MUSICAL PERFORMANCE AS A SCHOLARLY PRACTICE: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FROM A PERFORMER-SCHOLAR, AND A CASE STUDY OF THE PAUL DUKAS PIANO SONATA

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The subject of this talk may seem somewhat oblique in terms of the theme of this conference, but I hope to convince you that it is quite fundamentally related. It may be casually assumed that 'The Old' and 'The New', 'The Past' and 'The Music of the Present', all refer solely to musical *composition*. But musical *performance* equally has a past, and 'traditions', albeit with less detailed documentary evidence before the twentieth century than for composition. I want to speak about the purportedly contemporary field of practice-as-research, specifically musical *performance*-as-research, in the context of a Western art music repertoire

I'd like to talk first about my own broad experience of attempting to mediate between working as a professional pianist and also as an academic, and especially my engagement with various performance-related areas of scholarship, and lead from that to detail some aspects of a project on which I was first working around a year ago, relating to devising an interpretation of the Sonata of Paul Dukas. This is an 'old' work in the sense that it was composed around the turn of the twentieth century, but my interpretation is a wholly contemporary phenomenon, for simple chronological reasons if none others, and which I approach in the spirit of practice-as-research. Nonetheless, I want to argue that such an approach is not fundamentally different from the processes undertaken by many performing musicians, other than in terms of degree of critical self-reflexivity.

If I may be permitted some personal background, which may help to understand the development of my positions on these subjects: I came into academia at a relatively late stage, in my mid-30s, after already having established a reputation as a professional performer. At that time, I was awarded an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellowship at the University of Southampton, for a three-year project involving the production of a recording and a monograph on Michael Finnissy's *The History of Photography in Sound*, having previously written quite regularly on music, including some analysis and sketch study. Before entering academia, I had a general interest in rational and critical approaches to performance, to supplement rather than replace approaches construed as more intuitive and spontaneous. As a result, I became interested in historically-informed performance, and its associated debates, not least in some of the thinking on the subject provided by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and his articulation of alternative views of music-making to those engineered primarily towards the production of singular, overwhelming emotion.

Having long been dispirited by what I perceived as a strong current of anti-intellectualism in the world of musical performance, I hoped that academia provided an environment less burdened in this respect. And to some extent this is certainly the case in various places.

But also, I view academia at best as place where the value of scholarly and artistic work can be judged according to criteria other than short-term market utility, or for

that matter from the related but not synonymous criteria of audience-pleasing. With the decline of subsidy in various countries, more and more performers and composers (and other types of artistic practitioners) working in fields which are not primarily commercially oriented or unable to be self-financing, have been entering academia. And in the Anglophone world in particular, what were once reasonably clear boundaries between universities and conservatoires have been breaking down more and more, thus problematizing an opposition which existed over a century beforehand.

Composers have been integrated into academic structures in the UK and elsewhere for a long time, and so it has been common to present their compositional work in this manner, so as to justify their inhabiting research-active positions at their institutions, though this has periodically come under question, not least in the last year in a notorious article by the composer John Croft, which has sparked off a wide range of commentary. Performers are considerably less frequent in full academic positions than composers. Some institutions will only employ performers as adjunct staff; others only when they produce other written output (for example intensive researchers into historical performance) as well as performances and recordings. Some types of performance have by some been conceived as more obviously 'research-like' than others: those involving extended use of technology, which helps to tick the right 'science-like' boxes, or using extended techniques or new instruments.

Furthermore, after more than a decade in academia, I have come to conclude that the relationship between scholarly study and practice conducted both inside and outside academic institutions is highly problematic, and that there exist quite stratified sub-cultures, replete with their own range of ideological assumptions, and with little dialogue.

Music-making is one facet of the production of knowledge. The value of knowledge is not easy to evaluate, but to give up on the whole endeavour and leave market value or popularity as the fundamental yardsticks is in essence to surrender the most valuable aspects of academia, and relegate to the role of vocational training.

However, with the wholehearted embrace of commercial music in Anglo-American musicology, and more broadly the free market as the supposedly optimum environment for musical production (as found in the writings of Nicholas Cook, Susan McClary, Georgina Born, and numerous others, especially those writing on commercial and film music), in the post-Thatcher/Reagan aligned to the values of the corporate university, and a wider aggressive disdain for an ill-defined 'modernism' not despite but precisely *because* it is viewed as in opposition to such neo-liberal values, these sorts of high ideals become further and further from the reality.

[Maybe incorporate this:

Whilst no music or culture of music-making should be off-limits, I have some doubts about the value of devoting specifically musical attention to a field of practice which has flourished independently of such a thing (compared to a degree of mutual engagement between Western art music and scholarly study over an extended period). To some it has come to be seen as a welcome replacement for study of the more demanding recent Western art music; Susan McClary made this argument in her

notorious 1987 essay 'Terminal Prestige',[1] whilst Nicholas Cook, when commentating on his surprise that continental European musicologists would assume he has an interest in contemporary composition, has argued that

> music from Messiaen and Cage to Berio and beyond is well represented in the British academy, far beyond any possible measure of the music's dissemination throughout society at large. It is popular music that is under-represented, resulting in a situation where the few PhDs in this area get quickly snapped up by university departments anxious to respond to the interests of their students.[2]

But more importantly, the embrace of commercial music has been accompanied, during that period when many of the economic values of the Reagan and Thatcher years became second nature, by the growth of an ideology dismissive of the value or even possibility of any alternative to market-driven populism. Sentiments like the following are typical:

> Although we live in a commercially dominated culture, the music industry, despite its many faults, more closely approaches a meritocracy and offers opportunities to a wider spectrum of artists than any other form of support – certainly more than the patronage systems of old.[3]

> a much-derided category in Marxist analysis: petty capitalism. This category is actually quite central to the first academic paper that I ever wrote, 12 and my interest in it is very much informed by the experience of Henry Cow. My contention is that petty capitalism - a term I take to encompass myriad small-scale form of entrepreneurial, commercial activity in culture - has been one of the key means by which progressive leftist, anti-racist, and resistant forms of culture, music, and art have been made possible: have been produced, circulated, and lived. It's a despised category of economic activity and analysis, generally seen as collusive with capital, as politically irredeemable, as insignificant and ineffective in any meta-historical analysis. But with regard specifically to cultural activity it sits somewhere crucial between full-blown corporate capitalism and the quite different but just as marked forms of cultural, ideological, and aesthetic closure and policing that tend to characterize statist and other kinds of subsidized cultural institutions, whether in music, broadcasting or academia.[4]

The latter compares interestingly with Margaret Thatcher's speech to the Small Business Bureau Conference on February 8th, 1984,[5] and many other sentiments expressed by leading Conservatives privileging small businesses over a long period of time, or for that matter former Republican presidential candidates who have associated big business with big government.[6]

All these factors, combined with a large body of opinion relentless in its opposition to a very vaguely-defined modernism, of which a defining characteristic is said to be the cultivation of autonomy from audience-pleasing, commercialism, and much else, combine to produce a far from favourable environment for those who might look to

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[1] Susan McClary, 'Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition', *Cultural Critique* 12 (Spring 1989), pp. 57-81. There have been many important critiques of this essay; amongst the most important to my mind is Björn Heile, 'Darmstadt as Other: British and American responses to Musical Modernism', *twentieth-century music* 1/2 (2004), pp. 161-178.

[2] Nicholas Cook, 'On qualifying relativism', *Musicae Scientiae*, Discussion Forum 2 (2001), p. 170.

[3] Susan McClary, 'Women and Music on the Verge of the New Millenium', *Signs* 25/4 (Summer 2000), pp. 1285-6.

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[5] Margaret Thatcher, 'Speech to Small Business Bureau Conference, February 8, 1984, at http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105617 (accessed September 5, 2016)

[6] William Saletan, 'The Conservative Attack on Big Business', *Slate*, June 5, 2015, at http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/06/the_conservative_attack_on_big_business_republican_presidential_candidates.html (accessed September 5, 2016).

academia precisely for such forms of autonomy. But this is likely too optimistic in a climate of post-Thatcherite/Reaganite musicology in its unholy alliance with the corporate university.]

And I am more and more struck by the size of the chasm between musicology and the wider non-academic musical world, in a way I find profoundly unhealthy. As George Kennaway suggested recently, few classical performers are aware of the new musicology, of critique of the aesthetically autonomous model of music, and remain committed to an idea of 'the music itself' and a responsibility to composer's intentions.[7] Are these performers impoverished by not having kept up with musicological fashion, and are their performances less valuable as a result? I am not so sure. Amongst some new musicologists and ethnomusicologists in particular, it is often assumed that any sensible person would agree that claims to any vestige of musical autonomy must betoken class domination, imperialism, anti-semitism, misogyny, homophobia, militarism, even genocide. With this view comes a form of musical disengagement, whereby it is believed by some possible to pass judgement on music purely from looking at its context, or writings or other pronouncements about it, eliminating the possibility of any more dialectical relationship between sounding music and its social, ideological and intellectual context, ultimately resulting in what I have called elsewhere 'musicology without ears'.[8]

That wider musical world can continue its business blissfully ignorant of much of this, and I do not blame them. But I am concerned by a lack of interaction between performers and musicologists in general. With this in mind, I want first to look briefly at the field of scholarly work most obviously relevant to active musical performers, that of Performance Studies.

