gielgud reading *Gaspard de la nuit* in English.

Debussy's "Ondine" is a through-composed, continuously developing form according to Boyd Pomeroy.⁸⁴ However, motives do return throughout the prelude, casting doubt that it is a completely through-composed form. Fragmentary phrases return, are varied, and disappear quickly with the fluidity of sea currents. The introductory ten bars are multi-faceted with a swaying opening, abrupt staccato quartal chords, and elegant upward scales—all depictions of Ondine's capricious personality. Bars 11-29 introduce themes in a symmetrical *abcba* order:

Example 2.24—Themes of Debussy's "Ondine"

Theme a) Bar 11



Theme b) Bars 16-17

⁸⁴ Boyd Pomeroy, "Debussy's Tonality: a Formal Perspective," in *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, ed. Simon Trezise (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 164.

Theme c) Bars 20-25

à l'aise

p léger

mf en dehors

p expressif

Retenu - - - - //

Bars 30-31 are a bare, repeated note theme that will be varied three times in the remainder of the prelude.

Example 2.25—Single-note “Ondine” motive, mm. 30-31, and variations

Retenu - - - - //

p

en dehors

Variation 1, bars 34-37

p

pp

Variation 2 segment, bars 46-47

doucement marqué

Variation 3 excerpt, bars 56-57

pp

After a brief appearance of the ‘a’ motive (from bar 11), the coda juxtaposes D major and F# arpeggios until resting on D major. The final bars are visually similar to the ending of Ravel’s “Ondine.” Both pieces end with two measures of arch-shaped arpeggios, followed with a rising arpeggio and a ringing final major triad.

Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*

“When I was a child,” Ravel reminisced, “my mother told me fairy tales like nobody else could. Without her, I would never have written *Ma mere l'Oye*.”⁸⁵ The first segment of the suite—“Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant”—appeared in print in 1908, with the remaining four segments coming out in 1910 at the request of publisher Jacques Durand. Ravel planned the pieces as a four-hand duet for Mimi and Jean Godebski, the children living next door. Mimi recalled:

There are few of my childhood memories in which Ravel does not find a place. Of all my parents' friends I had a predilection for Ravel because he used to tell me stories that I loved. I used to climb on his knee and indefatigably he would begin, ‘Once upon a time...’ And it would be *Laideronnette* or *La Belle et la Bête*, or especially, the adventures of a poor mouse that he made up for me. I used to laugh uproariously at these and then feel guilty because they were really very sad.⁸⁶

The composer explained, “The plan to evoke in these pieces the poetry of childhood naturally drove me to simplify my approach and strip my writing to essentials.”⁸⁷ Apparently Ravel's simplified approach proved still too difficult for the neighbors' children, and the work was premiered on April 20, 1910 by Jeanne Leleu and Genevieve Durony, advanced students of Marguerite Long. Ravel orchestrated the suite as a ballet in 1911, with an additional Prelude and opening tableau, “Danse du rouet et scene” as well as a re-ordering of the original five piano duet segments.

Although titled “Mother Goose,” from Charles Perrault's 1697 “Tales of Mother Goose,” two pieces in the suite are based on fairy tales by other authors. The pieces and their sources are⁸⁸:

⁸⁵ Emily Kilpatrick, “‘Therein Lies a Tale’: Musical and Literary Structure in Ravel's *Ma mere l'Oye*,” *Context* 34 (2009): 94.

⁸⁶ Nichols, 19.

⁸⁷ Deborah Mawer, *The Ballets of Maurice Ravel* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 19.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

I. Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty in the Wood)	Charles Perrault, 1697 (also in Brothers Grimm)
II. Petit Poucet (Little Tom Thumb)	Perrault
III. Laideronette, Impératrice des Pagodas (The Ugly Little Girl, Empress of the Pagodas)	Marie d’Aulnoy, <i>Contes des fées</i> , 1698
IV. Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête (Conversations of Beauty and the Beast)	Marie Leprince de Beaumont, <i>Contes moraux</i> , 1757
V. Le jardin féerique (The Fairy Garden)	Perrault, ending of “Sleeping Beauty”

Emily Kilpatrick notes that the overall narrative scheme of *Ma Mère l’Oye* matches the structure of many fairy tales: 1) An introductory scene is set (Pavane); 2) the hero or heroine begins a long, difficult quest (Petit Poucet); 3) the main character reaches an outer limit to his or her journey (Laideronnette); 4) romantic love triumphs after difficulties (Les entretiens); and 5) “happily ever after” ensues (Le jardin féerique).⁸⁹

Ravel played the entire suite for his friends during one of their artistic “Apache” gatherings, and member Louis Aubert later described the scene to Manuel Rosenthal:

When Ravel played *Ma mere l’oye* for the first time, a heavy silence welcomed the final chord of ‘Le jardin féerique’. Nobody responded. Ravel, sensing their lack of sympathy, took his manuscript and left, without receiving a single compliment or even a farewell from his friends... When we could no longer hear his footsteps on the stair, everyone lamented to each other, ‘We have certainly been mistaken. We thought that he would become the leader of the French school, after Debussy, but he has no substance after all.’”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Kilpatrick, 90.

⁹⁰ Kilpatrick, 97.

The opening “Pavane” is a brief ABA form (8+4+8 bars) with a lowered-seventh, Aeolian melody. Short-short-long 4-bar phrase structure characterizes the piece:

Example 2.26--Bars 1-8, solo version by Jacques Charlot

The musical score for Example 2.26 shows the first eight bars of the opening of "Pavane" by Jacques Charlot. The tempo is marked "Lent" with a quarter note equal to 58 beats. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a melody in a lowered-seventh Aeolian mode, characterized by a short-short-long 4-bar phrase structure. The left hand provides a piano-piano accompaniment with a chromatic inner line and tenuto repeated notes.

A chromatic inner line contrasts with the medieval openness of the modal melody.

Lightly-stressed tenuto repeated notes—sounding twelve times within three different phrases—recall distant clocks chiming a magical midnight hour.

Epigraphs head the middle three movements of the suite, and Ravel quotes Charles Perrault at the beginning of “Petit Poucet:”

He thought he would easily find his way by means of the bread that he had scattered everywhere he had been; but...birds had come and eaten everything.

Tom Thumb’s anxious meandering winds through scales in thirds which return to their starting points and then extend higher in each successive measure (bars 1-4). He even wanders through a wisp of a misplaced “Pavane”:

Example 2.26

“Petit Poucet”, bars 7-8



“Pavane pour une infant défunte” (1899), bar 2



The moderate, eighth-note walking rhythm never ceases throughout the piece, and melodic intervals are restricted to a fifth and smaller, mostly moving stepwise. A rising third motive permeates the piece (a), along with a triadic contrasting phrase (b):

Example 2.27—“Petit Poucet” motives

a) Bars 4-5



b) Bars 12-14



Soft birdcalls and forest cuckoos interject the stepwise line in bars 51-54:

Beginning in bar 60, the return of the opening melody is doubled two octaves apart—a characteristic of the music of Spain and the compositions of Emmanuel Chabrier, two of Ravel’s lifelong influences.

Example 2.28—Melodic doubling, mm. 61-66



Tom Thumb wanders unexpectedly home to C major in the final measure:

Example 2.29—“Petit Poucet,” ending

Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas—the subject of the third piece in *Ma Mère l’Oye*—was made ugly by a witch’s spell. “She undressed and climbed into the bath,” Ravel quotes author Mme. D’Aulnoy. “Straight away, pagodes and pagodines began to sing and play instruments: some had theorbos made from a walnut shell; some had viols made from an almond shell; for it was necessary to proportion the instruments properly to their size.” This description creates an expectation of string and lute sounds, but instead, pentatonic figurations create a gamelan effect in the opening section, with fifths, fourths, and seconds dominating the quick repetitive melody. (The orchestral suite has piccolo and xylophone on the pentatonic patterns.)

Example 2.30—Pentatonic motives

Bars 9-10

F#-C#-D# motive

Musical notation for bars 9-10. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures, marked *pp*. The left hand (bass clef) contains a supporting bass line. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

Bars 65-72, beginning of B section

Musical notation for bars 65-72, beginning of the B section. The right hand (treble clef) features an augmented pentatonic motive (F#-C#-D#) highlighted in a blue box. The left hand (bass clef) contains a supporting bass line. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

In this ABA piece, the middle section is filled with distant pentatonic gongs, dynamics never above mezzo piano. Horns, glockenspiels, celesta, and harp in the orchestrated version heighten the exotic, Far Eastern effects. “Laideronnette” has an interior, accompanying chromatic motive unifying the first three pieces of *Ma Mère l’Oye*.⁹¹

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

Example 2:31—Comparison of inner voice chromaticism across movements

I. “Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant,” quarter note tenor chromatic line, mm. 5-8

The image shows a piano score for the first movement of 'Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant'. The music is in 3/4 time and features a prominent chromatic line in the bass clef (tenor voice). The right hand plays a melody with eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamic marking *pp* is visible at the beginning.

II. “Petit Poucet,” eighth-note tenor line, mm. 68-74

The image shows a piano score for the second movement of 'Petit Poucet'. The music is in 3/4 time and features a prominent eighth-note tenor line in the bass clef. The right hand plays a melody with eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The dynamic marking *m.f.* is visible in the middle of the score.

III. “Laideronnette,” quarter note tenor chromatic line, mm. 46-49

The image shows a piano score for the third movement of 'Laideronnette'. The music is in 3/4 time and features a prominent quarter note tenor chromatic line in the bass clef. The right hand plays a melody with eighth-note patterns, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Ravel quotes Marie Leprince de Beaumont’s fairy tale at the beginning of

“Conversations between Beauty and the Beast:”

Beauty: When I think of your kind heart, you don’t seem so ugly.

Beast: Oh my yes, I have a kind heart, but I’m hideous.

--Many men are more hideous than you.

--If I had wit, I’d think of a fine compliment to pay you, but I’m only a beast.

Beauty, will you marry me?

--No, Beast!

--I'll die happy, since I've had the pleasure of seeing you again.
 --No, Beast dear, you shan't die: you will live and be my husband.
 The Beast vanished, and at her feet she now found a prince more handsome than
 love itself, who thanked her for breaking the spell that bound him.⁹²

Beauty's theme is an innocent Lydian tune. Ravel commented that this piece should be called "Gymnopédie #4," in homage to Erik Satie's set of three pieces with a similar melodic contour and accompaniment pattern.⁹³

Example 2.32—"Conversations between Beauty and the Beast," mm.1-7

The Beast has, in contrast, a low chromatic motive with awkward deep seconds as an accompanying figure:

Example 2.33—Beast motives

Bars 49-54

⁹² English translation from Lawrence Rosen version for solo piano, quoted in Peter Kaminsky, "Ravel's Programmatic Impulse," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie*, 5/1, (2008): 35.

⁹³ Julianne Marie Lindberg. "Through the Looking Glass: Child-Inspired Keyboard Albums of the French *fin de siècle*" (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2011), 115.

After being presented separately, the themes of Beauty and the Beast combine in two long, accelerating buildups (bars 69-101; 128-144). Octatonic bass lines alternate with chromatic rising basses in two facets of the Beast's motives.

After a stunned silence at bar 145, the Beast transforms into the Prince.

Example 2.33—Glissando transformation of Beast, mm. 142-146

The coda drifts down in falling bass fifths—d, g, c, f. The rough edges of the Beast have not totally been changed, as the f-natural/f-sharp clash shows repeatedly:

Example 2.34—Coda, mm. 160-169

“The Fairy Garden” begins with a lush, arched melody (22 bars) of condensed intervals and long-breathed phrases, harmonized with seventh and ninth chords. An arpeggiated middle section takes the motive first heard in bars 20-21 and extends it in a delicate, lacy variation:

Example 2.35—“The Fairy Garden,” mm. 19-21

mm. 23-24

A hypnotic repeating bass line in quarter notes—g-e-d—sets the stage for the final pianissimo to fortissimo climax.

Example 2.36—ostinato bass, mm. 34-39

Beginning in bar 44, layers of clocks chime in perfect fourths--twelve repetitions of falling fourths—harkening back to the twelve tenuto repeating notes chiming the midnight hour in the opening “Pavane”. Glissandi occur in patterns of threes, a number significant in many fairy tales.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Kilpatrick, 86.

Example 2.37—“The Fairy Garden” coda, mm. 44-55

The musical score for the coda of "The Fairy Garden" (mm. 44-55) is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the coda with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system features a mezzo-forte (*m.f.*) dynamic and a glissando in the right hand. The third system concludes with a mezzo-dolce (*m.d.*) dynamic and a final chord.

With the orchestral version of this suite (1911) arranged so soon after the piano duet original (1910), one can only be curious if Ravel already heard a multi-colored instrumental *Ma Mère l'Oye* in his imagination while composing the piano duet for his young neighbors. Aside from this speculation, the final bars of the orchestrated “Fairy Garden” eclipse the piano duet in a spectacular example of Ravel’s mastery of the incremental orchestral crescendo (similar to the effect in his *Daphnis and Chloe* sunrise scene). Pianissimo strings in bar 40 creep stepwise, like a slow-growing ivy, finally unfurling into the light amid sparkling harp glissandi and ringing glockenspiel bells, the

timpani's repeating V-I cadence bringing the piece to a resonant, triumphant close. Love wins out in the midst of resplendent nature. In contrast to its first reception by the puzzled and disappointed Apaches, critic Emile Vuillermoz pronounced that *Ma Mère l'Oye* attracted "universal favor...the triumph of the elegant, aristocratic, smiling, and slightly ironic art of Ravel."⁹⁵



Arthur Rackham, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, 1906

⁹⁵ Mawer, 65.

Chapter 3

**Edvard Grieg and the
Rise of Norwegian Folklore**



Arthur Rackham, *Peer Gynt and the Threadballs* (1936)

Nineteenth-Century Norway

Violinist Ole Bull (1810-1880) was fond of referring to himself as “a Norse Norwegian from Norway.”⁹⁶ His facetious triple declaration of nationality highlighted the mood in Norway at the time. For more than four hundred years, his country had belonged to Denmark, in an extended occupation from 1380 until Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814 at the collapse of Napoleon’s empire. Norway then formed a Parliament to govern internal affairs, but was still subject to Sweden’s rule in issues involving foreign affairs. It would remain in this tense political marriage until complete independence was won peacefully in 1905.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Norway struggled to clarify its own identity, which had been historically deeply grafted into Denmark. Even after the two countries separated, Copenhagen remained the cultural center of Norway, with Norwegian musicians usually choosing to travel to Denmark or to Leipzig, Germany for training. Fish and timber were the country’s main exports. Roads connecting mountain villages were not built until the mid- to late-1800s, at the same time that railroad lines were under construction in the south. Norway itself was split into two layers of populations: the urban centers--barely urban by European standards—and the rural villages, individually separated by towering mountains. Less than 10% of the population lived in urban areas. Capital city Christiania had a population of 40,000 in 1855, with fishing industry center Bergen in second place. Like Ireland during the same time period, Norway was suffering a nearly unsustainable emigration loss due to depressed economic conditions. 29,000 Norwegians left the country in 1882 alone, and 800,000 had moved to

⁹⁶ Finn Benestad. “Nationalistic Trends in 19th Century Norwegian Music,” *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 16, No. 4-6 (1993): 667.

America by 1930—mostly to the northern Midwestern states. The escalating emigration rate accelerated the search for stability in a powerful national identity.

Danish had been the national language of Norway for generations, and no written Norwegian language had officially existed since the Danish takeover in the fourteenth century. The Old Norse language prevalent at the time of invasion had long since died. After 1814, two sides arose within Norway debating how to steer the creation of a new Norwegian language. One faction favored a mixture of Norwegian and Danish (called *Riksmål*), easily assimilated by urban centers Bergen and Christiania (renamed Oslo after 1925). A second group of linguists attempted to construct an entirely new Norwegian language (*Landsmål*) by collecting the dialects of a multitude of mountain villages and compressing many dialects into a single written form. By the early twentieth century the latter group created a written Norwegian that was true to its indigenous peasant heritage and less dominated by Danish vocabulary. Three major waves of government-initiated spelling revisions in 1907-09, 1917, and 1934-36 continued to create fluctuations in written Norwegian. In his song lyrics and in his theater work with Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg entered this language controversy, favoring the *Landsmål* Norwegian language created from the mountain dialects.

