

**An Investigation into the Performance Interpretations of
Erik Satie's Piano Music through Historical and Contemporary
Recorded Performances that Span from 1955 to 2015**

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Abstract

This study examines the performance interpretations and performance practice of Satie's piano music through historical to recent recordings that span over the last six decades to expose how his works inspire quasi-impromptu pianism, a key term that I coined to refer to performance decisions that are not strictly informed by performance indications or conventional musical cues, but rather by pianists' own imagination provoked by the suggestive power risen from different compositional aspects of Satie's music in addition to the composer's persona. The presence of quasi-impromptu pianism in some pianists' interpretations exposes the need to identify probable causes for the unique interpretative freedom offered by his oeuvres for piano, to which this study responds. To what extent has the reduction of performance directions in Satie's piano music free pianists to diverse interpretations? How did Satie's notational presentation and the inclusion of in-score texts lead pianists to new performance gestures? The absence of recorded performances by Satie of his piano music or documented discussion of the interpretations of his piano works requires questioning: did the lack of Satie's authorial voice free pianists to take on an experimental approach in the performances of his piano music? Does Satie's defiant persona encourage pianists to be spontaneous with their interpretations of his piano music? By conducting performance analysis of recordings between 1955 and 2015, I examine closely the contrasting interpretations by these pianists in response to Satie's musical language and the way the music is presented on notation. Satie's original manuscripts and edited piano scores are also scrutinized critically to show how visual presentation of Satie's piano pieces play a crucial part in stimulating imaginative performance interpretations. I also

interviewed contemporary pianists to gain the rationales for their performance decisions, illuminating the factors that lead to quasi-impromptu pianism in Satie's piano music. These findings recontextualise the existing knowledge of piano performance practice at the turn of the 20th century and re-address the influence of notational presentation on performance interpretation.

Declaration

In regards to the interviews conducted with pianists between 2016 and 2019, consent and approval have been obtained from pianists for the usage of the content in this thesis. I declare that ethics approval for the interviews was obtained according to procedure in place at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the time.

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Notes on the Text

Time code of musical examples

Each time code responds directly to an individual point of discussion, with or without musical example illustrated. The time codes associate with the time code of the links provided in the footnotes. Readers would be directed to the specific track on Spotify website for most cases.

Email quotations

Pianists' email contents have not been edited for the use of grammar or punctuation in order to preserve the original version.

Original French Translation

Unless otherwise stated, English translations to original French texts are my own. English translations for the in-score texts in *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, *Danses gothiques*, *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* and *Sonatine bureaucratique* follow Robert Orledge's translations provided in the 2016 Editions Salabert for consistency.

Full scores in appendix

Where possible, selected and annotated scores are provided as short musical examples in the main body of the thesis. The full scores provide a comprehensive view of the case studies, such as showing the structural position of the section that Poulenc omitted in his recordings or an overview of Satie's manuscripts of *Danses gothiques* in comparison to the 1929 Editions Salabert to demonstrate discrepancies that occur consistently in each of the titled dances across the two versions. For discussion on the application of rubato over consecutive musical systems, the full scores also make my arguments clear to follow.

Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation investigates the performance interpretations of Satie's piano works through historical to recent recordings that span over the last six decades. The period under investigation begins from Francis Poulenc's 1955 recording, which marks the first recording of Satie's piano works to the 2015 recording by Van Veen, the latest recording I could include within the years of research. Performance interpretations of five of Satie's piano pieces as performed by the thirty-four chosen pianists of various musical backgrounds demonstrate an international perspective of the performance interpretation of Satie's piano works. Initially, I began my analytical process with a large pool of pianists' recorded performances, which was eventually reduced down to thirty-four pianists by filtering out performances that were of similar style. The main purpose of evaluating a considerable number of recordings by different pianists is to reflect the scope and diversity in the performance styles of Satie's piano works as much as possible in order to obtain a reliable conclusion. These recorded performances expose marked contrasts in stylistic approach to Satie's piano pieces, which I refer to in this thesis as quasi-impromptu pianism. I coined this key term to denote performance decisions that are not strictly informed by performance indications or conventional musical cues, but rather by pianists' own imagination provoked by the suggestive power of compositional aspects of Satie's music in addition to the composer's persona. I assert that the application of quasi-impromptu pianism in some pianists' interpretations is a reaction to the ambiguity in the performance style of Satie's piano pieces caused by three key issues: 1) The reduction of performance directions and basic notational elements such as time

signatures, bar-lines, phrase lines in some of Satie's piano music, especially the Rose-Croix piano pieces, 2) Satie's musical language, which is distinguishably different from his peers and the presence of unconventional elements within the musical notations. They are for examples, the insertion of blank spaces that appear in different junctures of the music and the inclusion of cryptic or humorous narrative texts in his piano pieces. These elements lead to the debate of whether they could be considered as Satie's performance cues, 3) the lack of Satie's authorial voice, which I pinpoint specifically at the absence of self-recorded performances of Satie's piano music and documented discussion of the interpretation of his piano music despite the availability of his musical compositions, writings and vivid persona as other representations of his authorial voice. The lack of authorial performance style seems to be the composer's deliberate choice especially when Satie lived in the era that saw his contemporaries, such as Debussy and Ravel, documenting the performance practice of their own piano works as well as making piano rolls to preserve their authorial voices in audio form.

In association with the key issues, the ambiguity in performance style faced by pianists who performed Satie's piano music leads to interpretative freedom, which subsequently contributes to quasi-impromptu pianism as performers adopt inventive performance gestures and approaches to tackle performance issues in Satie's piano music. Satie's quasi-religious Rose-Croix piano pieces demonstrate the use of symbolism and numerology. The fact that a perfect cube when unfolded becomes the Holy Cross could be Satie's means to symbolize the religious backcloth of *Ogives*, which could influence performance style (See Chapter Six). The inclusion of cryptic in-score titles and blank spaces in the musical notations, which interrupt the continuous flow of the music in *Danses gothiques* leads pianists to re-evaluate

the purpose of their presence as potential performance criteria despite their non-musical nature in conventional terms. The discrepancies found between Satie's sketch and existing editions of *Danses gothiques* also add to performance challenges faced by pianists (See Chapter Seven). The inclusion of in-score texts alongside some of Satie's piano pieces also challenge performance traditions of whether such texts should provoke pianists' imagination and have an impact on their performance decisions (See Chapters Eight and Nine).

To support my main research aim, I chose to expose the key issues through musical and score analysis of the five case studies. These case studies represent three contrasting styles of piano music by Satie: firstly the Rose-Croix pieces—*Ogives* (1886), *Prélude de la Porte héroïque du ciel* (1894) and *Danses gothiques* (1893); secondly, his texted piano piece—*Croquis et agacerie d'un gros bonhomme en bois* (1913); and finally, another texted piano piece that has been associated with a neoclassical label by contemporary musicologists—*Sonatine bureaucratique* (1917). After the key issues are addressed, discussion proceeds to performance analysis of the chosen recorded performances. Amongst the eleven pianists, Aldo Ciccolini, Cordélia Canabrava Arruda, Jean-Joël Barbier, Klára Körmendi, France Clidat, Olof Höjer, Jean-Pierre Armengaud, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Cristina Ariagno, Bojan Gorišek and Jeroen Van Veen who recorded the complete solo piano works by Satie, I focussed on evaluating the recorded performances by Ciccolini, Arruda, Körmendi, Höjer, Thibaudet, Ariagno and Van Veen in all case studies in order to give consistent samples that make possible the evaluation of the pianists' individual styles across Satie's contrasting piano works. The reason for excluding four pianists' interpretations in the pool of eleven is because the individual styles contributed by the chosen seven pianists are representative of the pool in general. As the remaining

twenty-three chosen pianists have only recorded selected piano works by Satie, this explains why the number of recorded performances being evaluated for each of the case studies sets out in Chapter Six to Nine is lower than thirty-four. The outcomes of some of the performance interpretation analyses were later consolidated and verified by discussion of interpretive issues with pianists who performed the work. The discussion was carried out via email interviews, with the exception of Josu Okiñena, who suggested a verbal dialogue via Whatsapp video for convenience. The interviewing process and the integration of pianists' comments with my performance analytical outcomes mark the third stage of my research procedure. The authorial opinions given by pianists who were interviewed offered explanations and transparency respectively on some of their performance decisions. In some cases, their opinions verify or dismiss my assumption of their interpretative intents, making my analytical model more robust and less subjective. The results of the performance analyses and the dialogues obtained from pianists Peter Dickinson, Eve Egoyan, Philippe Entremont, Bruno Fontaine, Peter Lawson, Branka Parlić, Jeroen van Veen and Josu Okiñena contribute to key findings that shed light on the presence of quasi-impromptu pianism in the performances of Satie's piano music over the last six decades.

My research objectives are divided into two groups. The first group contextualises how some elements of Satie's piano music are distinguishably different from his peers in order to assert that pianists, in response to the unconventionality in Satie's piano works, are searching for new approaches to interpret his works (See Chapter Four). To achieve this, I looked at the historical reception of Satie's piano music through concert talks and performance reviews in order to expose how critics and audiences reacted to Satie's piano music. Amongst

these resources is a concert review of Satie's first-generation pianist, Jane Mortier, which provides a historical reference point for the performance style of Satie's piano pieces in his time. The historical reference is to be used as a benchmark to evaluate the performances by contemporary pianists to find out whether the essence of the performance style of Satie's piano works mentioned by Mortier is being reflected. I also explored how Satie's persona projected by Satie biographies since the mid-20th century could have an impact on pianists' perception of his intention, and subsequently affects their performance interpretations. For the second group of research objectives that deal directly with interpretative issues, I examined the impact Satie's musical language has on pianists' performance decision making. I investigated the effect of Satie's unconventional visual presentation of his piano music, namely the presence of blank spaces and sub-titles that disrupt the continuous flow of music, has on performance interpretation. I also examined the impact of the in-score texts, both cryptic and humorous, on performance interpretation. By analysing historical and contemporary recorded performances of Satie's piano music of the last six decades and conducting interviews with available pianists after the analytical process, the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music can reveal a deeper understanding of the rationale behind some of the performance choices made by current pianists that are not necessarily informed by traditional musical characteristics, such as rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality, form and structure, etc.

In the process of reviewing existing literature, it came to my attention that Satie's piano works are often excluded in current performance practice research. The isolation of Satie's piano works in performance practice literature denotes that Satie's piano works are considered to be trivial in comparison to the rest of his oeuvre or the fact that the style of his piano music is considered far too incongruent

to be discussed alongside his peers such as Debussy and Ravel. Amongst other performance practice literature that specializes in French piano repertoire, such as Roy Howat's *The Art of French Piano Music*, case studies mainly focus on Debussy, Ravel, Fauré and Chabrier despite mentioning Satie a handful of times in passing alongside his contemporaries. For instance, Satie's *Gymnopédies* are briefly mentioned by Howat as a 'salute' from Ravel to Satie because of Ravel's frequent use of unresolved seventh chords in his solo piano pieces.¹ As another example in *Perspectives on the Performance of French Piano Music* by Lesley A. Wright and Scott McCarrey, the authors express Satie as one of the significant French composers but is yet to be included in their research on the grounds that the volume is not meant to be comprehensive.² In performance practice literature that does not specialize only in French piano pieces, Satie's piano works are simply missing in all discussion. For example, Richard Hudson, who examines in great depth the use of different types of rubato across centuries in *Stolen Time*, also overlooks Satie's piano works but includes Satie's contemporaries in his discussion.³

Even within the domain of Satie scholarship, discussion of the performance issues of his piano pieces is largely ignored. Biographers Pierre-Daniel Templier,⁴ Rollo Myers,⁵ and James Harding offer descriptive account of Satie without in-depth discussion of his piano music.⁶ For instance when Myers writes about Satie's piano music, he begins his chapter with the discussion of *Sarabandes*, overlooking the earlier piano composition *Ogives*, which establishes the music aesthetic for the

¹ Roy Howat, *The Art Of French Piano Music* (repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 32.

² Scott McCarrey and Lesley Alison Wright, *Perspectives On The Performance Of French Piano Music* (repr., Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 5.

³ Richard Hudson, *Stolen Time* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 334, 337-8.

⁴ Pierre-Daniel Templier, *Erik Satie* (repr., Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1932). trans. Elena and David French (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969).

⁵ Rollo Myers, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Dennis Dobson, 1948), 67.

⁶ James Harding, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Secker & Warburg, 1975).

subsequent *Rose-Croix* piano works. Myers gives descriptions of Satie's harmonies such as 'so strangely daring in 1887 to ears accustomed to the suavities of Massenet and Gounod' but without actual musical analysis to justify his opinions.⁷ A decade later, Alan Gillmor's Satie biography shows a clear direction and effort to include many more musical examples of the composer's piano works and discuss these musical examples through musical analysis instead of giving purely subjective and descriptive comments as Meyer did.⁸ For example, when addressing the 'strangely daring' harmonies in *Sarabandes*, Gillmor explains analytically that 'chains of unprepared seventh and ninth chords, which later become major stylistic features of the Rose-Croix music, are first used methodically in the three *Sarabandes* for piano'.⁹ Satie biographies by Robert Orledge—*Satie the Composer*¹⁰ and Steven Moore Whiting—*Satie the Bohemian*¹¹ are considered groundbreaking as each of these volumes provides detailed musical analysis of Satie's music, which brings attention to Satie's modernist musical language and his invention of new musical forms and structures. While Orledge investigates Satie's compositional logic and exposes his musical language by examining his sketches and manuscripts, Whiting focuses on Satie's compositional logic in association with the popular music culture that he had been submerged in since his cabaret years. Despite the provision of detailed analytical work by Orledge and Whiting, no further attempts have been made to utilise their analytical findings to shed light on the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music given how controversial he was as a French composer at the turn of the century. For example, as a pianist I would question how

⁷ Rollo Myers, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Dennis Dobson, 1948): 67.

⁸ Alan Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Macmillan Press, 1988).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹¹ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

performers interpret and express mysticism in performance in relation to Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces? Orledge provides musical analysis on how Satie's motifs (the consecutive block chords that he named as 'cells') connect from one to another in the atypical Rose-Croix pieces and so, how could these block chords be performed if they are all supposedly self-contained melodic cells?¹² As for Whiting, in his chapter 'Satie's humoristic works for piano', he discovers Satie's musical borrowing and gives insights on how Satie would distort the original melodies in order to fit his own musical setting.¹³ How would pianists deliver the humor in performances or should they make the humour explicit for the audience?

Most of Satie's piano pieces can be categorized as intermediate piano pieces which are short and small-scaled. The so-called lesser form piano composition is a by-product of Satie's reaction to the overwhelming acceptance of virtuosity in composition and performance. Perhaps, it is the non-virtuosic profile of Satie's piano music that discourages performance practice research of his piano pieces. *Vexations* (1892–3), composed during the Rose-Croix years is the only Satie piano piece that drew public's attention to the extent that pianists found it worthy to broadcast the post-performance discussion.¹⁴ In 1963, John Cage initiated the collaborative performance project of *Vexations* (1892–3), a piano piece that involves the repeats of a short 'motif' for 840 times.¹⁵ Gavin Bryars described how pianists would approach the piece in the same performance with styles that were 'quite diverse, a variety—quite extreme, from the most sober and cautious to the wilful and effusive...'¹⁶ The

¹² Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 186.

¹³ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 354–416

¹⁴ "John Cale - I've Got A Secret - Higher Resolution", Youtube, accessed 4 September 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mqO-xsRyTM>.

Broadcast date: 16 September 1963

¹⁵ Gavin Bryars, "'Vexations' And Its Performance", 2004,

<http://www.gavinbryars.com/work/writing/occasional-writings/vexations-and-its-performers>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

contrasting tempos ranging from 12 to 24 hours in duration is also documented.¹⁷ The performance practice research that was carried out for *Vexations* was a one-off and remains so today. This piece deserves a mention in public due to its controversial nature. In order to give a complete continuous performance in Satie's tempo term *très lent*, it could easily last a whole day. This simply means that it is not possible to be performed only by one soloist. In a way, *Vexations* is a virtuosic piece in its own right. As studies on the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music are far and few between, I, as a pianist, challenge such isolation and call for the need to re-think the potential contribution of the study of performance interpretations of Satie's piano works could offer to mainstream performance studies. The significant exclusion of Satie's piano works in the performance studies field of 20th century French piano music largely curbs guidance in the performance of Satie piano work for later-generation pianists. All things considered, it is also necessary to question: Under the influence of existing literature on Satie, do current pianists interpret Satie's piano music with a different attitude compared to historical pianists who would have adhered to 20th century performance style?

Overview of the thesis

This thesis is divided into three parts: Part One, 'Historical and Cultural contents', consists of the Introduction (Chapter One), Literature Review (Chapter Two), Methodology (Chapter Three) and Contextualisation of Satie's unconventionality (Chapter Four). These four chapters provide the context for researching the performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Part Two, ‘Performance analysis’, includes the initial chapter ‘Medieval themes and symbolism in Satie’s Rose-Croix piano pieces’ (Chapter Five) that focuses on the musical style of Rose-Croix pieces. This chapter prepares the subsequent Rose-Croix performance evaluation chapters by illuminating how Rose-Croix pieces could be interpreted and how Satie’s use of symbolism, as I claim, could influence performance decisions. *Ogives* (1886) and *Danses gothiques* (1893) are chosen to illustrate how melodies, harmonies and overall structure of these pieces amongst other musical elements, contribute to a quasi-religious setting. As a pianist, I offer performance suggestions based on my musical analysis of the two pieces. Strictly speaking, *Ogives* is not a *Rose-Croix* piano piece as it was composed much earlier than Satie’s *Rose-Croix* piano music period. However, the musical language of *Ogives* foreshadows that of the *Rose-Croix* pieces composed a few years later and I endorse the relevance to be included as part of the *Rose-Croix* pieces case studies. The musical analysis of *Ogives* suggests that Satie proposed the quasi-religious setting through the use of symbolism and numerology, which I refer to as ‘extra-musical determinants’ (See Chapter Three). As such, religious subject matter such as the cathedral structure, the Holy Cross as well as the sound or reverb generated within a cathedral become viable connections that pianists could make in their performances. The examination of *Danses gothiques* as the second illustrative example of *Rose-Croix* piano pieces focuses on the use of symbolism through the inclusion of sub-titles and blank spaces that visually disrupt the supposedly continuous music. I refer to the disruptive elements as ‘in-score visual stimuli’ (See Chapter Three). *Danses gothiques* raises a significant performance question, which challenges pianists to evaluate the validity of welcoming ‘extra-musical determinants’ and ‘in-score visual stimuli’ as performance criteria to inform

interpretation. Such performance criteria could influence tempo choice, shape the musical structure, or even lead to performance gestures that symbolise specific meanings in *Danses gothiques*. I have chosen to include the poem *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le hasard* (A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish chance) by Mallarmé in my discussion to illuminate how visual stimuli could impact the speed the reader scans the words and as a result, provide deeper meanings to the poem in addition to the meaning suggested by the words themselves. Both artistic works, *Danses gothiques* and *Un Coup de Dés* share many similarities, which allow the inclusion of blank spaces to play a vital role in affecting the delivery of the texts: in Satie's case, the musical notes and in Mallarmé's, the words. This chapter provides the analytical details needed for my evaluation of performance interpretations of *Ogives* and *Danses gothiques* in Chapter Six and Seven respectively.

Chapter Six 'Quasi-impromptu pianism in *Rose-Croix* piano music' investigates the performance interpretations of *Ogives* and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* (1894) and exposes creative ways that pianists of the last six decades reflect the mystic and quasi-religious content of the Rose-Croix piano pieces. The paucity of performance directions in these piano pieces as one of the main causes of interpretations is also highlighted. The selected pianists range chronologically from Bill Quist's 1965 recording¹⁸ to Van Veen's 2015 recording¹⁹ in the case of *Ogives* and from Francis Poulenc's 1955 recording²⁰ to Van Veen's 2015 recording²¹ for *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*. The creative interpretations of the Rose-Croix piano pieces demonstrated by the selected pianists

¹⁸ Aldo Ciccolini, *Satie L'Œuvre Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: EMI Music France, 2001).

¹⁹ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., Brilliant Classics, 2016).

²⁰ Francis Poulenc, *Socrate/ Messe Des Pauvres/ Poulenc Piano Pieces*, CD (repr., Cherry Red Records, EL, 2007).

²¹ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., Brilliant Classics, 2016).

are discussed, and to further enrich the analytical outcomes, pianists Eve Egoyan and Branka Parlić provide further comments on how they gesture the mysticism found in the Rose-Croix piano pieces that have few performance indications. Their opinions verify my analytical findings of their recorded performances and also reveal practical issues pianists face when performing Satie's *Rose-Croix* music. This chapter demonstrates how Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces can be approached from different perspectives, a mindset that frees pianists from conventions and encourages open interpretations which contribute to quasi-impromptu pianism, the essence of the performance style of Satie's piano music.