Performance Studies

In a 2004 article,[9] John Rink characterised the field of 'Performance Studies' in music as consisting of 'three overlapping domains', which were (a) *historical performance practice*, (b) *the psychology of performance*, and (c) *analysis and performance*
For a forthcoming article in *Music and Letters*,[10] I have expanded this taxonomy, to include some areas which were at least nascent at the time of Rink's article and have grown in prominence since then. I have also sub-divided his first domain because of its breadth. These domains are by no means mutually exclusive, and often overlap.

(a) *Historical performance practice* [Rink, 2004];
    (i) the study of historical instruments and techniques;

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[7] George Kennaway, 'Historiographically Informed Performance?', in Vesa Kurkela and Markus Mantere (eds.), *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 169.
[8] See Ian Pace, 'My contribution to the debate 'Are we all ethnomusicologists now?'', June 9, 2016, at https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2016/06/09/my-contribution-to-the-debate-are-we-all-ethnomusicologists-now/ (accessed September 5, 2016.
[9] John Rink, 'The State of Play in Performance Studies', in Jane W. Davidson (ed.), *The Music Practitioner: Research for the Music Performer, Teacher and Listener* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 37-52.
[10] Ian Pace, 'The New State of Play in Performance Studies', *Music and Letters*, forthcoming 2017.

(ii) performance style and normative practices in specific times and places;
(iii) self-reflection on methodological and aesthetic considerations;[11]

(b) *Psychology of performance* [Rink, 2004];
(c) *Analysis and performance* [Rink, 2004];[12]
(d) *Critical, philosophical, and theological reflection on performance*;[13]
(e) *Performance-as-research; performance-based research; artistic research into performance*, generally undertaken by practitioners and requiring a practical element;[14]
(f) *Study of performance of contemporary art music*; [15]
(g) *Ethnographic study of performance and performers;* [16]
(h) *Cultural history and study of performances*, considering particular performances and groups of performances, relating their musical characteristics to wider cultural and social concerns;[17]
(i) *Studies of performance traditions*, a field which incorporates much of the best work in popular music studies and ethnomusicology;[18]
(j) *Detailed study of specific performers and groups of performers*, intense investigation of the musical work of individual performers or ensembles, bands, orchestras, choirs, etc. (a tradition which in many Western contexts (art and popular musics) has previously been pursued mostly by amateurs). Some of this category also belong in (h);[19]

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[11] As most obviously in volumes such as Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford, 1988); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford, 1995); and Peter Walls, *History, Imagination, and the Performance of Music* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY, 2003).

[12] For example Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure and Performance* (New Haven, CT, 1989); Jonathan Dunsby, *Performing Music: Shared Concerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); John Rink (ed.), *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 'Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis', in Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 239-61; and 'Words About Music, or Analysis Versus Performance', in Cook, Peter Johnson, and Hans Zender, *Theory into Practice: Composition, Performance and the Listening Experience* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999).

[13] Such as Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); or Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[14] A range of references on this subject can be found in my own 'Composition and Performance can be, and often have been, Research', *Tempo* 70/275 (2015), 60-70.

[15] These include books too numerous to mention on extended techniques for various instruments.

[16] Here I am thinking above all of ethnographic work done on performers of Western music, such as Kay Kaufman Shelemay, 'Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds', *Ethnomusicology* 45/1 (2001), 1-29; or Stephen Cottrell, *Professional Music-making in London: Ethnography and Experience* (Aldershot, 2004).

[17] Excellent examples of this include Richard Wistreich, *Warrior, Courtier Singer: On Giulio Cesare Brancaccio* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); and Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[18] For example Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hannover, NH, 1993); or Paul F. Berliner, 'In Performance: The Shona Mbira Ensemble and the Relationship Between the Mbira Player and the Mbira', in *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Chicago and London, 1981), 112-35.

[19] Such as Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, *Musikalische Interpretationen Hans von Bülow* (Stuttgart, 1999); or Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1998).

(k) *Historical and comparative performance pedagogy*; [20]
(l) *The study of the theatre of performance*, incorporating not just the study of opera and music-theatre, but more broadly the theatrical dimension of any live musical performance;
(m) *The study of the filming and broadcasting of performance*.

The study of recordings in general – which has a long history in non-scholarly contexts - has been labelled as a subdiscipline in its own right, that of 'phonomusicology',[21] but as the data concerned and means of processing and interpreting it can vary so widely, I see little purpose in so doing. Rather, recordings (and videos) simply constitute one type of source for the study of (some) musical performance in the twentieth century, with only limited application for the previous century, and almost none for earlier periods.

I regularly return to a fundamental question with respect to each of these categories: how much engagement with any of these areas is there by active performers, or for that matter by those who engage or record performers, or simply listen to them? Now, I cannot claim any expertise about sub-domain (b), and will not consider area (m) today, though it can certainly be relevant to practitioners. But in looking to form new methodological models for a form of research leading to the production of practice-based outputs, and which both brings a wider scholarly context to bear upon practice, and which conversely develops research through knowledge derived from practice, I have found great value in interaction with most of the others.

That there has been a long-standing interaction between scholars and performers (and performer-scholars) in areas (a)(i) and (a)(ii), in a way which ultimately has fed into that rather vaguely-defined area of 'mainstream classical performance', viewed as distinct from specialist 'early music', is clear; less so is whether many non-academic practitioners involved with historically-informed performance are that aware or interested in the wider aesthetic and historiographical debates.

With regard to domain (c), Nicholas Cook in his recent book *Beyond the Score* coins the term 'analytically-informed performance', or AIP, which he claims exists primarily on campuses and 'has been pursued within the contexts of academic epistemologies, modes of dissemination, and criteria for evaluation'.[22] This relates to repeated disparaging remarks made elsewhere in the book about 'structuralist' performance (a term used often quite interchangeably with 'modernist' performance), and a scepticism as to whether 'large-scale structure' is 'the most productive place to look for the emergence of musical meaning',[23] relating this to other remarks by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson cautioning performers against taking notice of music theorists. Musicologists who write repeatedly on performance telling performers not to listen to musicologists is more than a little ironic (unless we are to imagine they are the

[20] Such as John Butt, *Music education and the art of performance in the German Baroque* (Cambridge, 1994); or James A. Stark, *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy* (Toronto, 1999).
[21] See Stephen Cottrell's survey text 'The rise and rise of phonomusicology', in Amanda Bayley (ed.), *Recorded Music: Performance, Culture and Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 15-36.
[22] Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 97.
[23] Ibid. p. 246.

exception? More to the point, I believe every performer in some sense articulates structural aspects of a piece, whether wittingly or not, decisions about such long-range factors as relative dynamics through the course of a work, tempos, use of different sounds and textures at strategic points.

Domain (d), which can deal with wider questions of the work-concept and its meanings for performers, and also sometimes draws upon wider scholarship on theatre, performance and performativity, is relevant for anyone actively and critically engaged with the way they might perform, as is domain (l).

I have found a fair amount of work produced in domains (f) and (g) – and indeed some in domain (e) - most problematic, for related reasons. Domain (f) often consists mostly pragmatic and instructional rather than critical work. Numerous articles in a 2007 issue of *Contemporary Music Review* on the performance of new music are typical,[24] consisting mostly of practical guidance on executing various types of difficulties in new music followed by non-descript commentary on phrasing, etc. There is much less self-reflective thought on the complex and intricate process of preparing an interpretation and all the meanings that might generate. With respect to domain (f), I wish to quote the view of one senior musicologist (sourced anonymously) on some ethnomusicological work:

> The best ethnomusicologists I have worked with have strong critiques of authenticity narratives, skepticism about the general way the ethnographic method is conducted, read books (including historical writing and writing about history) and use various kinds of theory that pervade other kinds of humanities scholarship. The worst simply show what look like lovely holiday snaps, give a pseudo-literary, 'atmospheric' narrative about their trip, and quote their interlocutors at length, nodding sagely.[25]

It is understandable that Western ethnomusicologists and anthropologists might feel a post-colonial reticence about engaging critically with non-Western music and culture. But when this attitude is carried over into the study of Western art music, it leads to a type of musicology-on-the-cheap, padded out with texts or documentaries with quotations, often from not very articulate participants, without much commentary, critique or analysis. And a similar situation can occur with work in domain (e) when it takes the form primarily of auto-ethnography, filling out articles with unremarkable material from performance diaries, e-mails to collaborators, and so on, in a similarly non-critical fashion. The historian Richard J. Evans has argued that there is a difference between being a *historian* and a *chronicler*, and has even gone so far as to suggest some of the work of the late Martin Gilbert (one of his own teachers) might fall into the latter category.[26] I would suggest a similar divide separates some of the work in these domains from critical scholarship.