Folk and Fairy Tale Collections

Besides searching for a solid identity through their written language, Norwegians also turned inward in an exploration of their oral folk and fairy tale traditions. Clergyman Andreas Faye published “Norwegian Legends” in 1833. Collections of folk tales by the Brothers Grimm in Germany inspired Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe to journey to remote mountain villages to record tales passed on by generations of storytellers. The two folklorists produced a

first collection of Norwegian fairy tales (*Norske Folke-Eventyr*) in 1841-42 and an expanded edition in 1852. Asbjørnsen and Moe, like the Grimm Brothers, edited their collected stories for literary effect instead of publishing a word-for-word, ethnologically pure version of the tales. “They took a middle position between scholar and traditional storyteller, wishing to preserve intact the texts they collected from their informants but, at the same time, wanting to retell them in a form that was acceptable to the educated reader.”⁹⁷ The collection pilgrimages of Asbjørnsen and Moe were also fueled by the writings of German author Johann Gottfried Herder, who cemented the concept of “folkness” in contrast to modern industrialization. Romantic ideas about folk authenticity—“rural, ancient, original, natural, and unmediated by reflection”—were flourishing simultaneously in many countries throughout Europe.⁹⁸ Mountain village storytellers were indeed the true Norwegian folk, shielded from the Danish by impassable geography and the reputed illiteracy of their rural villages. Merrill Kaplan debates this urban prejudice toward the villagers: “In actual fact, a great number of nineteenth-century Norwegian farmers were literate, as were a great many of the informants who supplied folklore collectors with material, but far more important for the present purpose is the fact that they were conceived of as illiterate and, hence, stewards of the authentic.”⁹⁹

In addition to fairy tale collection, Jørgen Moe also collected folk songs and published them in 1840 in his *Collection of Songs and Folk Tunes in Common Norwegian Dialect*. He wrote arrangements of the tunes in *Norwegian Mountain Melodies Harmonically Worked for the Pianoforte* in 1841. Edvard Grieg used Norwegian folk melodies transcribed in two later

⁹⁷ Reimand Kvideland and Henning Sehmsdorf, *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 24.

⁹⁸ Merrill Kaplan, “On the Road to Realism with Asbjørnsen and Moe, ‘Peer Gynt’, and Henrik Ibsen,” *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Winter 2003): 492.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 493.

collections—Magnus Landstad’s *Norwegian Folk Melodies* (1853) and Ludvig Lindeman’s twelve volumes of almost 600 songs, collected between 1853 and 1863. Lindeman (1812-87) was the first to receive a national grant to collect folk songs, and he was government-supported in his travels from 1859 until his death. The bulk of his collecting was in mountain-locked villages in southern and western Norway, giving an overall slant in his entire production that these were the most *authentic* areas of Norway, as opposed to the urban southeast. The boundary between fairy tale collection and folk song collection was often indistinct because songs based on fairy tale themes were common, having been passed on in a long oral tradition. For example, the folk song tune “Halling from Gnomes’ Hill”, which Grieg used in his piano solo *Norwegian Dances* (opus 72 *Slåtter*) describes a farmer’s meeting with a fairy maiden, blending story with music.

At first, fairy tale collectors gave more attention to the stories themselves and less to the storytellers. By 1900, “folktale scholars in Germany, Scandinavia, and Russia (began) to take a sustained interest in the cultural provenance of storytellers and their tales.”¹⁰⁰ Olav Eivindsson Austad (1843-1929) from the village of Bygland was considered the most famous Norwegian storyteller, with forty-three of his stories gathered by Torleiv Hannaas, professor at the University of Bergen. Austad’s repertoire was a mixture of fairy tales, epic songs, comic verses and legends. Norwegian story collectors like Professor Hannaas felt pressured by time passing, believing that the village oral traditions were dying out. “By the 1920s industrialization and the mechanization of farming were rapidly transforming even the remotest corners and valleys of Norway, and the rural culture in which the storytelling tradition represented by Austad had

¹⁰⁰ R. Kvidland and H.K. Sehmsdorf, *All the World’s Reward: Folktales Told by Five Scandinavian Storytellers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 13.

flourished for centuries was rapidly disappearing.”¹⁰¹ Some of Austad’s stories were left unpublished due to existing pornography laws and the requests of his family members.¹⁰² The occasional erotic content of fairy tales, not just in Norway, but across Europe is evidence that the adaptation of fairy tales solely for children is a relatively modern development.

Characteristics of Norway’s Tales

What distinguishes Norwegian fairy tales from those of other countries? The stories are often bleak and shadowy, treating the burdens of life with a sardonic irony. Gudliev Bo comments that Norwegians wouldn’t be able to survive their harsh climate without this kind of dark humor.¹⁰³ Protagonists frequently are dead by the end of the story, in contrast to the “happily-ever-after” endings of Italian and French fairy tales. One Norwegian story tells of an engaged man seduced by a goblin woman. When he rejects her, she strikes him with a fatal illness, and his fiancée and mother quickly die from grief. In the famous fairy tale of Peer Gynt, the main character’s death concludes his adventures. This tragic kind of Scandinavian fairy tale is also evident in Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Story of a Mother,” “The Little Match Girl,” and “The Red Shoes”—all ending in death.

Although a scattering of tales have noble characters, the Norwegian tales as a whole have a noticeable lack of princes and princesses, with many protagonists coming from working class professions like farmers, miners, housewives, sailors and fishermen. This absence of the elite class in the oral stories may be because Norway’s aristocracy was annihilated by the Black Death

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰³ Gudleiv Bo, “Nation Building and Folklore in Norway 1840-1905,” *Forum for World Literature Studies* (August 2011): 173.

during the fourteenth century, at the same time that up to two-thirds of the entire population was also destroyed by the plague.¹⁰⁴ Denmark's immediately subsequent takeover prevented a ruling class from re-establishing itself in Norway.

Norway's stories often involve the sea. Mermaids and mermen--collectively referred to as the *draug*--were the malevolent spirits of people who had perished in shipwrecks. They raised underwater herds of cattle, and were especially feared for curses that could be placed on a groom before a wedding. Human excrement smeared on the ropes of ships could repel the *draug* and bring a ship safely to port.¹⁰⁵ Many stories tell of seals, believed to be the spirits of people who had committed suicide by drowning in the sea. Once a year on Twelfth Night (Epiphany), the seals clamber up on land, lay aside their seal skins, and dance in their former human forms. A Norwegian tale tells of a man who instantly fell in love with a seal woman on Twelfth Night, hid her skin in a trunk, and convinced her to marry him. After many years and two children, the wife discovered her seal pelt while she was cleaning. She then compulsively ran to the sea, clothed herself in her glossy skin, and dove into the watery depths forever. Norwegians have a common saying that reflects this kind of tale: "He couldn't control himself any more than a seal that finds its skin."¹⁰⁶

A belief in an underground hidden realm of *huldre*—the population of goblins and gnomes—saturates the Norwegian fairy tales. (Elves come from the Danish tradition.) According to one Norwegian story of *huldre* origin, soon after man's creation, Eve was ashamed when God asked to see her children. She had had so many that she hid them underground and inside the mountains so they would escape God's notice. Other tales claim that the *huldre* were either fallen

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Kvideland and Sehmsdorf, *Scandinavian Folk Belief*, 268.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 265.

angels or the children of Adam and Lillith, his first wife.¹⁰⁷ Behavior of the *huldre* is mercurial in the extreme. They can be helpful or hostile; visible or invisible; in need of human help for childbirth; causing death to human children; exchanging goblin for human babies; creating mental breakdowns in adult humans; giving blessings of abundant crops or wealth; or granting supernatural powers to humans. The underground people can lure humans inside their mountain caverns, giving rise to the Norwegian expression “taken into the mountains,” referring to a sudden mental instability or collapse.¹⁰⁸ Many stories tell of mysterious, distant music rising from *huldre* dwelling places. Often on the lookout for human spouses, the *huldre* are seductively beautiful from the front view, but hollow or appearing as a tree trunk from the back, and frequently having a cow’s tail.¹⁰⁹ Steel has the capacity to protect humans from the *huldre*, and therefore, baby cradles will sometimes have a pair of scissors concealed beneath the blankets.

Norwegian fairy tales are rooted to the physical land geography more than the tales of other European countries. The living spaces of the *huldre* can be permanently attached to specific rocks, farms, or caves. Stories describe *trolls* (the Norwegian word for *giants*) who turn into boulders or even transform into entire mountain ranges when the dawning sun rays strike them. One story tells of a troll woman who tried to walk to Iceland, but plunged into an ocean trench and then fell backwards across Norway’s coast. Her bent knees became two pointed rock spires on the beach. Trolls are not only panicked by light, but by the sound of church bells or even by the calling of their own true names; any of these will turn the slow-moving giants into stone. In addition to their slow motion, trolls are slow-witted and easily tricked by a clever fairy

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

tale protagonist. Two trolls are conversing in one tale, but their conversation is at a glacial pace with seven years passing between each remark.

Grieg and Norwegian Folklore

Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843-1907) was familiar with these kinds of fairy tales, witnessing the intense flurry of folklore and folksong collection throughout his lifetime. “Norwegian folk life, Norwegian sagas, Norwegian history, and above all Norwegian nature have had a profound influence on my creative work every since my youth,” Grieg wrote to author Henry Theophilus Finck.¹¹⁰ Because of violinist Ole Bull’s visits to the Grieg family home in Bergen, Grieg’s parents were encouraged to send young Edvard to the Leipzig Conservatory for piano and composition study. From the age of 15, Grieg had a series of piano teachers at the Conservatory, beginning with Louis Plaidy (whom he detested),¹¹¹ followed by E.F. Wenzel, Carl Reinecke and Ignaz Moscheles. Wenzel in particular planted a love of Schumann in Grieg, and he witnessed Clara Schumann playing her husband’s Concerto. Besides his interest in Schumann, Grieg also frequently performed works by Mendelssohn and Chopin.

His love for Wagner ran deep; he saw *Tannhäuser* fourteen nights in succession.¹¹² Grieg commented that Norwegians had a special affection for Wagner because some operas were based on the *Volsung Saga*, a collection of tales that had been circulating in Scandinavia from the sixth century. Wagner also had based operas on the *Elder Edda*, “a collection of Old Norse myths and legends found in...an Icelandic parchment manuscript dating from 1270, preserved in the Royal

¹¹⁰ Edvard Grieg, *Letters to Colleagues and Friends*, ed. Finn Benestad (Columbus: Peer Gynt Press, 2000), 226.

¹¹¹ Nils Grinde, “Edvard Grieg,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed May 1, 2017, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com>.

¹¹² Edvard Grieg, *Diaries, Articles, Speeches*, ed. Finn Benestad (Columbus: Peer Gynt Press, 2001), 290.

Library, Copenhagen.”¹¹³ The *Elder Edda* had been composed between 700 and 1100. In later decades of his life, Grieg became ambivalent in his attitude toward Wagner, congratulating American Edward MacDowell that his Third “Celtic” Sonata (dedicated to Grieg) was not overly Wagner-like.¹¹⁴

After his graduation from the Leipzig Conservatory, Grieg returned briefly to Bergen in 1862, but found it to be an artistic wasteland without professional prospects for him. He soon moved to Copenhagen where he continued composition lessons with Danish composer Niels Gade, and socialized within a stimulating literary and musical community. During this time he met Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75), and wrote of him in a letter to the Norwegian poet and novelist Bjornstjerne Bjornson: “Recently I was with H.C. Andersen, who might now appropriately be called Babble Andersen. He’s in his second childhood! But he speaks of you with the old admiration, whereas he loathes Ibsen and considers *Peer Gynt* the worst thing he has ever read.”¹¹⁵ Grieg also met Nina Hagerup in Copenhagen, a popular singer who was Grieg’s first cousin. She became a lifelong favorite interpreter of Grieg’s vocal compositions, and the two married in 1867 in spite of the protests from Nina’s mother: “He is nothing, has nothing, and writes music no one will listen to.”¹¹⁶

Grieg was enlightened about the potential of folk material when he heard Ole Bull’s violin recitals alternating selections of classical music with Hardanger-fiddle folk tunes. Bull was especially popular in his Paris performances, where the violinist’s outspoken passion for French revolutionary politics and the Norwegian folk elements in his playing became an exotic magnet

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹¹⁴ William H. Halverson, “Grieg and MacDowell: A Tale of Two Edwards,” *The Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 5.

¹¹⁵ Grieg, *Letters*, 117.

¹¹⁶ David Monrad-Johansen, *Edvard Grieg* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), 98.

for French audiences. A memorial statue of Ole Bull in his home town of Bergen displays the influence of Norwegian fairy tales. The sculpture shows the violinist atop a waterfall, with water sprites reaching upwards through the spray toward his feet. Norwegian tales depict water spirits or “nøkk” playing music—especially violin music--within waterfalls and streams and luring passersby into the water. The nøkk can venture out of the water and shift their forms into horse shapes, attracting people to their death. Extremely gifted folk violinists were rumored to have been taught by the nøkk; people who heard these fiddlers were compelled to dance, whether they wanted to or not.¹¹⁷

Another influence on Grieg’s attraction to folktales was Rikard Nordraak (1842-66), a young Norwegian composer whose life was cut short before he and Grieg could begin their planned trips through Germany and Italy. Together they founded the Euterpe Society to promote Scandinavian music.¹¹⁸ Grieg wrote of him in 1897: “Nordraak’s importance for me is not exaggerated. It really is so: through him and only through him was I truly awakened...He was a dreamer, a visionary, but he was not able to bring his own art up to a level corresponding to his vision...he opened my eyes to the importance of that in music which is not music.”¹¹⁹ Nordraak’s influence is evident in Grieg’s song cycle *Haugtussa (The Fairy)*, in which a young girl has visions of wind trolls, forest ghosts, and mountain gods.

¹¹⁷ Kvidland and Sehmsdorf, *Scandinavian Folk Belief*, 255.

¹¹⁸ Grinde, “Edvard Grieg” in Grove Dictionary online.

¹¹⁹ Benestad, 667.

The Tale of *Peer Gynt*

After meeting Henrik Ibsen in Rome, the poet invited Grieg in January 1874 to write incidental music for his *Peer Gynt* play. Grieg accepted Ibsen's invitation, but then struggled with his personal insecurities about writing large-scale works. The *Peer Gynt* story describes Peer's many adventures as a sharpshooting hunter, including his meeting with the Green Woman, daughter of the Troll King; his confrontation with the Thin Man, personification of the devil; and his battles with goblins who spontaneously transform into miniature spinning thread balls. "The work on *Peer Gynt* is progressing very slowly," Grieg wrote to his best friend attorney Frants Beyer in 1874, "and there is no possibility that I can finish it by autumn. It is a terribly intractable subject with which to deal, except for a few places—for example, where Solveig sings, all of which I have already finished. I have also written something for the scene in the hall of the Mountain King—something that I literally can't stand to listen to because it absolutely reeks of cow pies, ultra-Norwegianness and trollish self-sufficiency! But I also have a hunch that the irony will be discernible..."¹²⁰

Grieg's two orchestral *Peer Gynt Suites* (1874-75), extracted from the play's incidental music, were an enormous success.¹²¹ The composer wrote to Beyer fifteen years later about the reception when he conducted one of the suites in London in 1889: "Every single movement received thunderous applause, but I just let them clap and went on...I had to make three curtain calls, and then I had to repeat the troll stuff."¹²² Grieg's comments reveal a self-deprecating humor, a quality that Gudliev Bo identifies as a trait common in Scandinavian fairy tale

¹²⁰ Grieg, *Letters*, 29.

¹²¹ It remained a permanent success, even sparking Duke Ellington's jazz spinoff *Peer Gynt Suite* in 1960.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 56.

characters as well as in the general Norwegian population.¹²³ At Ibsen's death in 1906, Grieg expressed appreciation in his diary, "How much I owe him! Poor, great Ibsen! He was not a happy man, for it is as if he carried within him a chunk of ice that would not melt. But beneath this chunk of ice lay a fervent love of humanity."¹²⁴

Grieg himself experienced repeating bouts of discouragement and depression, possibly due to his health problems stemming from a serious case of pleurisy in his student days in Leipzig. Following the early success of his Piano Concerto, he was continually frustrated by his inability to produce lengthy, sustained works like operas or symphonies. After finally writing a symphony at the request of Niels Gade, Grieg scrawled "not for performance" across the manuscript that he submitted for Gade's critique.¹²⁵ He was ultimately able to combat his melancholia by taking frequent international concertizing trips, and by hiking and composing in the mountains when he returned to Norway. His fame as a representative of Norwegian tradition continued to grow with the international exposure.¹²⁶

¹²³ Bo, 173.

¹²⁴ Grieg, *Letters*, 439.

¹²⁵ Grinde, "Edvard Grieg."

¹²⁶ During one of Grieg's international trips in 1888, Anna Brodsky, wife of Russian violinist Adolf Brodsky, recalled hosting a dinner party: "Nina Grieg was seated between Brahms and Tchaikovsky, but we had only been a few moments at the table when she started from her seat exclaiming, 'I cannot sit between these two. It makes me feel so nervous.' Grieg sprang up saying, 'But I have the courage,' and exchanged places with her. So the three composers sat together, all in good spirits. I can see Brahms now taking hold of strawberry jam, saying that he would have it all for himself and no one else should get any. It was more like a children's party than a gathering of great composers." [Grieg, *Letters*, 157.]