Chapter Seven 'Quasi-impromptu pianism in response to in-score textual and visual stimuli in *Danses gothiques*' aims to examine whether the inclusion of numbered sub-titles and notation-less blank spaces which break up the continuous flow of the musical notation and have an impact on pianists' performance interpretations. The problem of inconsistencies found in Satie's manuscript, the 1929 and 2016 Editions Salaberts and how they could lead to performance decisions are also investigated in this chapter. In terms of the inclusion of blank spaces in the score, *Danses gothiques* in the 1929 Editions Salabert was edited and put together by Milhaud who preserved Satie's notational style by keeping the blank spaces more or less the same way as Satie did in his manuscript. However, in the 2016 Editions Salabert edited by Orledge, all blank spaces have been edited out suggesting the editor's intention to discount the visual stimuli as crucial elements that could possibly influence performance interpretation. The problem of inconsistencies illuminates the continuous thread of the lack of Satie's authorial voice: the absence of self-recorded performances of his piano music and documented discussion of the interpretation of his piano music, as one of the key issues in the performance of his

Rose-Croix piano pieces. By allowing visual stimuli to influence performance interpretation, pianists re-evaluate the validity of using non-musical elements to act as cues that are traditionally considered expression indications. In response to the visual impact *Un Coup de Dés* has on readers and the performance evaluation outcomes, I claim that Satie has created the opportunity in *Danses gothiques* for pianists to legitimize a new form of performance cues that I refer to as the in-score visual stimuli. This is evidenced by some recorded performances demonstrating moments of silence at blank spaces and at junctures where interrupting titles are present. My discovery of pianists legitimizing in-score visual stimuli as performance cues is significant as it is a concept that has not yet been acknowledged in 20th century French piano performance practice.

Chapter Eight ‘Quasi-impromptu pianism in texted piano piece *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois* (1913)’ includes ‘Danse maigre’ as a case study to investigate one of Satie’s so-called ‘humoristic’ piano compositions which span from 1912–1914. The function of the in-score texts in ‘Danse maigre’ remains unclear to pianists, as they appear to be ambiguous and irrelevant to the music for most part but with a few occasions when the in-score texts could almost be interpreted as performance directions. In regard to the function of the in-score texts in connection with the music and their potential contribution as a performance interpretive criterion, I obtain opinions given by historical music critic, Satie’s contemporary Francis Poulenc and current musicologists such as Orledge, Whiting and Potter. By combining the historical and current opinions on Satie’s in-score texts, my own interpretation of the in-score texts and musical analysis of ‘Danse maigre’ and the performance evaluation outcomes, I claimed that the in-score texts could influence performance decisions, acting as in-score textual stimuli, a new

interpretive criterion that I added to the modified analytical model (See Chapter Three, p. 62). Potter has recently reframed Satie's humoristic piano pieces as texted piano works and claimed that in addition to the humor [carried by the in-score texts] that is often seen to be separated from the music, the texts might bring possible extramusical associations to the music.²² Potter's claim draws attention to the interdisciplinary nature of the texted piano pieces, a notion that I strongly agree with. The performance evaluation outcomes expose different approaches adopted by the historical and contemporary pianists, whose interpretations and performance gestures lead to quasi-impromptu pianism in *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*. The humoristic approach, conservative approach with pianists performing without any humoristic gesture, and the experimental approach with pianists allowing in-score texts to function as a form of interpretive criterion are identified amongst twelve recorded performances. The performance evaluation outcomes that reflect the three different approaches are discussed in regard to three main categories: 1) pianists' tempo choices, 2) performance interpretations for the minstrel/cakewalk music reference suggested by the rhythmic characteristics in *Danse maigre*, and 3) creative interpretations and performance gestures led by the in-score textual stimuli. Interviews with Philippe Entremont, Jeroen van Veen and Josu Okiñena illuminate the psychological impact Satie's in-score texts have on them as performers of these texted piano pieces. Their comments provide valuable insights for the performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces, which could not be sought simply through performance and score analysis. The interview dialogues provide justification, from pianists' points of view, on the causes of quasi-impromptu pianism in Satie's texted piano pieces.

²² Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie* (repr., Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 98-137.

Chapter Nine ‘Quasi-impromptu pianism in the texted piano piece *Sonatine bureaucratique* (1917)’ examines the performance interpretations which combines heavy reference to Clementi’s *Sonatina in C major*, op. 36, no.1. with Satie’s musical language and the use of in-score texts that give a humoristic narrative alongside the music. This chapter begins by exposing different viewpoints musicologists have on *Sonatine bureaucratique*, with Orledge and Whiting asserting it being a neoclassical piano work,²³ and on the contrary, Belva Jean Hare²⁴ and Ann-Marie Hanlon²⁵ claiming that it is a pure parody that mocks the uninspiring practice of composing with traditional forms. I put forward my claim that *Sonatine bureaucratique* is a pure parody supported by the close relationship between the music and the in-score texts, in order to show that the inter-disciplinary elements work together to reach this goal. The performance evaluation outcomes show two distinctive approaches with some pianists adhering to classically aware interpretations and others choosing to highlight *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a parody and perform with experimental and creative gestures. Peter Lawson, Bruno Fontaine and Jeroen van Veen expressed, during email interviews, the effect of in-score texts in *Sonatine bureaucratique* had on them and how it could lead to quasi-impromptu pianism; and equally, how there are factors that lead to a reserved performance approach. This chapter offers the final piece of evidence to consolidate my claim that non-musical stimuli, such as the textual stimuli in this case, can act as crucial interpretive criteria for the performance of Satie’s texted piano pieces.

²³ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26. Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 488.

²⁴ Belva Jean Hare, "The Uses And Aesthetics Of Musical Borrowing In Erik Satie’S Humoristic Piano Suites, 1913-1917" (PhD, repr., University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 91.

²⁵ Ann-Marie Hanlon, "Satie And The Meaning Of The Comic", in *Erik Satie: Music, Art And Literature*, 1st ed. (repr., Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 45.

Final conclusions are given in Chapter Ten, Part Three of the thesis, followed by the appendices. The conclusion chapter includes an overview of the performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces from an international perspective that spans from 1960s to 2010s.²⁶ The seven selected pianists Ciccolini, Höjer, Armengaud, Thibaudet, Ariagno and Van Veen with their recorded performances of all five case studies illuminate the variation in coherence of interpretative approach. I also review the concluded evaluation outcomes with the remarks made by Satie's first-generation pianist Jane Mortier to demonstrate the ongoing psychological impact Satie's piano music has on current pianists. Together with the lack of Satie's authorial voice in the form of recorded discussion and own performances of his piano works, I conclude that quasi-impromptu pianism amongst pianists over the past decades will continue into the future as an essential part of the performance practice fueled by the key issues identified in this thesis.

Key findings

This dissertation offers three original findings and new perspectives: 1) a new form of rubato, which I coin 'section rubato', describing the sudden tempo change together with a delivery of mood change as a reaction to the appearance of a brief section of incongruent musical ideas despite the fact that no tempo changing indication is given by Satie. 2) New performance interpretative criteria are developed in response to unconventionality found in Satie's piano pieces, which includes the in-score visual stimuli, non-musical in-score textual stimuli and extra-

²⁶ Since Poulenc did not record *Sonatine bureaucratique* in 1955, Ciccolini's recording is the earliest one available.

musical determinants. 3) Satie's persona plays a partial role in influencing pianists' perception of the composer's intention in his piano pieces, which subsequently makes an impact on their performance styles.

In sum, Satie's piano compositions have become a vehicle for pianists to perform with freedom, originality and imagination, which are vital ingredients that contribute to the quasi-impromptu pianism in the performance of Satie's piano pieces.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

To explore the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music, I choose to begin with contextualising unconventionality found in his piano music in comparison to his peers and exploring Satie's persona as a musician and an individual. These two areas correspond directly to the key issues for the performance interpretation of Satie's piano music faced by performers (See Chapter One, pp.1–2). To contextualize unconventionality in Satie's piano music, I first compare musical analyses of piano works by Satie and Debussy to identify how distinguishably different Satie's musical language is, compared with another piano composer of the same nationality and era. Secondly, I also give historical reference points on the unconventionality found in Satie's piano pieces by consulting historical concert reviews by critics who singled out Satie's piano music as incompatible and provocative to mainstream musical reception at the turn of the century France. With regard to exploring Satie's persona, my viewpoint is established through information gathered from Satie's biographies as well as historical comments on Satie made by his contemporary, Francis Poulenc.

As my research method mainly focuses on the comparison of recorded performances of Satie's piano music by historical and contemporary pianists internationally rather than limiting to the French domain, I have prioritised sources written in English. By consulting the available English translated texts, the research project is sufficiently supplied by the ample information on Satie necessary to

generate assessment criteria for the evaluation of recorded performances of his piano music. Early literature on Satie comprises mostly descriptive biographies, addressing Satie's lifetime events and providing only a brief account of his musical output. The unbalanced account exposes insufficient scrutiny of a relationship between Satie's persona and his music. To remedy the narrow-ranging content, subsequent Satie biographies show more comprehensive content by stitching together Satie's life events, his compositional styles, logic and musical examples with more detailed analysis. Another type of Satie biography includes mainly translated primary resources such as Satie's own writings and personal letters. These personal writings also contribute to the forming of his image and persona through his own words.

Moving on to literature that deals with performance issues, there are two types of publication that are potentially informative to my research topic. The first type examines 20th century French piano music performance practice and the second type focuses on specific performance practice topics, for instance the study of rubato. Atypically, Satie's music aesthetic has pushed his piano music outside the mainstream. The relevance of applying performance practice associated with 20th century French piano music to the performance of Satie's piano works can therefore be challenged.

The performance analysis of audio recordings of Satie's piano music is the backbone of my research methodology as the analytical results act as vital evidence to support my assertion that quasi-impromptu pianism *is* an integral part of the performance practice of Satie's piano music (See Chapters Six to Nine). The lack of authorial recordings of his piano pieces, identified as one of the key issues in this thesis, is compensated by the abundant number of recordings made between 1955 to recent years by international pianists who specialize in repertoire that vary in genres

and periods. The highly contrasting performance styles demonstrated by the recordings not only support my claim that quasi-impromptu pianism is inevitable in the performance practice of Satie's piano music, they also verify how the ambiguity of Satie's musical notation, another key issue, is another cause for freedom in interpretation. The wide range of performance styles for Satie's piano pieces makes it difficult for musicologists or analysts to pinpoint his oeuvres to a specific category in mainstream performance discussion, which could explain why, to present days, Satie's piano music is still excluded in performance practice literature.

Different editions of Satie's piano music scores play an influential part in the performance interpretations of his piano pieces. Discrepancies can be found in the use of phrase markings, metronome markings for tempo terms, the positioning of Satie's in-score texts as well as the editors' decisions to embed the blank spaces within the musical notation or exclude them altogether. In the former case, they interrupt the way pianists scan the supposedly continuous musical phrases as found in Satie's notebook, whereas in the latter, there are no visual interruptions. The comparison of 1929 Rouart, Lerolle & Cie and 2016 Editions Salabert for *Danses gothiques* (See Chapter Seven) illuminates how these editions could direct pianists to different interpretations, providing another cause for contrasting performance styles in Satie's piano pieces.

The unpublished PhD theses by Ann-Marie Hanlon, Alexander Simmons and Iwan Lleyelyn-Jones in the last decade further confirm my observation that performance practice research of Satie's piano music continues to be under-represented (See pp. 39). In comparison to the copious piano performance practice

research conducted for Satie's contemporaries such as Debussy and Ravel, my thesis addresses a marked imbalance in the field.²⁷

Audio recordings of Satie's piano music

In an era when the production of piano rolls made it possible to record the historical performance style of composers' piano pieces, like the many piano rolls that Debussy had produced, the lack of Satie's piano roll recordings has brought limitation to my research project. Without Satie's authorial recording of his piano pieces, answers to performance questions such as whether in-score texts lead to specific performance gestures can never be sought. The lack of primary resources to illuminate the historical performance style of Satie's piano music encourages the freedom of interpretation, providing favourable conditions for quasi-impromptu pianism to evolve. To my knowledge, Poulenc's recording in 1955 is the earliest Satie piano music recording available, which is the only historical audio reference accessible by contemporary pianists to capture a glimpse of the Satie-generation French performance style for his piano music. Since then, his music has gone off the radar and so has the production of the recordings of his piano music until the 1963 performance and Aldo Ciccolini's 1967 recording of Satie's complete piano works and. Following the first revival of Satie's fame by Ravel during the composer's lifetime in 1911, John Cage brought the second revival in 1963 through the public

²⁷ Performance practice literature on piano music by Debussy and Ravel can be found under the section 'Performance Practice Literature' on page 13–16. Additional literature is, for example, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* and *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*. Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion To Debussy* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Deborah Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion To Ravel* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

performance of *Vexations* at the Pocket Theatre in New York.²⁸ The public performance of *Vexations* that lasted 19 hours 40 minutes could be the turning point for Satie's posthumous fame as it marked the beginning of a constant supply of recordings of Satie's piano works, which continues to be the case until the present day. It is worth noting that amongst the pianists who recorded Satie's piano pieces, their educational backgrounds, career paths and performance repertoire show a high degree of diversity that is unusual in the performance world of Classical piano music. While some performers specialize in classical music repertoire, others are musically trained as jazz pianists. There are also a handful of performers who are composer-pianists of film music and experimental music, challenging the expected norm of classical pianists performing classical piano works. There are two contemporary recordings that use a period instrument, the Érard piano, one by Linda Burman-Hall (2004) and another by Noriko Ogawa (2016) suggesting that the attempt to achieve a historically informed performance of Satie's piano music is in some pianists' awareness (See Chapters Six to Eight).

Different editions of Satie's piano music

With the abundant editions of Satie's piano music, I aim to focus on discussing editions that are relevant to my case studies and avoid the mention of all available editions for the sake of compiling a comprehensive list of publishers of Satie's piano works. Editions Salabert (1998) is an accessible edition as it includes the majority of Satie's piano pieces in one volume, from which copious pieces were previously

²⁸ Gavin Bryars, "'Vexations' And Its Performers | Gavin Bryars", *Gavinbryars.Com*, accessed 11 January 2010, <http://www.gavinbryars.com/work/writing/occasional-writings/vexations-and-its-performers>.

published under Rouart, Lerolle & Cie. (1908–1953) during the composer’s lifetime, making this edition almost the ‘urtext’ version for Satie’s piano pieces. For piano pieces that were not published under Rouart and Lerolle, such as *Ogives* by Imprimerie Dupré in 1889, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* in *Le Cœur* in 1894 before Rouart-Lerolle’s re-print in 1913, *Sonatine bureaucratique* by Stéphane Chapelier in 1917 and *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois* by E. Demets in 1913, they were later re-edited and published by others such as SOUNDkiosk edited by James Crofts in 2009, Barenreiter for *Ogives* in 2016, Cramer Music for *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois* in 1992 and Editions Combre in 1974 for *Sonatine bureaucratique*.

In 2016, Orledge re-edited Satie’s complete piano works with more clarity and accuracy with the aim of providing a user-friendly performance edition. To do so, Orledge provided suggested tempo marking for all the pieces as reference. Above all, what strikes me in Orledge’s edition is how he revised the notational presentation for *Danses gothiques* by getting rid of all the blank spaces that appear in the previous Salabert edition as well as Satie’s original sketch. Orledge expressed in our personal correspondence that apart from the gaps [the visual blank spaces] between pieces within *Danses gothiques*, the rest of the gaps were ‘Salabert’s attempt to space the pages out better... and Satie would not have seen the posthumous edition’.²⁹ Orledge mentioned that as ‘it was Milhaud’s work [to place the additional spaces in the piece]... any pianist who observes the spaces in the Editions Salabert is mistaken.’³⁰ Orledge’s newly edited *Danses gothiques* firmly dismisses the significance of the blank space visual stimuli as an influential element for pianists’

²⁹ Robert Orledge Grace Gatesto , "Danses Gothiques – New Edition", email, 2016.

³⁰ Ibid.

performance styles by removing all the blank spaces in the notation, even the ones that Satie incorporated in his original sketch. From a pianist's point of view, I strongly oppose this notion of ruling out the visual stimuli that these blank spaces may have on performers, a potential performance criterion that I assert would influence performance style (See Chapters Three and Seven). It also seems totally redundant for Satie to include the blank spaces in the musical notation of *Danses gothiques* in his sketchbook, and for Milhaud to insert the blanks for the Salabert edition only to be ignored entirely. I am also not convinced why Salabert would need to 'space the pages out better' for this particular piece but not in any other Satie's piano pieces. With regard to the textual and visual stimuli, Orledge makes a conscious decision in the editing process of *Sonatine bureaucratique* to split some of the narrative phrases into two detached parts and to separate them by a few measures of music. Orledge's deliberate choice of re-positioning the words raises questions on the functions of Satie's in-score texts in relation to the music. If the in-score texts are to be ignored by performers as well, surely, there is no need to reposition the words provided that they bear no significance in influencing performance decisions.

Literature on Satie

To date, literature on Satie captures his ever-changing image, such as the lazy conservatory music student highlighted by Alan Gillmor,³¹ the drunken cabaret pianist and esoteric priestly 'medieval' man as asserted by Robert Orledge,³² the velvet suited Bohemian claimed by Steven Moore Whiting,³³ and the avant-garde

³¹ Alan Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Macmillan Press, 1988)

³² Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³³ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

bourgeois acquaintance stated by Mary E. Davis.³⁴ The colourful image of Satie is further enriched by the amusing stories of him as a composer who was sensitive with a fierce temper, a (cabaret) pianist who gathered courage by consuming an excessive amount of alcohol in order to play on piano in front of an audience, a writer who expressed his opinions mostly in mockery and humour and never seriously discussed his own music, and an educator who enjoyed teaching music to young children. Combining these images and stories, Satie was commonly portrayed as an individual who could be self-conflicted and rebellious to established rules and traditions. Pierre-Daniel Templier,³⁵ Rollo Myers,³⁶ James Harding,³⁷ and Alan Gillmor portray Satie through their story-telling biographies,³⁸ unfolding Satie's life events in chronological order. As the first Satie biographer to give an authentic account of the composer, Pierre-Daniel Templier, whose father Alexandre was a neighbour friend of Satie in Arcueil, spares approximately twenty pages respectively on discussing Satie 'The Man' and another short thirty pages on Satie's piano pieces, without connecting the compositions to any performance issues. Templier would give statements such as 'wit and laughter came naturally to him'. In the commentaries to his piano pieces, sentence such as 'he is a little tense and his humor is a disguise' is written to give brief insight on how Satie reacted to his piano music, but nothing of a deep discussion that would illuminate the performance interpretation of his piano pieces.³⁹ Like the rest of the biographies by authors listed above, the emphasis often lies on Satie the person rather than Satie the composer as if his personality attracts

³⁴ Mary E. Davis, *Erik Satie* (repr., Reaktion Books, 2007).

³⁵ Pierre-Daniel Templier, *Erik Satie* (repr., Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1932). English translation edition: Pierre Daniel Templier, Elena L French and David S French, *Erik Satie* (repr., Cambridge (Mass.): M.I.T. Press, 1969).

³⁶ Rollo Myers, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Dennis Dobson, 1948).

³⁷ James Harding, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Secker & Warburg, 1975).

³⁸ Alan M Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Macmillan Press, 1988).

³⁹ Pierre Daniel Templier, Elena L French and David S French, *Erik Satie* (repr., Cambridge (Mass.): M.I.T. Press, 1969), 63.

more attention than his music. For example, when mentioning the humorous in-score texts of *Gnossiennes*, Templier describes it as ‘a device intended to unsettle the faithful and to force them to unmask the music’,⁴⁰ a subjective opinion that lacks further supportive evidence. The supposedly musical discussion by Templier has somehow drawn attention to Satie’s character of being mysterious and defiant, rather than examining how in-score texts function with the music. Templier sees Satie as ‘a free soul, [who] deliberately wanted to remain detached’. He adds that ‘it is difficult to define clearly any one aspect of Satie’s character, because of the strange contradictions that destroy any conclusion one may reach.’⁴¹ Templier’s projection of Satie’s character could have great impact on pianists’ perception on his piano works in a sense that *nothing* is set in stone for Satie. The notion of being free and not pigeonholing or fixating on a specific performance approach echoes Satie’s motto in life.

In James Harding’s biography of Satie, the author attempted to comment on Satie’s music and his use of in-score texts, to which he claims: ‘His passion for dressing up the music with words attains a riotous flowering with these last piano pieces’ and ‘Text and music are entirely independent.’⁴² To reach such strong statements on Satie’s texted piano music without thorough examination of the potential link between text and music in Satie’s piano work sees the limitation of this biography with regard to the discussion of Satie’s piano music.

Satie’s need to change his public image constantly and express such changes with his piano composition is proposed by Mary E. Davis whose Satie biography widens connections made between Satie and his music through the examination of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 77.

⁴¹ Ibid., 59.

⁴² James Harding, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Secker & Warburg, 1975), 126–127.

the role of fashion on Satie. As Davis puts it: ‘Satie perceived the link between public image and professional recognition, and throughout his career manipulated his look to conform to his artistic aims.’⁴³ Davis’ study of Satie exposes his physical appearance as visual correspondence to his musical output. Davis’ opinions on Satie’s qualities, which form his persona of the contradictory, free-spirited character and changing public image, could impact the way pianists respond to his piano music and eventually affect performance interpretation.