Documentation accompanying practice-as-research can also function essentially as *spin*: appropriating a handful of ideas and theoretical models from musicology and

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[24] Barrie Webb (ed), *Contemporary Performance*, in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 28 Part 2 (2007).

[25] Cited in Ian Pace, 'Ethnographically sourced experience of Ethnomusicology – a further response to the debate' (August 14, 2016), at https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2016/08/14/ethnographically-sourced-experiences-of-ethnomusicology-a-further-response-to-the-debate/ .

[26] In a talk entitled 'Meet the historian' at Australian National University, July 25, 2015, online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMmtZVRSAHM (accessed September 5, 2016).

other disciplines in order to legitimise and flatter one's own practice, rather than supplementing and enhancing any wider critical discourse such as might have other applications.

I believe there is a wider problem affecting these three domains, for which I want to quote from the musicologist Björn Heile, writing on scholarship about new music:

> The process could be described as bargain basement hermeneutics: study the composer's so-called influences, his or her own pronouncements and look at the work with these things in mind – something will no doubt be found. As a result, the scholar becomes the composer's spokesperson, dutifully explaining how the master would want their work to be understood – which, evidently, is the only way of correctly interpreting it. There are many reasons for the predominance of this approach. New music scholars are often dependent on the goodwill of their subjects: one critical remark and you may find yourself frozen out from access to the person, their work and other materials, and from speaking and writing engagements – there are a number of (in)famous examples. Furthermore, the new music business is a tight network in which composers, musicians, institutions, broadcasters, publishers, record companies, journalists and scholars cooperate in often murky ways. There is a fine line between scholarship and PR, and some so-called journals are more akin to trade magazines. [….]
> [Charles Wilson] quotes numerous cases in which Ligeti's exegetes dutifully adopted the composer's own terms, criteria and outlook, so that their commentaries are little more than summaries of the composer's own pronouncements. Ligeti's is hardly a special case: Messiaen's Catholicism, Nono's Marxism, Cage's Zen-Buddhism, Cardew's Maoism, Lachenmann's 'refusal of habit' – time and again one finds scholars piously repeating or paraphrasing lofty assertions, instead of subjecting them to rigorous critical scrutiny.[27]

I would agree with Heile that there is too great proximity between various scholars of new music and those involved in the wider external new music business, and add that this situation is magnified when those scholars are also themselves practitioners and dependent upon winning or maintaining favour in that external community in order to continue to gain external 'impact', perhaps especially amongst practitioners working in highly commercialised fields. Are the criteria for high quality practice-as-research essentially the same as those for the production of practical work which will gain some visibility and acclaim in a wider non-academic context? I think it would be deeply problematic to assume that they are, which would relegate such research to a purely functional role relative to externally-applied criteria, forfeiting the possibility of autonomous production of knowledge in a humanities context. But separating the latter is difficult when there is not a clear consensus as to what constitutes 'research' manifested through practice.

Nonetheless, I still believe there remains much potential in these domains, and the others, to whose species of research I will allude in what follows.

Practice-as-Research

[27] Björn Heile, "'Un pezzo . . . di una grandissima serieta' e con una grandissima emozione . . . e con elementi totalmente bruti': Aesthetic and Socio-political Considerations and the Failure of their Integration in Mauricio Kagel's Work post-1968," keynote paper given at conference "Faire 'de la musique absolue avec la scène': Mauricio Kagel," Nice, April 25, 2014. Reproduced in part at https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2014/09/18/musicological-observations-1-bjorn-heile-lauren-redhead-and-myself-on-the-relationship-between-scholarship-and-new-music/ (accessed September 5, 2016).

In an essay published in a 1993-4 journal, Christopher Frayling set out a tripartite model of research 'into', 'through' and 'for' art and design.[28] These can be mapped onto practice-led research, practice-as-research, and research-based practice respectively.

I am not one who would argue that research outputs which are not accompanied by written documentation are not research – for writing is just one more form of output which should not have any privileged position – but I do think it would be worthwhile for more composers and performers to document critically the nature of their work. As Robin Nelson aptly puts it, 'the critical engagement entailed in the process of documentation in PaR can yield valuable insights into the process of making in different arts, and ultimately leads to more refined arts practices'.[29] However, such documentation is *not,* I believe emphatically, practice-as-research, but practice-*based* research. It is not a 'manual' or other type of supplement to another form of output, but *another* output. My performance(s) – and in time, a recording - of the Dukas Sonata are the practice-as-research.

Every musician playing a notated piece of music has no choice but to answer a wide range of questions in the act of so doing, which I believe quite fundamentally should be viewed in a similar manner to 'research questions' in more conventional understandings of scholarship. Examples of these would be:

- What tempo should be used for various large-scale sections of the score in question?
- How much flexibility should be employed within these broad tempi?
- On a smaller scale, what forms of stylisation and elasticity would be most appropriate for playing various types of rhythms?
- In music with a relatively stable metre, should one at least slightly stress notes which fall on strong beats, and play those on weak beats less?
- Should dissonant pitches receive special emphasis, and if so, how much?
- When might the dynamic envelope for a line serve to emphasise its contours, or be otherwise?
- What is the dynamic range desired for the piece (e.g. how quiet are dynamics such as *ppp* and how loud *fff*)?
- Through various combinations of accentuation, articulation and rhythm, to what extent, and where, should one tend towards continuity of line, or more angular approaches?
- In polyphonic or contrapuntal textures, to what extent should one be aiming to project a singular voice which is foregrounded above others, or a greater degree of dynamic equilibrium between parts?
- How exact should synchronisation between hands or parts be? Are there occasions where staggering of different pitches and lines can be fruitfully employed?
- In a piano work, where should one employ the right pedal? Should the 'basic sound' in legato passages be pedalled, or might it be used more selectively?

[28] Christopher Frayling, 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers* 1/1 (1993-4), p. 5.
[29] Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 72.

Should pedalling be allowed to carry across changes in harmonies, and if so, when?

- What sort of technical approach to one's instrument is appropriate for this music (it may be several)? In the case of the piano, might one tend towards higher fingers and a clear, well-articulated sound, or play closer to the keys?
- Should one aim for a singular prominent climactic point within a movement, or can there be several of roughly equal prominence?

I could continue with more – by articulating them in this fashion I am not simply making explicit what might as well remain implicit in the acts of musical preparation and performance, but also underlining the fact of their being *choices* in various respects.

I am not looking to conclude from this that simply *any* performer is automatically a high-level researcher and as such on a par with other types of scholars; nor would I say that of simply any composer. Whilst all practitioners must answer these types of questions, some are more aware of and open to the fact of choices and the possibility of creative attitudes and approaches to these. The opposite tendency might be represented by the 'gigging' performer, who simply 'plays the notes' perhaps with the added qualification of 'making a good sound', or a type of performer with whom many will be familiar, who disdains any approach which might seem even remotely 'intellectual' and favours instead 'instinct' and 'intuition'. Amongst pianists, this latter type is sometimes aided in their performance by an apparent appearance of the Deity on the ceiling of the concert hall, or might enhance the melancholy aspect of their playing by periodic swaying of the head from left to right and back again, as if to negate and so cushion the impact of what is being played.

Joking aside, I do recognise some potential objections to the model of performance I favour above: it might seem over-analytical, studied, or incompatible with the instantaneous realities of live performance, in which one might respond instantly to the mood and ambience of the place and ambience, or any number of other complex factors which are more complex as to be reducible simply to basic questions like this.

[Check this] Recalling the views of Cook and Leech-Wilkinson, I should make clear here that I am *not* advocating an approach which turns the act of performance simply into the application of academic study, nor one which requires every significant detail to be pre-planned before a concert. Study prior to performance can at best serve the purpose not so much of delivering plans for performance as increasing the reservoir of possibilities available to the spontaneous mind at the point of delivery. There is no way that I could say clearly what each performance I would give will be like (a recording may be a different matter) – there are so many factors contingent upon the moment. But the mind which responds to that moment can itself be nurtured and tutored so as to be able to enhance the range of responses.

To get round the objections, I would put it to you that all the above types of questions are never really answerable without first asking a more fundamental question:

- What are one's primary motivations and objectives when performing (or recording) this musical score?

There are numerous different ways this question might be answered. A certain type of historically-informed performer from several decades ago (and not only them) might have maintained that the primary aim was to recreate something akin to the first performance or other performances from around that time, especially those given, directed or supervised by the composer. An advocate of a particular type of 'analytical' approach would say the performer should foreground those features of the music which are deemed most significant by a particular school of analysis (rarely allowing that the performer might be able to teach the analyst something too); this approach has been sharply criticised by more recent scholars in the field of Performance Studies, not least Nicholas Cook.