Folklore in Grieg's Piano Works

Grieg's piano pieces—similar to the Norwegian fairy tales—are often brief, highly descriptive character portraits tinged with Norwegian landscape elements and an earthy oral story tradition. Just as the characters of Norwegian tales are predominantly commoners, Grieg's short piano works, including his twelve books of sixty-six *Lyric Pieces*, are also intended for the commoner instead of the elite virtuoso. Many of the *Lyric Pieces*, which he collectively nicknamed the “wheat buns,”¹²⁷ are sight-readable for the intermediate pianist and not for performance for an aristocratic salon audience. (Claude Debussy had snidely referred to Grieg's short pieces as “pink bonbons filled with snow.”¹²⁸) This easy accessibility, rather than being a negative feature, was a welcome attribute for Max Abraham, owner of Peters Verlag in Leipzig. Peters published Grieg's works beginning when the composer was only twenty years old, and Grieg was at times the best-selling composer for the firm.

Lyric Pieces

The *Lyric Pieces* are divided into ten opuses with six to eight pieces in each set. Grieg wrote the pieces from opus 12 in 1864 and ending with the opus 71 set in 1901, spreading the *Lyric Pieces* across his entire compositional career. The pieces range from traditional dances and peasant songs to nature pieces (“Little Bird”; “Butterfly”) and musical landscapes. Six of the pieces reflect fairy tale themes, including “Fairy Dance” (op. 12, no. 4); “March of the Trolls”

¹²⁷ Ståle Kleiberg, “Grieg's ‘Slåtter,’ Op. 72: Change of Musical Style or New Concept of Nationality?” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 121, No. 1 (1996): 46.

¹²⁸ Jee Young Choi, “Edward Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*: An Analysis of His Musical Style” (DMA diss., Boston University, 1998), 22.

(op. 54, no. 3); “Sylfide” (op. 62, no. 1—describing a being that inhabits the air); and “Puck” (op. 71, no. 3).

“Klokkeklang” (op. 54, no. 6), although not about a *specific* Norwegian fairy tale, could conceivably be added to the fairy tale group because of the meaning of bell sounds throughout Norwegian folk and fairy tales. Bells signify the airy escape of souls from bodies, the banishment of evil, the warding off of malevolent entities like trolls and the sea *draug*. Bell sounds convey the bracing-air resonance of cattle calls floating and echoing from mountain to valley. Distant muted bell tones arise from the underground gnome realm inside the mountain. Grieg’s “Klokkeklang”, the sixth and final piece of his opus 54 set of *Lyric Pieces* (1891), is an unrelenting peal of bell-ringing, stark in its insistent and evocative bare fifths. W. Dean Sutcliffe expresses surprise at the lack of scholarly writing regarding this piece. (It is merely a peripheral piece tossed off by a peripheral composer, exhibiting a flash of Norwegian impressionism, he suggests that some writers imply¹²⁹.) “Surely it must have seemed like a barbaric intrusion into the drawing room,” Sutcliffe writes. It doesn’t “accommodate either the player or the listener...a raw form of musical expression, out of scale within a nineteenth-century genre we are likely to be rather sniffy about nowadays.”¹³⁰ The piece opens with fifteen bars of ostinato bass, graceful downward-swooping bells and arch-shaped treble bells, dominated by bare fifths.

¹²⁹ W. Dean Sutcliffe, “Grieg’s Fifth: The Linguistic Battleground of ‘Klokkeklang’,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Spring, 1996): 161.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

Example 3.1--“Klokkeklang,” mm. 1-22

On the printed page, the constant bass ostinato creates a literal, visual image of the bell clapper swinging in its back and forth motion inside the bell itself. Except for brief motions in seconds in measures 15 and 17, the top melody moves only in fourths and fifths. Can one even call this a melody? It is a metallic reverberation, a sound picture.

The bass ostinato in the middle section provides a static foundation while the upper treble climbs from a subdued pianissimo to triple forte and back to a whisper. Looking at the overall shape of the melody line in this entire middle section (bars 19-60), it is as though a painter traced the shape of a mountain, black against a twilight sky, low swipes to high jagged peak and then settling downward again through tenuto half steps (d, c#, c) to a low plateau. A pianissimo tritone in measures 21 and 23 interrupts the perfect fifth purity, reinstated immediately in bar 24.

Example 3.2—mm.19-60

pp

ppp

pp

ppp

cresc. poco a poco

sempre più creso.

molto

fff

dim. molto e poco ritard.

The ostinato ceases (bar 76) in a measure of rest, the silence creating a sense of open geographical space and physical distance. An E major harmony slides quietly and unexpectedly into the silence, after a long lulling recap in the key of C, with constantly falling RH figures. A last arched outburst subsides back to C, disappearing into the depths of the lowest register.

Example 3.3—mm. 61-90

The musical score for Example 3.3 (mm. 61-90) is presented in four systems. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'Tempo I.' and the dynamic 'pp'. The second system concludes with a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking. The third system features a 'pp' dynamic, followed by 'molto' and 'ff' (fortissimo) markings. The fourth system includes 'p' (piano), 'pp', and 'morendo' markings. The score is written for piano with multiple voices in both the right and left hands, showing intricate textures and dynamic contrasts.

***Slåtter*, opus 72**

Folk and fairy tale themes are prominent in the 1902-1903 *Slåtter* (*Norwegian Peasant Dances*), op. 72. These seventeen dances are based on the Hardanger-fiddle tunes of Knut Dahle (1834-1921), a folk fiddler from Telemark in southern Norway. Grieg had asked his violinist

friend Johan Halvorsen, musical director of the National Theater in Christiania, to transcribe Dahle's playing and provide the results to Grieg. The composer was sensitive to the problems inherent in removing improvised folk music from its natural environment and placing it in an artificial context like piano music. A piano transcription loses the ringing sound of the Hardanger-fiddle's extra set of sympathetic drone strings, as well as the effect of the fiddle's sometimes microtonal tuning. (There are twenty-five different tunings for the Hardanger-fiddle.¹³¹) "So far it seems to me a sin to adapt the *slåtter* for piano, but I shall nevertheless sooner or later commit this sin," Grieg wrote to Halvorsen.¹³²

Grieg was thrilled with Halvorsen's transcriptions, writing that the peasant dances blended "fine, soft gracefulness with sturdy almost uncouth power and untamed wildness" from "an imagination as daring in its flight as it is peculiar."¹³³ He recognized immediately that these folk dances were "something completely different from that found in the Lindeman collection, [*Older and Newer Norwegian Mountain Melodies*, 1853-63] where one does not know what is the original and what is Lindeman."¹³⁴ Grieg was excited about composing from a raw form of folk music, but he was eventually disappointed that the *Slåtter* were more popular internationally and less so in Norway. The set was almost too Norwegian for the Norwegians. Grieg lamented in his diary, "What hurt me particularly was that the *Slåtter* didn't succeed as they should and ought to have done. I played them with all the affection and wizardry I possess... Here [in Norway] they pine continually for the standard of my youth, which on appropriate occasions they praise at

¹³¹ Benestad, 669.

¹³² Kleiberg, 47.

¹³³ Edvard Grieg, preface to *Slåtter*, op. 72 (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1991).

¹³⁴ Daniel M. Grimley, *Grieg: Music, Landscape and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 158.

the expense of my current position. But—I must not let myself be held back by it. I must simply be allowed to develop for as long as I live.”¹³⁵

The *Slåtter* are full of folk characteristics—lydian raised fourths; mixolydian lowered sevenths; droning bass fifths; extensive pedal points; dotted rhythms; and ornaments that should be played “like a little trout on a string” according to Halvorsen. “As soon as you try and catch them, they are gone.”¹³⁶ The tunes contain Grieg’s favorite peasant feature—sometimes called the “Griegian leitmotiv”—prominent in his Piano Concerto opening.¹³⁷ The composer described his preference for this motive: “There is one peculiarity of our folk music that has always had a strong appeal to me: the treatment of the leading tone, in particular when the progression is from the leading tone down to the dominant.”¹³⁸ The traditional dances included in opus 72 are the “Halling” in moderate to fast 2/4 time, the rapid “Springar” in 3/4, and the allegretto “Gangar” in 6/8. Peters published Grieg’s *Slåtter* in 1903, with Halvorsen’s transcriptions printed for comparison in the same edition. This most Norwegian set of dances was dedicated to Grieg’s German theorist friend Hermann Kretschmar.

The Australian pianist Percy Grainger was the first to make a success of the *Slåtter* in his international recitals. Grainger had met Grieg in London in 1905 and became one of Grieg’s favorite soloists (along with Teresa Carreño) for the Piano Concerto. Grainger visited Nina and Edvard Grieg for several months in 1907 at “Troidhaugen” (“Troll’s Hill”), their home in Norway, where Grainger was working with Grieg preparing a Leeds Festival performance. Unfortunately the composer suddenly died on September 4, 1907, the evening before he would

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹³⁷ Grieg, *Letters*, 226.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

have boarded the ship for England. Grainger's performances of the *Slåtter* throughout Europe could have influenced Béla Bartók, who owned a copy in his library, as well as Igor Stravinsky.

Four of the seventeen *Slåtter* are based on fairy tales. At the beginning of #4—"Halling from the Gnomes' Hill," Grieg relates the following story:

A man, by the name of Brynjuw Olson, had lost a bull. After searching for the animal in the mountains, for several days, he became exhausted and fell asleep. He dreamed that he heard a wondrous strange song. Behind a hill he saw a beautiful maiden; she called to him and said: "Yea! So shalt thou play on the fiddle, Brynjuw Olson, when thou returnest home to wife and child, and yonder, where the mountains disappear, wilt thou find the bull."¹³⁹

The D major piece is a simple ABA coda form, with the melody of all sections based on a repeating two-bar motive. The opening ten bars partner the whirling two-bar melody with a straightforward I-vi-ii-V-I harmony. According to Ståle Kleiberg, Grieg uses "budding technique" throughout the *Slåtter*--repeating, fragmenting, and varying brief fiddle motives.¹⁴⁰ A drone bass adds syncopation and sharp dissonances against the melody. The C# first note of each motive creates clashing major sevenths and minor seconds against the bass. "Little trout" mordents decorate the raised fourth lydian G#, a favorite folk element of Grieg's.

¹³⁹ Grieg, *Slåtter*, op. 72, (New York: Dover Publications), 176. Grieg subtitles the piece "Abode of the Fairies."

¹⁴⁰ Kleiberg, 47.

Example 3.4—“Halling from the Gnomes’ Hill,” mm. 1-10

Musical score for Example 3.4, measures 1-10. The score is in 2/4 time, marked Moderato with a tempo of 84. The right hand (RH) plays a complex melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand (LH) plays a steady, stomping bass line with accents. A yellow box highlights measures 11-14.

Articulation becomes more complex beginning in measure 11, with alternating soprano/alto sixteenth note motives against a non-syncopated stomping bass. Perhaps the slurs are in imitation of Knut Dahle’s fiddle bowings. Navigating the leaping bass while simultaneously accurately slurring the RH are technical features that elevate this piece beyond the reach of an intermediate pianist.

Example 3.5—“Halling from the Gnomes’ Hill,” mm. 11-21

Musical score for Example 3.5, measures 11-21. The score continues from the previous example, showing more complex articulation in the right hand and a more active bass line. Dynamics include piano (p), forte (f), and fortissimo (ff).

The B section of this dance uses the same 2-bar melodic motive of the A section, but with augmented note values spreading it across four bars. The “tranquillo” voice of the beautiful *huldre* maiden is in a slower, dream-like d minor, with Germanic-sounding harmonies and chromatic inner and bass lines. Grieg remarked that he preferred sinuous inner and lower voice chromaticism against diatonic upper melodies.¹⁴¹ The major/minor contrast of this halling is typical of Norwegian dance and songs. “The basic feature of the Norwegian folk song...in comparison with the German, is a deep sense of melancholy that can suddenly change into wild, unbridled humor. Mysterious gloom and unrestrained wildness—these are the contrasting elements in the Norwegian folk song.”¹⁴²

Example 3.6—mm. 29-46

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The title is "Tranquillo." and the tempo is marked "p espressivo". The score is in 2/4 time and D minor. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a chromatic bass line in the left hand. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 29-46, which are highlighted with a yellow box. The second system contains measures 47-54, which are marked "poco mosso". The score ends with a fermata and a double bar line.

Another fairy tale dance, *Slåtter* #14, “The Goblins’ Wedding Procession at Vossevangen (Gangar,)” begins with a fermata-laden, free recitative moving with chromatic ambiguity from a-minor to the dominant of G major.

¹⁴¹ Grieg, *Letters*, 198.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 231.

Example 3.7—“The Goblins’ Wedding Procession,” m. 1



This introduction could depict a passing hiker straining to hear a faint melody wafting through the goblins’ subterranean tunnels. Then the wildness begins. Grieg had written many wedding pieces--“Wedding Day at Troldhaugen” (*Lyric Pieces*, op. 65, #6) for his and Nina’s silver anniversary being one of the most popular with young pianists. A goblin wedding could be an appropriately raucous conclusion to his nuptial processions, illustrating his comment about the “unrestrained wildness” of Norwegian folk music.

The procession begins softly with rustic open string fifths as a left hand ostinato, and gradually peaks in a long fortissimo before retreating into distant tunnels. Like “Halling from Gnomes’ Hill,” this goblin wedding piece manipulates and varies a simple 2-bar motive, then later changes harmonies and alters the rhythmic accents. The repeating motive is harmonized in G major, then up a major second in a-minor, then back to G major with a crunching major seventh F# layered on top of G pedal points.

Example 3.8—“Goblins’ Wedding Procession,” mm. 2-15

The musical score for Example 3.8 consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked *Allegretto* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 76$. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a repeating 2-bar motive in the bass line, marked with an asterisk (*). The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The second system includes dynamic markings *cresc.*, *poco*, and *a poco*, and continues the 2-bar motive in the bass. The third system ends with a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic and a final measure with a fermata over the right hand.

Dropping the incessant 2-bar motive, Grieg begins a new section with a subito piano, delicate with Scarlattian hand crossings, but building quickly to a fortissimo. The noisy climax is chaotic in its accented syncopation and the alternation of 6/8 and 3/4. Measures 25 and 27 throw ill-mannered bass tritones into the already unruly wedding party.

Example 3.9—mm. 16-30

The musical score for Example 3.9 shows a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and accents, and a bass line with chords and a tritone. The score is presented in a single system with a treble and bass clef.

The first system of the coda features a piano with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a melody with slurs and accents, and the bass clef has chords. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *più cresc.*. The second system continues the melody and bass line, with a *ff* dynamic. The third system also continues, with *ff sempre* and *ppp simile* dynamics. Pedal points are indicated by *Ped.* in the bass line.

The goblin procession lurches dimwittedly through its final seventeen bars of coda, trudging on pedal point low G's on first and fourth beats, ever quieter until evaporating in faraway *ppp* staccatos.

Example 3.10—Coda, mm. 54-63

The second system of the coda features a piano with a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef has a melody with slurs and accents, and the bass clef has chords. Dynamics include *più decresc.*. The second system continues the melody and bass line, with *pp* and *ppp* dynamics. Pedal points are indicated by *Ped.* in the bass line.

The final two *Slåtter*, each identically titled “The Maidens of Kivledal” are based on the following tale, related by Grieg:

In Selljord in Telemarken there is a little valley, called Kivletal. In ancient times, a tiny church stood in this valley. One Sunday, when the community had assembled for mass, loud sounds from the mountain suddenly reverberated through the church. It was the three maidens of Kivletal, the last heathens in the valley, who, while watching their goats on the mountain-slopes, were blowing a “Slåt” on the Trill-horn. The community rushed out of the church and listened enraptured to the wondrous enchanting tones. The parson followed, and called to the maidens, bidding them stop playing; but as they kept on blowing their horns, he raised his hands and anathematized them in the name of God and the Pope. The maidens of Kivletal and their herds were at once changed into stone. And to this day, you can see them standing high up on the mountain-slope, the horn to their mouth and their herds around them. This is the legend of the “Slåt” of the maidens of Kivletal, as preserved by the peasants in the valley, and which they still play on their fiddles. The following “Slåt” (#17) is related to this same legend: There are in all three such “Slåtter” (one for each of the maidens), and only that fiddler was considered great who could play all three.¹⁴³

Slåtter #16 is so thoroughly a graceful and carefree “springdans” in 3/4, that it is unlikely that the maidens are turned to stone until *Slåtter* #17. Even the brief forte measures 29-30 are framed before and after with *dolce* indications, creating an unruffled landscape of horn calls and peacefully grazing sheep. Most of the other *Slåtter* are built on two-bar motives which Grieg varies and fragments in short units. *Slåtter* #16 has longer, more lyrical four-bar phrases following its six-bar introduction.

¹⁴³ Edvard Grieg, introduction to *Slåtter*, op. 72, #16 and #17 (Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 1903), 49.

Example 3.11—“The Maidens of Kivledal,” *Slätter* #16, mm. 1-14

Introduction.
Allegro moderato. ♩ = 122.

p

dolce

The maidens' horns ring out against tranquil inner voice parallel sixths in the chordal accompaniment.