In 1965, Patrick Gowers published a detailed analysis of Satie’s Rose-Croix music, which brings this odd collection of quasi-religious piano pieces to the foreground of Satie’s piano music research.⁴⁴ Gowers’ publication unfolds a musical language that is unique to his Rose-Croix pieces, namely the consecutive block chords, unresolved seventh chords and a group of block chords that forms a musical unit in order to punctuate the piece in replacement of the use of cadences. I speculate that Gowers’ analysis of Satie’s Rose-Croix music has prompted subsequent Satie scholars to write about the composer and in addition, focus more on in-depth musical analysis of his musical works in order to highlight his musical output as mutual guide to his lifetime events.

Alan Gillmor’s biography of Satie published in 1988 foreshadows Robert Orledge’s 1990 autograph *Satie the Composer* in a sense that both authors provide detailed analytical examples of Satie’s music as supportive evidence when statements on Satie’s persona are made. For example, in order to demonstrate Satie’s witty sense of humor in response to the in-score texts ‘Plaza Clichy’ and ‘Rue de Madrid’, Gillmor shows how Satie harmonized his “Españaña”, a melodic theme

⁴³ Mary E. Davis, *Erik Satie* (repr., Reaktion Books, 2007), 12.

⁴⁴ Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1.

taken from Chabrier's *España*, with the first time using dissonant bitonal harmonization and the second time with a 'traditional' harmonization that one would expect to use as a conservatoire student in a composition class. The in-score text 'Rue de Madrid' leads to possible mockery by Satie as he might have introduced the 'traditional' harmony in order to represent the Paris Conservatoire, which has relocated to rue de Madrid since 1911.⁴⁵ Compared to previous authors of Satie biography, Gillmor is the first to include analysed musical examples of Satie's music in greater depth.⁴⁶ In *Satie the Composer*, Orledge investigates Satie's compositional logic and music aesthetic in great length by examining his sketches and conducting detailed melodic, harmonic and structural analysis.⁴⁷ Through this, Satie's character of being meticulous, humorous and defiant is reflected and is well supported with analytical evidence rather than a merely subjective account given by the author.

Steven Moore Whiting, on the other hand, investigates how popular music influenced Satie's composition and deconstructs his humoristic piano works (the texted piano pieces).⁴⁸ To magnify Satie's close connection with the popular music influence, Whiting examines in detail in part II of his book 'Satie's Involvement in Popular Milieux', giving background context to how the composer became familiar with popular songs by spending years in the Parisian cabarets.

The most recent publication on Satie by Caroline Potter explores the close connection between Satie's changing musical style and the evolution of the Parisian world during his time.⁴⁹ Instead of focusing on the divide of musical genre, 'classical' versus 'popular', Potter pinpoints particular unconventionalities in Satie's

⁴⁵ Alan Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., London: Macmillan Press, 1988), 165.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴⁸ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

⁴⁹ Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016).

composition and makes connections between these elements and Satie's outside world. For instance, Potter discusses Satie's texted piano music and how his absurd and humoristic texts alongside the notation are in fact, more often than not, related to the real world that Satie shared and not merely arbitrary words set in some sort of fantasie world.⁵⁰ Potter's discovery strengthens the connection between the co-existence of texts and music as well as offering a sense of purpose to the seemingly fun-provoking texts. The possibility of the connection between the text, music and Satie's surroundings could also encourage performers to make an attempt to decode the in-score texts. This avoids performers ignoring the in-score texts, regarding them as random jokes, which may curb inspiration and influence performance interpretation. Performance issues in relation to the interpretation of the texts in musical performance are raised by Potter, to which my thesis responds (See Chapters Eight and Nine).

Ornella Volta's extensive work of compiling Satie's life-long writings, personal letters and drawings offers a unique kind of Satie biography that has less of an author's subjective tone. Writing such as the ironic 'Who I Am' written by the composer himself, and other writings that feature in 'Memories of an Amnesiac', projects Satie's image through his own words. The candid dialogues Satie had with family, friends and collaborators that are displayed in *Satie Seen Through His Letters* expose Satie's private life and also the relationships he had with his collaborators and pianists who performed his piano works.⁵¹

In 1996, Anthony Melville offered the translation of Satie's written texts for the piano music in *Mammal's Notebook*, which provided an interpretation of the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 98-137.

⁵¹ Erik Satie et al., *Satie, Seen Through His Letters*, 2nd ed. (repr., London: Marion Boyars, 1994).

original French texts. As seen in *Satie Complete Works for Piano* edited by Orledge in 2016, the translation given for the texted piano pieces is more or less the same as Melville's given two decades ago (See Chapters Six and Eight). Since these in-score texts do not always appear to be performance terms, interpretations of their meanings can be vastly diverse, as Potter highlights that Satie's texts could carry 'many possible meanings in different contexts.'⁵² In response to this, I put forward my translation and interpretation of the original French in-score text of 'Danse maigre' to examine how different translations of the text could lead to different performance interpretations (See Chapter Eight).

It is also significant how Volta categorizes texts in the piano scores under the heading of 'Performance Indications' in the Chapter 'Texts not to be read aloud'.⁵³ Volta's arrangement implies that she considers the in-score texts, no matter how ambiguous or absurd they can be, should be recognized as performance indications. Fantasy texts such as 'Like a nightingale with toothache' (*Comme un rossignol qui aurait mal aux dents*) would baffle performers and raise questions on the functionality of such texts as performance indications.⁵⁴ As much as these words look arbitrary, without any connection with the music, it is possible that they form an allegory that could be understood by Satie's circle of musicians and audience of his era but had since become obscure in its meaning a century later. That said, it is also possible that such absurd performance indications are simply present to generate moods or character to the music. Should that be true, ignoring the in-score texts would overlook some vital performance cues. Perhaps in Satie's mind, such texts could be the literal equivalent of the musical scenery that does not grimace and

⁵² Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016). XV.

⁵³ Erik Satie et al., *A Mammal's Notebook* (repr., London: Atlas, 1996), 46–49.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

therefore should accompany the music like a piece of furniture. For example, performance indications like ‘on yellowing velvet (Sur du velours jauni)’ found in *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois* could simply be an injection of bright colour for a pianist’s imagination, projecting positivity to one’s state of mind during the performance. To interpret or not Satie’s in-score texts is certainly an area for debate, which serves as the one of the main objectives of this thesis (See Chapter Three).

To this day, the absence of Satie’s authorial voice in the form of discussion and performance of his own piano music continues to encourage diverse interpretations of his piano music, one of the key issues that I assert in the performance practice of Satie’s piano music. For sure, the ambiguity and mysteriousness attached to Satie’s music thrives on the lack of definitive answers on the performance interpretations of his piano pieces. I claim that Satie has intentionally created this phenomenon. With literature on Satie portraying the composer as boundary-pushing and forward thinking, his defiant personality could inspire pianists to be creative and experimental or even be controversial when interpreting his piano music. It is this sense of freedom in performance interpretations that differentiates Satie’s piano music from the rest of his peers and enriches the 20th century music piano performance practice research with wonder. Exposing the gap in literature on Satie is not the priority here as I focus on what has been written about Satie and his music, which contributes hugely to influencing performers’ interpretative approach before deeper performance practice issues are considered.

Performance practice literature

In this section, I focus on literature specific to performance practice of French piano music, supported by more general sources. To my knowledge, *'Vexations' and its performers* by Gavin Bryars is the one and only article that examines the performance practice of this particular piece by Satie.⁵⁵ This controversial piano piece comprises a short motif only two-systems long, to be repeated 840 times consecutively. It was first performed as Satie intended in 1963. The 'marathon' performance was made possible by twelve pianists who took over from one another.⁵⁶ Significantly, post-performance interviews were conducted to reveal how the piece was performed and interpreted. More importantly, performers' emotional states during and post-performance and the effect of Satie's unprecedented composition and its associated notations, the frequent use of enharmonic and the lack of time signature, phrase line, bar-line and tempo marking, had on these performers were illuminated. Christian Wolff documented the effect during the lengthy performance of *Vexations* over 18 hours and 40 minutes:⁵⁷

Musically the effect seemed disturbing. But after another round the more expansive players began to subside, the more restrained to relax, and by the third round or so the personalities and playing techniques of the pianists had been almost completely subsumed by the music. The music simply took over. At first a kind of passive object, it became the guiding force...

Wolff's comment on how expansive players would subside and pianists' techniques would be subsumed by the music indicates the application of traditional performance style and technique for 20th century piano music has become entirely irrelevant. It is

⁵⁵ Gavin Bryars, "'Vexations' And Its Performance", 2004, <http://www.gavinbryars.com/work/writing/occasional-writings/vexations-and-its-performers>.

⁵⁶ Ibid. These pianists are John Cage, David Tudor, Christian Wolff, Philip Corner, Viola Farber, Robert Wood, MacRae Cook, John Cale, David Del Tredici, James Tenney, Howard Klein and Joshua Rifkin.

⁵⁷ Gavin Bryars, "'Vexations' And Its Performance", 2004, <http://www.gavinbryars.com/work/writing/occasional-writings/vexations-and-its-performers>.

ironic how powerful the music can be as a ‘guiding force’ despite the lack of performance indications provided in the piece. This precedent demonstrates the viability and value of applying primary post-performance interviews to research in performance practice and in the context of my study, modifies an existing analytical model that I deploy in my methodology (See Chapter Three). Opinions given by pianists post performance on their interpretations or simply how they feel in connection with Satie’s notations cannot be otherwise extracted through score analysis or performance analysis. The transfer of artistic ideas from the composer to his scores, which are to be received by a pianist who would then re-project to his audience, forms the complete cycle. In my opinion, performance practice research can be enriched by forming dialogues with pianists and allowing them to reveal practical insights that cannot be seen or deduced simply through musical analysis. As shown by the case of *Vexations*, the real message and impact of the piece will not be fully appreciated and understood until the piece is performed and *felt* by the performers. This is the big gap in the performance practice research of Satie’s piano pieces that I aim to begin filling in this dissertation.

The following titles that appear to be highly relevant and informative to my research topic are worth mentioning in order to expose how often Satie’s piano music is excluded in literature that examines 20th century French piano music. In *The Art of French Piano Music*, Roy Howat uses repertoire by Satie’s peers Debussy and Ravel in addition to Fauré and Chabrier to closely examine performance aspects for French repertoire.⁵⁸ For example, in terms of tempo marking, Howat points out that ‘French tempo markings tend to reflect underlying structure rather than surface

⁵⁸ Roy Howat, *The Art Of French Piano Music* (repr., New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

figurations'.⁵⁹ Although Howat does not direct this sort of claim to Satie's piano music, context on how tempo terms are applied and understood by French composers of Satie's era is highlighted which could offer a reference point to the use of tempo terms in Satie's piano music. I also notice that although Howat does not include Satie in this discussion, the French composer keeps being mentioned in short, brief accounts in parallel to some of the musical examples given. This suggests that Howat constantly has Satie in his mind and the overlapping of stylistic awareness of piano compositions by Satie and his contemporaries is possible but clarity of definite connection is still lacking. The on and off mention of Satie in performance practice literature seems to be common practice as my review of the following two sources demonstrates. Despite belonging to the 20th century, Satie's piano repertoire shares few stylistic characteristics of that era, which could explain why Satie's piano works have not been mentioned alongside works by his contemporaries in performance practice literature. I am also aware that performance practice literature that focuses specifically on Satie's piano works is not yet available, meaning a gap in the existing knowledge of 20th century French piano music performance practice research.

In *French Pianism*, Charles Timbrell discusses French piano playing and different playing techniques that are associated with different teachers in the Paris Conservatoire in the 20th century. For example, taking Gabriel Tacchino's teachers Marguerite Long and Jacque Février as examples, Nicole Henriot-Schweitzer mentions that the *jeu perlé* style that Long adopted, exemplified 'fast-fingered work very close to the keys, so that a series of equally sounded notes reminds us of uniformly shaped pearls on a string'.⁶⁰ In contrast, Jacque Février 'was definitely

⁵⁹ Ibid., 251.

⁶⁰ Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism* (repr., Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1999), 94, 150.

influenced by the Russian school...who helped changed the entirely digital, old French style (which focusing only on the fingers).'⁶¹ Although it is useful to know performance techniques that pianists such as Tacchino are accustomed to when performing Satie's pieces, the focus of this thesis is on performance interpretations of Satie's piano music instead of pianism amongst pianists who perform Satie's piano music. That said, it is relevant to find out whether Tacchino adopts a different touch to articulate Satie's piano music than music by Satie's peers. If so, how is the pianism different and crucially, what elements in Satie's piano music inspire Tacchino to perform with pianism that distinguishes Satie's work amongst others (See Chapter Nine)?

Perspectives on the performance of French piano Music explores the impact of conducting musical analysis prior to performance has on pianists.⁶² Through musical analysis, the 'what' and 'how' to perform questions are addressed in separate case studies. As joint-editors of this autograph, Scott McCarrey and Lesley Wright encouragingly highlight Satie as a significant French composer in the introduction but ultimately exclude his piano work on the grounds that the volume is non-comprehensive. Despite the fact that there is no mention of Satie's piano music, close parallels can be drawn in the analytical approaches offered by various authors in this book. Christopher Dingle's chapter on how Messiaen welcomed new interpretative decisions in the performance of his piano works suggests the notion of placing diversity over appropriateness in performance decisions, which resonates with my assertion of quasi-impromptu pianism as essential in the performance of Satie's piano music. Howat's chapter on editorial ambiguity and the prejudiced role

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Scott McCarrey and Lesley Alison Wright, *Perspectives On The Performance Of French Piano Music* (repr., Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

of an editor who makes interpretative choices on behalf of the composers such as Debussy and Fauré highlight the effect of different editions has on performance choices.⁶³ The impact of different editions on performance interpretations is also relevant in Satie's case as seen in the discrepancies found in the scores for *Danses gothiques* (See Chapter Seven).

Performance practice literature that covers repertoire from different periods and regions also tends to isolate Satie's piano pieces in their discussion. In *Stolen Time*, Richard Hudson provides detailed examination of the use of different types of tempo rubato from the Baroque to the modern period repertoire. Hudson identifies and differentiates how rubato functions in specific musical moments to highlight harmonies, musical phrases and structure. When examining 20th century French music, Debussy is the only composer whose piano works are being examined. Hudson claims that Debussy's seemingly descriptive term '*avec charme*' is in fact a performance cue for tempo rubato. This type of descriptive term often appears in Satie's piano works, such as 'with tenderness' and 'with sadness'. Although it is uncertain whether Satie's descriptive terms also suggest the use of rubato, Hudson's proposition no doubt provides an avenue of interpretation for Satie's in-score texts of similar kind. In another example involving the unusual term '*ondoyant (undulating)*', Hudson mentions Marguerite Long, who studied with Debussy, instructed that a specific touch, '*nuance or élan*' is required rather than an '*alteration of line or measure*'.⁶⁴ Debussy's use of slightly ambiguous words to indicate the change of tempo and touch could have enticed Satie to do just that but with a high degree of mockery in tow. To fill the gap and further extend Hudson's study of tempo rubato, I

⁶³ Scott McCarrey and Lesley Alison Wright, *Perspectives On The Performance Of French Piano Music* (repr., Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 11-28.

⁶⁴ Richard Hudson, *Stolen Time* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 334, 337-8.

discovered a new type of rubato executed amongst various pianists when performing Satie's piano pieces, which I coined 'section rubato' (See Chapters Six, Eight and Nine).

The Practice of Performance and Musical Performance A Guide to Understanding by John Rink,⁶⁵ and *Rethinking Music* by Nicolas Cook and Mark Everist have set the trend for current musicology by provoking performers to re-evaluate the relationship and balance between analysis and performance.⁶⁶ It also questions the reliability and accuracy of musical notation to inform performance decisions, inspires performers to rethink the meaning of existing notations and how the notations subsequently inform their performances. For some of Satie's piano pieces such as *Danses gothiques*, *Croquis et agacerie d'un gros bonhomme en bois* as well as *Vexations* as mentioned previously, conducting musical analysis before performance does not necessarily mean that performance decisions are better informed as a result. For instance, in *Danses gothiques*, the chain of chords that adheres to no particular harmonic progression undermines the power musical analysis has to influence and inform performance decisions. The insertion of blank spaces that visually disrupt the supposedly continuous flow of the musical notation would baffle musicians as they would have to rethink whether such visual stimuli could be considered performance cues, a judgement which would be made through one's subjective belief rather than musical analysis. For Satie to use his piano compositions as a medium to experiment with new ideas, emotions and expression, he contradicts the conventional function of melodies and harmonies, notations and

⁶⁵ John Rink, *The Practice Of Performance* (repr., Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

John Rink, *Musical Performance* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁶⁶ Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist, *Rethinking Music* (repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

the sense of time and space that associate with music progression. This means that the stretching and abandoning of the music conventions associated with early 20th century French piano music makes the application of conventional musical analysis (e.g. harmonic, tonal and structural) to the performance of Satie's piano music less straightforward. Performers are encouraged to be more imaginative with their interpretations. The common performance question of whether a performance style is appropriate or not for a chosen piece would not be a relevant concern for at least some of Satie's piano pieces.

Unpublished PhD theses

Over the last decade, there are only two PhD theses that bring new knowledge to the existing Satie literature. Ann-Marie Hanlon explores the reception theory of Satie's music and reveals how the canonic influence impacted significantly on the reputation of Satie throughout his life.⁶⁷ Alexander Simmons focuses on the period 1886–1893 and addresses the impact of mysticism, an ideal of late-romanticism, on Satie's early composition. Simmons' study overturns the straightforward image of Satie as an anti-romantic composer. Simmons also claims Satie's use of symbolist technique in composition as means to resist modern rationality.⁶⁸ In terms of French piano performance practice, Iwan Llewelyn-Jones investigates works by Maurice Ravel, their pianistic sonority, nuance and expression but shed no light on Satie's music.⁶⁹

Taking into consideration the existing literature on Satie the composer and his musical works as well as sources on piano performance practice that are more

⁶⁷ Ann-Marie Hanlon, "Erik Satie And The New Canon: Criticism, Reception And Analysis" (Ph.D, repr., Newcastle University, 2013).

⁶⁸ Alexander Simmons, "Erik Satie'S Trois Gnosscienne In The French Fin De Sièclea" (Ph.D, repr., University of Birmingham, 2013).

⁶⁹ Iwan Llewelyn-Jones, "Studies In Pianistic Sonority, Nuance And Expression: French Performance Practices In The Piano Works Of Maurice Ravel" (Ph.D, repr., Cardiff University, 2016).

general or French piano music focussed, it is clear that the connection between the research of Satie's piano music and the research of the performance practice of these works is missing. The causes of existing performance styles and interpretations in addition to how pianists of different generations perceive Satie's piano music have not been investigated in any depth.

Originated in a Study Day, 'Erik Satie: His Music, the Visual Arts, His Legacy', my published paper *Satie in performance, with historical recordings* and the subsequent book chapter—Satie's Rose-Croix Piano Works are the seeds of this research project.⁷⁰ With part of the existing contents re-introduced in the main body of this thesis, such as the performance discussion of *Ogives* and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, the initial performance-related questions are given more detailed responses with sharper focus and evidence to shed light on the performance interpretations of these pieces in addition to the newly introduced case studies (See Chapters Five and Six). This dissertation therefore aims to provide the missing link and contribute original knowledge to the corpus of research on Satie, with its focus on the performance practice and interpretation of Satie's piano works offered by international pianists over the last six decades.

⁷⁰ Grace Cheung, "Satie In Performance, With Historical Recordings", *Gresham.Ac.Uk*, 2010, <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lecture/transcript/print/erik-satie-part-two-composers-forum-satie-in-performance-and-the-only-musician/>.
Gates, Grace. "Satie's Rose-Croix Piano Works". In *Erik Satie: Music, Art And Literature*, 49–66, 1st ed. Reprint, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013.

Chapter Three

Methodology—Recorded Performance Analysis

Introduction

This chapter consists of three parts. Part one addresses the research aim and provides a rationale for the choice of research tools. Since examining performance interpretations of the chosen five piano pieces is the key research process, justification for 1) why these five case studies are chosen amongst Satie's complete oeuvres of piano repertoire, 2) how pianists and 3) their recordings are selected, is given to reflect a systematic approach in the selection process, with the aim of examining an international perspective of the performance interpretations over the last six decades of Satie's piano music composed in different compositional styles. Discussion of the adaptation of a pre-existing analytical model rounds off the first part.

Part two explains the research procedures by displaying 1) how the new interpretive criteria are applied to the Rose-Croix piano music case studies and clarifying why different analytical approaches are chosen as more suitable tools for these works; 2) the details regarding the post-performance evaluation interviews with pianists, which include how the process is conducted, interviewees are selected, questions are designed and lastly, how the results are applied.