There might be other primary motivations, such as for the player approaching a competition who needs to decide what approach is most likely to win favour with the judges – or at least which types of approaches definitively to avoid if one does not want to be instantly eliminated. Others might consider the type of audience anticipated; with a lay audience not likely to contain a large number of people with a high degree of musical literacy, or not likely to be familiar with the repertoire played or similar music, some strategies might be adopted to increase comprehensibility and cut down on the degree of what I would call 'active experiential participation' on their part – one way to cut down on this type of participatory requirement can be to strive for a high degree of continuity and unity within a performance. Or conversely, if playing to a more expert audience, one might take the opposite approach. There is some evidence, though still far more research to be done on the subject, of something of the former attitude informing Soviet schools of performance from the 1920s and 1930s onwards, influenced directly or indirectly by some of the early post-revolutionary cultural and musical organisations and their ideals of music-making for a mass proletarian audience, requiring exaggerated expressivity, rhetoric, dynamics, and so on; this type of performing aesthetic would become familiar from at least a sub-section of Soviet competitors in major international competitions from this point onwards.

But I approach the process somewhat differently, in terms of a two-way interplay between overall conception and approach to musical details, so that the overall motivation is to settle upon some desired ideal for the former in line with explorations and awareness of possibilities for the latter. Then the objective is to create a performance out of this which is coherent, imaginative and distinctive. To decide upon approaches to individual details in a performance of a musical work, one needs some type of even loose conception of what one is trying to achieve, unless one is simply doing things unquestioningly according to a set of 'rules' with no other creative input. But conversely, as one approaches the individual details and becomes more intimately acquainted with them and the possibilities for their execution, the conception can change. I may want to learn more about *fin-de-siècle* Paris in order to gain wider insight into how to play the Dukas Sonata, but conversely I might play the Dukas Sonata in order to learn more about *fin-de-siècle* Paris, as it is a not-insignificant part of this cultural history. On the other hand, were I to play the work without further knowledge, the performance might reflect a crude stereotypical view of what the period and its cultural products entailed.

So I look at both (and other contextual and analytical dimensions) *concurrently*. It is not a case of never setting a finger on a piano key before having done one's homework as scrupulously as possible from written sources and recordings. Rather, I would start simply taking a work to the piano, trying out passages to get a general feel, playing them in a variety of ways, trying some fingerings, tempi, voicings, rhythms, and so on, often allowing myself to be guided by what the aural and kinetic experience of practising reveals. Of course, this is no 'blank sheet' approach – no-one who has even a modicum of musical knowledge and experience could pretend to that. I start the music with some basic ideas about stylistic and other parameters, sometimes find that the particularities of the score suggest a re-think of those initial assumptions.

Historical conditions of performance can be studied not slavishly, but as a guide to a deeper understanding of a score in terms of aspects which might be taken for granted and unquestioned at the time of its creation, but would seem quite different today. Gaining some sense of what the music might have meant and been heard *in its own time* may facilitate the creation of a performance in a contemporary context which is informed by that 'enhanced conception' provided not only by the score, but information which helps one to *read* it more acutely.

I want to tell you a little about work of my own, still work-in-progress, on the *Sonata* of Paul Dukas, which falls in the former category, practice-led research, but comes out of work which entails the other two categories. The output today is not primarily practice (though it will involve a bit of that).

This slide shows some very basic facts about the work, in terms of its composition, first performance and most fundamental structural factors. It is very literally a *fin-de-siècle* work, written between 1899 and 1900.

- One of a relatively small number of works published during Dukas's lifetime.
- Preceded by Symphony in C (1895-6), and *L'apprenti sorcier* (1897).
- Sonata was written when Dukas was in the midst of working on his opera *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* (1899-1907)
- Followed by *Variations, interlude et finale sur un thème de Rameau* (1899-1902).
- Sonata was premiered by Édouard Risler in the Salle Pleyel on May 10th, 1901.
- Sonata a four-movement, extended work. Lasts between 40' and 50' (shortest recording is the first, by Vladimir Pleshakov, at 40'36"; longest by Vladimir Stoupel, at 49'17").
- First, second and fourth movements in sonata form, third scherzo and trio.
- Key of movements: 1. E-flat minor; 2. A-flat major; 3. B minor; 4. E-flat minor – major.
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Here are the primary texts upon which I have drawn on Dukas in general:

- Gustav Samazeuilh, *Un musicien français: Paul Dukas* (Paris: Durand, 1913).
- Georges Favre, *L'Oeuvre de Paul Dukas* (Paris: Durand, 1969).
- Jacques Helbé, *Paul Dukas, 1865-1935* (Paris: Editions P.M.P., 1975).

- Bénédicte Palaux-Simonnet, *Paul Dukas ou le musician-sorcier* (Papillon, 2001).
- Simon-Pierre Perret and Marie-Laure Ragot, *Paul Dukas* (2007).
- Paul Dukas, *Correspondance: Choix de lettres établi par Georges Favre* (Paris: Durand, 1971).
- Gustav Samazeuilh (ed), *Les Écrits de Paul Dukas sur la musique musique* (Paris: Société d'editions française et internationales, 1948)
- Paul Dukas, *Chroniques musicales sur deux siècles 1892-1932*, with preface by Jean-Vincent Richard (Paris: Stock Musique, 1980)

And here are a range of important sources considering the sonata itself in more detail:

- Vincent d'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale, deuxième livre, Part I* (Paris: Durand, 1909), pp. 431-3.
- Blanche Selva, *La Sonate*: *Etude de son evolution technique historique et expressive en vue de l'interprétation et de l'audition* (Paris: Rouart, Lerolle & Co, 1913), pp. 244-9.
- Alfred Cortot, *La musique française de piano* (Paris; Editions Rieder, 1931-2); *French Piano Music: First Series*, translated Hilda Andrews (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 178-208.
- William S. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven*, third edition (New York: Norton, 1983) (first edition 1969), pp. 534-41.
- Robert Avedis Hagopian, 'The Confluence of Artistic and Literary Sources in the Creation of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* and the d'Indy and Dukas Piano Sonatas (DMA Thesis: Indiana University, 1975).
- Virginia Elizabeth, 'Tonality and Form in Selected French Piano Sonatas, 1900-1950' (PhD Dissertation: Ohio State University, 1977)
- Frederick Minger, 'The Piano Music of Paul Dukas (DMA Dissertation: Peabody Conservatory of Music, 1982)
- Giselher Schubert, '"Vibrierende Gedanken" und das "Katasterverfahren" der Analyse: zu den Klaviersonate von Dukas und d'Indy', in Hermann Danuser et al (eds), *Das musikalische Kunstwerk: Geschichte, Ästhetik, Theorie* (Laaber: Laaber, 1988), pp. 619-34.
- Andrea Malvano, 'La Sonata per pianoforte di Paul Dukas. Alfa e omega di un genere musicale francese', *Musica/Realità* 31/93 (November 2010), pp. 111-132.
- Stefan Keym, '»L'Art de distribuer l'émotion«. Zur Klaviersonate von Paul Dukas', in Ulrich Tadday (ed), *Paul Dukas* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2012), pp. 96-120.

To study the work's early reception, there numerous reviews collected in the writings of Simon-Pierre Perret and Marie-Laure Ragot and Andrea Malvano. Other important reviews were by Pierre Lalo and Claude Debussy, the latter reproduced in the volume *Debussy on Music*.[30]

Then the following sources are very useful on French pianism of the time:

[30] *Debussy on Music: The Critical Writings of the Great French Composer*, collected and edited François Lesure, translated and edited Richard Langham Smith (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977).

- Norman Demuth, *French Piano Music: A Survey with Notes on its Performance* (London: Museum Press, 1959).
- Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1999).
- Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).
- Scott McCarrey and Lesley A. Wright (eds), *Perspectives on the Performance of French Piano Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).

And these are sources of wider significance on music in Third Republic France.

- Michael Strasser, '*Ars Gallica*: The *Société nationale de musique* and its Role in French Musical Life, 1871-1891' (PhD dissertation: University of Illinois, 1998).
- Jane F. Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music from the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et Musiciens: Du salon au concert à paris sous la IIIe republique* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).
- Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter (eds), *French Music since Berlioz* (Aldershot: Ashtage, 2006).
- Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2009).