Example 3.12—mm. 15-18

mf

Bright F major is interrupted only by a brief excursion into d minor—a section which also reverts to repetitive two-bar variations before the sun returns in a soft arpeggiated upswEEP.

Example 3.13—mm. 23-31

The coda is dominated by the Scotch snap rhythm, which had appeared briefly in the opening theme.

Example 3.14—Coda, mm. 39-44

Perhaps Grieg favored this rhythm due to his ancestral heritage; his great grandfather Alexander Greig had emigrated from Scotland to Bergen, Norway in the 1760s, changing the spelling of his last name to Grieg. Percy Grainger commented that Grieg was aware of this ancestry in his

compositions—“his originally Scotch blood, of which he was proud and fond of dwelling upon.”¹⁴⁴

In *Slåtter* #17, the maidens of Kivledal represent an ancient, pagan Norway--free to make music and roam the mountains--confronting civilized, churched, industrialized Norway, imposing modern structure and restrictions on nature. The 6/8 “gangar” is rhythmically ambiguous from the outset, with hemiola measures in three beats layered on top of the basic duple rhythm reinforced with F pedal points.

Example 3.15—“The Maidens of Kivledal,” *Slåtter* #17, mm. 1-14

¹⁴⁴ Percy Grainger, “Personal Recollections of Grieg,” *The Musical Times*, Vol. 48, No. 777 (Nov. 1, 1907): 720.

Rhythmic predictability is restored with the subito pianissimo in measure 11. Eight bars of stability occur before an explosion of dissonant major sevenths, tritones and unnatural accents. Dynamics shift to extremes without warning in this turbulent conflation of cultures.

Example 3.16—mm. 19-28

The maidens have been shocked into a stone silence and peace imposed, although a peace rippling restlessly through 3-beat, 2-beat, 3-beat measures.

Example 3.17—mm. 33-36

High chiming bells and syncopated articulation combine with Grieg's favored inner-voice alto chromaticism in an evocative pastoral closing to this final peasant dance.

Example 3.18—Coda, mm. 41-49

Grieg traveled frequently in his mature years, but an invisible thread linked his heart to the mountains of his homeland. From Amsterdam he wrote to his friend Johan Christie: “I hope to be home again in the spring and gladden myself with the thought of seeing my dear, dear Norway again, wandering in the mountains and concealing myself in Nature’s never-failing embrace.”¹⁴⁵ The opus 72 *Slätter*, his final work for solo piano, is the epitome of his longing for country. Vacationing in the town of Hardanger in June 1896, Grieg’s description perfectly paints the essence of the region in midsummer:

Then the waterfalls’ immense symphony can be heard, the glaciers shimmer, the air is filled with an aroma, the nights are light, and the whole existence is like a fairy tale. Just imagine, we didn’t go to bed in the evenings. We sat out in the light night one evening after another, drinking in the beautiful air and the light dawning fjord, which then lay in its deep calm.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Grimley, 70.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

**Dvořák, MacDowell, and the Quest for
American “Fairy Tales”**



Arthur Hughes, *Will o' the Wisp* (1872)

Dvořák in the New World

When Antonin Dvořák arrived in New York in 1892 as the newly-appointed Director of the National Conservatory of Music, he determined to establish a basis for American music and encourage American composers to write works based on indigenous North American themes. The Czech composer's attention turned to America's folklore (the country had no tradition of fairy tales), which included stories and songs of the African American slaves; tales and melodies of Native American tribes; and the literary regional stories of Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Joel Chandler Harris.

Harry Thacker Burleigh was a talented African American voice student at the National Conservatory. To familiarize himself with plantation songs, Dvořák would invite Burleigh to sing the spirituals and work songs of the southern states, even though Burleigh was a northerner from Erie, Pennsylvania. Burleigh's grandfather had been a slave on a southern plantation, and the singer had heard traditional songs from him as a boy. In a *New York Herald* article of May 21, 1893, Dvořák pronounced African American music the “real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.... These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are American.”¹⁴⁷

American composers recoiled. The Civil War had ended within relatively recent memory, and northern composers, in particular the group of composers meeting regularly in Boston's St. Botolph Club, were hesitant to base their works on slave melodies.¹⁴⁸ The whole premise of the war and the fact that America had sanctioned slavery was an embarrassment to them in the world arena, and a focus on slave music—so they thought--would perpetuate America's shame and

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Horowitz, “Dvořák and Boston,” *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 2001): 5.

¹⁴⁸ Michael Pisani, “From Hiawatha to Wa-Wan: Musical Boston and the Uses of Native American Lore,” *American Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring 2001): 44.

backwardness in the eyes of Europe. Edward MacDowell, who “could not countenance a Czechoslovakian telling American composers how to be ‘American,’”¹⁴⁹ objected to dressing musical ideas with a “badge of whilom slavery rather than with the stern but at least manly and free rudeness of the North American Indian...Masquerading in the so-called nationalism of Negro clothes cut in Bohemia will not help us.”¹⁵⁰

In a second article for the *New York Herald* on December 15, 1893, Dvořák expanded his advice to American composers, adding that Native American melodies could be used for compositions in addition to slave tunes.¹⁵¹ Dvořák, in spite of negative rumblings about his “interference,” set out to write an opera on Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*, but the opera was never finished. His Quartet, op. 97, and his *New World Symphony* were imbued with an American aboriginal flavor, yet have no direct quotes of songs. Dvořák claimed to have researched authentic tribal music during his meetings and interviews with American Indian musicians. However, his actual research into Native American music was not as rigorous as he asserted. In 1892, his patroness Jeannette Thurber, wife of a millionaire New York grocer and philanthropist, brought Dvořák to Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, a flamboyant, commercialized extravaganza of tribal war dances and frenzied battle re-enactments. Buffalo Bill Cody consistently presented the Native American as the aggressor and the noble White Man as the civilizing hero.

Dvořák also spent two summers in the largely Czech immigrant community of Spillville, Iowa, where he saw a traveling medicine show lead by Kickapoo Chief Big Moon and his wife Large Head. Song and dance routines in the show were theatrical, designed to draw crowds and

¹⁴⁹ Tara Browner, “Breathing the Indian Spirit: Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the ‘Indianist’ Movement in American Music,” *American Music*, vol. 15, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997): 272.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹⁵¹ Horowitz, 5.

increase the sales of herbal medicines. Dvořák asked the members of the dance group for additional performances for him on private occasions at his inn, and they obliged his requests. The composer, along with his wife and four children, attended “Czech Day” at the World’s Fair Columbian Exposition in Chicago on August 12, 1893, observing the Kwakiutl tribal dances and music. “Thirty thousand Czechs and Moravians marched in the two- or three-mile-long procession from the city’s downtown to the fair ground,”¹⁵² and Dvořák conducted his G major symphony for a festive, noisy throng of 8000 people.

Dvořák came to America at the time when European composers were absorbing their own national fairy tales and folklore. American composers were also looking for grassroots folklore equivalent to the European fairy tale collections. According to Tara Browner, Dvořák assumed that American composers would be able to collect, categorize and integrate Native American and African American music and stories as easily as Czechoslovakia was gathering its peasant folk materials. But the composer failed to calculate that American racial and cultural divides were vastly larger than the divides between the Czech peasant communities. “Dvořák was unfamiliar with race relations in the U.S., where judgments were made by skin color gradations instead of language or religion differences as in Czechoslovakia.”¹⁵³

The Indianist Movement (1890-1920)

Two viewpoints of Native Americans dominated late nineteenth-century America. The “noble savage” view saw tribal peoples through a sentimental, pre-Columbian lens. Indians roamed silent, emerald forests teeming with wildlife, sparkling with the rising mist of cascading

¹⁵² John Clapham. *Dvořák* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 126.

¹⁵³ Browner, 272.

waterfalls, untouched by foreign civilizations. Longfellow's book-length poem *Song of Hiawatha* (1855) had captured America's attention, reinforcing this romanticized scenario, and had been translated into multiple languages by the end of the century. Dramatic readings and musical settings of the poem proliferated until they were eventually labeled a "public nuisance."¹⁵⁴

The alternative view of Native Americans could be labeled the "violent savage" view. This stereotype emphasized the history of warring tribes, the rumored cannibalism of the western territory tribes, and the cold elation of scalping ceremonies. Pianist-composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), in his concert tours during the Civil War, feared playing in Milwaukee because it was too close to the Indian Territories. Gottschalk wrote about seeing "a stretched and dried human scalp, complete with ears, nostrils and gaping eye holes and mounted like a tambourine on the end of a pole."¹⁵⁵

By 1900, the "noble savage" and "violent savage" polarities began to be supplanted by a third, more realistic outlook. A trickle of pioneering ethnographers began earnest studies of specific tribes. In 1882, Theodore Baker completed his University of Leipzig dissertation "Über die Musik der nordamerikanischen Wilden," a collection and analysis of Seneca Nation tribal songs in western New York. Alice Fletcher, an ethnologist at Harvard's Peabody Museum, lived with the Omaha tribe, recording melodies with a gramophone cylinder beginning in 1895. Her

¹⁵⁴ Pisani, 40.

¹⁵⁵ Michael V. Pisani, "Exotic Sounds in the Native Land: Portrayals of North American Indians in Western Music" (PhD diss., Eastman School of Music, 1996), 11. Gottschalk preceded Dvořák by fifty years in writing compositions based on American music—African American, Creole and Cuban American melodies. He also composed works on fairy tale themes. His memoirs reveal a man of great flair and humor. Dramatic to the end, Gottschalk collapsed in a headlong swoon across the keyboard at a recital in Rio de Janeiro in 1869, following the conclusion of his piece *Morte!! (She is Dead)*. He succumbed three weeks later, to "an incurable galloping pleuropneumonia." Alternative causes of his death were rumored to be quinine poisoning and the fatal seductions of a French actress named Clélie. (S. Frederick Starr, *Bamboula!: The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 6.)

Indian Story and Song from North America was published in 1900. Seattle photographer Edward Curtis traveled the country, creating black-and-white portraits of Native Americans in natural settings like the Hopi Snake Dance ceremonies. Curtis showcased his gallery of photographs enhanced with live orchestral music by Henry F. Gilbert at a lecture-concert in Carnegie Hall in 1911. Author Hamlin Garland spent significant time living with the Zuni, Navajo, and Ute tribes, documenting their music and sacred rites. The research of these historians and artists caused a flourishing interest in tribal issues and arts from 1890 to 1920. The tribes were judged to be civilizations teetering on the edge of extinction, and researchers were rushing against time to gather artifacts from a vanishing race.

Composer Edward MacDowell returned to America from his studies in France and Germany in 1888 at the onset of these blossoming studies of Native American music and American folklore. MacDowell, born in 1861 in New York City, began piano studies at the age of eight with Juan Buitrago, a native of Bogota, Columbia. He also had sporadic lessons with pianist Teresa Carreño (1853-1917) during her visits to New York. MacDowell's mother was in demand as a pianist in New York, and she and Carreño became close friends and correspondents. Fanny MacDowell even gave personal advice to Carreño during her tumultuous marriage to baritone Giovanni Tagliapietra, who had “decorated [Carreño] with black eyes and bloody nose more than once!”¹⁵⁶ The Venezuelan pianist later championed Edward MacDowell's compositions in Europe, and he dedicated his second piano concerto to her.

When his parents recognized MacDowell's ability, he was sent in 1875 to the Paris Conservatoire, where he was a classmate of Claude Debussy, whom he called “a youth of erratic

¹⁵⁶ Anna E. Kijas, “‘A Suitable Soloist for My Piano Concerto’: Teresa Carreño as a Promoter of Edvard Grieg's Music,” *Notes*, Volume 70, No. 1 (September 2013): 40.

and non-conformist tendencies.”¹⁵⁷ In Paris, he struggled not only with the French language, but also vacillated in his decision to follow music as a career. His French tutor noticed MacDowell’s absent-minded caricatures and sketches of Conservatoire professors. The tutor took one of the drawings to an art professor friend who offered MacDowell a three-year scholarship at a Paris art academy.¹⁵⁸

Turning down the art scholarship and settling upon music as his career course once and for all, MacDowell moved to Frankfurt, where he became fluent in German and completed his composition studies under Joachim Raff. After MacDowell met Franz Liszt and played his first piano concerto for him in 1882, Liszt gave his enthusiastic support to MacDowell’s concerto and set up publication of the young composer’s works with Breitkopf & Härtel. MacDowell established himself as a piano teacher, composer and concert artist at the Darmstadt Conservatory and traveled through Germany performing his compositions. He later played his d-minor piano concerto at the Paris Exposition of 1889 on an all-American program. MacDowell married one of his piano students, Marian Nevins, before returning to America and settling in Boston.

MacDowell and the Boston composers were embroiled in the turn-of-the-century debate over formation of a distinctly American music striving to disentangle itself from German influences. MacDowell’s own writings show a conflicted view of musical nationalism.

So-called Russian, Bohemian, or any other purely national music has no place in art, for its characteristics may be duplicated by anyone who takes the fancy to do so. On the other hand, the vital element of music—personality—stands alone. We have seen the Viennese Strauss family adopting the cross rhythms of the Spanish...Moszkowski the

¹⁵⁷ Marina A. Ledin, “Edward MacDowell: Piano Music Vol. 1,” James Barbagallo, pianist, Naxos 8.559010, 1994.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Pole writes Spanish dances. Cowen in England writes a Scandinavian Symphony. Grieg the Norwegian writes Arabian music...¹⁵⁹

This opinion of music, although magnanimous and all-encompassing, is not reflected in MacDowell's actual compositional output, or even in his later correspondence regarding American music. His early works are completely German-influenced, but his later works are clearly inspired by a purely American viewpoint, drawing its sources from American landscapes, stories and folklore.

In 1896, MacDowell was appointed Director of the newly-formed music department at Columbia University in New York City. He was the sole professor on the faculty, charged with designing a four-year undergraduate curriculum and teaching all classes including a private studio, while at the same time maintaining an independent, rigorous recital schedule. MacDowell was elated that music education was moving into the sphere of a public university in addition to the private conservatories:

...there are surely many among university students who would gladly specialize in music if the calling were presented to them and their advisers as one of dignity, and commanding serious and universal consideration. The same student now has to choose between the many outside conservatories if he wishes to specialize in music. This immediately takes him out of the pale of university work, thus prejudicing the minds of parents and guardians, who probably already have strong opinions on the subject of a calling that to them seems vague in everything, except general good-for-nothingism. Such opinions are very excusable, considering the fact that music has never been recognized in our schools as an indispensable element of liberal culture.¹⁶⁰

Writer Upton Sinclair, who sat in MacDowell's first-year classes recalled, "Edward MacDowell was the first man of genius I had ever met...I watched his appearance, his mannerisms, his every gesture. I listened to every word he said and thought it over and pondered it."¹⁶¹ John Erskine, a

¹⁵⁹ Irving Lowens, "Edward MacDowell's 'Critical and Historical Essays' (1912)," *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1971): 32.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 23

student in MacDowell's classes beginning in October, 1896, concurred with Sinclair, "MacDowell was one of the most stimulating geniuses I ever met...Our questions were likely to suggest new directions of thought, which however brilliant left us somewhat breathless."¹⁶² MacDowell resigned from Columbia in 1904, following disputes with university President Nicolas Butler, who had rewritten MacDowell's curriculum while the composer was on a 1902 sabbatical leave.

The MacDowells left New York and settled in their Peterborough, New Hampshire vacation home—a residence that would become the MacDowell Colony for working artists. Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Roger Sessions, and many other composers produced works in this forest retreat which "looks out over the whispering tree-tops and faces the setting sun."¹⁶³ After moving to New Hampshire, MacDowell's health declined precipitously, attributed to the stress of Columbia and his wife's explanation of an alleged taxi accident on a New York street. He lost the ability to speak coherently; he sat staring vacantly for hours; and he obsessively read the same pages of a book of Celtic fairy tales. Shortly after his 46th birthday, he died on January 23, 1908, his death certificate diagnosing "Paresis" (Dementia Paralytica). Syphilis had brought his life to a tragic early close.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ranck, Edwin Carty, "The Macdowell Colony at Peterborough," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (January, 1920): 26.

¹⁶⁴ Arnold T. Schwab. "Edward MacDowell's Mysterious Malady," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 139.

MacDowell and Folklore

Edward MacDowell's piano works reflected his interest in folklore in three areas: 1) his pieces based on Native American melodies; 2) compositions about the Uncle Remus stories of Joel Chandler Harris, a Caucasian author writing about African American slaves; and 3) his compositions based on European fairy tales. Without having a large pool of American folklore to draw from, MacDowell was still able to create imaginative character pieces in the tradition of Couperin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn.