The final part puts forward three possible research outcomes. Firstly, I propose that contemporary pianists have been seeking creative performance gestures in response to interpreting the unconventionality found in Satie's piano music. This would also mean that these unconventionalities, such as the inclusion of in-score

texts, the use of blank spaces in the musical notation or sub-titles that disrupt the visual flow of the supposedly continuous music have become eligible criteria to inform performance styles and approaches. Secondly, experimental and provocative performance gestures found in these recorded performances could be an inspiration that pianists have been obtaining through Satie's witty and defiant persona, allowing a non-musical criterion to inform performance style, which is unusual in the performance practice tradition. Thirdly, there could be an increasing trend of later-generation pianists adopting experimental and provocative gestures in the performance style of Satie's piano pieces over the last six decades as a result of performance traditions of Satie's piano music continuing to diversify.

Part One: Research aim and tools

This dissertation aims to investigate the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music over the last six decades by evaluating recorded performances of the first, second- and later-generation pianists.

The choices of case studies

The piano pieces chosen as case studies in Chapters Six to Nine provide representative examples for the different compositional styles of Satie's piano pieces, of which the unconventionalities as part of Satie's musical aesthetic in comparison to the mainstream 20th century French piano music are illuminated (See also Chapters One and Four). The oddities associated with Satie's piano pieces were controversial for performers in Satie's era and a few generations on, Satie's compositional ideas and techniques continue to raise performance questions. The

chosen case studies aim at exposing different interpretive issues linking to Satie’s use of musical structures, melodies, harmonies and notational presentation, which fuel the continuous debates amongst pianists in the absence of a benchmark or authorial version of how Satie’s piano music ought to be performed. Table 3.1 provides a list of performance issues found respectively in each of the five case studies.

Table 3.1: Performance issues in the chosen five case studies

Name of the piano piece	Elements that raise performance issues
<i>Ogives</i> (1886)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The suggestive title ‘ogives’ could lead pianists to imaginative interpretations, questioning the validity of allowing extra-musical determinant to influence performance decisions • A simple single line melody that is repeated four times without further development, contributing to an unusual musical structure • Absence of bar-lines, time signatures and key signatures minimises performance cues • Harmonic progression that lacks traditional gravitational pull minimises performance cues (Rose-Croix harmonic scheme)
<i>Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel</i> (1894)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose-Croix harmonic scheme minimises performance cues • The visually appealing consecutive block chords that dominate the entire piece raise questions on the impact of in-score visual stimuli have on performance decisions (See p. 64 interpretive criteria) • The ambiguous in-score text alongside the melody, e.g. ‘superstiteusement’ imbues esotericism, which raise questions on the impact of in-score textual stimuli has on performance decisions (See p. 64 interpretive criteria)

<p><i>Danses gothiques</i> (1893)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose-Croix harmonic scheme minimises performance cues • The ambiguous function of blank spaces and sub-titles that break up the visual continuity of the musical notation raises questions on the impact of in-score visual stimuli have on performance decisions
<p><i>Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois</i> (1913)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ambiguous function of Satie's piece title and narratives alongside the music raises questions on the impact of in-score textual stimuli have on performance decisions
<p><i>Sonatine bureaucratique</i> (1917)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-score texts and the musical content lead to contradictory perception of Satie's musical meaning • The classically-aware neoclassicism approach versus the humoristic, experimental approach inspired by other Satie's music and Satie's person raise questions on the impact of in-score textual stimuli and extra-musical determinant has on performance decision making

The proposed performance issues addressed in the chosen five case studies are to be responded to by the evaluation outcomes of the performance interpretations. The outcomes shed light on how such issues affect pianists' interpretations and provide an understanding to why contrasting or even contradictory performance styles seem to be commonplace as part of the performance practice of Satie's piano pieces.

First-, second- and later-generation pianists

By 'first-generation pianists', I refer to historical pianists who were born in Satie's lifetime and performed his solo works during his era or after his death. I speculate that those with French lineage may have had greater exposure to Satie's piano works and/or their reception than those with non-French lineage. These pianists would have performed in Satie's lifetime or after his death. Crucially, to be qualified as a first-generation French pianist, one ought to be Satie's acquaintance or acquaintance of

Satie's pianists of the same era. The first non-French generation includes pianists who do not share the French lineage but are born in Satie's era.

The second French generation group consists of pianists who were born after Satie's death. These pianists would not have had the direct acquaintance with the composer or had the chance to take part in or attend any of Satie's piano concerts, a privilege exclusive to the first French generation pianists. That said, the second-generation pianists with French lineage could still have had moderate exposure to Satie's piano works and contemporary French performance practices, because these pianists belonged to the same lineage as the first generation who received their musical training in the Paris Conservatoire. By the same token, the second-generation with non-French lineage would cover pianists, who were born after Satie's death and did not receive musical training in the Paris Conservatoire. As for the later-generation pianists, the line is drawn from when pianists are born from the 1960s to signify the substantial century gap since the composer's birth.

There are altogether thirty-four pianists chosen for the five case studies. To make it clear, Table 3.2 shows how these pianists are allocated into different rows with the top to bottom representing the transition from the first- to the later-generation pianists. The different columns differentiate pianists' closeness to Satie the composer and display their familiarity with the performance style of Satie's piano works during his time. For example, a first-generation pianist who knew the composer in person would have gained a range of authoritative performance insights denied to a Satie music specialist born long after the composer's lifetime. The names in bold highlight pianists who have recorded the complete Satie piano works.

Table 3.2: Categorization of the selected pianists

Different Generations	French Lineage			Non-French lineage			
	Musical connection with Satie	French repertoire specialists	Pianists of other genres	Satie music specialist	Versatile classical pianist	Pianists of mixed genres	Pianists of experimental, contemporary and new pieces
First French/ non-French generation	Francis Poulenc (1899-63)						
					Frank Glazer (1915-2015)		
		Jean-Joël Barbier (1920-1994)					
Second French/ Non-French generation				Aldo Ciccolini (1925-15)			
		France Clidat (1932-2012)	Michel Legrand (b.1932-2019) (Jazz pianist)	Cordélia Canabrava Arruda (?)			
		Gabriel Tacchino (b.1934)				Peter Dickinson (b.1934)	
		Philippe Entremont (b.1934)					
							John White (b.1936)
					Olof Höjer (b.1937)		

							Reinbert de Leeuw (b.1938)
							Yuji Takahashi (b.1938)
		Jean-Pierre Armengaud (b.1943)					
							Klára Körmendi (b.1944)
						Ulrich Gumpert (b.1945)	
		Anne Queffélec (b.1948)					
					Alan Marks (1949-1995)		
					Peter Lawson (b.1950)		
		Pascal Rogé (b.1951)				Bill Quist (b.1951)	
					Branka Parlić (b.1955)		
			Bruno Fontaine (b.1957)		Linda Burman-Hall (?)		
					John Lenehan (b.1958)		
Later French/ non-French generation							Steffen Schleiermacher (b.1960)

(1960s onwards)		Jean-Yves Thibaudet (b.1961)					
				Cristina Ariagno (b.1962)	Noriko Ogawa (b.1962)		Bojan Gorišek (b.1962)
							Eve Egoyan (b.1964)
							Jeroen van Veen (b.1969)
							Josu Okiñena (b.1971)

The table provides a clear overview of the distribution of the thirty-four pianists of Satie's piano music by generation and according to different lineages and expertise. This categorization of pianists facilitates historical and stylistic organization of the findings of analysis to display clearly 1) whether pianists with French lineage would adopt an approach that is distinctively different from pianists with non-French lineage when performing Satie's piano pieces, 2) the possible connection between pianists' adopted performance approaches and their backgrounds. For those who regularly perform experimental music and music of other genres such as Jazz and film music, are they more inclined to regard Satie's piano music as another piece of experimental music and as such interpret his works with more personal and inventive gestures that might not necessarily be informed by the performance cues in the piece? The comparatively inventive approach would bring contrast to the conventional Romantic period performance style that is commonly applied for 20th century piano music. Finally, the categorization also helps to organize data pointing to possible trends in Satie performance over the last six decades. Ultimately, has Satie's piano music opened up a new avenue in performance practice that cannot be pigeonholed under the 20th century French piano performance?

Selection of piano recordings

Early 20th century historical recording of Satie's piano pieces is a rarity. Apart from the earliest recording of a selection of Satie's solo piano pieces produced in 1955 by Francis Poulenc, who I label as one of the first-generation pianists, other recorded performances of Satie piano pieces did not appear until later in the 1970s.

Satie's death in 1925 drove the publicity of his piano pieces to a halt. It was not until 1963 when the public performance of *Vexations* organized by

experimentalist composer John Cage led to the revival of his piano music, a turning point in Satie musicology. From the 1970s onwards, recorded performances of his piano music began to trickle in (due to the Satie revival as well as culturally, Satie's music fitted in perfectly with the welcome to the experimental/minimalist era). Stepping into the 1980s and 90s when cultural musicology started to take shape, there was an increasing interest on Satie and his musical works. The more in-depth musical analysis of Satie's music given by musicologists reflects his increasing popularity in the field of French music research (See Chapter Two). The sudden influx of recorded performances of Satie piano pieces also happened during that period, which provide essential resources for my research project. From 2000s onwards, performers continued to interpret his piano music in contrasting styles as ways to respond to the obscurities and unconventionalities found in his works (See Chapters Four and Five).

In view of the selection of recordings for the case studies, a few specific recordings stand out to me as being worthy of discussion due to their significant connection with Satie or the fact that their Satie recordings have been singled out by the press as highly acclaimed interpretations of Satie piano music. While Poulenc's 1955 recording marks the earliest recording of Satie's piano music by the first-generation French pianist, Aldo Ciccolini's highly acclaimed 1967 recording contributes to the first complete Satie piano album by a second-generation pianist with non-French lineage. As Poulenc's only piano pupil and also taught by Jacques Février who partnered with Poulenc to perform Satie's duet piano pieces, Gabriel Tacchino's execution of Satie's piano pieces would make an interesting comparison with Poulenc's performances of Satie's piano works due to their teacher-pupil relationship. My analytical outcomes of their interpretations would reveal just how

prevalent it is for French pianists to adhere to the French lineage performance style for Satie's piano works (See Chapter Eight). There are also the highly acclaimed Satie albums recorded by Jean-Pierre Armengaud and Anne Queffélec, with the latter rewarded with 'Diapason d'Or', which signifies a recommendation of an outstanding recording. Recordings by French pianists Jean-Jöel Barbier, France Clidat, Philippe Entremont, Pascal Rogé and Jean-Yves Thibaudet, British pianists Peter Dickinson and Peter Lawson, American pianists Frank Glazer and Bill Quist, Brazilian pianist Cordélia Canabrava Arruda, Slovenian pianist Bojan Gorišek, Swedish pianist Olof Höjer, Hungarian pianist Klara Körmendi, Japanese pianist Yuji Takahashi, German pianists Ulrich Gumpert and Alan Marks, Serbian pianist Parlić, Canadian pianist Eve Egoyan, Italian pianist Cristina Ariagno and Dutch pianists Reinbert de Leeuw and Jeroen van Veen were selected for analysis to give an international perspective of the performance interpretation of Satie's piano pieces. I also chose to include performances by Linda Burman-Hall and Noriko Ogawa who performed on an Erard piano in my analysis, in the hope of discovering whether the use of a period instrument leads to different performance gestures and styles in comparison to the rest of the selected recordings. Lastly, recordings by pianists John White, Bruno Fontaine, John Lenehan, Steffen Schleiemacher, Josu Okiñena and Michel Legrand are chosen for their creative gestures and interpretations, which demonstrate marked differences from the rest of the recordings and largely enrich the evaluation outcomes of the research project.

The analytical tool

The purpose of an analytical tool is to give musical meanings associated with the musical texts, which subsequently illuminates possible performance intentions made

by pianists. In my case, the investigation of the performance interpretations of Satie's piano works is far from straightforward due to his musical aesthetics as well as the other key issues previously identified (See Chapter One). In order to systematically expose and accommodate in the analytical process the challenges Satie's piano music brings when responding to the traditional performance criteria during performance analysis, I choose to apply an adapted version of Julian Hellaby's analytical model. As his performance analytical tool is equipped with individual performance criteria that are clearly listed and defined, which Hellaby refers to as 'informants', this makes the modification process easy to apply and the performance analytical outcomes easy to follow.

Performance analysis has evolved in the twentieth century by lessening the sole responsibility of the analyst to offer judgements on performance directions and in return, acknowledging the analytical role of performers as contributive to the overall process. The change in attitude towards musical analysis has led to an integration of text-based analysis with the outcome of actual musical performances in order to complete the analytical process.

Hellaby's analytical approach to performances is a reaction to what I refer to as a 'one-way' analytical system, such as the formal analysis addressed by Wallace Berry who emphasises the crucial role of the analyst to inform musical performances.⁷¹ As a less subjective method, Roy Howat's analysis offers valuable theoretical insight to inform performance interpretations by cross referencing to other composers works.⁷² His analytical method therefore provides deeper stylistic awareness and much wider context in comparison to Berry's analytical method.

⁷¹ Wallace Berry, *Musical Structure And Performance* (repr., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁷² Roy Howat, *The Art Of French Piano Music* (repr., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

Although Howat's findings on performance practice of French piano music are indispensable, his analytical model is still regarded as a 'one-way' analysis, even with the less subjective verdicts.

In contrast, Hellaby's analytical approach differs as he identifies that the full reliance on theoretical analysis to inform performances is inevitably limited and subjective, which risks performance 'errors' caused by misjudgment on the part of the analyst. Besides, it is often that pianists do not gesture or make audible all necessary features identified in an analysis, which means that the performance itself does not fully reflect the musical analysis, and vice versa. To improve from the limitations of the 'one-way' analytical system, John Rink began to produce pre- and post-performance graphic analyses, such as his performance research on Chopin in 2002. In this performance research, Rink attempts to integrate the analyses of music work with the associated musical performances to facilitate a 'two-way' approach in order to give more insights of the connection (and discrepancies) between the theoretical and practical outcomes.⁷³

In my research hypothesis, I assert that pianists of Satie's piano music are informed not only and not always by the conventional performance criteria in musical analysis, such as characteristics of rhythm, melody, harmony, tonality, phrases and overall structure, but also unconventional features that are seldom recognized as performance criteria. I refer these unconventional features as the in-score visual stimuli (See Chapters Five and Seven) and the in-score textual stimuli (See Chapters Eight and Nine) found in Satie's notations. A composer's persona would normally provide background context for pianists but would not necessarily

⁷³ John Rink, *Musical Performance* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

be significant enough to influence performance decisions. However, in Satie's case, his defiance and witty personality could affect pianists' perception of his piano works and as such indirectly affect performance interpretations. In this research project I speculate that the three main issues regarding Satie's ambiguity in notating his music, his musical language being unconventional to his peers and the lack of his authorial voice through performances of his own pieces could lead to highly diverse interpretations of his piano pieces.

In response to this phenomenon, I consider that Hellaby's two-way analytical approach with his structured informants as assessment criteria would be a better-suited analytical tool for Satie's piano music. This is because Hellaby's model has the facility, the 'interpretative tower', to highlight performance gestures that may seem incongruent with the performance cues, to which he regards as individual and creative expression.⁷⁴ To further develop and refine the model in order to meet the demand of the performance evaluation of Satie's piano music, I first analysed the case studies and secondly, introduced extra 'informants' which I labelled 'interpretive criteria' in order to tackle the unconventional features that are exclusive to Satie's piano music. Thirdly, I carried out interviews with a selection of performers after their recorded performances had been analysed to obtain personal justifications of certain performance interpretations that could not be explained easily through musical analysis of the piano works.

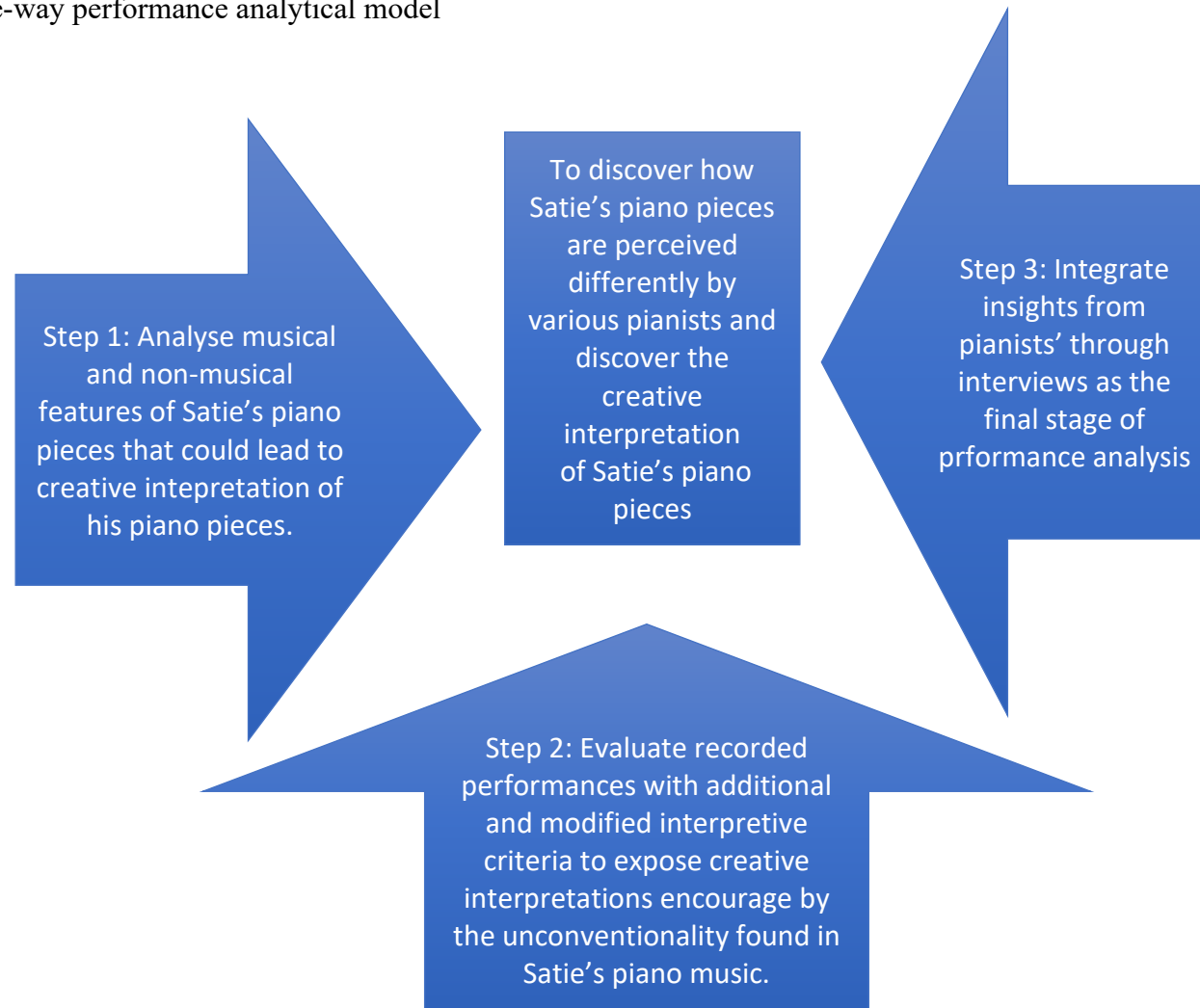
I originate a need in integrating performers' rationales on their performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces as I see the limitation in the one-way and two-way performance analytical method as previously mentioned. I claim that no matter how *accurately* one wish to analyse a performance, the verdict is still based on the

⁷⁴ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation* (repr., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 47.

analyst's speculation. For instance, if a pianist brings out a musical phrase in *piano* dynamics, it is highly likely that such decision is provoked by the *piano* dynamic marking, but equally, the decision could be provoked by factors other than the dynamic marking indicated on the music. In such case, analysts may make connections between the pianist's execution and the performance cues provided by the notation. By allowing performers to give rationales behind their performance interpretations, speculation made by analysts are instantly curbed and replaced by firsthand evidence. The post-performance evaluation interviews with pianists contributes to the modification and extension of Hellaby's existing model, which leads to a three-way analytical system. The dialogues with a selection of performers offer vital insights on their performance styles and gestures. They also illuminate performers' responses to the key issues associated with the Satie's piano pieces as identified in Chapter One. These firsthand explanations obtained from pianists together with the performance analytical outcomes give crucial evidence for the testing of my research hypothesis. Figure 3.1 shows a graphic representation of the three-way performance analytical model.

In Hellaby's model, the analytical method facilitates an approach that relies on 'informants' as yardstick to measure and justify performance choices, offering a comprehensive and structured method of performance analysis. The informants refer to the information deduced from the scores, which inform performers of their interpretative styles. The informants are categorized into era, genre, topic, topical mode, characterizer, tempo, duration manipulator and sonic moderator. Informants

Figure 3.1 Gates' three-way performance analytical model



are placed within the representation of an ‘interpretative tower’ on four separate levels, from bottom to top, showing their degrees of importance and relevance to an individual performance. The bottom level includes informants era (style) and authorship via the score; the second level includes genre and topic; the third level includes topical mode and characterizer and the final and highest level includes tempo, duration manipulator, and sonic moderator. The interpretative tower offers clarity in understanding how a piece of music could be interpreted in so many different ways and the plausible reasons behind performers’ interpretations. A highly literal performance would be revealed by the stronger emphasis on the bottom layer. In contrast, a highly personalized performance would be demonstrated by the stronger emphasis on the top layer(s). Hellaby claims that performers’ artistic creativity and individuality are illuminated by considering all informants during the analytical process regardless of their coherence to the musical analysis.⁷⁵ This practice also minimizes subjectivity caused by analysts’ personal judgement. Table 3.3 gives brief definitions of Hellaby’s eight informants used in his analytical model.