There are seventeen recordings of the work of which I am aware, which are as follows:

- Vladimir Pleshakov – Orion ORS 6906 (1969)
- François Thinat – Arion 30 A 122 (1972)
- John Ogdon – HMV SLS 868 (1974) (in vinyl box set *Pianistic Philosophies*), re-released EMI CD 7243 5 65996 2 8 (1996)
- François-René Duchable – EMI C-069-16288 (January 1978)
- Jean Hubeau – Erato IFPI NM (1990)
- Jean-François Heisser, Francia (1993)
- Margaret Fingerhut – Chandos B000000AJ8 (1999)
- Alexander Vaulin, Classico CLASSCD293 (2000)
- Chantal Stigliani, Naxos 8.557053 (August 2003)
- Tor Espen Aspaas, Simax Classics PSC 1177 (2004)
- David Bismuth, Ameson (2006)
- Marc-André Hamelin, Hyperion CD A67513 (May 2006)
- Olivier Chauzo, Calliope CAL 9388 (2008)
- Marco Rapetti, Brilliant Classics 9160 (2011)
- Laurent Wagshal, Timpani 1211 (2013)
- Vladimir Stoupel, SWRmusic 10037 (2013)
- Hervé Billaut, Mirare MIR242 (2015)

A huge amount of information about performance possibilities can be gleaned from these. Most basic would be the durations, which are as follows:

Pianist	**Mvt 1**	**Mvt 2**	**Mvt 3**	**Mvt 4**
Pleshakov	8’45”	9’34”	8’17”	14’00”
Thinat	10’29”	11’57”	8’55”	14’38”
Ogdon	10’10”	9’57”	8’51”	12’24”
Duchable	11’11”	10’14”	8’12”	11’24”
Hubeau	11’13”	11’10”	8’11”	12’59”
Heisser	11’04”	11’04”	8’29”	14’07”
Fingerhut	12’04”	12’49”	8’38”	14’01”
Vaulin	12’42”	10’31”	8’44”	13’35”
Stigliani	11’36”	10’43”	9’51”	14’24”
Aspaas	11’17”	10’31”	9’30”	12’44”
Bismuth	9’51”	9’40”	8’50”	13’44”
Hamelin	9’55”	11’10”	8’42”	12’50”
Chauzo	12’09”	12’07”	8’57”	14’07”
Rapetti	11’58”	11’30”	8’49”	13’53”
Wagshal	10’15”	10’10”	7’57”	12’42”
Stoupel	12’35”	11’56”	9’49”	14’57”
Billaut	10’35”	10’39”	8’52”	13’22”

The shortest are those of Pleshakov, Bismuth and Ogdon, the longest those of Fingerhut and Stoupel. There is a difference of a whole four minutes duration between the recordings of the first movement of Vladimir Pleshakov, at 8’45”, and Alexander Vaulin, at 12’42”. Similarly three minutes difference in the second movement between David Bismuth, at 9’40”, or John Ogdon, at 9’57” (who tends to gravitate towards a pulse of crotchet 60) and Margaret Fingerhut, at 12’49”. Approaches to tempo variation in this movement in particular (which some start considerably more slowly than others, than relax the tempo later) illuminated to be various possibilities.

So, to give just the slightest taster of the process involved in developing an interpretation of this work (which is ongoing): first, early perceptions from taking the work to the piano included such factors as the possibilities for tempo flexibility and voicing in the second movement relating to the degree of harmonic detail in the passagework or its register. In the first movement I considered to what degree to allow for some expressive tension due to physical awkwardness, or whether to re-arrange the hands to simplify matters. The second subject of this movement seemed to be rather too sugary, but I found this was diminished through playing it in a stricter tempo than other parts of the movement, with less desynchronization of parts.

Those scholars of music in Third Republic France have focused on developments in a new spirit of French nationalism, following defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the overthrow of the Paris Commune. This period saw the first appearance of the word *nationalisme* in French dictionaries in 1874, betokening a new emphasis upon the relationship between ethnic identity and state, the re-discovery of earlier French repertoires and an increased focus on the teaching of music history as part of a search for a distinct French style or *ars gallica* as an alternative to German romanticism,[31]

[31] Déirdre Donnellon, ‘French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates’, in Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter (eds), *French Music since Berlioz* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 10-12. As Katharine Ellis puts it, ‘During the *belle époque* years, nostalgia for an idealized and irrecoverable past

very much in line with Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's model of the 'Invention of Tradition'. At the same time, the influence of Wagner in France was large, with composers such as Fauré, Massenet, Franck, Chabrier, and d'Indy fascinated by his work. D'Indy even tried to argue that Wagner's music was rooted in established French practice, so French Wagnerites were thus continuing such a tradition.[32]

Dukas himself went to Bayreuth in 1886 and 1889, reviewed a production of Wagner's *Ring* in London in 1892, and made transcriptions for piano eight hands (now lost) of excerpts from *Tannhäuser* and *Die Walküre* in 1892. However, he also edited some volumes of French early music, including Rameau's opéra-ballet *Les Indes galantes* in 1902 and comédie-ballet (play with incidental music) *Le princesse de Navarre* in 1906, and Couperin's collection of chamber pieces, *Les gôuts réunis* in 1908 (which may have influenced the composition of Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola and, Harp (1916-17)[33]); later works of Scarlatti and Beethoven.

There were writers who had criticised Wagner (including Théophile Gautier in 1857, though his words may have been ghosted) for representing a 'return to the old fugal styles', and as Katharine Ellis has pointed out, the re-discovery of Bach in France coincided with the rise of Wagnerism.[34] A special alternative to the St Matthew Passion was staged in 1892 in the Théâtre du Châtelet, featuring a play, *La Passion* (1891) by Ed. Haraucourt, together with a variety of incidental music from Bach (keyboard, organ and orchestral music, as well as some arias) using (according to one account which is all that is known to have survived) a Wagnerian leitmotivic system. J.-G. Fréson, in his 1893 book *L'esthétique de Richard Wagner* , compared *Parsifal* to the St Matthew Passion, and even traced Wagner's contrapuntal practice back to Palestrina.[35]

Dukas's Sonata was written during the playing out of the Dreyfus Affair, which polarised French society, including in terms of culture. It brought to a head competing claims on French identity – was France the country of the state, army, aristocracy and Church, or of the principles bequeathed by the French Revolution?[36] On the opposite side of the divide were composer Vincent d'Indy on the conservative wing, and Charles Koechlin on the other.

The *Schola Cantorum de Paris* was founded in 1894 by Charles Bordes, Alexandre Guilmant and d'Indy, and favoured the study of Gregorian chant, Renaissance music, late Baroque and early Classical works, in opposition to the emphasis on opera at the Paris Conservatoire. The institution ran a campaign against ostentatious virtuosity and even playing by memory. Édouard Risler himself would sometimes use the music.[37]

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became an important part of the enthusiasm for early French music in particular' (Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, p. 244). The 'Latin, dramatic, accessible' Handel came to take the place of the 'Germanic, learned, elitist' Bach, whilst some French musicians wanted German influences purged entirely (ibid. pp. 247, 251).

[32] Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, p. 133.

[33] Messing, *Neoclassicism*, pp. 48-9.

[34] Cited in Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, p. 234.

[35] Ibid. pp. 235-7.

[36] Jane Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 15-6.

[37] Timbrell, *French Pianism*, p. 75.

Dukas himself was quite critical of early neo-classical tendencies, saying that 'The error of the neo-classicists is precisely the attribution of value to a form independently of its ideas'.[38] He was very keen to distinguish César Franck from neo-classicism, writing in 1904 that:

> Franck's classicism is not purely that of form; it is not a mere filling in, more or less sterile, of scholastic outlines, such as resulted by the hundreds from the imitation of Beethoven, and later of Mendelssohn, and continue to grow every year out of respect for useless traditions. [Franck's compositions], like bodies in which the function creates the organ, areas widely different from the schematicism of most of the neoclassicists as a living organism from an anatomical model.[39]

Various commentators have considered that Dukas saw Brahms as a neo-classicist, as traced in his declining opinion of his work from the early 1890s to the early 1900s.[40] Debussy would say of Dukas's *Variations, interlude et finale sur un thème de Rameau* (1899-1902), which some might consider a neo-classical work, that it was 'festooned with so much gilt that at times Rameau himself would not have been able to find his theme' [41]

The early reviews of the Sonata by Lalo and Debussy should be viewed in the context of the dispute around the Schola Cantorum. Lalo emphasised heavily a Beethovenian model, while Debussy opposed this because he saw Lalo as a mouthpiece for that institution; at least this is the view of Alfred Cortot. Other critics, some of whom I have listed on the slide, commented on the strong sense of unity across the breadth of the long work, the relationship to the music of d'Indy, the intensity of the finale, and so on.