Native American Folklore Influence

MacDowell wrote two Native American pieces—"From an Indian Lodge" (*Woodland Sketches*, op. 51, #5) and "Indian Idyl" (*sic*), (*New England Idyls*, op. 62, #6) In the tug of war between the two views of Native Americans as "noble savages" or "violent savages," MacDowell was wholeheartedly in the "noble savage" camp. He saw the Indians living, not in the current realistic and hostile political climate, struggling to maintain their identity, but as a free and pure race populating an ancient, uncivilized North America. The cover illustration of *New England Idyls*, originally published in 1902, shows a solitary Native American playing a flute while striding proudly toward a blurred and impressionistic pastel forest. That this cover illustration was chosen--even though only one of the ten pieces in the set is about Native Americans--shows the strength and public popularity of the "Indianist" movement at the turn of the century.

"From an Indian Lodge" begins with a nine-measure introduction in 3/2, marked "sternly, with great emphasis." It then proceeds to a 3/4 middle section, and returns to the 3/2 introduction

material in the last four bars. The beginning uses hollow 5ths without the e-flat third of the c-minor chord—a common “Indianism” of this time period. The grace notes themselves are heavily accented rather than the corresponding main notes, lending an ancient, ponderous quality to the mood. Low fifths and octaves are rolled like somber, beckoning drums. Dynamics in the opening nine bars range from *ff* to *ppp*.

Example 4.1—“From an Indian Lodge,” op. 51, #5, mm. 1-3

The image shows a musical score for three measures of a piece. The score is written for piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The first measure is marked with a forte dynamic (*ff*) and the instruction 'broadly'. The melody in the treble clef consists of a series of notes, some with grace notes. The bass line features a low fifth and octave in the first two measures, and a more complex harmonic structure in the third measure. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings.

When the main 3/4 tune begins (completely in octaves), MacDowell gives an unusually pinpointed direction instructing the player whether to voice the low thumb note or the top note. The melody intervals are tight, moving predominantly in seconds and thirds. An ostinato staccato low fifth on every second beat ominously underscores this middle section, providing “a subtext of stoic resolve and austere timelessness.”¹⁶⁵ Upper staccato harmony adds the stinging dissonance of a b-natural or d-flat into the core c-minor harmony.

¹⁶⁵ Pisani, *Exotic Sounds*, 329.

Example 4.2—mm. 10-13

Mournfully. ($\text{♩} = 84$)

The accompaniment detached throughout

*) The low notes of the octaves carry the melody *ppp* etc.

The coda uses MacDowell’s “Indian cadence”, a frequent progression in his orchestral Second “Indian” Suite (1896). Soft drum rolls underscore this $v6-iv6-ii^\circ 6/5-i$ cadence before the piece ends tragically *fff* on a $III-VI-ii^\circ 6/5-i$ progression.

Example 4.3—Coda, mm.32-37

*) The upper notes of the octaves carry the melody *p* etc.

The sixth piece of *New England Idyls*, “Indian Idyl” begins with MacDowell’s own evocative poetry:

Alone by the wayward flame
 She weaves broad wampum skeins
 While afar through the summer night
 Sigh the wooing flutes’ soft strains.

The piece uses a tune from Theodore Baker’s dissertation—“Dakota Night Song.” After studying the dissertation, MacDowell became convinced that Indian melodies were related to the music of the Vikings. He wrote that the tribal melodies’ “similarity to European themes seems . . . a direct testimony in corroboration of Thorfinnkarlsefin’s Saga.”¹⁶⁶ His comment referred to contemporary European research surrounding the recent discovery of an intact Viking ship in Norway. Researchers were proposing for the first time that Leif Erikson had discovered America rather than Columbus, thus making possible a direct musical line from Scandinavia to North America.¹⁶⁷

An ABA piece (like almost all of MacDowell’s character pieces), “Indian Idyl” has somewhat irregular phrase lengths of 4+4+6+2 measures in the opening A section. The double dotted rhythmic patterns dominating this section lend a light and feminine dancing quality to the music, perhaps unexpected because of the solitary loneliness of the opening poem.

Example 4.4—“Indian Idyl,” op. 62, #6, mm. 1-8

Lightly, naively. (♩ = about 69.)

The musical score for measures 1-8 of "Indian Idyl" is presented in two systems. The first system includes the tempo and metronome marking: "Lightly, naively. (♩ = about 69.)". The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to pianissimo (pp). The piece is marked "With pedal." The second system continues the musical notation for measures 5-8.

¹⁶⁶ Browner, 268.

¹⁶⁷ Pisani, *Exotic Sounds*, 295.

The middle B section becomes more solemn, depicting a faraway flute trio or quartet, and ending “with pathos” before the recap of the A section. The key scheme is unusual for MacDowell’s character pieces. Both A sections are in F major, and the middle section is in A major, linked from the first A section by two measures of mysterious unison e minor. The B section enters a dream world of low *ppp* hollow fifths, with the flute trio remaining in a constricted planing formation in the high register. An insistent repeated central E ties the two registers of the keyboard together. Another unusual feature is the direction to hold two pedals down throughout most of the section, resulting in a wash of melted, distant sound.

Example 4.5—mm. 17-22

The musical score for Example 4.5, measures 17-22, is presented in two systems. The first system is marked *slightly slower* and *ppp throughout*. The second system continues the piece. The score features a high register melody in the right hand and a low register accompaniment in the left hand, with a central E note in the bass line. Pedal markings indicate that both pedals should be held down throughout the section.

MacDowell and Uncle Remus

MacDowell was drawn to the Uncle Remus stories of Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) in his search to create music based on American folklore. The originality of American composers had been nearly smothered (much like Br'er Rabbit in Uncle Remus's "Tar Baby" story¹⁶⁸), engulfed in a thick Germanic influence. MacDowell was self-critical of his works for their German traits and expressed his frustration in finding a new way of writing. The composer had read Hamlin Garland's *Crumbling Idols*, which supported impressionism, American art and veritism (Garland's version of realism).¹⁶⁹ MacDowell wrote to Garland: "My problems as a composer are precisely those you have delineated in your essays. I am working toward a music which shall be American in the creative sense. Our music thus far has been a scholarly restatement, old world themes. In other words it is derived from Germany as all my earlier pieces were."¹⁷⁰ Garland was supportive of the local color movement in literature, which advocated the works of regional writers such as Harris and Mark Twain.

Joel Chandler Harris gained nationwide fame and popularity for his short stories, newspaper articles, and Uncle Remus tales. As a boy, Harris worked as an apprentice in a plantation printing shop, "hunted rabbits and small game with the slaves, visited their one-room cabins, talked with them, and listened and learned from their stories of animals and of people. More importantly, he developed an understanding of how their tales were a part of their culture."¹⁷¹ Harris's mother never married, and his father had deserted her before their child was born. In spite of the struggles of his family background, Harris became a successful writer after

¹⁶⁸ In Harris's story, Br'er Rabbit fights with a Tar Baby, who had insulted the rabbit by not answering his friendly "good morning's". Br'er Rabbit repeatedly punches the Tar Baby until he is sucked into an inescapable tar puddle.

¹⁶⁹ Neil Leonard, "Edward MacDowell and Realists," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1966): 175.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁷¹ Walter M. Brasch, *Brer Rabbit, Uncle Remus, and the 'Cornfield Journalist': The Tale of Joel Chandler Harris* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2000), 10.

landing a newspaper job at the post-war *Atlanta Constitution*. His serialized stories featured Remus, an urban African American character who discussed social concerns and political issues during Reconstruction. The Remus character eventually metamorphosed into the wise and rural Uncle Remus, weaving stories for a little boy on a plantation. “You must remember that the negro is sometimes a genius and original philosopher,” Harris commented.¹⁷² He published *Uncle Remus, His Songs and Stories* in 1883, an expanded new edition in 1895, and *Nights with Uncle Remus*, also in 1895.

Other composers of MacDowell’s time were also focused on African American themes. George W. Chadwick’s Second Symphony premiered in Boston in 1886 with a “Plantation” movement. MacDowell’s composition student Henry F. Gilbert wrote *Negro Episode*, op. 2, #2 (1896) and the *Humoresque on Negro Minstrel Tunes* (1903). Gilbert’s works became popular in the post-Revolution Soviet Union because use of African American materials was favorably labeled “proletarian.”¹⁷³ Gilbert also partially wrote a three-act opera on the Uncle Remus stories, full of feisty characters like Br’er Rabbit, Br’er B’ar, Mammy-Bammy Big Money, and a “Chorus of ‘critters.”” Gilbert approached Joel Chandler Harris and later Harris’s son Julian for performance rights to the Uncle Remus stories, but they rejected his requests twice and Gilbert gave up working on the opera.¹⁷⁴ The composer would have been the first to write an opera mainly for animal characters, preceding Ravel’s *L’Enfant et les Sortilèges* by fifteen years and Janáček’s *Cunning Little Vixen* by ten years.

¹⁷² Ibid., 46.

¹⁷³ Rey M. Longyear and Katherine E. Longyear, “Henry F. Gilbert’s Unfinished ‘Uncle Remus’ Opera, *Anuario Iberoamericano de Investigación Musical*, Vol. 10 (1974), 67.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

MacDowell's two pieces based on Uncle Remus stories are "Of Br'er Rabbit," op. 61, no. 2 from *Fireside Tales* and "From Uncle Remus", the seventh piece in the 10-piece *Woodland Sketches*, op. 51. Offbeat accents, large leaps and sudden dynamic changes characterize the opening section in "Of Br'er Rabbit". As in other pieces, MacDowell uses chromatic lines as a bridging device between themes and structural divisions.

Example 4.6—"Of Br'er Rabbit," op. 61, #2, mm. 1-7

Op. 61, No. 2.

With much spirit and humor. ($\text{♩} = \text{about } 84.$)

The image shows the first seven measures of the piano piece "Of Br'er Rabbit" in D major. The score is written for piano and includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *lightly*. The tempo is marked as "With much spirit and humor" with a quarter note equal to approximately 84 beats per minute. The piece is in 2/4 time. The first system shows measures 1-3, and the second system shows measures 4-7. The music features offbeat accents, large leaps, and chromatic lines, particularly in the right hand.

The middle section of this ABA piece uses fragments of themes from the A section, but in augmentation. After a bass chromatic scale link, two false b minor returns of the A section precede the "real" recapitulation in D major in bar 45.

Example 4.7—mm. 37-46

The musical score for Example 4.7, measures 37-46, is presented in three systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (measures 37-40) shows a long melodic line in the right hand, starting with a slur and an accent, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The second system (measures 41-44) features more complex melodic patterns in the right hand, including slurs and accents, with a steady accompaniment in the left hand. The third system (measures 45-46) concludes with a final cadence in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

The ending of “Br’er Rabbit” shows the animal trickster skittering wildly (bars 59-62) through diatonic, chromatic, and whole tone scales. A pianissimo played “slyly” in bar 63 precedes the smart-alecky final cadence.

Example 4.8—Coda, mm. 57-65

A.P.S. 5772²-19

The intended level of the performer is unclear. While observing sets of MacDowell’s character pieces as a whole, some pieces appear to be easily played by children, and some are difficult. Notwithstanding the juvenile theme of “Br’er Rabbit,” its fast tempo, LH leaps, and widely-spread chords may be beyond the reach of most child performers.

“From Uncle Remus” (op. 51, no. 7) begins with an upbeat rising perfect fourth, a common interval at the beginning of many MacDowell character pieces. “Uncle Remus,” like “Br’er Rabbit,” may not be playable by children because of the rapid offbeat accompaniment chords spaced widely in tenths as well as brief passages in parallel sixths. MacDowell directs the performer to play “With much humour; joyously.” He sprinkles light mordents and grace notes

throughout the piece, ornaments common in expressing “exotic” effects in European pieces, e.g. Gypsy- or Spanish-themed pieces. Plantation stories were the homegrown exotica of post-Civil War America.

Example 4.9—“From Uncle Remus,” op. 51, #7, mm. 47-52



“From Uncle Remus” in measures 51-52 pictured above has repeating seconds in the RH similar to the repeating seconds in “Br’er Rabbit”:

Example 4.10—“Br’er Rabbit,” mm. 13-15



This piece also has the arching melodies (a melodic shape MacDowell frequently uses) and the sliding chromaticism at linking points common in other pieces.

Example 4.11—“From Uncle Remus,” mm. 43-46



A chromatic rising L.H. signals the return of the A section illustrated above. The coda features a repeating perfect fourth, the interval which seems to dominate many of MacDowell's pieces in both his beginning and ending figures, as well as in the bass lines of his frequent plagal cadences.

Example 4.12—mm. 59-64

MacDowell's Fairy Tales

During the 1890s, MacDowell published two sets of pieces—*Forgotten Fairy Tales* and *Six Fancies*—under the pseudonym Edgar Thorn. Marian MacDowell later explained that she had a friend who had encountered financial difficulties as a single mother with three children. MacDowell used a pseudonym and transferred copyrights to the woman so that royalties would go to her.¹⁷⁵ All four pieces in *Forgotten Fairy Tales* are simple ABA forms, playable by children at an elementary or intermediate level.

“Sung Outside the Prince’s Door,” the first piece in the set, moves from G-flat major to a more dissonant e-flat minor and then back home to the tonic key. “Of a Tailor and a Bear,” the

¹⁷⁵ Marian MacDowell, *Random Notes on Edward MacDowell and His Music* (Boston: Arthur P. Schmidt Co., 1950), 32.

second fairy tale, depicts a carefree G major tailor theme contrasted with a dangerous, chromatic bear theme:

Example 4.13—“Of a Tailor and a Bear,” mm. 13-16

The bear’s musical segment has outbursts of opposing dynamics, low “growling” chromatic lines, and scattershot tritones. The fairy tale “Beauty and the Beast” inspired the third piece of the set—“Beauty in the Rosegarden.” A dolce F major opening has a lyrical singing RH melody, which is interrupted by the Beast B section with its d minor LH melody, thicker texture and chromaticism.

The final piece, “From Dwarfland,” is the hardest of the set, with precise and varied articulation, syncopated leaps, and awkward wide intervals. MacDowell gives the odd instruction, “not bound” in this piece, also found in “From Uncle Remus,” and reserved for measures with constant sixteenth notes.

Example 4.14—“From Dwarfland,” mm. 11-16

The four pieces in *Forgotten Fairy Tales* are popular, frothy compositions, seemingly tossed off quickly for the benefit of a friend. MacDowell did republish the pieces later in his own name, perhaps for the additional income generated from a composer better known than “Edgar Thorn.”¹⁷⁶

“Of Salamanders” --*Fireside Tales*, op. 61, No. 4

Salamanders seem to be unrelated to the story-like qualities of the other movements in *Fireside Tales*, but MacDowell was not merely interrupting the prevailing romantic mood for a natural history lesson. Salamanders in many fairy tales lived in fire—often described as living within a witch’s fire--magical creatures that “sparkle and sport amid the flames.”¹⁷⁷

Marian MacDowell recalled, “Night after night we used to sit by the open fire in the Hillcrest music room watching, as so many thousands have watched, with fascination the flames as they rushed up the chimney. More than once MacDowell laughingly referred to the sparks as salamanders, those imaginary little animals who are supposed to make their home in the flames, and it was this sudden quick motion of the sparks that was in his mind as he wrote the composition.”¹⁷⁸

“Of Salamanders” is in ABA form, with an abbreviated A return. A hypnotic dotted quarter bass line anchors much of the 9/8 A sections, filled with rapid filigree in the treble.

¹⁷⁶ Marian MacDowell, 31.

¹⁷⁷ Friedrich de la Motte Fouque. *Undine* (Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2825 Accessed April 29, 2017).

¹⁷⁸ Marian MacDowell. *Random Notes on Edward MacDowell and His Music*. Boston: (Arthur P. Schmidt Co., Inc., 1950), 22.

Example 4.15—"Of Salamanders," op. 61, #4, mm. 7-10

The image shows the musical score for measures 7-10 of "Of Salamanders, op. 61, #4". It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system (measures 7-8) features a right hand with a complex, arched melodic line and a left hand with a steady, slow-moving bass line. The second system (measures 9-10) continues the melodic development in the right hand, with a *dim.* marking in the left hand. The key signature is three flats (C minor), and the time signature is 6/8.

MacDowell shows a preference for plagal cadences in the A section and maintains the c minor tonality throughout. The B section changes to 6/8 time, abandons the slow-moving bass, and quickens the upward rushing motion in both hands.

Example 4.16—mm. 21-25

The image shows the musical score for measures 21-25. It consists of two systems of piano music. The first system (measures 21-22) features a right hand with a melodic line and a left hand with a complex, arched melodic line. The second system (measures 23-25) continues the melodic development in both hands, with a *dim.* marking in the left hand. The key signature is three flats (C minor), and the time signature is 6/8.

A.P.S. 5772^d-19

The most frequent dynamic marking in “Salamanders” is *ppp*, and the piece never rises above mezzo piano. Overall, the character is melancholy, as though MacDowell was locked in a mesmerized stare while contemplating the flames in his cabin hearth.