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Table 3.3: The eight informants in Hellaby’s analytical model

1. Era (Bottom level)	In order for performers to adopt a certain style for a piece of music, they seek guidance from the score in order to bridge the cultural and stylistic perception from the disconnected past to present. The transfer of stylistic characteristics through the score to performers is what Hellaby called ‘authorship via the score’. He explains: ‘a musical author is recognized by, amongst other traits, melodic or rhythmic patterns, characteristics harmonies, timbres or favoured structural methods.’ ⁷⁷ The importance of recognizing authorship via the score is that ‘[t]he authorship (score) informant prompts questions relating to basic musical
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⁷⁵ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation* (repr., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33-41.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

	<p>syntax, where no performance directions appear in the score, as well as to the implications of a composer’s very detailed performance directions, and to everything in between.’⁷⁸</p>
2. Genre (Second level)	<p>This informant refers to different types and classes of music that performers and audiences could relate to in terms of sonic conception - e.g. how a concerto could sound differently to a prelude. The preconception could influence the performers’ ‘frame of mind and manner of approach.’⁷⁹</p>
3. Topic (Second level)	<p>The topic is defined as ‘a musical type often associated with a particular function (such as a dance, a march or a fanfare) and recognizable by certain related characteristics.’⁸⁰</p>
4. Topical mode (Third level)	<p>Topical mode refers to ‘performance qualifiers which appeal to the imagination (<i>maestoso</i>, <i>dolce</i>) or the emotions (<i>expressivo</i>, <i>agitato</i>) but do not specifically instruct concerning tempo or articulation.’⁸¹ Hellaby explains that the topical mode could lead to creative gestures that are not necessarily responding to particular performance cues given in the score.⁸²</p>
5. Characterizer (Third level)	<p>‘Characterizer’ is defined as ‘distinctive musical features such as rhythmic, melodic or harmonic devices which give a stretch of music its unique character... Characterizers can play a vital role in determining the aurally discernible, or “surface”, features of a performance.’⁸³ Hellaby further explains: ‘characterizers concern microstructural features and how a performer may or may not be heard to bring these out.’</p>
6. Tempo (Top level)	<p>‘Tempo’ is classified in a category, through which ‘the performer’s active engagement with an informant may be acoustically identified... Whether the informant is viewed philosophically or practically, it is a crucial aspect of musical information and a defining feature of any performance, including its emotional effect.’⁸⁴</p>
7. Duration manipulator (Top level)	<p>This informant concerns the change in tempo in a localized term. It could be simply a brief moment like manipulating the duration of one note, or it could apply to a change of tempo over a stretch of music and may affect a few bars to a few systems of music. Hellaby summarized five different functions of rubatos used by</p>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation* (repr., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 34-36.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 36-37.

⁸¹ Ibid., 38.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 40.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 41.

	performers: ⁸⁵ 1. As desire to give each note its full expressive value, not necessarily achieved in a Romantic context through metronomic adherence 2. Engagement with the musical discourse which suggests a modification of the basic pulse to achieve expressive contouring 3. Highlighting of a perceived structural point 4. Promotion of technical clarity 5. Acknowledgement of an inherited tradition
8. Sonic moderator (Top level)	The sonic moderator refers to terms such as ‘forte’, ‘piano’, ‘staccato’ and ‘legato’ and those related to pedaling. This informant specifically addresses the ‘personal possession’ of the sonic expression that is unique and intimate to individual pianists.

In comparison to the rest of the 20th century French piano music, the musical language of Satie’s piano works displays elements of unconventionality. To give an example, the Rose-Croix pieces composed in 1891–1894 show new ways to form melodies by juxtaposing musical cells together, of which their arrangement order could seem arbitrary at times (Chapter Five). While notating without bar-lines and time signatures becomes commonplace for the Rose-Croix pieces, some even have an addition of in-score texts to accompany the music. In a controversial piece like *Danses gothiques*, blank spaces and sub-titles are inserted in the supposedly continuous melodic phrases, causing a disruption of the visual flow of the musical notation (See Chapter Seven). After taking all these unconventional elements into consideration, it is clear that relying on traditional methods of musical analysis to examine Satie’s piano works in order to evaluate performance interpretations is insufficient. For example, the harmonic gravitational pull becomes irrelevant to musical passages with unresolved consecutive seventh chords.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 44.

Hellaby's model allows the analytical process to be carried out more objectively and inclusively, avoiding the potential fixation on a particular criterion as the main source of interpretative information to justify pianists' performance decisions. The clearly laid out criteria can therefore expose performance challenges pianists face when one or more of these informants become irrelevant in the analytical process for some of Satie's piano pieces. The irrelevant informants to Satie's piano music expose that there are few performance directions offered to pianists through Satie's notation. In theory, as a reaction to the lack/paucity of performance directions, performers could opt for an individual and imaginative approach to celebrate the interpretative freedom brought by the ambiguity in the music.

Amongst the eight informants, the 'era' criterion has proven to be the most difficult to be applied in order to decide on the style of Satie's piano music. Hellaby identifies two complications for this informant: Firstly, discrepancies arise when individuals interpret the authorship-via score informant with different perspectives: 'the role of performance in representing what a composer 'meant' by a score is partly determined by historical processes and is itself subject to varying perceptions on the part of the receiver.'⁸⁶ Secondly, he recalls Leonard Meyer identifying the 'deviation' problem in the process of understanding 'authorship via the score' and calls it 'Chinese whispers' nature of inheritance of performance traditions as performance conventions gradually change over a long period of time.⁸⁷ This deviation problem pinpoints how performers from different eras will inevitably

⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 34.

approach the same piece of music with varied viewpoints despite agreeing on the fundamental performance style.

The complications that Hellaby identified have in fact encouraged diverse performing styles of Satie's piano pieces. As a subversive composer, Satie composed piano pieces that do not always resonate with the piano repertoire of his era. This results in distorting the 'historical processes' function that is crucial for performers to perceive the style of a piece of music. Attempting to make reference to historical performance style of Satie's era in order to give historically informed performances of his unconventional piano pieces would not be particularly fruitful or even at all relevant. Besides, Satie's piano pieces were left dormant for a few decades after his death meaning that there is a vacuum period when the performance practice of his piano pieces, which could have been passed on by pianists of Satie's generation is now lost. Certainly, the lack of Satie's authorial voice in the performance of his own piano pieces and discussion of how his piano pieces could be performed further weakens the 'era' informant. Under this circumstance, later-generation pianists would struggle to seek historical references on performance issues related to his piano works. As a response, they would seek appropriate styles at their own discretion to perform Satie's piano pieces.

As part of the adaption process of Hellaby's model, I revise the definition of informants 'era', 'topic; and 'duration manipulator' so that they fit the style of Satie's piano music better and in turn, makes the performance evaluation process more effective. Table 3.4 illustrates the complications or limitations of Hellaby's informants under the original definitions when applied to Satie's piano pieces. It also shows my proposed definitions for these three informants in the last column, which I will refer to as interpretive criteria from this point onwards. New additional

interpretive criteria numbered 9 to 11 and their definitions are also provided to cover all elements of Satie's piano music that could inform performance interpretations.

Table 3.4: Gates' additional and modified interpretive criteria

Hellaby's Informants	Complications/Limitations identified by Gates for Satie's piano works	Gates' revised definition of interpretive criteria
1. Era (style)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satie's piano pieces contain elements that defy 20th century French piano music conventions (See Chapter Four). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorship via score and other contextual issues
4. Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satie subverted the characteristics of different musical types that often associate with a particular function and/or association/meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic mode can act as an inspiration and pianists are not encouraged to dwell on performance traditions inherited from the past and apply with the same emphasis on Satie's piano pieces.
7. Duration manipulator (change in tempo)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new form of rubato, which I coined 'section rubato' is identified. Section rubato occurs when a new tempo is established and kept consistently over the bars to reflect an <i>abrupt</i> change of musical content despite the lack of the presence of any tempo changing terms. The new tempo in these bars also delivers a new mood. Original tempo resumes when the previous musical ideas return. (See Chapter Five). Section rubato also provides the means for pianists to reflect the narrative (in-score texts) within a piece as the application of a new tempo helps emphasise the sudden mood change. (See Chapter Nine).

Gates' additional interpretive criteria (numbered in succession to Hellaby's informants)	Definitions
9. In-score visual stimuli (See Chapters Five to Seven)	<p>This criterion is determined by both distinctive musical and non-musical features.</p> <p>The in-score visual stimuli in Satie's piano pieces include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deletion of bar-lines (musical feature) 2. Visual appeal resulting from the notation, e.g. the dense and pillar-looking block chords (musical feature) 3. Insertion of blank spaces and sub-titles that disrupt the continuous visual flow of a passage of music (non-musical feature)
10. In-score textual stimuli (See Chapter Seven to Nine)	<p>The textual stimuli refer to in-score texts that Satie provides in the notation, which are not considered as explicit performance directions. These in-score texts provide separate narratives to the piano pieces. In some cases, the narratives are coherent to the music (reflecting the melodic content), while in others; their meanings tend to be ambiguous and appears to have no connection with the music.</p>
11. Extra-musical determinants (See Chapter Five to Eight)	<p>This criterion covers a concept or discipline implied in the music that could affect performance style. In the cases of Satie's piano music, the implication of symbolism, numerology, esotericism, humor and Satie's persona as driving force to be creative and defiant is considered as extra-musical determinants.</p>

Part Two: Research procedures

New interpretive criteria and analytical method for the Rose-Croix piano pieces

Due to the changing compositional styles of Satie's piano music, a selective analytical approach is required for each of the five case studies. In the case of Satie's *Rose-Croix* piano pieces, the application of conventional formal analysis and the use of interpretive criteria one to eight to evaluate recorded performances have shown to be inadequate. I therefore bring in the new interpretive criteria numbered nine to eleven to address the visual and textual (the use of words) stimuli as well as the extra-musical determinants that are equally contributive to influencing performance interpretations. As the research focus shifts for each of the case studies, not all interpretive criteria are discussed in the analytical process for each of the piano pieces. Only criteria that highlight creative performance interpretations will be included in the discussion in each case study.

Inspired by the strikingly linear and vertical visual appeal of the notation in *Ogives*, I opt for an original analytical approach by examining the number of notes that form the linear melody and the vertical harmony in an attempt to work out the *physical* structure (metaphorically, its perimeter) of the piece instead of merely analysing the melody and harmonies in the traditional sense (See In-score visual stimuli). The inter-art inspired analytical method is encouraged by the piece title '*Ogives*' (the topic mode), which I interpret as Satie's message for performers to *see* on the score a gothic building and to *hear* and *feel* the different kind of sounds, music and atmosphere associated with gothic churches through the musical performance of the piece (See extra-musical stimuli). Since the word 'ogive' represents an integral part of the architectural design of a gothic building, the pillar-

like block chords and single linear melody inspire me to see each of the musical notes as building blocks of a three-dimensional object. In association with the setting of a gothic building, the quasi-religious backdrop leads back to the conventional harmonic analysis in order to see whether Satie intentionally avoided the use of tritones in *Ogives*. Such gestures strengthen the quasi-religious intent of the piece as the use of tritone was commonly regarded as the devil's interval and was forbidden in medieval church music.

In the examination of the phrases and structure of *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, Patrick Gower's coined term 'punctuation form' is used.⁸⁸ Gower refers the punctuation form to an overall melodic scheme in which certain recurring motifs that carry longer rhythmic value notes are used to give a sense of rest to the preceding chain of motifs that are seen as a melodic phrase. These recurring motifs, which are called punctuation phrases have a different character to the rest of the motifs. They often consist of a chain of notes that sequentially increase in rhythmic duration. For example, a three-note punctuation phrase could be formed by quaver-crotchet-minim rhythmic notes. They punctuate the music in a similar way that the use of commas or full stops do in word sentences. To clarify, the score analyses of the Rose-Croix pieces in the case studies utilise the punctuation phrase concept when examining pianists' performance interpretations.

Post-performance evaluation interviews with pianists

Taking into consideration the practical concerns of reaching as many pianists as possible to agree to take part in the post-performance evaluation interviews, I have

⁸⁸ Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1.

chosen to email pianists with no more than five questions regarding performance interpretations of each of their performances respectively. The email interview method allows me to reach out to pianists from different countries and avoids difficulties conducting face-to-face interviews due to the different time zones with potential interviewees. By conducting email interviews, pianists also have the chance to reply to my interview questions in their own time. Amongst all pianists who have accepted my invitation, Spanish pianist Josu Okiñena is the only interviewee who suggested carrying out the interview via WhatsApp video call, which I agreed and went ahead with his request.

After evaluating the recorded Satie piano music performances by the thirty-four pianists, it was my original intention to interview a selection of current pianists from two distinctively contrasting groups. The first group includes pianists who give performance interpretations are comparatively more with gestures mostly informed by conventional performance cues. The second group includes pianists who give performance interpretations that suggest impromptu gestures that could be resulted from the key issues associated with Satie's piano pieces. The distinctively contrasting performance decisions by these pianists prompted my curiosity to ask each of them tailor-made questions, in the hope that their personal justifications will enrich my analytical outcomes and will offer insights into their performance decisions and their understanding of Satie's piano music.

Amongst the twenty-nine current pianists, seven of them have not publicized their email addresses on world wide web. They are, namely second-generation pianists Jean-Pierre Armengaud, Anne Queffélec, Cordélia Canabrava Arruda, Olof Höjer, Klára Körmendi and Ulrich Gumpert and Bill Quist. With the remaining twenty-two current pianists, I have selected eleven pianists to be invited to take part

in the email interviews that I conducted between 2016 and 2017 because of their diverse interpretations. By sending each of them an introductory email explaining the aim of the interview, pianists were aware of my research purpose and their responses allowed me to find out more about how and which elements in Satie's music influences them as pianists and subsequently their performance decisions. These eleven pianists include: second-generation pianists Gabriel Tacchino, Philippe Entremont, Bruno Fontaine, Peter Dickinson, Peter Lawson, Branka Parlić and later-generation pianists Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Cristina Ariagno, Eve Egoyan, Jeroen van Veen and Josu Okiñena. Despite my effort to get in contact with all these pianists via email, my invitation was turned down by Thibaudet due to his full working schedule and no reply was obtained from Tacchino and Ariagno. Table 3.5 shows the names of the interviewees in accordance with each of the case studies to give an overview of interviewees' contribution to the post-performance evaluation process. Despite the limited number of interviewees, their opinions on the performance interpretations of Satie's piano music are highly diverse and informative, which are indispensable to my research topic. Their authorial voices as later-generation pianists who performed Satie's piano music offer crucial evidence to further test my hypothesis that quasi-impromptu pianism and diverse performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces are subsequent reactions to the key issues associated with his piano works.

To conduct the email interview, no more than five performance interpretation questions were being set in an individual basis to reflect performance decisions made by a particular pianist. As the performance styles vary from pianist to pianist, the tailor-made questions helped to pinpoint individual performance interpretations and any interpretive issues occurred in each of the case studies. As the questions are intended to be open-ended, they allowed pianists to give feedback in response to my

comments made towards their interpretations and also encouraged pianists to share any extra performance-related issues that might not have been addressed initially in the proposed questions. As a general guideline, interview questions on interpretation tend to address certain performance choices identified in my performance evaluation that are not explicitly directed by Satie’s musical notations. The interviewees were therefore given the opportunity to explain such personal choices. In some cases, pianists had the opportunity to defend their interpretations that are contradictory to the musical directions provided by Satie.

Table 3.5: The distribution of pianist interviewees in each of the case studies

Piece titles of the case studies	Pianist interviewees
Rose-Croix piano work: Case study 1 <i>Ogives</i>	Branka Parlić and Eve Egoyan
Rose-Croix piano work: Case study 2 and 3 <i>Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel</i> <i>Danses gothiques</i>	No interviewee involved in these two Rose-Croix case studies. Despite the fact that Van Veen took part in the post-performance interview, his contribution does not apply to these two pieces.
Texted piano work: Case study 4 <i>Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois</i> —‘Danse maigre’	Peter Lawson, Philippe Entremont, Josu Okiñena and Jeroen van Veen
Texted piano work: Case study 5 <i>Sonatine bureaucratique</i>	Peter Lawson, Bruno Fontaine and Jeroen van Veen

The interview results supported many of my assertions of the pianist interviewees’ rationale of their interpretative choices as well as straightening out any queries I had for them during the performance evaluation process. The verdicts essentially addressed the performance practice of Satie’s piano music from pianists’

lens, allowing them to share directly the impact of Satie's musical notation on performers. With interviewees belonging to different cultural backgrounds and specialising in different piano repertoire, the interview results were as balanced as they could be to provide an international perspective on the performance interpretation of Satie's piano works. When the interview results contradicted with each other, for instance, when a pianist saw the in-score texts as performance cues while another dismissed the narrative entirely, such conflicting opinions were followed by explanations given by both sides. Their clarification acted as evidence to further justify how Satie's piano music were understood in many different ways, and to give a fair account of why creative and diverse performance interpretations was an integral part of the performance practice of Satie's piano music.

Part Three: Prediction of research outcomes

I hypothesise that as the performance tradition of Satie's piano pieces evolved, second-generation pianists would have begun to explore with the use of creative performance gestures to response to the in-score textual stimuli (the use of in-score texts), visual stimuli (the inclusion of blank spaces in notation and disrupting subtitles) and extra-musical determinants (the use of symbolism, numerology, influences of Satie's persona) in their performances. In reaction to the performance tradition formed by the first- and second-generation pianists, diversity in performance interpretation may have become the essence of the performance practice of Satie's piano works, further reflected by the performance style of later-generation pianists.

With regard to the adaptation of the existing analytical model by Hellaby, I predict that my three-way analytical method with its modified and additional

interpretive criteria to analyse the performance interpretations of Satie's piano works will offer a fresh look on the interdependent relationships between the composer, the musical texts, the analysts with their theoretical judgements and the performers with their theoretical judgements as well as their ultimate performance interpretations. I speculate my new approach to performance analysis will allow me to re-evaluate the importance of being able to communicate with pianists and to seek deeper understanding of their direct responses to a piece of music. The post-performance dialogues between the analysts and pianists may enrich the analytical process and may bring clarity to performance gestures and interpretations. The data collected from the pianists will be presented and discussed in Chapters Six to Nine, which will test my hypotheses about evolving performance practice traditions in Satie piano performance and the efficacy of my analytical model inspired by Hellaby.

Chapter Four

Contextualisation of Satie's Unconventionality

Introduction

As a modernist French composer at the turn of the century, Satie sought 'new' ways to compose his piano music by demonstrating a departure from Germanic influences, embracing simplicity (See Chapters Eight and Nine), as well as adopting the essence from medieval music to create his own musical language and to experiment with new compositional concepts (See Chapters Five to Seven). This chapter aims to first contextualise how and why was Satie's piano music considered unconventional in comparison to his peers' piano works. An examination of the reception of his piano music during his time through primary sources such as concert talks and concert reviews is therefore provided. There are also comparisons between musical examples drawn from Satie's and his peers' piano works, in order to show how common musical language could indeed be found. However, these examples aim to expose how Satie would then modify his compositional approach in order to distinguish his piano works from others, leading to the unconventional elements that I highlight in the dissertation. Satie's strong emphasis on imbuing his music with original ideas, being formally and structurally small-scale and technically non-virtuosic, and having intentionally ambiguous performance directions and musical meanings, contribute to his defiance of convention, allowing his music to stand out from his peers.

It is vital to acknowledge the fact that Satie's musical language is unconventional and therefore incongruent to his peers' musical language as it provides the understanding needed to comprehend performance issues faced by

historical and contemporary pianists. It also explains why it is not always possible or relevant to apply performance practice of say, Debussy's or Ravel's piano pieces to Satie's piano pieces, or looking into a bigger context, to include Satie's piano pieces in mainstream performance practice research (See Chapter Two). Satie's musical language challenges pianists to raise performance questions and entuse them to seek, if necessary, alternative performance styles and interpretations to reflect on musical elements that are considered unconventional.

The second step to contextualise Satie's unconventionality departs from examining his piano works but draws attention to his persona, which I assert has an important role in influencing pianists' attitudes towards Satie's piano music. The defiant, ironic and enigmatic image of Satie constructed by the evidence in Satie biographies since the mid-20th century could lead to performance interpretations that reflect Satie's character in general.