French pianism of the time was divided between a quite rhythmically strict and finger-oriented tradition looking back to the playing of Henri Herz and Ferdinand Kalkbrenner, and players who looked further afield to the tradition of Liszt, one of whom was Risler, who studied first with Émile Decombes, a disciple of Chopin, and also Louis Diémer, to whom Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, Saint-Saëns' Fifth Concerto, and works of Chaikovsky, Lalo, Massenet and Fauré were dedicated, but who was also a harpsichordist and notorious for his dryness and severity of style.[42] Risler then studied for several years in Germany with three different Liszt pupils – Eugen d'Albert, Bernard Stavenhagen and Karl Klindworth. Alfred Cortot saw in him the pianist who opposed the exact, neat and elegant playing style of Herz, Kalkbrenner and others with an approach which 'imposed his artistry', calling him 'a Siegfried of the piano'. [43] Risler's recordings give some hints of how he might have played the Dukas: for example his sustaining of a legato line whilst playing a variety of ornamental writing underneath in Rameau, his very still and concentrated playing of the chordal writing in the slow movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, or his very brilliant, clear but controlled performance of a Mendelssohn Scherzo. On

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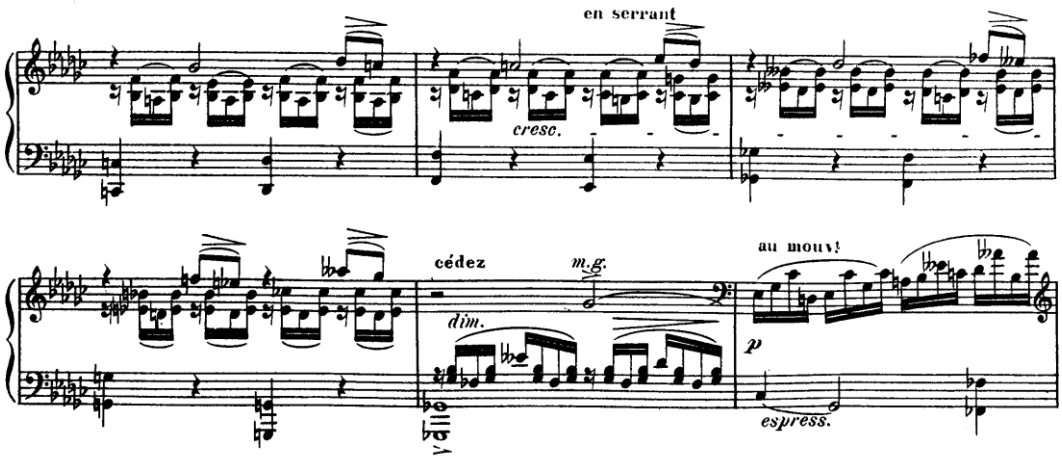
[38] Grove.
[39] Paul Dukas, 'A propos César Franck', *La chronique des arts*, 33 (1904), p. 273, cited in Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1996), p. 15.
[40] Messing, *Neoclassicism*, p. 15.
[41] Debussy, 'At the Société Nationale', in *Debussy on Music*, p. 159. Debussy was however unsure about this work, confessing 'I prefer my Dukas without Rameau' (ibid).
[42] Timbrell, *French Pianism*, pp. 43, 50-2.
[43] Ibid. p. 63, citing Cortot writing on Risler in *Le monde musical*, June 30, 1930.

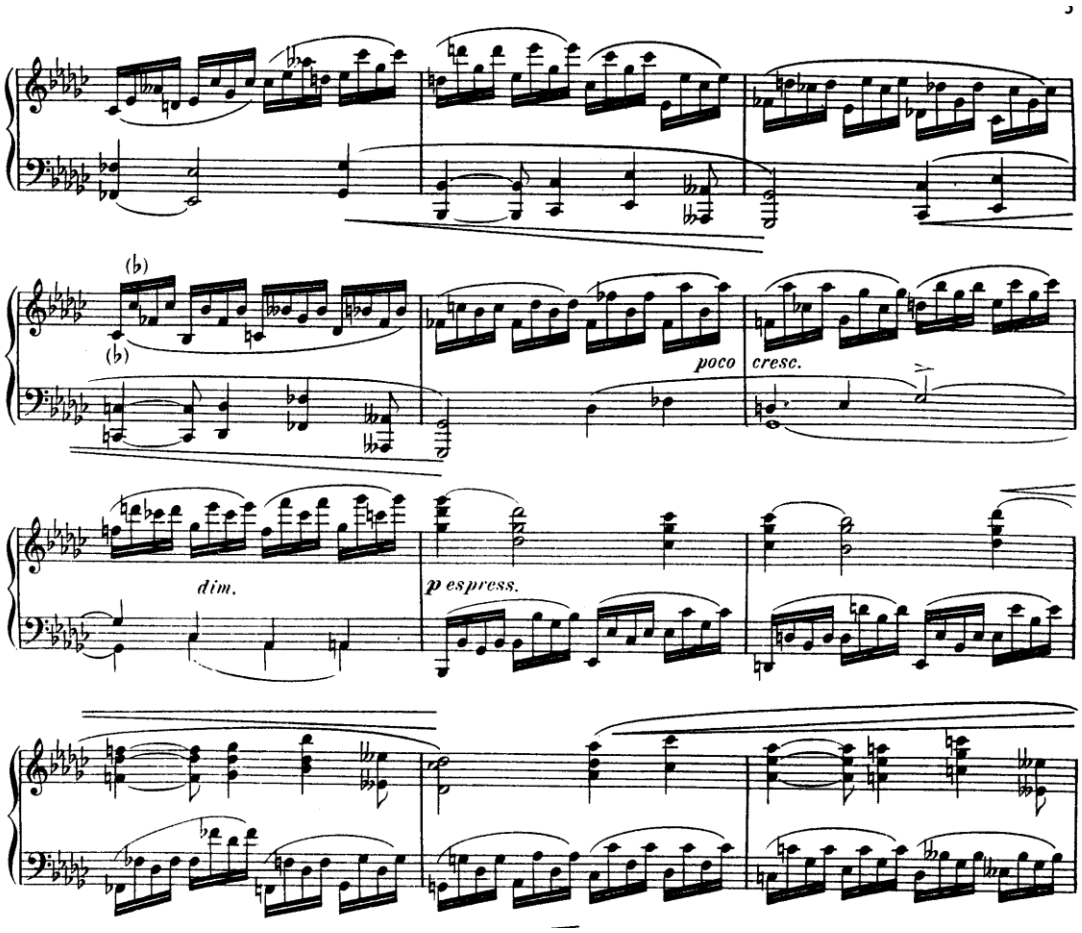
the other hand, his performance of the last movement of Beethoven's Sonata in A-flat, op. 26, is quite relentless and a bit rushed. Gaby Casadesus, however, recalls Risler advising his students 'to work realistically for tempo and detail, always to build up gradually from what we could do'.[44]

Except for two performances by Antoinette Véluard in 1909 and 1910, all French performances up until WW1 were by Risler or Blanche Selva. Selva we know to have adopted elements of weight technique pioneered by Rudolf Breithaupt and Friedrich Steinhausen, as well as the technique of Vasily Safonov.[45]

As regards analytical dimensions, I am not really convinced about the value of attempting to foreground micro-motivic relationships in performance, as these inform the surface rather than being the surface. But other structural issues are very important. For example, whether one considers the second subject to appear properly at bar 33 or 41, and how much to emphasise this through phrasing, voicing and tempo, can affect how 'boxey', from one perspective, or 'classical', from another, the structure might appear.