“Will o’ the Wisp”--*Woodland Sketches*, op. 51, no. 2

Example 4.17—“Will o’ the Wisp,” mm. 1-3



“Will o’ the Wisp”, op. 51, no. 2, is in ABA(CB)A rondo form, with the C section simultaneously blending elements of the B section. The rondo theme is in 9/8 time and other sections in 6/8 time. An airy, syncopated 4-bar melody opens this piece, meticulously marked with dynamics and articulation directions. Strangely, the two returns of this rondo theme have no dynamic markings, and only its final statement is marked in detail as at the beginning. “Will-o’-the-Wisp” is *moto perpetuo*; “without retard” is written before the return of the rondo theme as well as in the final measures. The “Scotch snap” in bar two hints at the Celtic roots of this piece, MacDowell’s favorite choice of folklore. “In all my work there is the Celtic influence. I love its colour and meaning.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Michael V. Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 207.

Marian MacDowell commented that “Will o’ the Wisp” “represents the fitful, phosphorescent light that may sometimes be seen at night over boggy, marshy places...In Ireland there is a legend that these are lamps carried by fairies as they flit about the country, and it was traditional to place a saucer of milk outside the door for the ‘little people’ as they were called. When milk was given to them they were supposed to keep the animals well and bring good luck to their human friends. If neglected, bad luck appears.”¹⁸⁰

The key is *f#* minor, but the listener is drawn deceptively into *c#* minor from bar 1, similar to the peasants’ confused and tentative search for fairy lights in Arthur Hughes’ pre-Raphaelite painting “Will o’the Wisp”. (See chapter title page illustration.)

Soft horn calls echo faintly through the bogs in measures 7-9:

Example 4.18

Once the piece settles into *f#* minor around bar 9, it stays in that tonality until the end. Contrast is achieved through changes in the light figuration patterns and in added touches of chromaticism.

¹⁸⁰ Marian MacDowell, 11.

Many of MacDowell's compositions are charming and imaginative, vividly painting a scene or story with detailed care and sensitivity. The level of sentimentality in his works, however, can be difficult and challenging to twenty-first century ears. The sometimes overwrought emotionalism of late Romanticism had dissolved into the overly-saccharine writings and art of the Victorian era. (Perhaps many of the piano works of Emmanuel Chabrier and Gabriel Fauré have also fallen through the cracks due to sentimentality foreign to current thinking.) "Indeed, much of MacDowell's music sounds overly sentimental, even sappy, to modern American ears," writes John Struble. "But, despite all this, MacDowell skillfully treads a fine line between formal integrity and sheer mawkishness in most of his music, especially in the smaller character pieces—a line of which he himself was conspicuously aware and that he rarely overstepped for more than a few moments at a time."¹⁸¹ The overwhelming sweetness was not to last, and soon World War I embittered this lyrical, protected view of the world and the arts.

Virgil Thomson wrote appreciatively of MacDowell's place in American music: "... the scenes he describes are vivid. His rhythmic contours evoke the stated subject quickly, accurately. No other American composer has painted a wild rose or an iceberg, a water lily or a deserted farmhouse so neatly. The rendering is concise, the outline definitive. No piece is a rewriting of another. Each is itself, economical, elegant, clearly projected. The impersonality of the procedure is proof of the author's sincerity; its evocative power is proof of his high skill as a craftsman. MacDowell did not leave his mark on music as a stylist; he left us merely a repertory of unforgettable pieces, all different from one another and all charming. And he left us American

¹⁸¹ Struble, John Warthen, "Edward MacDowell and the 'Second' New England School" in *The History of American Classical Music: MacDowell Through Minimalism*. (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 45.

composers an example of clear thought and objective workmanship that has been an inspiration to us all.”¹⁸²

¹⁸² Virgil Thomson, “MacDowell’s Music,” in *Music Chronicles 1940-1954* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 2014), 343-344.

Chapter 5

**Folklore Collection and its Impact on
Composers in Germany**



Hansel and Gretel Led into the Woods by Their Parents
Carl Offterdinger (1829-1889)

The Path of German Fairy Tale Collection

Snow White’s mother dances to death in red-hot iron shoes...Doves peck out the eyes of Cinderella’s stepsisters...Gretel stuffs the witch into a fiery oven ...The wife in “The Juniper Tree” decapitates her stepson, minces his body, and feeds him in a stew to his father...An enormous millstone crushes the stepmother into dust. These are the children’s stories of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, commonly known as *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.

On January 11, 1811, 26-year-old lawyer Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) had issued his “Appeal to All Friends of Old German Poetry and History:”

We are going to start by collecting all the oral tales from the entire German fatherland...each and every tradition and tale of the common man whether the contents be sad or humorous, didactic or amusing, no matter what the time period is, whether they have been composed in the simplest prose or set in rhyme...We especially mean here the fairy tales, the evening conversations, and the stories from the spinning rooms...Certainly, among old craftsmen, silently working miners, and the green free foresters and soldiers many peculiarities and particular ways of conversing and telling stories, customs and manners have continued to be maintained, and it is high time that they are collected before they are completely extinguished or new forms of those traditions have their meaning torn away from them.¹⁸³

Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), one year younger than his brother and also a lawyer, would join him in gathering tales from families in the Hessian and Westphalian areas of Germany. The careers of both men had been volatile during this period of Napoleonic invasions, and they had previously held various legal and German language research positions. Because he could speak French, in 1808 Jacob was appointed director of the private library of Jerome Bonaparte, “the

¹⁸³ Jack Zipes, *Grimm Legacies: The Magic Spell of the Grimms’ Folk and Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 9-10.

puppet king of Westphalia.”¹⁸⁴ They collaborated with Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim on their three volumes of folksongs published as *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805-1808). In later years, the brothers would become university professors and writers of an unabridged German dictionary.¹⁸⁵

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Germany was politically fractured from years of foreign conflicts and wrangling among the independent German states. An early romantic nationalist, the minister Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) had resented the dominance of the French Enlightenment, which in his view had declared itself the universal solution for a Europe evolving out of its feudalistic past. Herder’s proposed brand of nationalism “emphasized passion and instinct instead of reason, national differences instead of common aspirations, and, above all, the building of nations on the traditions and myths of the past—that is, on folklore—instead of on the political realities of the present.”¹⁸⁶

The Grimm brothers were influenced by Herder’s philosophy of national identity, and launched their folklore-collecting expeditions spurred on by his ideas. Indeed, all of Europe was influenced by Herder’s thought, published in essays written from his post as head pastor of the Weimar court.¹⁸⁷ Herder believed firstly that geographic features determined the characteristics of a nation; mountain ranges and rivers were natural fences surrounding distinct ethnic groups.

Each nation had a special ‘mission’ to perform in the progress of man toward humanity—the cultivation of its own national characteristics... For a nation to do otherwise—to

¹⁸⁴ Joseph Campbell, “Folkloristic Commentary” in *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1944), 836.

¹⁸⁵ The encyclopedic reference work remained unfinished at their deaths.

¹⁸⁶ William A. Wilson, “Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism,” *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 6, Issue 4 (1973): 820.

¹⁸⁷ Herder obtained the position through the influence of Weimar court official Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832), his college friend from the University of Strasbourg. The two men met as students when Goethe appeared at Herder’s home to care for him following tear duct surgery.

attempt to develop on a cultural foundation other than its own—meant breaking the continuity of past development and disrupting the nation’s organic unity. The consequences would be the stultification of native cultural forms and ultimately the death of the nation itself.¹⁸⁸

A nation made up of one ethnic group with one national character was the ideal condition according to Herder; the “wild mixture of various breeds and nations under one scepter” was unnatural and abhorrent.¹⁸⁹ However, Herder’s writings did not rank various ethnic groups in superiority compared with each other, but stressed that a national soul be developed within each group.¹⁹⁰

Herder’s ideas spread during an especially fertile time when European countries including Russia, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway were suffering the effects of Napoleon’s conquests. A deep undercurrent of anti-French sentiment sparked the core question: “We cannot and will not be French, but who are we?” The search for national identity turned inward in all of these countries in an almost simultaneous, but independent search for stories and songs from the *Volk*, the common people who were believed to harbor the distilled essence of national character. Herder called the peasant class “the Germans who had remained the most unspoiled by foreign influence and who had kept on their lips those songs created by folk poets in the days when German culture had rested on its own foundation.”¹⁹¹ He believed that the Middle Ages had been the last time that Germany had been free of foreign influences; therefore

¹⁸⁸Wilson, 823-824.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 822.

¹⁹⁰ Herder also called for the collection of folklore and poetry among Slavic minorities and wrote essays on Hebrew literature and poetry. The folklore study he championed took a sinister turn in the period of National Socialism during the Third Reich. After 1933, the Nazis created new professorships and research institutes for the study of German folklore, all geared toward the propagation of their theories of racial superiority. The fascist influence on folklore scholarship decimated the field for decades after World War II. The Grimm’s collection of fairy tales was banned from German schools in the years following the war. [Roderick Stackelberg, review of Hannjost Lixfeld. *Folklore and Fascism: The Reich Institute for German Volkskunde*, ed. James R. Dow, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 5, (December 1995), 1614.]

¹⁹¹Wilson, 826.

the study of ancient folk poetry, stories and songs would fan the embers of the ancient, unadulterated German spirit.

In response to Herder's writings, Friedrich David Gräter and Christian Gottfried Böckh founded a periodical of folklore collections. The writers Novalis, Fichte, Jean Paul, Goethe, and E.T.A. Hoffmann focused on folk traditions and wrote literary fairy tales and ballads based on past models. In 1803, Ludwig Tieck produced a collection of ancient minnelieder, and from 1816-18, the Grimms published *Deutsche Sagen*, their scholarly analysis of the German epic tradition.

The Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published in seven editions from 1812 to 1857.¹⁹² Eighty-six tales were included in the 1812 first volume, with seventy additional stories added in volume two in 1815. By 1857, the final edition contained 211 tales in a variety of genres—folktales, animal fables, sacred legends and fairy tales. The earlier editions, despite the reference to children in the title, were dense with scholarly annotations and prolific notes laying out parallel variants of the tales. Following negative reviews and disappointing sales, the brothers began to revise the stories for easier reading and accessibility. The Englishman Edgar Taylor had sent the Grimms a copy of his English translation of their tales, *German Popular Stories* (1823-1826), a version readable for children. Taylor's book, published without the Grimm's knowledge, had become extremely popular, eventually helping to make the fairy tale "the dominant form of children's literature in England during the second half of the nineteenth century."¹⁹³ Inspired by Taylor's approach, the Grimms produced a simplified *Kleine Ausgabe* (Small Edition) for children with ten different printings from 1825-1858, which included

¹⁹² Exact years of the editions: 1812 (vol. 1) 1815 (vol. 2), 1819, 1822, 1840, 1843, 1850 and 1857.

¹⁹³ Jan Susina, "'Like the Fragments of Coloured Glass in a Kaleidoscope': Andrew Lang Mixes Up Richard Doyle's 'In Fairyland'," *Marvels & Tales*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2003): 100.

illustrations by their painter brother Ludwig Grimm. Overall, the Grimm's collections are the third best-selling books worldwide, after the Bible and the works of Shakespeare.¹⁹⁴

Although the Grimms held a significant anti-French bias, many of their tales were collected from the French-speaking Wild family in the town of Kassel, and Wilhelm later married Dortchen Wild. French influence is also evident in the Grimm's duplication of traditional French fairy tales such as "Puss in Boots" and "Little Red Riding Hood." Many books of fairy tales already had been published in Germany in the 1700s and early 1800s—all translations of tales originating in the French aristocracy or in earlier Italian Renaissance writers. Native folklore in Germany had the reputation of coming from the lowest peasants, but the Grimms collected their first stories from upper class women and girls. The tales reputed to be the stories of "Old Marie," a nursemaid, were actually collected from Marie Hassenpflug, the daughter of a wealthy banker.¹⁹⁵ Other storytellers were from the lower classes, including Frau Katherina Viehmann, the wife of a tailor. Wilhelm Grimm complimented her storytelling abilities in his 1815 preface: "This woman has a strong and pleasant face and a clear, sharp look in her eyes; in her youth she must have been beautiful... She recounts her stories thoughtfully, accurately, with uncommon vividness and evident delight... Anyone believing that traditional materials are easily falsified and carelessly preserved, and hence cannot survive over a long period, should hear how close she always keeps to her story and how zealous she is for accuracy."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Maria Tatar, "When Fairy Tales Had Fangs: The Earthy Realism of the Original Stories and Fables is Preferable to Today's Sanitized Versions," *National Post* [Don Mills, Ontario], Dec. 26, 1998.

¹⁹⁵ Bottigheimer, "Fairy-Tale Origins," 215.

¹⁹⁶ Joseph Campbell, 833.

Schumann and Fairy Tales

Robert Schumann (1810-1858) was drawn to fairy tales in several of his late works between 1848 and 1853. The oratorio *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt* (The Rose's Pilgrimage), op. 112, premiered in 1851 in Dusseldorf with Schumann as conductor. The plot of this fairy tale is a near duplicate of Fouqué's *Undine*, with a Rose taking the place of the lovelorn mermaid. The Rose longs to become human after she falls in love with Max, a huntsman. When the Elf Queen changes the Rose into a young maiden, she and Max marry and have a child. Time runs out on the Elf Queen's enchantment after merely one year, and the Rose dies, leaving her husband and newborn son behind and ascending to heaven accompanied by a chorus of angels. This final scene resembles the conclusion of Hans Christian Andersen's *Little Mermaid*, in which the mermaid rises from the sea to join the eternal spirits of the air.

Märchenbilder (Fairy Tale Pictures) for viola and piano, op. 113, is a group of four character pieces written in March, 1851. Schumann did not designate specific fairy stories on the manuscript, but his journal entries have references to the topics he had in mind. The first two movements are depictions of the Rapunzel story; the third movement is the frenzied dance of the dwarf Rumpelstiltskin and a band of fairies; and the slow finale illuminates scenes from Sleeping Beauty. Another four-movement chamber work—*Märchenerzählungen*, (Fairy Tales for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano), op. 132—was written in only three days, October 9-11, 1853. The twenty-year-old Johannes Brahms was visiting the Schumanns in Dusseldorf at the time, after presenting his hosts with a letter of introduction from violinist Joseph Joachim.¹⁹⁷ In

¹⁹⁷ James M. Hinson, "A Stylistic Analysis of Three Selected Trios for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano: *Fairy Tales* by Robert Schumann, *Eight Pieces* by Max Bruch, and *Kleines Konzert* by Alfred Uhl" (DMA dissertation, Florida State University, 1995), 13.

correspondence to his publisher, Schumann described the work as “mostly bright pieces, written with real enjoyment.”¹⁹⁸ The composer left no trace of specific story ideas about this work.

Schumann’s programmatic solo piano works, although frequently literary in origin, have no explicit ties to fairy tales or German folklore. However, musicologist Clemens Goldberg and Schumann biographer Eric Jensen both believe that *Waldszenen*, op. 82 (1848-49), is based on fairy tales. The time of composition places *Waldszenen* in the period of the fairy tale chamber works, and Schumann had historically grouped his works in specific genres within a relatively narrow time frame. The first printing of *Waldszenen* (omitted in subsequent printings) contained Pfarrius’s poem “Komm mit!”

“Come on, leave the cries of the market,
Leave the smoke suffocating
Your heart and breathe freely again,
Come with me into the green woods!”

We go down to the source in the rocks,
Where a tale, born in spray and with golden wings,
As out of the boy’s magic horn,
Emerges from the depths.

And where, out of the lofty realm of the animals,
Without false art and unobstructed,
You encounter in changing symbols
Your own world.¹⁹⁹

The forest was a central symbol of German romanticism and folklore—a womb-like, mysterious place of danger, hope, and rebirth. Weber’s *Freischütz* takes place in the forest, as does one act of Schumann’s opera *Genoveva*. The parents in the story of Hansel and Gretel abandon their children in the forest depths. “Repeatedly, we find the same kind of ideas and the

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Clemens Goldberg, “Going into the Woods: Space, Time, and Movement in Schumann’s ‘Waldszenen’ op. 82,” *International Journal of Musicology*, vol. 3 (1994): 157.

same *topoi*,” Goldberg writes. “We must go down to a dark place, drink from pure sources, listen to fairy tales, decipher symbols: in order to find ourselves.”²⁰⁰ *Waldszenen* contains the image of the hunt, another frequent element in German fairy tales. “Hunting is true action, imbuing the life of the citizen spoiled by civilization with a new meaning, leading him back to the sources of life... Hunt is directly connected with love. Hunt and love are the two true and only passions in the life of men... While hunting, man enters into a world ‘rich of magic’, it is the magic of the woods.”²⁰¹

In the nine pieces of *Waldszenen*, Schumann chose each title “with care and concern for its effect within the set as a whole,” writes Eric Jensen. “...the forest is presented in the guise of a *Märchen*, a concept in which Schumann was particularly interested. The *Märchen* was a sophisticated form of fairy tale in which fantastical and often improbable occurrences were presented in a deliberately simple and guileless manner. It was an especially popular genre with the early Romantic writers of 1800, such as Tieck, Novalis, and Wackenroder, authors with whom Schumann was extremely familiar.”²⁰² The “Bird as Prophet,” the seventh piece in the set, was originally left out of Schumann’s first version of *Waldszenen*, but was added in a later version. Schumann wrote the final line of the poem “Twilight” by Joseph Eichendorff as an epigraph to this piece: “Beware, be alert and wide awake!” The remainder of Eichendorff’s poem paints a nightmarish, paranoid vision of a forest, full of straying hunters and deceitful, betraying friends. Jensen states, “[Vogel als Prophet] has long been regarded as one of Schumann’s most inexplicable works. But, within the context of the *Märchen*, its presence in *Waldszenen* is understandable. Birds of marvelous powers were, after all, a stock-in-trade of the *Märchen*.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁰² Eric Frederick Jensen, “A New Manuscript of Robert Schumann’s *Waldszenen* Op. 82,” *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1984): 85.