Unconventionality in Satie's piano music

Historical reception of Satie's unconventional musical language

On 2 and 18 April 1916, Satie's music concerts were introduced by Roland Manuel to promote Satie as a modernist composer. Roland Manuel's introductory talk, '*Un Musicien fantaisiste Erik Satie*' highlights his original aesthetic in his piano pieces.

Roland Manuel expressed:

...his *Sarabandes* mark a significant date in the evolution of our music: here are three short pieces with a harmonic technique that is without precedent,

the result of a completely new aesthetic, instigating a distinctive atmosphere, an absolutely original magic sonority.⁸⁹

To contextualise Satie's unprecedented musical language, I compare the *Sarabande* composed by the 'precursor' in 1887 with his peer Debussy, whose '*Sarabande*' was completed four years later. In common, both pieces demonstrate the avoidance of traditional diatonic cadences with the chord progressions displaying the dismissal of conventional harmonic schemes. In retrospect, what distinguishes Satie's musical language in his piano music from Debussy's is more than the unprecedented harmony and sonority that Roland Manuel stated but Satie's overall musical language, which put an emphasis on the minimalist approach and the high reliance on repetition in regard to his use of melody, harmony and rhythm. Satie's melodies are often very simple with no development. They are also not necessarily as lyrical as Debussy's.

In Example 4.1, the first twenty-one bars of Satie's *Sarabande* No.1 demonstrate his disjunct melodies and repetitive rhythmic patterns. The different coloured boxes highlight different rhythmic groups for clarity. For instance, the rhythmic pattern of crotchet-minim-minim in the opening phrase (indicated in red-colour boxes) re-appears in bar 12 and 17. The rhythmic pattern in bar 10–11 (in pink-colour boxes) appears also in bar 15–16. In these bars that share the same rhythmic pattern, the melodies vary but maintain similar melodic contours. The texture in these rhythmically repetitive bars is also the same. Satie's mosaic-like melody, for example from bar 9 to 11, does not seem to give a sense of continuity or

⁸⁹ Original French text: 'Je voudrais que l'on comprît bien que ces *Sarabandes* marquent une date dans l'évolution de notre musique: voici trois courtes pièces d'une technique harmonique sans précédent, issue d'une esthétique toute nouvelle, instaurant une atmosphère particulière, une magie sonore absolument originale.' Lecture given at the Société Lyre et Palette, 8 April 1916. See Roland Manuel, *Erik Satie* (repr., Paris: Roberge, 1916), 3.

coherence by having close connection from one bar to the next. As a result, the melody sounds fragmented and disjointed.

As for Debussy's *Sarabande*, as shown in Example 4.2, the direction of his consecutive melodic phrases is much clearer in comparison to Satie's despite the use of non-functional harmonies and the avoidance of traditional cadences. The green brackets show how Debussy re-introduces the same motives but developing them further for the consecutive phrases. In the second system, the parallel chords (indicated by the blue boxes) show how they eventually become part of the accompaniment in the third system, demonstrating that Debussy's arrangement of his 'musical cells' is far from spontaneous.

Example 4.1 Satie's musical language in *Sarabande* No.1, bars 1 to 25

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

The ambiguous musical direction in Satie's *Sarabande* contributes to one of many examples of unconventionality in his piano music. This kind of fragmented melodic phrase or cells is common music aesthetic for his Rose-Croix piano pieces as well as some of his texted piano pieces/ humoristic piano pieces composed in 1912–1915. Other unconventionalities that can only be found in Satie's piano pieces, which could play a significant part in influencing performance interpretations will be discussed individually in each of the case studies chapters.

Example 4.2 Debussy 'Sarabande' from *Pour le piano*, bars 1 to 17

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Satie apart from adapting the 20th century musical language to form his own, he also turned to the use of cryptic texts in piano music for inspiration. Putting Satie's use of cryptic texts in context of his peers' works, plentiful examples can be found in Debussy's piano music, for example in his *Preludes* composed at the end of 1909 to 1913 which overlap the period when Satie composed his texted piano pieces during 1912–15. The differences behind Satie and Debussy's piano pieces with the use of cryptic texts is that Satie not only uses them as his piano titles, he also includes them in the music, displaying them in the same manner as in-score performance directions (See Chapter Five). Satie's in-score cryptic texts along with the music make pianists ponder the function of their presence—are they to be ignored? If Satie intended pianists to ignore these cryptic in-score texts, what is the purpose of including them in the first place? If they are *not* to be ignored, how do pianists make sense of the ambiguous meaning in order to enrich performances? In Debussy's case, his cryptic texts do not intervene with the music. In fact, in his *Preludes*, Debussy deliberately places his cryptic titles at the end of the piece, allowing pianists to address the piece without the interference of the title. Also, Debussy's detailed performance directions provided in the score means that his cryptic titles bear no significance in influencing performance interpretations.

In a Ricardo Viñes solo piano concert on 15 April 1914, Satie's piano piece *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* was featured alongside piano works by contemporary French composers such as Debussy, Ravel, Schmitt and Spanish composer Turina.⁹⁰ A critic review of that concert provides a historical perspective of the perception of Satie's piano music, which suggests that it was

⁹⁰ Ann-Marie Hanlon, "Erik Satie And The French Musical Canon: A Reception Study" (Ph.D, repr., Newcastle University, 2013), 317.

incompatible to the mainstream French piano music at the time. In addition, the critic points out Satie's deliberate use of visual stimuli through the typeface of the title to poke fun for the audience, of which the success (with regard to the visual effect) has largely undermined the value of Satie's piano music:

The varied and very musical programme of this recital would have lost some of its attraction if the amusing titles invented by Erik Satie had not been featured, but was it necessary on the one hand to print words in large characters whose arrangement or excess would have passed unnoticed otherwise, and on the other hand to play these indifferent jokes someplace else other than between Ravel and Turina?⁹¹

Apart from highlighting Satie's piano works as incongruent to his peers' work during his time, this review signifies Satie's first-generation pianist, Ricardo Viñes's specific effort to introduce visual stimuli to highlight his 'amusing titles' to the audience as an experimental feature to form part of the performance.

Another unconventionality is indicated by Satie's application of humour in his piano pieces as he found ways to differ his approach from his peers. To contextualise Satie's atypical humoristic gestures compared to his mainstream counterparts, I take Satie's *Sonatine bureaucratique* and Debussy's 'Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum' from *Children's Corner* as comparable examples. While both composers mocked Clementi's technical exercises as severe and mundane, Debussy approaches the subject by constructing his piece satirizing the style of Clementi's work with a blend of his own musical language. As for Satie, he takes the humour to the next level by almost ridiculing Clementi's *Sonatina in C* by eliminating the classical principles one by one, leaving the so-called 'neo-classical' piece with unrecognisable classical traits apart from the prominent *Sonatina* theme and

⁹¹ Ibid., 85. Original French text 'Le programme varié et très musical de ce récital aurait perdu quelque attrait si les titres amusants inventés par Erik Satie n'y avaient figuré, mais était-il nécessaire d'une part d'imprimer en gros caractères des mots dont l'assemblage ou la surcharge ne sauraient passer inaperçus et d'autre part de jouer ces indifférentes plaisanteries entre du Ravel et du Turina?'

replacing what he destroyed with musical language of his own (See Chapter Nine).

As Hanlon expresses her view on Satie's humoristic gesture in *Sonatine*

bureaucratique while bringing in Orledge and Whiting's opinions of the piano piece:

Orledge reveals that Clementi's *Sonatina* in C (Op. 36 No.1) acts as a 'pre-established formal plan.' Satie then reworks Clementi's piece with the aim of destroying many of the elements that situate it historically: the use of Alberti bass, regular periodization, diatonicism (Satie incorporates instances of bitonality) and traditional development which Satie avoids through musical repetition in order to make the piece comply with his non-developmental approach to composition. Whiting notes that "Clementi and Satie seem continually to interrupt each other – usually with a shift in register or change in dynamic or both." Satie uses various forms of musical surprise in order to subvert Classical principles through situational irony in this piece.⁹²

The in-score texts, which I assert have a close connection with the humour found in the music add another layer of mockery to the existing humour. Satie's humoristic gesture of deconstructing conventional ideas and reconstructing new ideas by means of his own musical language, allows montage-like *Sonatina* themes to remind the audience of the original source of the humour. It is inevitable that the performance interpretations of *Sonatine bureaucratique* would vary to a great extent as any opinion given to Satie's use of humour in this piece is subjective. However, such ambiguity is largely curbed in 'Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum', as Debussy made sure to provide clear instruction in regard to the performance style, tempo, articulation and how his humour is to be understood, through his letter to publisher Jacques Durand on 15 August, 1908:

Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum is a kind of health-oriented, cumulative gymnastics: it should be played every morning before breakfast, beginning *moderato* and ending *spiritoso*... The piece should not be thought of as a virtuoso piece, nor should the touch necessarily be brittle or percussive. Note that the tempo is *modérément animé* [moderately lively], so it should not be played with great speed. Because of the humor involved it should sound like an exercise; thus the notes should be articulated with extreme clarity.⁹³

⁹² Ibid., 217–218.

⁹³ Maurice Hinson, *Debussy: Children's Corner For The Piano* (repr., USA: Alfred Masterwork Edition, 1992), 3.

The practice of providing clear performance instructions by Debussy for his piano music is a rare phenomenon for Satie as the latter continued to shield himself from engaging in any serious performance discussions for his piano pieces.

On a separate occasion, Jane Mortier, another of Satie's first-generation pianists who also actively supported the promotion of French modernist music, to whom Satie dedicated '*Embryons desséchés*' (*Dry Embryos*), performed it at the Salle Y.M.C.A. in Montréal on 27 February 1918. *Embryons desséchés* is a humoristic piece that caused controversy at Satie's time because of its provocative title. Looking at a wider context, away from the French soil, the reception of Satie's humoristic piano music in Canada was just as underwhelming as back home. In a concert review of Mortier, Canadian-French pianist Léo-Pol Morin wrote:

Erik Satie's "*Dry Embryos*" could have been more humorous and ironic. In this country, where we do not know when to laugh and it is shameful to be free, you have to be rigid when you compose, and the art of Satie will always be misunderstood. We take it very seriously, gazing on it with a tragic face, when it is so pleasant and sometimes so musical.⁹⁴

In addition to Morin's reflection on the reception of Satie's piano pieces during the composer's lifetime in Canada, Claudine Caron also shared similar opinions that Satie was a composer that the Canadians had trouble understanding, suggesting that Satie's musical style and his approach to humour in his piano pieces were far too unconventional and spontaneous to be understood by the audience.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Léo-Pol Morin, *Le Nigog*, 1918/03, 105. Original French text: 'Les "Embryons desséchés" d'Erik Satie auraient pu être plus humoristiques, plus ironiques, plus fins. Dans ce pays-ci, où on ne sait pas rire et où il est malséant d'être libre, où il faut être raide et composé, l'art de Satie sera toujours incompris. On le prend très au sérieux, avec des airs tragiques, quand il est si plaisant et quelques fois si musical.'

⁹⁵ Claudine Caron, "Full Text Of "Paroles Gelees : UCLA French Studies"", *Archive.Org*, 2006, https://archive.org/stream/parolesgelesuc22univ/parolesgelesuc22univ_djvu.txt.

In 1922, Jane Mortier wrote an article ‘Virtuosité, tu n’es qu’un mot!’ pinpointing at her obligatory role as a pianist to support modernist music, which included Satie’s piano works. In her writing, Mortier redirected the focus from the sought-after virtuosity in performance to the importance of delivering feeling and emotion that was personal to the pianist when interpreting a piece of music. Mortier expressed: ‘It is up to us to impose our personality, even with mistakes. At least, it is interesting and emotion is created ... Externalize it, so that through the natural process, the music touches the listener. The music encourages the listener to think. When he leaves, he matures. This is our true role.’⁹⁶ Mortier’s opinion on the performance of modernist music was pioneering since pianists of her generation and the previous generations were accustomed to prioritising the delivery of composers’ emotion expressed through music notation over the delivery of the pianists’ personal emotions. Given the unexpected, unconventional features in Satie’s music, which are often thought-provoking, Mortier’s opinion on the performance of modernist music would fit well in Satie’s case.

Satie’s persona as an influence on performance interpretations

There is no other composer who reflects his/her persona onto the music composition the way that Satie did and to such an extent that the persona could play a part in influencing pianists’ interpretations of his/her works. Satie’s tendency to be defiant, ironic and mysterious are well documented in biographies since the mid-20th century. Moreover, documented dialogues between Satie and his contemporaries help to

⁹⁶ Mortier, Jane. "Virtuosité, Tu N’Es Qu’Un Mot!". *Action Cahiers De Philosophie Et D’Art* - (1922): 45. Original French text: ‘C’est donc à nous d’imposer notre personnalité, même avec ses erreurs. Au moins, c’est intéressant et nous créons de l’émotion... Extériorisons-la, afin que par une pente naturelle elle touche l’auditeur, le force à penser, s’impose à lui en un mot, et qu’il parte grandi.’

construct his multi-facets persona. I assert that these qualities have infiltrated not only in Satie's compositions, but have also encroached on pianists' minds when performing Satie's piano works, subsequently influencing their performance interpretations (See Chapters Seven to Nine).

Initially, a glimpse of Satie's defiant persona is exposed by his underwhelming performance at the Paris Conservatoire when he first enrolled as a piano student there in November 1879. Émile Descombes described Satie as 'the laziest student in the Conservatory' and that he was 'gifted, but indolent'⁹⁷ despite the fact that he passed his entrance audition performing a movement from a piano concerto by the Czech virtuoso composer Jan Dussek. Satie's choice on his virtuosic audition piece suggests that he was capable of performing well if he wanted to and his laziness was perhaps his way to defy the establishment.⁹⁸ By developing his unprecedented musical language and compositional technique while intentionally undermining the use of virtuosity, which was still a sought-after essence in most composers' works at the time, Satie clearly showed his aspiration to explore new territory. Satie's attitude to challenge existing tradition and expectation could inspire pianists to experiment with new performance interpretations and gestures or to rethink how one could respond to a given musical notation. This way, pianists reflect Satie's individualistic spirit through their performances of his piano works.

Poulenc, as one of the first-generation French pianists of Satie's piano music, recalled how Satie would 'mutter into his beard, half-ironically, half-seriously: "Mon vieux, could I try out some little thing [on Poulenc's piano]?"'⁹⁹ Poulenc also recalled

⁹⁷ Alan M Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 10.

⁹⁸ Olof Höjer, Liner note to *Erik Satie: The Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., Swedish Society Discofil, 1996).

⁹⁹ Francis Poulenc, *My Friends And Myself* (repr., London: Dobson, 1978), 70.

how Satie would try to get himself out of the pianist role when he needed to perform an entire piece:

Erik Satie very seldom played the piano. I may have heard him accompany some of his songs two or three times, but in the end, he tried to escape from it. Most of the time, it would be Ricardo Viñes, Marcelle Meyer, Georges Auric or I myself who played on his behalf.¹⁰⁰

As a capable pianist and a composer who produced piano pieces in much greater amount than compositions of other genres, Satie would deliberately shy away from the keyboard and avoid any discussion and performance of his own piano pieces, contributing to the lack of authorial voice as a performer of his work. Putting Satie in context of his peers, both Debussy and Ravel recorded their own performances of their piano pieces in piano roll while Satie did not. Should the making of piano rolls highly depend on the composer's financial status and the opportunities given by the recording companies, which would be out of Satie's control, he could have provided more discussion about the performance of his piano music through his writings as it is clear that he was a keen writer.¹⁰¹ As such, I claim that the lack of authorial voice for the performance or discussion of his pieces was Satie's intention, which on one hand adds to his enigmatic persona, and on the other hand, liberates pianists having to seek interpretations that would be considered authorial in order to reflect the composers' strict performance directions as in the case for Debussy and Ravel.

This chapter contextualises and defines what is considered unconventional in Satie's piano pieces, details of which will be discussed further in subsequent case

¹⁰⁰ Francis Poulenc, "La Musique De Piano D'erik Satie", *La Revue Musicale* 214, (June 1952): 23. Original French text : Erik Satie jouait très rarement du piano. A pein l'ai-je entendu deux ou trois fois, accompagner quelques-unes de ses mélodies et encore, jusqu'au dernier moment, il essayait de s'y soustraire. Le plus souvent, Ricardo Viñes, Marcelle Meyer, Auric ou moi-même lui rendions ce service.

¹⁰¹ Erik Satie et al., *A Mammal's Notebook* (repr., London: Atlas, 1996), 97–153.

study chapters. The indirect influence of Satie's persona on performance interpretations of his piano piece is an area worthy of investigation in the field of performance analysis. This could only be done via post-performance dialogues with pianists and will be addressed in the case study chapters.

Chapter Five

Medieval Themes and Symbolism in Satie's Rose-Croix Piano Pieces

Introduction

In 1891, Satie was introduced to Joséphin Péladan by his symbolist poet acquaintance Contamine de Latour. Péladan was a prolific art critic at the time and was determined to promote arts with symbolism, mysticism and esotericism as a reaction to the contemporary academic art that was associated with perfection and idealism, which he condemned. To fulfil his purpose, Péladan formed the Rosicrucians, a mystical society, which organised a series of music salons associated with the cult. Satie supported the quasi-religious Rosicrucian art movement led by Péladan and during 1891 to 1894, he composed a set of *Rose-Croix* piano pieces specifically for the salons. Unlike other Satie piano pieces, the Rose-Croix compositions were only allowed to be performed for the music salons associated with the cult. As performances of the Rose-Croix piano pieces during Satie's lifetime were held privately and no reviews of any sort could be sought, such exclusivity makes it challenging for contemporary pianists to understand the performance practice of these quasi-religious pieces or simply to make sense of the musical style. The exclusivity and obscurity attached to these Rose-Croix piano pieces echoes the doctrine of the Rosicrucian occult. In order to provide more detailed context to these pieces prior to exploring the associated performance practice in the next chapter, I choose to acknowledge the influence of medieval revival in France had on Satie to obtain a better understanding of the compositional aesthetic for the *Rose-Croix* piano pieces. New interpretive criteria are subsequently drawn up in my analytical model

(See Chapter Three) to take into account how symbolism, numerology and medieval themes as means to facilitate mysticism could impact performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces. Through my score analysis of *Ogives* (1886) and *Danses gothiques* (1893), I question: What was the inspiration behind the short repetitive melodies in *Ogives*? What do the inserted blank spaces and the nine titles of *Danses gothiques* signify? What kind of performance issues have these Rose-Croix musical features raised?

Medieval revival and *Le Chat Noir*

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the medieval revival was pursued in France. Elizabeth Nicole Emery and Laura Morowitz point out that this movement was reflected in architectural and interior design, literature, song writing and also lifestyle.¹⁰² As a young composer in his twenties, Satie experienced this movement while frequenting the Montmartre cabarets, venues where strong medieval influence could be traced, and socialising himself with artists, painters and poets who were also in favour of the medieval revival.

Inaugurated by the painter and writer Rodolphe Salis, *Le Chat Noir* (1881-1897) was the most successful and famous of these cabarets. Satie spent his time there working as a pianist.¹⁰³ *Le Chat Noir* went hand-in-hand with the medieval revival movement and the immediate influence could be seen in its own paper *Le Chat Noir*, its interior décor, its shadow theatre shows and the kinds of clientele it attracted who were mostly artists and anyone who followed Parisian chic. Emery and

¹⁰² Laura Morowitz and Elizabeth Emery, *Consuming The Past* (repr., Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 1-12.

¹⁰³ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 77.

Morowitz wrote: ‘The pages of *Le Chat Noir* abounded with off-colour stories, tales and fabliaux written in archaic French, often with Gothic lettering and small-scale vignettes of costumed monks, princesses and saints, a veritable showcase for the imaginary Middle Ages of legend.’¹⁰⁴ Regarding the interior décor of *Le Chat Noir*, Jean Pascal, a historian of Montmartre, described vividly: ‘Rustic chairs, benches and solid wood tables, a stained-glass window, a tall fireplace, some antique armour, shining brass and copperware made up the Louis XIII establishment.’¹⁰⁵ Its clientele would have been immersed in its pseudo-medieval environment. As part of *Le Chat Noir*’s regular shows, the shadow theatre played a large part in familiarising its participants with the idioms of the medieval world. For example, Mukherjee mentioned that ‘these descriptions [the play’s titles] underscore the homage paid by nineteenth-century artists to religious, biblical and medieval sources of inspiration’.¹⁰⁶ As examples, there are *L’Enfant prodigue* as a Biblical parable, *La Marche à l’étoile* as a mystery play, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* and *Sainte Geneviève de Paris* as stories of the medieval saints. It is highly possible that Satie was part of the audience in these shadow theatre shows, which might have inspired him to include the names of medieval saints such as Saint Michel, the Archangel, Saint Bernard and Saint Lucie in *Danses gothiques* in order to let medieval elements infiltrate into his piano work.

¹⁰⁴ Laura Morowitz and Elizabeth Emery, *Consuming The Past* (repr., Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 185.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Emery and Laurie Postlewaite, *Medieval Saints In Late Nineteenth Century French Culture* (repr., Jefferson, 2004), 27. Translation provided by Mukherjee in footnote no.5, 41. Original French texts were from Jean Pascal, ‘Les Chansons et poésies du Chat noir.’ *Les Chansonniers de Montmartre* 24 (25 June 1907), 2. – ‘des chaises rustiques, des bancs et des tables en bois massif, un vitrail enluminé, une haute cheminée, quelques armures anciennes, de luisantes pièces de dinanderie, constituaient l’établissement Louis XIII.’