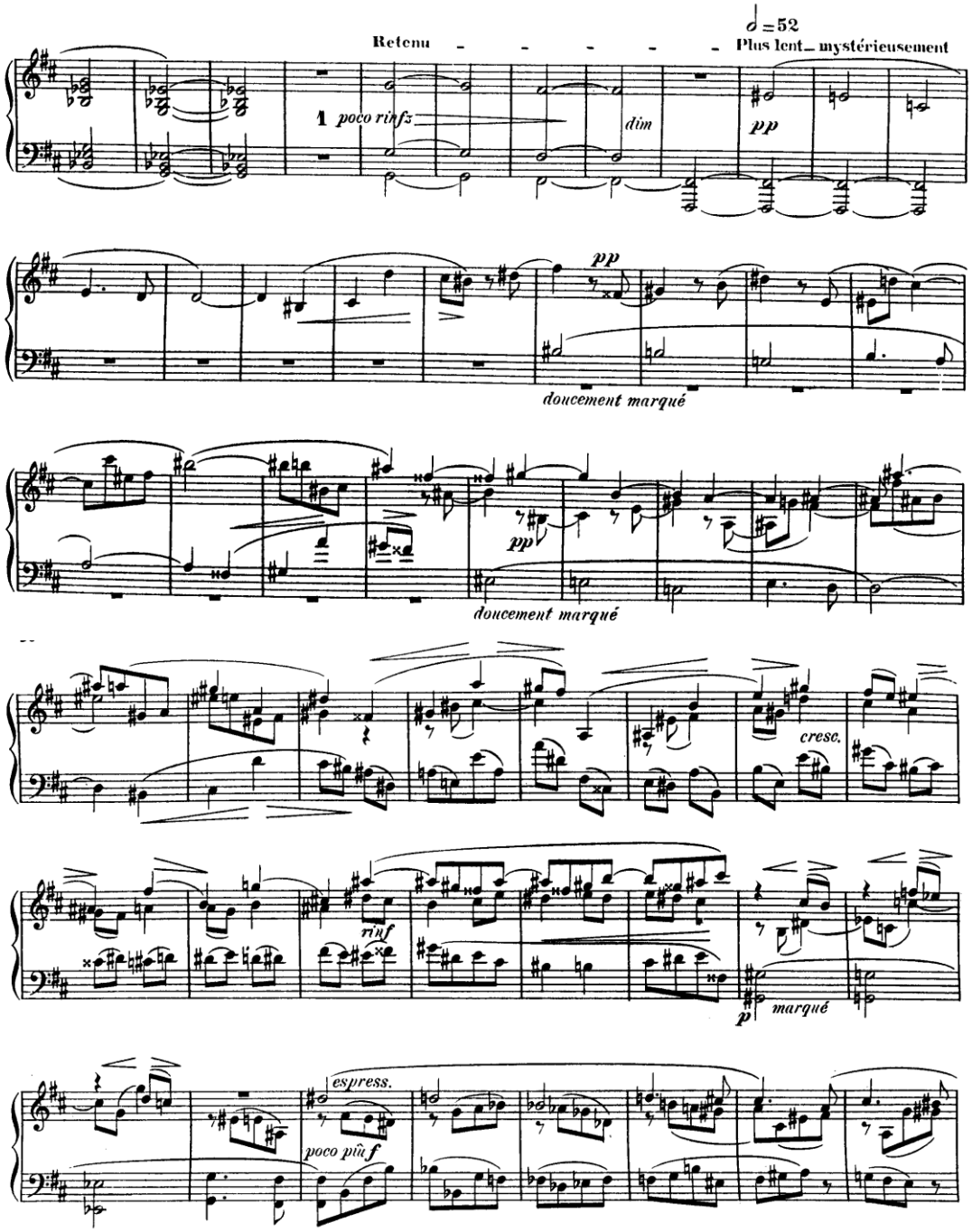


[44] Timbrell, *French Pianism*, p. 195.
[45] Timbrell, *French Pianism*, p. 68.



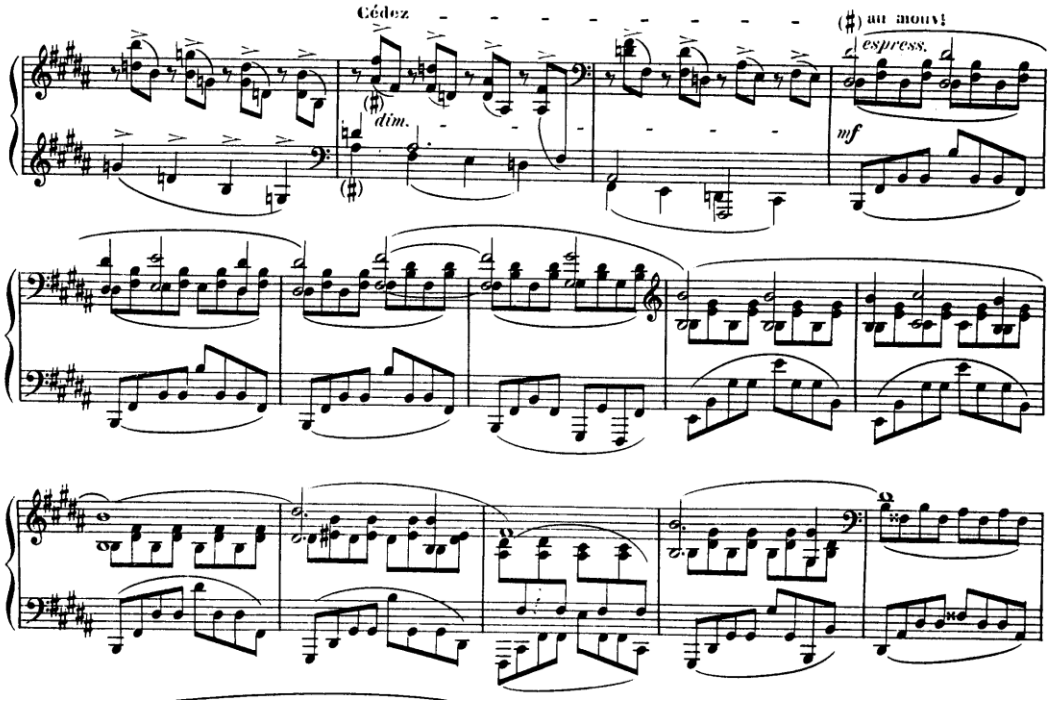
Dukas, Sonata, first movement, bars 28-45.

The remarkable fugue in the third movement brings to the fore the possibilities inherent in an attempt at reconciling post-Wagnerian chromaticism with older contrapuntal traditions such as were taught at the Schola.

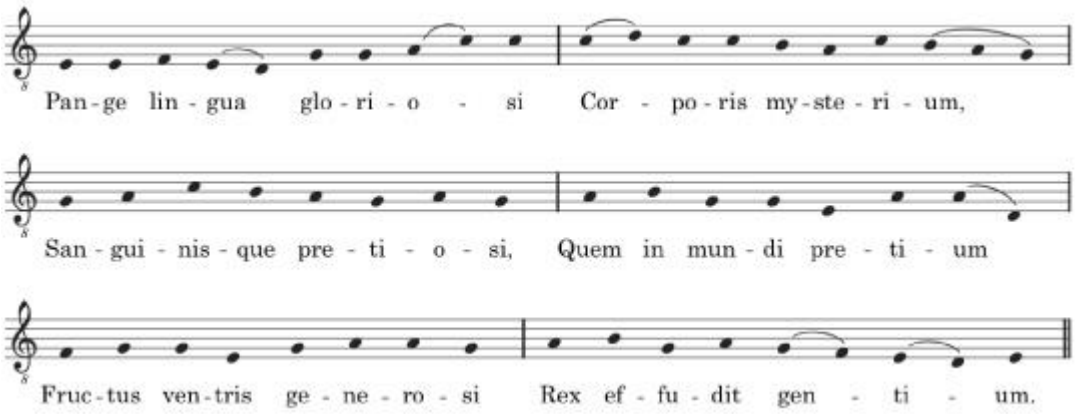


How one articulates the relationship and possible hierarchies between voices, how much one emphasises those points of relative tonal stability within otherwise highly harmonically fluid and amorphous writing, how the pedalling might accentuate a vertical rather than horizontal conception – all of these and other things can actually affect the extent to which one might perceive a pro- or anti-Dreyfusiard attitude in the music.

D'Indy drew attention to the relationship between the second second subject in the finale of the Sonata and the plainsong *Pange lingua* (to which d'Indy himself alluded in his opera *Fervaal* (1889-93)).

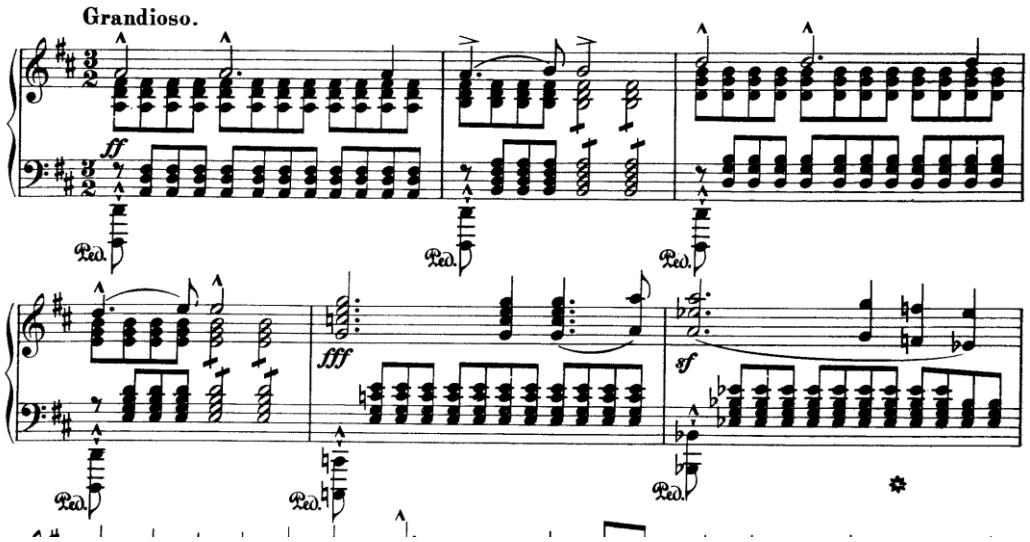


Dukas, Sonata, fourth movement.