Schumann's music aptly instills an aura of mystery about the piece, adding another touch of the miraculous to *Waldszenen*.²⁰³

Hans Christian Andersen's Musical Contacts in Germany

Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) first visited Weimar, Germany in 1844, one of many excursions outside of his native Copenhagen. In addition to his fame for writing fairy tales, Andersen was well-known in Europe for novels, stage works, travelogues, and musical and literary criticism. The writer carried travel diaries during his frequent journeys, and collected signatures from celebrities across Europe, including Charles Dickens, Robert and Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and Felix Mendelssohn. Many of the composers wrote miniature musical samples in Andersen's private autograph books.

Example 5.1--Felix Mendelssohn's November 1840 autograph in H.C. Andersen's travel diary.²⁰⁴



²⁰³ Ibid., 86. Stories of "birds of marvelous powers" were especially frequent in Russian fairy tales, famously depicted in Stravinsky's *Firebird*.

²⁰⁴ Kirsten Maegaard, "Hans Christian Andersen's Travel Album," *Fontes Artis Musicae*, vol. 42, no. 1 (January-March 1995): 82.

“Thin and bony, with outsize hands and feet,”²⁰⁵ the depression-prone Andersen frequently overstayed his welcome at the homes of colleagues. After Charles Dickens’ invitation to his London home, Andersen’s initial two-week stay during the summer of 1857 lengthened indefinitely, with Dickens repeatedly having to comfort the despondent author regarding negative press reviews. After Andersen’s departure, Dickens hammered an announcement to the guest room door: “Hans Andersen slept in this room for five weeks—which seemed to the family AGES!”²⁰⁶ In spite of his social blunderings, Andersen’s fairy tales had a long-term effect on writers and composers, including Grieg, Schumann, Carl Nielsen, Prokofiev and Stravinsky.

As a teenager, Andersen had sung opera in Copenhagen, and was interested in making music his career before deciding finally upon a writing profession. He was drawn to Italian opera and the works of Beethoven, and became acquainted with violinists Ole Bull and Joseph Joachim. Initially enamored with Richard Wagner’s operas, he later became hostile to Wagner, citing an absence of “the flower of music—melody.” His critique of *Lohengrin* stated, “On me *Lohengrin* has the effect of a tree vibrating with marvelous murmurings of its foliage, but barren of flowers and fruit...In Wagner I see a contemporary composer-philosopher, great in his intelligence and will-power, a puissant destroyer of all blameworthy principles handed down from the past; but I do not find in him the divine genius of a Mozart or a Beethoven.”²⁰⁷ Above all, Andersen was deeply smitten with the Swedish singer Jenny Lind, and he trailed her to performances and social engagements in Berlin, Weimar, London, and Vienna.

²⁰⁵ Louis James, “Flight from the Snow Queen: Childhood in the Imaginative Worlds of Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen,” *The Dickensian*, vol. 102, no. 3 (2006): 224.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.

²⁰⁷ Gustav Hetsch and Theodore Baker, “Hans Christian Andersen’s Interest in Music,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (July 1930): 326.

In 1852, Andersen settled in for a lengthy visit with Franz Liszt in Weimar, who had been in residence there since 1848 with his mistress Princess Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein and her daughter Marie. Andersen had previously heard Liszt perform in Denmark and observed, “I have seen peaceful Copenhageners with Danish autumn mist in their blood become political bacchants from his playing, and mathematicians have become dizzy with tonal figures and calculations of sound.”²⁰⁸ Andersen wrote in a later diary entry following one of Liszt’s recitals in Weimar: “What a damned sort of music!”²⁰⁹ Vacillating in a kind of love/hate relationship with the magnetic Liszt, Andersen described the composer as a “witty, unique genius. We were together for a few hours, and I heard him bleed on the piano.”²¹⁰

In spite of this ambivalence, Andersen accepted multiple invitations to dine with the composer and his mistress at their Weimar residence. “The princess accompanied me to the table,” Andersen wrote in his diary, May 27, 1852. “After [lunch] I read *The Nightingale* and *The Ugly Duckling*, she applauded and was very taken by each amusing thought. During coffee she smoked a cigar and asked me if I didn’t find it strange to see a woman do such a thing.”²¹¹ On another evening, the princess begged Andersen to read *The Nightingale* to her dinner guests. Instead, Andersen insisted on reading *The Swineherd*, his tale of a rash princess who rejects her steadfast prince and publicly kisses a dirty swineherd in exchange for a musical toy. Princess Caroline retreated into silent fuming, appalled by a story uncomfortably close to her relationship with Liszt. However, only a few days later, Andersen was again invited to dinner and on this occasion was more socially tactful, reading *The Nightingale* to the assembled guests. The

²⁰⁸ Anna Harwell Celenza, “The Poet, the Pianist, and the Patron: Hans Christian Andersen and Franz Liszt in Carl Alexander’s Weimar,” *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2002): 133.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

princess immediately declared Liszt to be the nightingale and pianist Sigismond Thalberg the artificial bird in Andersen's story. Andersen agreed with her interpretation, all the while knowing that he had actually written the story with Jenny Lind in mind as the beautiful songbird who represented the "glory of 'natural' music over pure virtuosity."²¹²

Liszt's social life in Weimar revealed his particular interest in fairy tales, but when it came to the composer's choice of topics for programmatic music, his prodigious output showed a broad interest in a plethora of themes. Historical legends, literary references, natural landscapes, scenic geographic locations, *style hongrois* themes,²¹³ and sacred legends and stories all served as inspiration for his programmatic music. Fairy tales appear in four of Liszt's piano solos, two pieces originating with Liszt with direct references to fairy tale elements—*Gnomensreigen* and *Feux Follets*. His transcription of Schubert's *Erlkönig* and his paraphrase *Wedding March and Elf's Dance* from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* round out his fairy tale-related piano repertoire.

Gnomensreigen, S. 851

"Gnomensreigen" or the "Dance of the Gnomes" was composed c. 1862 as the second of *Two Concert Etudes*. According to Alan Walker, Liszt wrote these etudes in Rome following the fiasco of his 50th-birthday wedding to Princess Caroline, which had been unexpectedly halted by a Vatican representative at the church of Saint Carlo al Corso. Uncertain about what to do in Rome following the wedding disappointment, Liszt rented an apartment and composed there on a

²¹² *Ibid.*, 145

²¹³ Jonathan Bellman's term for gypsy elements in 19th century compositions.

small upright piano.²¹⁴ “Gnomesreigen” is a rondo (ABABCAB Coda) with angular, staccato A sections contrasting with more lyrical B sections. The overall key scheme is:

Section	A	B	A	B	C	A	B	Coda
Key	f# minor 1-20	A major 21-26 Bb major 27-28 B major 29-32	f# minor 36-56	Bb major 57-62 B major 63-64 C major 65-68	g minor 77-102	f# minor 103-120 Chromatic/ transitional from 115.	F# major 121-143	F# major 143-168

“Gnomesreigen” could be considered a hybrid sonata rondo form due to the homecoming F# minor/major tonality of the final three sections. Outlining the dominant C# triad, the opening four-bar introduction already signals trouble, hinting at the unearthly character of the dancing creatures. If a performer rewrites the grace notes in the introduction to consistently rise a half step to each main note, the introduction becomes bland and innocuous. But Liszt writes the ornaments descending a half step or whole step to the main notes, creating an awkward series of distinctly ‘ungraceful’ grace notes.

Example 5.2—“Gnomesreigen,” mm. 1-4, Busoni edition



²¹⁴ Alan Walker, “Franz Liszt,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed May 1, 2017, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com>.

The main theme of the first A section beginning in bar 5 is a clear-cut 8-bar phrase, repeating within itself after four bars. Tonic f# minor and dominant C# major predominate, with all grace notes rising toward the main notes. However, this normalcy destabilizes quickly in a sequence of augmented chords from bars 13-20, climaxing in a repeating F augmented triad teetering at the edge of an unknown resolution. The same section (mm.13-20) raises questions about Liszt's notation change from grace notes to 32nd notes. Does the sound of the two notations noticeably change when played at the "Presto scherzando" tempo designation? Perhaps Liszt wanted to clarify the seven accents occurring on the first note of the paired right hand groups in this section, a feature not communicated by grace note notation.

Example 5.3—"Gnomenreigen," mm. 13-20

The F augmented triad of bar 20 turns out to be poised for a resolution in A major, launching a B section which is unexpectedly softer, faster, and more lyrical than the jagged A section.

Throughout the piece, A sections are in 6/8 time, and B sections are in a waltzing, circular 9/8.

The *giocoso* B section remains predictable in A major for a mere four measures, before chromaticism and incorrectly-resolving dominant seventh chords intervene from bar 25. The F#⁷ in measure 26 deceptively resolves to Bb major; the G⁷ of bar 28 resolves to a B major triad,

both resolutions a jolting downward slide from the expected resolutions. The entire section dissolves into pure chromaticism from bar 31, rising to repeated collisions against a high pitch ceiling of $f/e\#$ (leading tone of the upcoming A section) in bars 32-33 before a chromatic spiral downward to the opening introductory material. Measures 37-56 are identical to bars 1-20, reprising both the introduction and first A section. The arrival of the F augmented triad in bar 56 is ambiguous in its resolution, as the same chord was in bar 20. This time the resolution is a new surprise in Bb major, which begins the second B section.

Example 5.4—transition into second A section, mm. 31-38

Overall, the keys in the first B section creep upwards by half steps ($A \sim Bb \sim B$) before dropping a fourth to the key of $f\#$ in the returning A section. The second B section (bars 57-71) does the same starting a half step higher ($Bb \sim B \sim C$) before falling to g minor. This emphasis of keys a fourth apart reflects the influence of the Hungarian *verbunkos* tradition, which Christian

Schubert referred to as having “bizarre modulations in a subdominant direction.”²¹⁵ No two successive keys in “Gnomenreigen” follow a traditional dominant-to-tonic progression.

The C section (77-102) could arguably be labeled another A section since it is not actually new material, but a bass register variation of the rondo theme in g minor. The segment has a low dominant pedal D from bars 84 to 96, and then outlines an ornamented D major chord from 98 to 102, raising the expectation for a tonic resolution on g. But instead, the listener loses tonal footing, sliding downward into f# minor, the repeated dominant pedal D from the previous section becoming a pulsating dominant C# from bar 103 onwards.

Example 5.5—mm. 98-109

Pianissimo restraint marks the beginning of bar 111--harmonies changing twice per measure tethered by a bass C# pedal. But restraint soon explodes into all-out abandon, with augmented harmonies snowballing into three, four, and finally six changes per measure. The sforzando A augmented triad in bar 120 could be considered an enharmonic F augmented triad, thus becoming the third time this harmony sets up the entrance of the B section.

²¹⁵ Shay Loya, *Liszt's Transcultural Modernism and the Hungarian-Gypsy Tradition* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 67.

Example 5.6—transition into final B section, mm. 110-122

The musical score for Example 5.6 is presented in three systems. The first system, marked *sempre staccato*, shows a piano part with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and a string part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system, marked *poco a poco cresc.* and *molto cresc. e string.*, features a piano part with a more complex rhythmic pattern and a string part with a crescendo. The third system, marked *Vivacissimo*, shows a piano part with a star symbol and a string part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Triumphant, fortissimo F# major marks the final return of the B section, at an accelerated vivacissimo tempo. This section also uses the wrongly-resolving dominant seventh chords (mm.126-129) that were prominent in the preceding B sections. New transitional material at 134 climaxes in plummeting parallel sixths scales which then expand outward into contrary motion octaves. A suddenly hushed coda fragments a B section motive encircling low tonic and dominant pitches.

Example 5.7—mm.140-156, coda bass motive originating in bars 25-26

The musical score for Example 5.7, mm. 140-156, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 140-143) shows a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (mm. 144-147) includes the instruction "sempre più piano" and shows the bass clef with a descending eighth-note pattern. The third system (mm. 148-151) includes the instruction "ppp" and shows the bass clef with a descending eighth-note pattern. Red and green circles highlight specific notes in the bass clef across the systems.

Bars 25-26

The musical score for Bars 25-26 is presented in two systems. The first system (Bar 25) features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system (Bar 26) shows the bass clef with a descending eighth-note pattern. Red circles highlight specific notes in the bass clef.

Alternating $F^\#$ and D^{6+} triads reiterate a falling D to $C^\#$ pitch combination, emphasizing the descending half step as not only a central interval of this coda, but of the entire piece.

Example 5.8—Coda, D/C# half step repetition, mm.157-168

One writer suggests that imagining the comical, frolicking gnomes in “Snow White and the Seven Dwarves” can fuel a compelling performance of “Gnomensreigen.”²¹⁶ A colorful imagination is indeed a necessity, but traditional earthy folklore regarding gnomes is darker than the portraits in twentieth-century animated films. A gnome can be good or evil, bringing prosperity or even death. Their realm is subterranean--in caves, beneath trees and stones—where a human can be lost sliding downward like Liszt’s downward-slipping, pervasive half steps. They are unpredictable—like the unconventional resolutions of Liszt’s dominant sevenths and tonally ambiguous augmented chords. (In Liszt’s real-life circumstances, he was also surrounded by unpredictable authorities who had rejected, then approved, then ultimately vetoed his marriage to Caroline.) Elements of surprise, wariness, and possible danger should counterbalance the giocoso characteristics of this piece.

²¹⁶Zhiwei Zheng. “Pedagogical Thoughts on Liszt’s *Six Concert Etudes*” (DMA diss., West Virginia University, 2015), 205.

Transcendental Étude #5—“Feux Follets,” S. 627 (1852)

The Transcendental Études of 1852 were preceded by two earlier versions of the twelve études, the first appearing in Frankfurt in 1826 as “Études in 12 Exercises” and the second version in 1837 as “12 Grandes Études.” Joseph Banowetz describes the three versions of Étude #5:

The fifth study is of some difficulty, but still is written within reach of the reasonably advanced student who is willing to work for a legato in the melodic line of the right hand. This early version (1827) is transformed into the technically notorious *Feux-follets* which, alas for the poor performer, remains relatively unchanged from the second (1837) to the final version. Most of the 1854 revisions are simply for the sake of better effectiveness. Only the tempo in the 1854 version is charitably changed to *Allegretto leggiero* from the earlier *veloce leggiero*. The merciless double-note section near the beginning is unaltered.²¹⁷

The étude depicts the phosphorescent lights flashing and disappearing over dark bodies of water at night—lights thought to be glimmering from nocturnal fairy activity. Liszt did not attach this title to the piece until its third version. *Feux Follets* is fearsome in its virtuosity, yet upon closer scrutiny melts down into remarkably few elements, all fragmentary and not extending beyond two measures in length, as though in imitation of briefly-flashing fairy lights. The pervasive interval in the piece is the fourth. Two themes predominate, each theme motivic in character rather than a full-fledged melodic phrase. Both themes are four descending notes, first with a chromatic descent, then diatonic.

²¹⁷ Joseph Banowetz, “Liszt: Études d’exécution transcendante,” *American Music Teacher*, vol. 20, No. 3, (January 1, 1971): 19. Banowetz states that the third version of the Études was published in 1854 by Breitkopf and Härtel. However, Busoni’s preface to his edition as well as Alan Walker in Groves Dictionary online gives the publishing date as 1852.

Example 5.9—m. 9, Theme A, 4-note chromatic descent

The image shows a single measure of music in a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) features a descending chromatic line of four notes: G4, F4, E4, and D4. The left hand (bass clef) provides a steady accompaniment with a series of chords, each containing the notes of the descending line in the right hand.

Example 5.10—mm. 18-23, Theme B, diatonic 4th left hand, chromatic right hand with the range of a 4th

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 5.10. The first system (measures 18-20) has a green box around the right-hand part, labeled *sempre legato*, and a red box around the left-hand part, labeled *dolce, tranquillo*. The second system (measures 21-23) continues the musical pattern. The right hand in both systems plays a chromatic line, while the left hand plays a diatonic fourth.

The left hand line in bars 18-20 is a stepwise diatonic fourth, first falling and then rising, converging on the tonic B \flat from two directions. The chromatic right hand also outlines a fourth between the lowest and highest melody notes. Measures 22-26 repeat the same pattern up a perfect fourth to e-flat minor. Bars 18-20 are a remnant of the opening of the original “Études in 12 Exercises, #5.” The 1826 version also has the left hand outlining falling and rising fourths, and a right hand melody confined stepwise within the range of a fourth.