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

It was in *Le Chat Noir* where Satie met many avant-garde artists based in Paris. They ranged from satirists, painters, poets, writers, critics and musicians to youngsters who would simply be there to share a glimpse of chic Parisian society. For example, satirist and cartoonist Caran d'Ache, poet Contamine de Latour, artist-humorist George Auriol, painter Paul Signac and composer Claude Debussy were amongst those who frequented the cabaret. In an environment that was full of artistic inspiration, Satie exposed himself to the symbolists. Richard Langham Smith defined symbolism in music as: 'A term for the ways in which musical elements may in some way be connected to extra-musical phenomena: the words of a poem, a natural object, or a person or emotional state.'¹⁰⁷ Smith's definition highlights connections that music can make with other phenomena in addition to traditional musical elements, in order to convey ideas or emotions on a different expressive layer. Under this definition, symbolism can be found as a tool for Satie to include medieval mysticism in his late 19th century piano pieces.

Numerology, which has a long tradition in different parts of the world, became part of Satie's obsession. Orledge commented that 'he (Satie) had an obsession with numerology second only to that of Berg and was forever counting his bars.'¹⁰⁸ Volta elaborates on this idea:

[T]he first manuscript of *Uspud* is dated November 17, 1892. The authors defined this date as "the 72nd of the works of hermetic consolations". One could wonder forever about this little formula, as hermetic as the consolations promised by its works. It may be enough to remember that, in occult numerology, 72 is considered "the symbol of solidarity in multiplicity."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Richard Langham Smith, "Symbolism - Oxford Reference", Oxfordmusiconline.Com, accessed 5 November 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6586>.,.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 142.

¹⁰⁹ Ornella Volta, "Give A Dog A Bone", Satie-Point.De, accessed 24 June 2012, <http://satie-point.de/text-VOLTA%20-%20Give%20a%20dog%20a%20bone.pdf>.

Another example of his obsession with numbers was the famous *Vexations*, a piece that came with Satie's instruction printed on the score to play the motive 840 times 'Pour se jouer 840 fois de suite ce motif...' On different occasions, the obsession of the number three is also prominent, such as *Trois Sarabandes* (1887) and *Trois Gymnopédies* (1888), which signifies the representation of the Trinity. The early twentieth century texted/humoristic piano works are also composed as sets of three, continuing the trinitarian concept, such as *Trois Valses distinguées du Précieux dégoûté* (1914) and *Avant-dernières pensées* (1915). Among his pseudo-religious pieces, I have chosen *Ogives* and *Danses gothiques* as case studies in order to demonstrate how Satie's use of symbolism, numerology and medieval themes lead to specific compositional techniques for his melodies, harmonies, structure as well as the inclusion of visual and textural stimuli in his Rose-Croix piano pieces.

Symbolism and Numerology in *Ogives*¹¹⁰

Composed in 1886, during the decade of the medieval revival in France, the set of *Ogives* recorded the beginning of the infiltration of symbolism and esotericism in Satie's compositions. Although strictly speaking, *Ogives* was not part of his Rose-Croix piano pieces, which formed the peak of his quasi-religious output, this set of piano works could be seen as the predecessors of the Rose-Croix piano works composed between 1891 and 1894. The nature of these short pieces was revealed by the title, as according to his brother Conrad Satie, 'it was while contemplating the

¹¹⁰ The following section is published in Grace Gates, "Satie's Rose-Croix Piano Works", in *Erik Satie: Music, Art And Literature*, 1st ed. (repr., Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 49–66.

ogives of this church (Notre Dame de Paris) for days on end that the composer conceived *Ogives*’.¹¹¹

Architecturally, an ogive is a diagonal vaulting rib or a pointed arch which was one of the common characteristics of Gothic architecture that were originated in the twelfth century France and could be found often in cathedrals. The ogive symbolized the medieval and esoteric world in which Satie was interested, and the title *Ogives* revealed the mystic nature of this set of piano pieces. An advertisement for the *Ogives*, which was believed to have been written by Satie himself, appeared on 9 February 1889 in *Journal du Chat Noir*, the house newspaper of the cabaret: ‘The indefatigable Erik-Satie, the sphinx-man, the composer with a head of wood, announces the appearance of a new musical work of which from henceforth he speaks most highly. It is a suite of melodies conceived in the mystic-liturgical genre that the author idolizes, and suggestively titled *Les Ogives*.’¹¹²

With Satie’s declaration that the mystic-liturgical genre has infused the set of *Ogives*, I assert that its overall musical structure reflects Satie’s obsession with symbolism and numerology. Worrel explains:

Numerologically, the cross is sometimes represented by the number four. Within our own teachings: “No.4 is the Mystic number, and indicates the operative influence of the four elements. Under this number, or the geometrical square, Pythagoras communicated the Ineffable Name of God to his chosen disciples.”¹¹³

Satie could have read about the significance of the number four in religious and mystical terms and decided to bring this mystic number to the set of *Ogives*, beginning with the decision of having four self-contained pieces to form the set instead of the

¹¹¹ Erik Satie et al., *Satie, Seen Through His Letters*, 2nd ed. (repr., London: Marion Boyars, 1994), 56.

¹¹² Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 92.

¹¹³ Thomas D. Worrel, "A Brief Study Of The Rose Cross Symbol", Sricf-Ca.Org, accessed 23 June 2013, <http://www.sricf-ca.org/paper3.htm>.

trinitarian concept of having a set of three. The next decision that Satie made in relation to the number four is the number of systems required. Each of the *Ogives* consistently consists of four systems with the main melody neatly presented in the first system, followed by its harmonization in the next three systems. Another intriguing finding related to the cross symbol is the representation of the perfect cube. Worrel explains:

[T]he traditional Rosicrucian symbol is a cross of six squares whereon is a red rose of five petals...the cross of six squares is also the unfolded cube of six faces. The perfect cube has been used to represent the Holy of Holies since Old Testament times. ¹¹⁴

In the case of the *Ogives*, I discovered that Satie attempted to apply the equilateral (equal sides) characteristics of a perfect cube through composing the melodies and harmonies in such a way that both the horizontal and vertical sides of the piece shared the same number of notes. Example 5.1 and 5.2 show respectively how there are twenty-three notes forming the single melodic line horizontally as well as forming the vertical harmony once the first chord of each of the four systems is combined. The perfect combination of having twenty-three notes for the top and bottom horizontal lines as well as the left (the first chord of the four systems) and right (the last chord of the four systems) sides, symbolises the perfect cube, which ultimately represents the Holy Cross when unfolded.

Example 5.1 The twenty-three horizontal notes in *Ogives* no. 1

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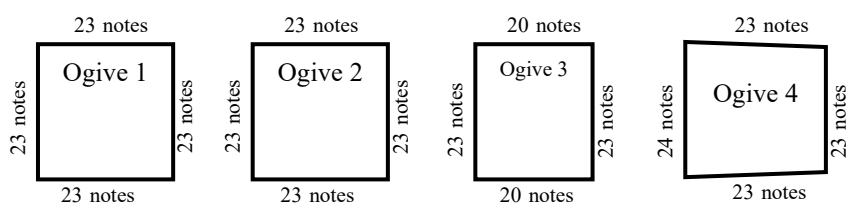
¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Example 5.2 The twenty-three vertical notes in *Ogives* no. 1, taken from the first chord of each system



The third and fourth *Ogives* show slight deviations from the ‘perfect cube’ musical structure. In the third of the *Ogives*, although the first and last chords of all four systems still add up to twenty-three notes each, the horizontal melody only consists of twenty notes. In the fourth of the *Ogives*, the first chord of all four systems adds up to twenty-four notes, which is one note too many compared to the twenty-three notes of the other ‘three sides’. The diagram in Example 5.3 sums up the perfect cube symbolism of all four *Ogives* and also the occasional deviations.

Example 5.3 Perfect cube symbolism and the deviations from this in *Ogives*



Despite the slight deviations from the symbolic perfect cube in the third and fourth of the *Ogives*, the above finding certainly supports the assumption that symbolism and mysticism are part of the main ingredients of these four *Ogives*. It is worth noticing that such slight ‘deviations’ from a rule are commonplace in Satie’s composition and with its suggestive title, the delivery of the mystic atmosphere is no doubt central to

all the *Ogives*. In fact, I would identify these deviations as Satie's way to condemn perfectionism, a notion that Péladan strongly supported in his Rosicrucian art movement a few years after the *Ogives* was composed. As an interesting side issue, as if by coincidence, the number twenty-three that Satie was obsessed with in each of the *Ogives* is also the composer's age in years at the time of composition. Could this be a simple joke, or Satie's skillful representation of himself as the perfect cube, which symbolized the Holy of Holies? This is in a way similar to Satie declaring himself the founder of the Metropolitan Church of Art in 1893, of which he was the only member.¹¹⁵

Apart from the musical structure of *Ogives*, which shows Satie's comprehensive plan on the symbolism account, other aspects of *Ogives* such as melody, harmonization, tempo and rhythm choices also reflect the mystical quality of the piece. The melodies in the *Ogives* are very simple. Unlike any other pieces that he composed, each of the *Ogives* introduces the main melody in the first system, which is then repeated three times with identical harmonization in the second and fourth systems. The compositional technique of relying on a recurring melody to form an entire piece resembles the repeating series of pitches, which is referred to as the 'color', often found in medieval music. The same chords are used in the third system although in different chord positions, for example changing from root position to first inversion. The melody is short, as identified earlier that it has only twenty-three notes, except the third of the *Ogives*, which has only twenty notes. When the melodies are harmonized, the unexpected accidentals push the melodies to sound more and more modal. It is in fact quite logical for Satie to introduce modes in the *Ogives* as they fit nicely with the whole medieval esoteric setting of the piece. On another note, the

¹¹⁵ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 170.

melody is mostly restricted to stepwise motion, reminiscent of Gregorian chants, which Satie had learned with his first piano teacher Monsieur Vinot.¹¹⁶

In all four *Ogives*, Satie harmonised the main melodies solely with block chords, which provides a still, solemn and solid character. Since the pieces were full of block chords, visually, they resembled building blocks in architecture. In this case, these vertical blocks were reaching for the ceilings of the solemn cathedral, as Conrad Satie suggested Notre-Dame in Paris, with its imposing pointed arches (ogives).

As early as the medieval period, the augmented fourth or the diminished fifth interval was considered the Devil's intervals and it was forbidden in music composition. However, tritones were extensively used in the late 19th century and composers welcomed the dissonant sound generated by them. Interestingly, in *Ogives*, Satie added all necessary accidentals to the harmonised chords so that the formation of tritones was prevented. Such execution was consistent with no exception as not even one dissonant chord can be found in all four *Ogives*. Surely, the medieval belief of the association of the tritone with the Devil was the reason behind Satie's consistent avoidance of the dissonant chords simply because it would be inappropriate for such chords to exist in this piece which symbolizes the Notre Dame church. Below is an example of the harmonized chords with accidentals to avoid tritones. Example 5.4 is taken from the third system of the fourth of the *Ogives*. It is shown that the second and sixth chords both have the B flat accidentals so that the B diminished chord is avoided and replaced by a B flat major chord. The same arrangement was applied to chord fourteen and eighteen of the next phrase. In chord twenty-one, B naturals replace the B flat accidentals to avoid forming tritones with an E diminished chord.

¹¹⁶ Olof Höjer, liner note to Olof Höjer, *Erik Satie: The Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., Swedish Society Discofil SCD 1070, 1996).

Example 5.4 Accidentals on block chords to avoid tritones in *Ogives* no. 4

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In terms of Satie's choice of tempo, I assert that *Très lent* was chosen in order to create a tranquil atmosphere for all four *Ogives*. The slow tempo choice could also be inspired by the numerous performances of Gregorian chant that Satie would have heard, of which the slow tempo reflects the reciting speed of the congregation's prayers to God. Aurally, as well as visually, the stillness of these pieces is further enhanced by the choice of longer duration rhythmic values. Only semibreves, minims, crotchets and quavers are used, with crotchets being the most frequent choice. The very slow tempo offered ample time for the block chords to ring (with the use of sustain pedal). In combination, the slow tempo, the chant-like melody that recurs throughout the piece and the consecutive block chords texture produce sonorities that mimic the medieval chants. The music not only symbolises the Holy Cross as I claimed earlier, it also embodies the atmosphere as visually, *Ogives'* isorhythmic (talea) and chordal texture provide a pillar-like image, which gives an emphasis on the striking characteristics of the cathedral with its imposing heights.

Finally, I assert that Satie's choice of dynamic range in the *Ogives* suggests the echoing sound in the spacious Notre Dame church. Apart from the third of the *Ogives*, which has dynamic marking *piano* for its third system, the other three *Ogives* follow the consistent pattern of *p-ff-pp-ff* for the four respective systems. Aurally, the soft – loud – soft – loud effect tends to depict the echoing sound. This could simply

be Satie's reminiscence of those daydreaming hours under the arches of Notre Dame.¹¹⁷ Inside it, the echoes of the priests' and churchgoers' prayers or the sacred singing by the church choir would naturally bounce against its high roof and ogive arches, facilitated by the architecture of the Gothic building. Despite the varied dynamic of *piano* instead of *pianissimo* in the third *Ogive*, such deviation does not at all contradict to the above assumption.

Performance issues of *Ogives*

With the use of symbolism, numerology as extra-musical stimuli, the use of melody and harmony as in-score visual stimuli as previously examined, *Ogives* challenges pianists to rethink how appropriate and effective it would be to apply traditional performance approaches to such pieces, given all the unconventional qualities. In regard to the in-score visual stimuli aspect, as for the rest of Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces, the use of bar-lines is omitted in the musical notation. Although it was unusual for 19th century music compositions to notate music without bar-lines, it was the initial practice for notating the Gregorian chant in medieval times. Joseph Gajard, a choirmaster of Solesmes, has insightful discussion of the notational presentation and rhythmic characteristics of the Gregorian chant, which I claim could offer valuable points for contemporary pianists to understand Satie's musical choices in *Ogives*. The performance practice of medieval music may also be applied to other Rose-Croix piano pieces, offering pianists performance choices with a historical perspective.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Mary E. Davis, *Erik Satie* (repr., Reaktion Books, 2007), 23.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Gajard, "The Rhythm Of Plainsong (According To The Solesmes School)", Media.Musicasacra.Com, 2019, <http://media.musicasacra.com/pdf/plainsong.pdf>.

Gajard writes persuasively about the reasons behind the lack of bar-lines and the relatively equal rhythmic ‘notes’ in medieval plainsong:

Gregorian notation is very far from possessing that absolute rhythmic precision found in modern musical notation...there is no bars of measurement... since all notes, whatever their shape or manner of being written, have each the value of a simple beat... Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that in Gregorian chant each note is worth *one simple beat*, and is indivisible... Gregorian notes can be doubled or trebled but never subdivided. This point is most important, for on it depends, to a great extent, the religious value of Gregorian chant, whose whole idea is to establish peace within us, which can only be achieved by the tranquility of order. Such peace is primarily assured by the smooth and regular flow of melody and rhythm, without shock.¹¹⁹

I assert that Gajard’s opinion on the establishment of peace through the delivery of the smooth and regular flow of melody and rhythm could be the essence of performance style for the whole set of *Ogives*, a performance style that could be extended to apply to the rest of Satie’s Rose-Croix piano pieces. To achieve tranquility, pianists would have to decide on their own choice of tempo, articulation, and effective ways to incorporate the use of the sustain pedal to enhance performances, such as to reflect the natural reverberation of sound occurred in a church building. Gajard emphasises specifically how ‘Gregorian chant possesses no rhythm properly so called, but is something vague, like speech, for which correct accentuation is sufficient.’¹²⁰ As such, ‘an artist has the right of interpretation, of slightly lengthening or modifying a note in order to enhance its meaning.’¹²¹

Gajard’s opinions on the performance practice of Gregorian chant could inspire and liberate pianists to adopt contrasting performance interpretations of *Ogives* and the Rose-Croix piano pieces that reflect the essence of medieval music characteristics. Although the set of *Ogives* has no quasi-liturgical text to sing, pianists could offer a

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 8-9.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹²¹ Ibid., 37.

stylistically aware interpretation and apply rubato by accentuating or lengthening certain notes (known as agogic accents in current performance practice literature) in response to the performance practice of Gregorian chant. In another words, pianists could take the initiative to slightly alter the duration of the notes without adhering to the given note values. On the other hand, the visual stimuli which include the pillar-like block chords and the suggestive title could persuade pianists to focus on the symbolised structural presence of a church, which could lead to a performance that discards the flexible tempo in order to highlight the orderly overall structure of the music (See Chapter Six).

Symbolism in *Danses gothiques*

Satie composed *Danses gothiques* in 1893, during the period of his involvement with the Rose-Croix art movement (1891–1894), which is also the same year when Satie’s relationship with painter Suzanne Valadon ended. Shortly afterwards, *Vexations* was composed. To my knowledge, *Danses gothiques* marked the beginning of Satie’s inclusion of texts to accompany his music, which I claim has created in-score textual stimuli that could influence performance interpretation (See Chapter Seven). As these in-score texts appear in the form of titles, they are inserted in *Danses gothiques* in a manner, which would disrupt the continuous visual flow of the music. The texts or ‘interrupting titles’ as I refer to them, are in fact hard to be ignored during performances while pianists’ eyes scan along the musical notation. Even with conscious efforts being made to not let these interrupting titles affect performance

interpretations, they have inevitably become a kind of in-score visual stimulus.¹²² In order to infiltrate esotericism and medieval themes in this Rose-Croix piano piece, Satie includes in the small caption under the piece title: ‘Neuvaine pour le plus grand calme et la forte tranquillité de mon Âme’ (Novena for the greatest peace and tranquillity of my soul). ‘Neuvaine’, French for novena, refers to the idea of the religious novena practice that took place in the Roman Catholic Church. The process is ‘a nine-day period of private or public prayer to obtain special graces, to implore special favors, or to make special petitions’, during which, sentiments of grief and hope are expressed through special prayers or services.¹²³ By considering the novena context, the choice of a *très lent* tempo is logical. However, the very slow tempo would pose performance question of whether *Danses gothiques* ought to be regarded as a dance piece? Amongst the nine titles that appear within this set of dances, the third, fifth, seventh and eighth titles visually interrupt the continuous flow of the music. In addition to that, there are blank spaces inserted in the notation, creating another form of in-score visual stimulus as these blank spaces would further disrupt the visual flow of the music. I assert that the disproportional number of titles used in the piece, alongside the choice of *très lent* tempo for a so-called dance piece, and the unprecedented inclusion of blank spaces as part of the notation are Satie’s means to incorporate the use of symbolism in this piano work.

In response to why Satie gave this piece a dance title with the very slow tempo marking, I propose that the term ‘danse’ in this piece could in fact be referring to an art form that was considered spiritual in the Medieval Ages rather than a

¹²² To clarify, *Gnosstienne* no.1 (1890) was the first piano piece to include text. However, these texts resemble performance direction despite their bizarre meanings. They do not form part of the musical structure as the case in *Danses gothiques*.

¹²³ "Novena Prayers; EWTN Global Catholic Network", Ewtn.Com, accessed 6 November 2013, <https://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/prayers/novena.htm>.

traditional dance like a courante or a waltz. Yvonne Kendall mentioned that ‘it was not until the thirteenth century that dance became an accepted part of Christian worship.’¹²⁴ Emery and Morowitz point out that ‘In the literature of the fin de siècle, however, Gothic architecture is most often described as a dreamy private space of meditation and inspiration.’¹²⁵ Combining the interpretations of ‘dance’ and ‘gothic’, the title *Danses gothiques* could be referring to a meditative piece under the blanket of quasi-religious titles and medieval themes, which was composed to express his emotional struggles in his relationship with Suzanne Valadon. This connection is plausible as the time of the deterioration of the short and only relationship Satie had coincided with the time when this piano piece was composed. The atmosphere of calm and tranquility was intended for Satie himself as he revealed in the small title caption that it is a ‘novena for the greatest peace and tranquility *of my soul*’.

Approaching *Danses gothiques* as a meditative piece would encourage pianists to focus on a performance style that promotes calmness and timelessness other than the association with mysteriousness. The inclusion of fanfare-like musical ideas as shown in Example 5.5 also symbolise *Danses gothiques* as a ritualistic piece. A similar fanfare-like musical idea also appears in *Sonneries de la Rose + Croix*, another Rose-Croix piece composed in the year before *Danses gothiques*, which Whiting refers to as ‘enigmatic musical entities’¹²⁶

Example 5.5 Fanfare-like musical idea in ‘À l’occasion d’une grande peine’, *Danses*

¹²⁴ Yvonne Kendall, "Medieval Dance", The Online Reference Book For Medieval Studies, accessed 7 November 2013, [>>](http://the-orb.net/encyclop/culture/music/kendall.htm#dancewest)

¹²⁵ Laura Morowitz and Elizabeth Emery, *Consuming The Past* (repr., Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 102.