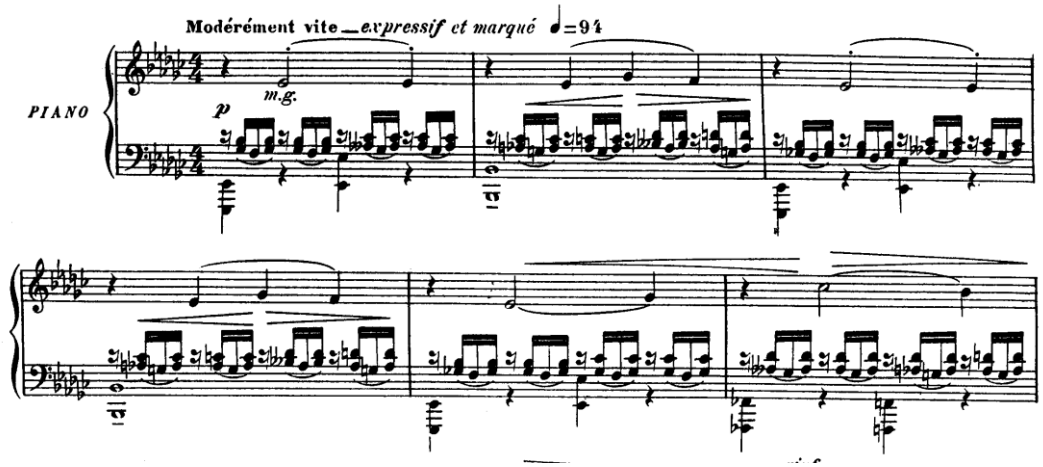


Plainsong, *Pange lingua*

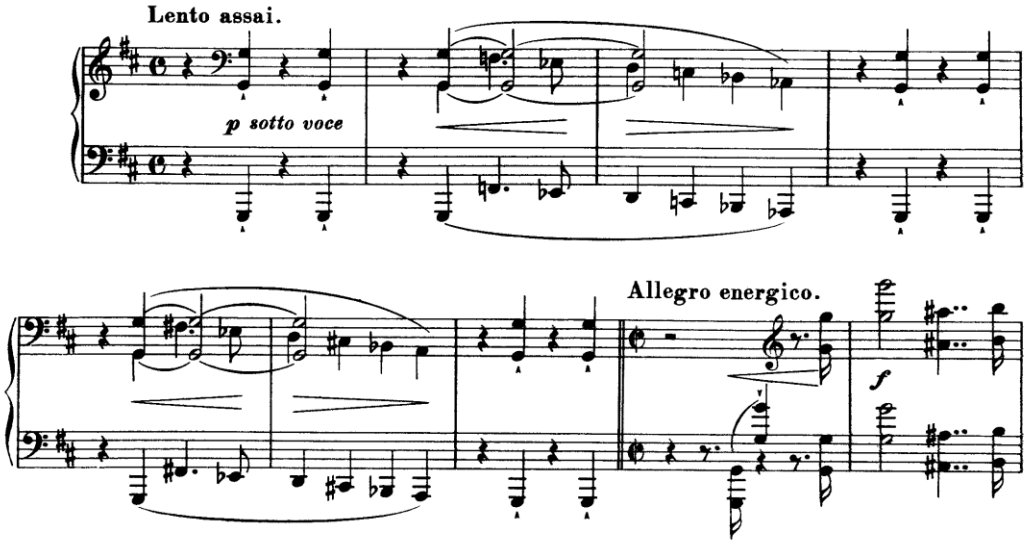
Alfred Cortot, on the other hand, compared this to the big D major theme from Liszt's Sonata in B minor.



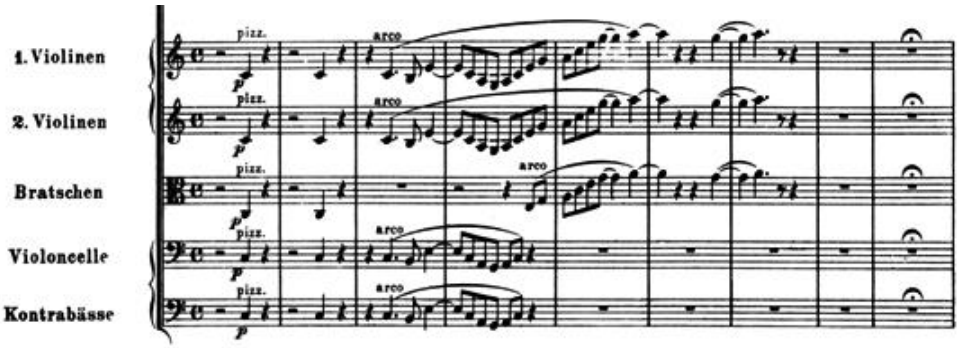
Personally I find d'Indy's claim more plausible, but do believe that the Lisztian connection applies elsewhere. Compare the very opening of the Dukas:



with the opening of the Liszt:



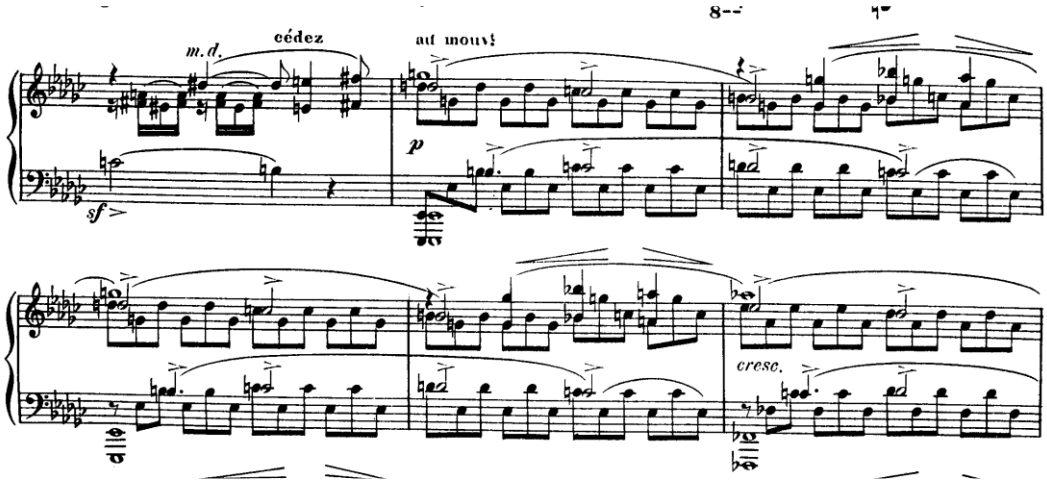
Or for that matter with the opening of Liszt's *Les Préludes* :



For reasons which I have argued elsewhere,[46] I maintain that the staccato wedged notes at the opening of the Liszt – 'damped timpani strokes' according to Liszt – should be played detached and separate from the line which follows, rather than as part of a continuum. The situation is less extreme in the Dukas, as the opening repeated notes are *portato* rather than *staccato,* but nonetheless this influence opens up the possibility of a more dichotomous relationship between the first and second bars, and parallel passages, than might otherwise be imagined.

But the situation is quite different at the following place in the Dukas, oscillating around a C minor triad (which anchors a V-I progression) in a way which creates some almost painful and yearning dissonances:

[46] Ian Pace, 'Conventions, Genres, Practices in the Performance of Liszt's Piano Music', *Liszt Society Journal* 31 (2006), pp. 70-103.



Here the sustained Gs are not the accented part, but the alto voice, which is in an interplay with the fundamental cell.

Precedents for the pianistic figuration of the third movement of the Dukas can be found in works of Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Alkan, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, and Albéniz, and after the composition of the Dukas, in various parts of Albéniz's *Iberia* and Debussy's Prelude, 'La serenade interrompue'. This clearly situates Dukas in a tradition composers for the piano concerned to exploit its colouristic possibilities, and provides a tradition (or rather series of traditions) of musical and performance styles for the work. My choice not to pedal the *sforzandi* in this movement creates a more 'spikey' approach (the pedal diffuses the short accent which creates the 'spike'). This makes the music a little harsher and drier, but also provides for the possibility of linking it to the late work of Debussy and that of Stravinsky in the 1920s. This is a link which I believe to be meaningful over and above the other, arguably more backward-looking, aspects of the work.

So, to draw this to a conclusion in terms of the wider issues of the old in the new for musical performance: there is today an unprecedented accessibility of many materials today, including recordings, scores, other documents, and wider literature. This allows new possibilities for *aware* and *critically engaged* performance. The model I offer to you entails a degree of engagement with the past in preparing an interpretation for the present, which goes beyond a lot of approaches commonly associated with historically-informed performance, though it certainly also overlaps with them.

Something about the presence of the past for listeners, at least those with a more active interest in various music. There is everything to be gained from a concomitant interest and scholarly application of what it enables, as a means of bolstering rather than limiting contemporary creative interpretation. Scholarly work derived from Performance Studies and wider research can fruitfully inform the process of developing an interpretation of this type of piece, and I would commend the approach, if not necessarily all the particular interpretative conclusions, therein.