Example 5.11--Etudes in 12 Exercises, #5, mm. 1-6

Bars 30-38 are a variation of Theme B from bars 18-26, with a near-identical right hand in chromatic double notes and a *leggiero* leaping left hand, again using B-flat major and e-flat minor harmonies. An *espressivo* transitional theme in bar 40 lowers itself in a rocking motion towards a restatement of Theme A in measure 42. Staccato diminished seventh chords change rapidly—seven times per bar—in a pattern similar to the decorative diminished sevenths in measures 7-8 and 10-11 in the introduction.

Example 5.12—mm. 39-43

A development section beginning in bar 49 combines themes A and B, chromatic scales, and circle of fifths progressions (53-57). A and B themes combine again in measures 72-91, in variations centering on A and D major.

Example 5.13—combination of themes, mm. 72-77

The image displays a musical score for piano, measures 72-77. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system features a 'Theme A variation' in the right hand, marked 'con grazia', and a 'Theme B variation' in the left hand. The second system continues the development with complex textures in both hands.

The appassionato transitional theme from bar 40 appears in a variation (91-96) and then in its original form in 98-100, setting up a recap of theme A in the tonic B-flat major. The coda (bars 112-132) retreats in a gradual fade, featuring chromatic scales and the diminished seventh chords that characterize the piece from start to finish. Theme A sets up III-ii-V⁷-I cadences twice in the coda, e.g., bars 114-116.

Example 5.14—mm. 111-116

The musical score for Example 5.14 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 111-113) begins with a *molto* tempo marking. The right hand plays a series of chords and arpeggios, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 114-116) continues the arpeggiated texture in the right hand, with the left hand providing harmonic support. The piece concludes with a *ten.* (tension) marking and a *sempre piano* instruction.

The haunting figuration of a tonic B-flat major arpeggio decorated with an added minor sixth g-flat (upper leading tone to the dominant) graces the final measures. The decorative arpeggio evokes visions of fairy lights swooping repeatedly downward in kite-like motions toward the water, until finally disappearing suddenly skyward.

Example 5.15—B^b with added minor sixth, mm. 126-132

The musical score for Example 5.15 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 126-128) begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The right hand plays a series of chords and arpeggios, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 129-132) continues the arpeggiated texture in the right hand, with the left hand providing harmonic support. The piece concludes with a *pp* marking.

Interestingly, this tonic major chord with added minor sixth is the same otherworldly harmony Ravel uses to portray the mermaid Ondine’s final disappearance into the sea depths.

Example 5.16—Ravel “Ondine,” ending

The image shows a musical score for the ending of Ravel's "Ondine." It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a grand staff bracket. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The piece concludes with a tonic major chord with an added minor sixth. The tempo marking "Sans ralentir" is placed above the final measure.

Concert Paraphrase of Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March and Elf Dance” from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

The concert paraphrase of Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* follows a loose, improvisatory form—ABA—with three wedding march themes in the A sections encircling elfin dancing in the center.

Example 5.17—Liszt, “Wedding March and Elf Dance,” three themes

Bars 14-17—Wedding theme #1

The image shows a musical score for Liszt's "Wedding March and Elf Dance." It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, with a grand staff bracket. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo marking "marcato" is placed above the first measure, and "p sotto voce" is placed below the first measure. The instruction "senza Ped." is placed below the first measure. The score shows the first theme of the wedding march.

Bars 42-45 –Wedding theme #2

Musical score for Bars 42-45, Wedding theme #2. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melody with triplets and slurs, while the left hand has a bass line with chords and slurs. The tempo is marked *dolce p* and *ben marcato la melodia*.

Bars 176-179 –Wedding theme #3

Musical score for Bars 176-179, Wedding theme #3. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melody with slurs and ties, while the left hand has a bass line with slurs and ties. The tempo is marked *dolce espressivo cantando*.

Liszt varies wedding themes 1 and 2 with differing degrees of virtuosity before theme 3 enters, followed by a brilliant cadenza ending the overarching first A section. The elf dance begins in Mendelssohn's effervescent, key of e—a key he used in similar airy, scherzo passages (e.g., Rondo Capriccioso, op. 14 and the finale of the Violin Concerto, op. 62)

Example 5.18—mm. 221-224, beginning of B section elf dance

Musical score for Example 5.18, beginning of B section elf dance. The score is in 2/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The right hand has a melody with slurs and ties, while the left hand has a bass line with slurs and ties. The tempo is marked *Presto* and the dynamics are *pp staccato sempre una corda*.

Liszt melts fairy writing together with wedding theme #1 in a subtle re-entry of the final A section.

Example 5.19—mm. 276-278—variation of wedding theme #1 in tenuto notes

Vivamente
pp leggierissimo

Theme #1 has two *leggierissimo* variations (mm. 276-291) before a version of theme #2 is presented in bars 292-300. A brassy, fanfare-filled coda brings this virtuosic nuptial celebration to a close.

Example 5.20--Coda

Ossia:
Stretta
semprefff

Edition Peters
 9881

Liszt's Piano Transcription of Schubert's "Erlkönig"

Liszt composed 57 transcriptions of Schubert's songs between 1833 and 1846. "By a strange fate, of which I have little to complain, a part of Schubert's heritage has been my domain," wrote Liszt in 1850.²¹⁸ "Erlkönig" is the fourth piece in *Twelve Lieder von Schubert*, written 1837-1838. Schubert's dramatic masterpiece is based on Goethe's 1782 poem, which Goethe had produced as part of the singspiel *Die Fischerin*. Melodramatic and filled with supernatural elements, the poem ends with the disastrous death of a child. Goethe himself had several of his siblings die in childhood, and in Schubert's family, only five of his fourteen siblings survived childhood. Goethe's poem originates in a Danish fairy tale, which describes the malevolent race of elves who seek revenge on humankind, especially the female elves who entice men to their death. Johann Gottfried Herder's translation of the story—"Erlkönigs Tochter" (Elf King's Daughter)—was published in 1778 in "Stimmen der Völker in Liedern." In this tale variant, Sir Olaf rides joyfully on horseback to his wedding until he is distracted and lured from his path by elf music. The daughter of the Erlkönig offers him gold to come be with her, but Olaf refuses. The following day, his fiancée discovers Olaf's lifeless body, wrapped in a scarlet cape. Goethe was influenced by Herder's story, but escalated the level of evil when the villain becomes the Erlkönig himself tempting a child victim.²¹⁹

Schubert wrote four versions of the song, the fourth published in 1821 as his opus 1 (D. 328). Schubert's song is notorious for its difficult and driving piano accompaniment of right

²¹⁸ Christopher Gibbs, "The Presence of 'Erlkoenig': Reception and Reworkings of a Schubert Lied" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1992), 214.

²¹⁹ Goethe's version of "Erlkönig" is echoed later in Henry James' *Turn of the Screw* (1898), the novella ending with young Miles falling dead at the hands of the ghost of Peter Quint.

hand triplet octaves, unrelenting in drama through much of the piece. Liszt creates an even more difficult accompaniment, adding octaves to the left hand part.

Example 5.21—Liszt “Erlkönig,” mm. 1-9

The image shows the first nine measures of Liszt's transcription of Schubert's "Erlkönig." The music is written for piano in G minor, 3/4 time, and is marked "Presto agitato" and "f dramatico." The right hand part features a vocal line with triplet eighth notes, while the left hand part features a triplet eighth-note accompaniment with octave doublings. The score includes fingering numbers (1, 2, 3) and dynamic markings (f, dramatico).

Schubert’s song has five characters for a solo vocalist and accompanist to delineate—narrator, father, child, the Erlkönig, and the galloping horse—all treated with individualized harmonies and accompaniment figures. Liszt’s transcription challenges a pianist to singlehandedly flesh out all characters and to stage the multi-dimensional tragedy of this tale. Liszt places the opening narrator speech at the same pitch as the Schubert original, but with lower octave doubling to highlight it against the triplet hoof beat accompaniment.

Example 5.22—Opening narration, mm. 15-18

Wer rei - - tet so spät durch Nacht und

p sempre

recitando

Liszt increases the menace of the Erlkönig motive by lowering it an octave. The baritone voice of the father is also placed down an octave, slightly disentangling it from the repeated octaves.

Example 5.23—differentiation of characters

Bar 24—Erlkönig theme in bass

Kind; er

Bars 37-38—Father's voice

Der Vater
Mein Sohn, was birgst du so

sotto voce ma marcato

The taciturn father speaks three brief statements of comfort during the journey, the duration of reassurances to his child lasting four, three, and seven bars in length. No comfort answers the child's final frantic pleas--only silence and acceleration toward home. Liszt emphasizes the child's voice by arpeggiating chords with his melody notes, in the same octave as Schubert's song. Schubert had additionally characterized the child's fear with frequent diminished seventh chord harmonies, unlike the simpler diatonic harmonies in phrases of the father and the Erlkönig.

Example 5.24—mm.39-45, Child's arpeggiated chords

The musical score for Example 5.24 (mm. 39-45) is in G minor and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of arpeggiated chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The lyrics are: "bang dein Ge-sicht? Das Kind Siehst Va-ter du den Erl-kö-nig nicht?". The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *sempre marcato il canto*, and a red arrow points to a specific chord in the piano part.

The Erlkönig also speaks in rolled chords, but an octave higher than in Schubert's song, and at a dynamic level louder—Liszt marks the temptations of the Erlkönig pianissimo instead of *ppp* as Schubert had done.

Example 5.25—mm. 57-63, high register Erlkönig

The musical score for Example 5.25 (mm. 57-63) is in G minor and 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of high register chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The lyrics are: "Der Erlkönig Du lie - - - bes Kind, komm geh mit mir! gar schö - - ne Spie - - le". The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp (una corda)* and *leggiero*.

In contrast to the father, the speeches of the Erlkönig are long (15, 10, and 7 measures) and deceptively calming, with frequent tonic and dominant harmonies, first in Bb- and later in C-major. Luring the child to come with him, the Erlkönig entices (bars 57-72) with mesmerizing long-short rhythms like the pendulum swings of a hypnotist's watch. Liszt writes a crescendo--pianissimo to forte in bars 70-72--differing from the unchanging *ppp* in Schubert's song. Liszt also adds a new, heart-leaping-in-terror motive (bar 72) to the child's reaction. In this second outcry (bars 72-80), the child has shaken off the innocent arpeggiated chords of his first statement (41-50), perhaps to distance himself from the Erlkönig's own rolled chords. The child's melody is powerfully reinforced in three octaves and is raised an interval of a second in comparison to his first speech.

Example 5.26—mm. 72-78, Liszt's new motive in child's second statement

The musical score for Example 5.26, mm. 72-78, Liszt's new motive in child's second statement, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment and the vocal line. The piano part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a *precipitato* tempo marking. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Das Kind Mein Vater, mein Vater und". The second system continues the piano accompaniment and the vocal line. The piano part features a *tremante* effect and a *sfz* dynamic marking. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "hörest du nicht, was Erlkönig mir".

The Erlkönig's second temptation extols his daughters' charms, in a breathless delivery of short melody notes and light triplets, contrasting with his first lulling invitation to the boy.

Unlike Schubert's song, Liszt designates "un poco piú vivo" and "leggiero amorosamente" at the outset of the Erlkönig's description and ends with a crescendo-diminuendo flourish. Schubert, however, keeps the entire section *ppp* and without tempo change. After the child's cry for help (again raised an interval of a second), Liszt writes the father's reply in accented octaves, differing from his previous replies in subdued single notes. "My son, it is only shimmering willows," he says, but the accents and doublings belie his assurances.

Example 5.27—doublings in father's response, mm. 107-117

The musical score for the father's response in Liszt's Erlkönig, mm. 107-117, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the father's response, with the lyrics "dü - - ste - - ren Ort? Der Vater Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau: es scheinen die alten Weiden so". The piano part features accented octaves, and a red arrow points to a specific note. The second system continues the father's response with the lyrics "grau...". The piano part features a crescendo and a flourish. The third system shows the piano part with a forte dynamic marking.

The father's statement ends in d minor, a key igniting hope as the dominant minor setup for the return of the home g minor. But the Erlkönig, consumed with desire to possess the child,

instead floats upward to the Neapolitan E-flat major, chillingly sweet on “Ich *liebe* dich.” Liszt marks these words “molto appassionato,” followed with a crescendo across four measures marking the declaration, “and if you’re not willing, I will use force.” Schubert’s treatment of this section is quite different, with the Erlkönig held back in a suppressed pianissimo until a violent *fff* on the final syllable of “Gewalt.” (“force”)

Example 5.28—Erlkönig, last statement, mm. 121-128

Der Erlkönig lie - - - be dich, mich reizt dei - ne schö - ne Ge - - stalt, und
 Ich

molto appassionato
riten.

pp

bist du nicht wil - - lig, so brauch ich Ge -
subito

walt. Das Kind
precipitato Mein

rff

After the child’s final cry, “The Erlkönig has done me harm!” the father is silent for the first time. Schubert drops the dynamic level from *fff* to forte in measure 136, and leaves the tempo unchanged until an accelerando begins in bar 141. Liszt, in contrast, keeps the *fff* dynamic

level and begins a tempo “as fast as possible” in measure 136, with alternating accented duple eighth notes and triplet eighth octaves not in Schubert’s original.

Example 5.29—Liszt’s change of Schubert’s rhythm, mm. 136-137

Eight bars of unchanging g minor harmony depict the father’s fixed determination to arrive home, until a shift to the tonic major (bar 144) and then subdominant c minor begins a chromatic climb to the Neapolitan A-flat major—undoubtedly the “death chord” in this piece. Dynamics lose all energy in bar 150, with a sudden exhalation fortissimo to pianissimo, a musical portrait of the child’s last breath.

Example 5.30—Coda, mm. 144-153

äch - - zen - - de Kind,
er - reicht den Hof mit Müh und
in sei-nen Ar - men das Kind war tot.

Not:
Recit. *lunga* Andante

pp *molto sostenuto* *f*

* Four bars of Neapolitan Ab

* Vocal line octave drop; accompaniment chords thickened in bass.

Liszt and Schubert differ in the stark statement: “In his arms the child was dead.” In Liszt’s transcription, the narrator’s vocal line is doubled and then drops an octave on the words “war tot.” Because Schubert’s “Erlkönig” is such a celebrated, frequently-performed song, it is unexpected to hear this octave drop. Earlier in the piece, Liszt shifted the vocal line into different registers to keep the identity of the story’s characters clear, but this is the first time a character drops out of his previously-established range. The diminished chord with fermata in the penultimate bar therefore needs careful voicing and timing to clarify and not overshadow the final two words of the narration. The V^7 -i ending cadence is a powerful statement. Schubert’s

own earlier versions of “Erlkönig,” however, demonstrate indecisiveness about the placement of the last diminished seventh chord and also whether the final chords would be forte or pianissimo.

Example 5.31—Schubert’s changes in four versions of “Erlkönig”

2nd and 3rd versions

The image shows the musical score for the 2nd and 3rd versions of Schubert's "Erlkönig". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked "Recit." and "Müssig." and includes the lyrics "in seinen Armen das Kind war todt." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings *p* and *pp*.

1st and 4th versions

The image shows the musical score for the 1st and 4th versions of Schubert's "Erlkönig". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked "Andante." and includes the lyrics "in seinen Armen das Kind war todt." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings *p* and *pp*.

More than one hundred musical versions of “Erlkönig” appeared after Goethe’s first setting of the poem in his 1782 singspiel. Beethoven’s sketches of his setting survive, unfinished and unpublished. Czerny, Diabelli, and Heller were among those writing songs and piano solo versions, and Liszt and Berlioz orchestrated Schubert’s piece. Christopher Gibbs writes:

Fascination with different settings of ‘Der Erlkönig’ led to public concerts in which various settings were sung in succession; this was probably an even more common practice in private circles...In a reminiscence, Maria Mitterbacher recounts how following the performance of ‘Erlking’ ‘there was already such a frenzy of applause that I realized it was going to be repeated. But I was so terribly moved by it that I was afraid I should faint.’²²⁰

The “Erlkönig” transcription was Liszt’s most frequent encore, followed by transcriptions of Schubert’s “Ave Maria” and “Ständchen,” and then his own “Grand Gallop Chromatique” (1838). In his old age Liszt wrote, “What a repugnant necessity it is in the life of a virtuoso to

²²⁰ Gibbs, 57-58.

have to keep on chewing the same old things! How often have I not had to mount the ‘Erlkönig’ horse!”²²¹ But it was as though European audiences were addicted and spellbound by the macabre elements of the Erlkönig—the nocturnal staccato hoof beats, the wind-whipped forest, the malevolent supernatural entities, the death of a child— all compressed into an alluring and potent image of German Romanticism.



Moritz von Schwind (1804-1871), *Der Erlkönig*

²²¹ *Ibid*, 244.

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