¹²⁶ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 144.

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As mentioned earlier that *Danses gothiques* was composed in the same year when his relationship with Suzanne Valadon came to an end. To be precise, Satie wrote the piano piece between 21 and 23 March 1893, in the midst of his affair with Suzanne Valadon, which only lasted briefly from 14 January 1893 to 20 June 1893. In his letter to her dated 11 March 1893, Satie clearly reveals his emotional struggle linked to the love affair. The combination of his emotional state during the time of the composition together with the novena remark at the beginning of the piece and the content of the nine titles lead me to claim that *Danses gothiques* was aimed to be a meditative piece by Satie for his troubled soul caused by his unsuccessful relationship with Valadon. During their relationship, Satie wrote: ‘you are in Me complete; everywhere...For Me there is only the icy solitude that creates an emptiness in my head and fills my heart with sorrow...’¹²⁷ When Satie finally broke up with Valadon, he expressed in a letter to his brother, Conrad, ‘I shall have great difficulty in regaining possession of myself...’¹²⁸ I assert that the unsettled and conflicting emotions that Satie experienced, which swung from feeling hopeful to desolate, are expressed through the nine titles in *Danses gothiques*. These nine titles, which appear throughout the entire piece in different junctures, however, do not

¹²⁷ Erik Satie et al., *Satie, Seen Through His Letters*, 2nd ed. (repr., London: Marion Boyars, 1994), 45-46.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

correspond to separate sections or movements of the whole piece. I have italicised ones that represent desolation and the original font shows hope and positivity:¹²⁹

1. *À l'occasion d'une grande peine.*
2. Dans laquelle les Pères de la Très Véritable et Très Sainte Église sont invoqués.
3. *En Faveur d'un malheureux.*
4. A propos de Saint Bernard et de Sainte Lucie.
5. *Pour les pauvres trespases.*
6. Où il est question du pardon des injures reçues.
7. *Par pitié pour les ivrognes, honteux, débauchés, imparfaits, désagréables, et faussaires en tous genres.*
8. En le haut honneur du vénéré Saint Michel, le gracieux Archange.
9. Après avoir obtenu la remise de ses fautes.

On a spiritual level, the mention of religious saints in these titles such as Saint Michel, the Archangel, Saint Bernard and Saint Lucie adds to the esoteric effect but also offer consolation because of their religious connections. The mention of 'great affliction' as well as all the negative non-religious subjects such as the poor wretch, drunkards, disgraced, debauched represent desolation, which contrasts with the mention of Holy Fathers and the remission of sins that represents hope.

Apart from using the titles in *Danses gothiques* to express emotional conflicts, I assert that Satie's use of harmony also purposefully reflects this. I discover that there is a plausible connection amongst the insertion of titles, the fragmented Rose-Croix musical cells and Satie's harmonic designs. Combining all of these features, they symbolise a journey to tranquility and peace just as the novena caption suggests. Comparing *Danses gothiques* to the other Rose-Croix pieces, which commonly include minor and unresolved diminished chords as the musical

¹²⁹ Titles translated by Orledge, see 2016 Salabert Edition piano score *Erik Satie Complete Works for Piano Vol. 1*: 1. On the occasion of a great affliction. 2. In which the Holy Fathers of the Most Venerable and Most Holy Church are called upon. 3. On behalf of a poor wretch. 4. On the subject of Saint Bernard and Saint Lucy. 5. For the poor departed. 6. Where it is a question of pardoning received offences. 7. In pity for the drunkards, the unpleasant, the disgraced, the debauched, the unpleasant, and forgers of all kinds. 8. In the highest honour of the venerated Saint Michael, the graceful Archangel. 9. After having obtained the remission of their sins.

language, the former has noticeably more major 7th and major 9th chords. For example, while there are no major 7th chords in both *Première Pensée Rose-Croix* and *Sonneries de la Rose-Croix*, they appear sparsely in the third act prelude of *Le Fils des Etoiles* (1892) and specifically underneath Satie's performance direction 'très bien'. In *Messe des Pauvres* (1895), the major 7th chord also appears several times in the sections 'Chant Ecclésiastique' and 'Prière pour le salut de mon âme' where the harmony links to positivity and hope—the prayer for salvation. Satie's consistent gesture of associating major 7th chords with the idea of religious prayer and hope supports my assertion that the major 7th chords in alternation with the minor and diminished chords symbolise the emotional struggle of hope and misery in this quasi-religious novena/ meditative piano piece. Example 5.6 shows a chord progression that involves diminished and major chords from 'A l'occasion d'une grande peine'

Example 5.6 Diminished and major chords from 'A l'occasion d'une grande peine', *Danses gothiques*, system 1

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Visual stimulus as an extra symbolic gesture in *Danses gothiques*

In *Danses gothiques*, the nine titles do not correspond to nine separate movements, as simply, there are no nine separate musical movements. The titles sometimes interrupt halfway through a musical idea, namely the mosaic-like musical cells. Satie also chose not to fill up the page with notation, leaving ample blank spaces at particular parts of the page. Figure 5.1 shows how Satie notated, in his manuscript, the title number 9 in such a way that it separates the musical cell into two parts (the last eight crotchet beats belong to one musical cell) and also his choice to give a line jump after jotting down the first four quaver chords. Having titles and blank spaces to appear during the continuous visual flow of the musical notation was an original idea by Satie, which causes visual stimulus for performers, which I refer to as in-score visual stimuli, one of the new performance interpretive criteria for the performance analytical model (See Chapter Three).

Figure 5.1 Satie's manuscript of *Danses gothiques*, Title 9¹³⁰

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¹³⁰ Erik Satie, "Danses Gothiques" (Manuscript, repr., Paris, 1929), Bibliothèque nationale de France Département de la reproduction.

Three years after *Danses gothiques* was composed, Stéphane Mallarmé published his poem *Un coup de dés Jamais N'abolira Le Hasard*, in which the use of blank spaces is overwhelmingly similar to Satie's practice in *Danses gothiques*. To add, the first published version of the complete *Danses gothiques* in 1929 is a posthumous edition put together by Milhaud. Separately, Milhaud admired Mallarmé's work to the extent that he set his song *Chansons bas* Op.44 (1917) based on the writer's posies.¹³¹ It is plausible that Milhaud would have acknowledged the parallels found between the notational presentation of *Danses gothiques* in Satie's notebook and the presentation of Mallarmé's published *Un coup de dés* and decided to preserve Satie's unconventional style in notational presentation in the posthumous edition. For this reason, I turn to Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* poem for inspiration since there is strong resonance between how Mallarmé presented his poem and Satie presented his music, despite the fact that these two works belong to different disciplines. Mallarmé also manipulated the size and the position of some of his words, which provides visual stimuli to the reader in order to change the speed the words are scanned and to enrich the meaning of his texts. Figure 5.2 shows the word 'n'abolira' printed in capital letters and situated in the bottom of a page with a much bigger font size compared to the other words in the poem. It also displays how a complete sentence is disrupted visually by letting a mid-sentence begin on a new line despite the fact that there is ample space for the sentence to continue without the line jump.

Commenting on *Un coup de dés*, Marcel Cobussen expresses that 'the blank comes neither before, nor after the series; it intervenes between the semantic series

¹³¹ The posthumous edition came eighteen years after the publication of the first 'movement' appeared in *Revue musicale SIM*, 7/3 (15 March 1911). This is the only part of *Danses gothiques* that Satie saw being published.

in general; it liberates the effect that a series exists.¹³² Applying Cobussen's explanation on the effect of the blanks has on *Un coup de dés*, I claim that the blank spaces and interrupting titles in *Danses gothique* provide similar effect, which symbolise the journey to liberation. It is important to note that Satie assigned more and more blank spaces towards the end of the piece, which I interpret as signifying the process of reaching the ultimate level of calm and tranquility towards the close of this meditative piece. With the more blanks or emptiness (in a metaphorical sense) one experiences, the calmer the soul would become. The notion of being freed is also reflected by the seemingly spontaneous insertion of titles throughout the piece and expressed through the word choices of these titles that emphasise the seeking of tranquility of the soul (See Chapter Seven for more detailed discussion).

Figure 5.2 The visual stimuli in *Un coup de dés*¹³³

¹³² M. Cobussen, "Cage, White, Mallarmé, Silence", Deconstruction-In-Music.Com, accessed 12 November 2013, http://www.deconstruction-in-music.com/proefschrift/300_john_cage/316_cage_and_silence/316a_cage_white_mallarme_silence/cage_white_mallarme_silence.htm.

¹³³ Stéphane Mallarmé, "Un Coup De Dés Jamais N'abolira Le Hasard / Stéphane Mallarmé", *Gallica*, 2007, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k71351c/f4.image.texteImage>.

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restrictions**

Performance issues in *Danses gothiques*

On a practical level, the nine titles and inclusion of blank spaces add ambiguity to the musical notation as they split the entire piece up into multiple chunks, upsetting pianists' common practice in score-reading and thus prompting various kinds of performance question. The main question to raise when performing *Danses gothiques* is whether the unusual notational presentation should be interpreted as cues to be gestured in performances. The disproportional number of titles and the inserted blank spaces and line jumps of the cells challenge traditional performance approaches to French piano music at the turn of the century. Using texts in the form

of titles as in-score visual stimulus is unconventional in notational presentation during Satie's time. What impact do these titles and blank spaces have on the overall musical structure and the natural flow of the piece? Without Satie's authorial voice via his own performance of or discussion of *Danses gothiques*, there can never be definitive answers to the questions of performance interpretations. From a pianist's point of view, I assert that these titles draw attention from performers, and encourage them to scan past the texts before playing the motive that follows. Naturally, the title could delay the entry of the music. The silence caused by the delayed entry of the following motive becomes part of the music. The titles could be seen as part of the music and performers could allocate time to scan the titles before playing the music notes that immediately follow. Each title is therefore a unique motif, slotted within the mosaic-like musical cells. Mallarmé explains how the blank spaces could have an impact on how readers scan or recite the poem:

If I may say so, from a literary viewpoint this reproduced distance mentally separating word-groups or words from one another has the advantage of seeming to speed up and slow down the rhythm, scanning it, even intimating it through a simultaneous vision of the Page...¹³⁴

Applying this concept to the performance interpretation of *Danses gothiques* would result in the application of rubato, which is determined by the appearances of titles and blank spaces but not by the traditional gravitational pull of functioning harmonies. This means that the in-score visual stimuli and extra-musical determinants would act as performance criteria as addressed in my modified analytical model.

¹³⁴ Quotation taken from the preface of *Un coup de dés Jamais N'abolira Le Hasard*. See Stéphane Mallarmé and E. H. and A. M. Blackmore Blackmore, *Stéphane Mallarmé Collected Poems And Other Verse* (repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 262.

By considering Satie's use of symbolism in *Danses gothiques*, I would assert that in order to express his symbolic meaning of reaching the state of tranquility, a looser, unrestricted pace as the overall tempo in addition to the use of rubato would give a smoother and freer flow of the music, mimicking the delivery of a recitation. The speeding up and slowing down of the rhythm or pulse becomes a possibility in the interpretation of the blank spaces in *Danses gothiques*. The visual and practical interventions brought about by the blank spaces, which can be interpreted as point of silence could be regarded as part of the flow of the music as if those are the moments one reaches the meditative state. That way, the silences are given new meanings as opposed to moments to rest or stop as pianists could experience the true freedom in delivering a moment of emptiness, in which counting would not be necessary.

Overall conclusions

The use of symbolism to bring out the esotericism and quasi-religious backdrop of these Rose-Croix piano pieces is reflected in Satie's musical language and notational presentations of *Ogives* and *Danses gothiques*, which enrich the piano pieces with additional atmosphere, ideas and feeling that cannot always be expressed through traditional means. The symbolic gestures and unconventionalities found in these pieces inevitably lead to different opinions on interpretative issues amongst pianists and musicologists as no one can truly know for certain Satie's intentions in these Rose-Croix piano works. Orledge, who has an extensive knowledge of Satie's compositional logic and examined many of Satie's original sketches, questioned the likelihood of the composer leaving blank spaces in *Danses gothiques* as performance

cues. Orledge expressed: 'he [Satie] left gaps between motifs or transferred from line to line in mid-motif, probably again "to confuse the Stupid"...I do not think they were meant as guides to the performer to split the music up in performance.'¹³⁵ In response to Orledge's viewpoint, I am not overwhelmingly convinced. Afterall, why would Satie only do so in *Danses gothiques* and not to the rest of his Rose-Croix piano pieces? From a pianist's point of view, I believe that the focus should shift to the impact of Satie's compositional and notational styles, and how they lead pianists to think and respond differently during performances. Mallarmé's call for unforeseen irregularity in poetry as an essence of stirring emotions reflects that irregularity is a quality to be valued:

Is there not something abnormal in the certainty of discovering, when opening any book of poetry, uniform and agreed-upon rhythms from beginning to end, even though the avowed goal is to arouse our interest in the essential variety of human feelings! Where is inspiration? Where the unforeseen? And how tiresome!¹³⁶

I believe such a quality should also be applied to the performances of Satie's piano piece, hinted at by the irregularities he introduced amongst the œuvre of his piano works from the early to late period. Significantly for Satie, he avoided 'the certainty of discovering' by maintaining the obscurity and ambiguity and not standardising the interpretations of his creative outputs by deliberately not providing explicit rules to how his music should be understood, interpreted or performed. With the lack of Satie's authorial voice through the performances or discussion of his piano works, he continues to give pianists and musicologists the pleasure to experiment with new interpretation of his music until the present day. In the next four case study chapters,

¹³⁵ Robert Orledge Grace Gatesto , "Re: Danses Gothiques - New Edition", email, 2016.

¹³⁶ Jules Huret, *Enquête Sur L'évolution Littéraire* (repr., Paris, Fasquelle: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1891), 55-56.

I will discuss my interpretation of Satie's musical meanings and expose how symbolism and ambiguity associated with his piano works led to contrasting performance gestures amongst selected pianists.

Chapter Six

Quasi-impromptu Pianism in Rose-Croix Piano Music

Introduction

In Chapters Four and Five, Satie's musical language, the use of symbolism and the unconventionality of the Rose-Croix piano pieces have been examined. With the key issues associated with the performance of Satie's piano works, the reduction of performance directions provided on the scores, the unprecedented Rose-Croix musical language and notational presentations, together with the lack of Satie's authorial voice through performances or discussions of his own music, means that interpretative freedom for the Rose-Croix piano pieces is granted. The resulting diverse performance interpretations with personal performance gestures that are not strictly informed by performance indications or conventional musical cues, but rather by pianists' own imagination provoked by the suggestive power that has arisen from different compositional aspects of the Rose-Croix piano music, define the term 'quasi-impromptu pianism' in the performance of Satie's esoteric piano pieces. The composer's persona is also contributive to influencing performance interpretations, leading to various performance gestures that might be regarded as 'quasi-impromptu pianism'. In this chapter, I aim to use the three-way analytical approach, the modified method based on Julian Hellby's analytical model and the interpretive criteria (See Chapter Three, pp. 57–63), to conduct musical and performance analysis of *Ogives* (1886) and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* (1894) in order to unearth the quasi-impromptu pianism demonstrated by selected pianists of the last six decades. I also highlight the impact of Satie's Rose-Croix musical language and how the use of

symbolism affects performers' interpretations. In conjunction with the performance analysis, the post-performance analysis interviews conducted and the evidence collected from the seven pianists will test and review my hypotheses and judgements of the rationales behind their performance interpretations and gestures (See Chapter Three, p. 65). The interview results also provide important insight on how these pianists react to the key issues (See pp. 1–2) in association with the performance interpretations of Satie's Rose-Croix piano works.

Rose-Croix piano music first case study—*Ogives*

Musical analysis

The performance analysis conducted using my additional interpretive criteria and the modified informants from Hellaby's model exposes how certain elements in *Ogives* can also be found in other Rose-Croix piano pieces, bringing freedom rather than confinement to pianists' interpretive choices. The significance of using the structured interpretive criteria to analyse the performance interpretations of the Rose-Croix piano pieces is to show how the unconventionality found in these pieces could fall outside of the ability of the criteria to inform interpretations in a traditional sense and to their full capacity. For instance, when there is limited performance-related information provided on the scores such as the lack of time signatures or phrase markings, the resulting ambiguity would lessen the functions of the 'Topic' or the 'Characterizer' as informants during a performance analysis (See Table 3.3, pp. 56–57). Primarily, my additional interpretive criteria can remedy the above limitations when analyzing performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces.

With the unprecedented compositional style of *Ogives*, the ‘era’ criterion is weakened substantially, or even disabled since little parallel can be drawn between *Ogives* and the late 19th century French piano pieces (See Chapters Four and pp. 95–97 of Chapter Five). Drawing references from the twentieth century French piano performance styles and applying them to Satie’s Rose-Croix piano pieces is equally in vain as their compositional styles share little in common. In addition to this, the enigma and ambiguity caused by the pucity of performance directions in the Rose-Croix pieces would make criterion such as ‘authorship via score’ redundant in the analytical process, which is the case for *Ogives* and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*.

The set of *Ogives* demonstrates Satie’s early use of symbolism during the medieval revival era as thoroughly examined in the previous chapter. The ‘Topic’ interpretive criterion, which refers to the piece title and its implication, only goes as far as implying the mystical backdrop to performers but serves no function of informing pianists of a particular performance style in association with the piece. The topical mode, for example ‘*avec calme*’, which could direct pianists to a particular expression or emotion for *Ogives* is also not applicable as Satie did not supply such performance indication on the score.

The ‘characterizer’ criterion bears a heavier weight on influencing performance decisions as it considers the rhythmic, melodic or harmonic devices used in *Ogives*, musical features that give the music its unique character. The rhythm of *Ogives* is simple, with only four different types of note value being used: semibreves, minims, crotchets and quavers. With the longer value notes mostly dominating the piece, a sense of calm and tranquility is established. For instance, as shown in Example 6.1, the second *Ogive* has a long melody that stretches across

forty crotchet beats and in the melody, crotchets form the shortest value notes.

Example 6.1 Rhythm variety in *Ogive* no. 2, system 1

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The same melody that is notated across one system is then repeated three more times to reach the end of the piece. I discover that the implied architectural symmetry of the ‘perfect cube’ for the *Ogives* is also reflected by the choice of rhythmic notes across the four pieces, the first *Ogive* mirrors the third *Ogive* as both use minims, crotchets and quavers, whereas, the second and fourth *Ogives* both dismiss the use of quavers to complete the symmetry (See Example 6.3, p. 114). In performance interpretation, the implied rhythmic symmetry could lead performers to highlight the symbolic reflection with their own desirable gestures.

The way that Satie notates his rhythm in *Ogives* is also worthy of further discussion. As there are no bar-lines in the score, the use of a tie is in fact redundant unless Satie intended to show specific rhythmic groups. Example 6.1 shows Satie’s choice to notate the ninth crotchet beat with a tie instead of simply notating the fourth minim as a dotted minim. I proposed that Satie could have in mind the minim beat as the underlying pulse. By establishing the minim pulse for the core melody, the chords marked in brackets would create a triple rhythmic group with a crotchet beat, i.e. not three minims, mimicking the Ars Nova rhythmic variety when a basic pulse can be sub-divided into groupings of duple or triple rhythm. To further support

my assertion of the duple/triple metrical organization and the sub-division of the beat, the third *Ogive* also shows similar traits. As shown in Example 6.2, by settling initially in duple groups, there are triple rhythmic groups on two separate occasions marked in bracket. The mixture of two and three rhythmic groups offer irregular metrical rhythm of 7 + 7 + 10, mimicking the irregularity in rhythmic pattern in the medieval chants.

In terms of the use of melody as one of the features of the ‘characterizer’ criterion, as examined in the previous chapter, the melodies in each of the *Ogives* are highly repetitive as each one of the *Ogives* comprises of only one melody that is notated across one system and then which repeats itself three times with slightly

Example 6.2 Rhythm variety in *Ogive* no. 3, system 1

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different harmonisations before the piece ends. I claim that this repetitive use of a single melody (and rhythm) resembles the compositional technique originated from Machaut’s medieval motets, which utilises *colores* (recurring melodic patterns) and *talea* (recurring rhythmic patterns) to unify the music composition. I interpret the exact recurring melodies as Satie’s gesture to infiltrate medieval mysticism into this set of piano music.

With the modal chant-like melody, the pitch of final note ends on D for the first and third *Ogives* and note A for the second and fourth *Ogives* (See Example 6.3). This is clear to me that it is another play on the idea of symmetry by Satie as so far, he achieved this through the image-provoking title and the ‘perfect cube

symmetry' formed by the meticulous design of the rhythm, melody and harmony. A final example of Satie's play on reflection can be seen in similar melodic fragments found among the four *Ogives*. As shown in Example 6.3, there are four instances where similar melodic contours appear in different 'movements'. Melodic fragment A1 of pitches F#-G-E-D appears in the first *Ogive* and the same melodic contour transposed up a major second (G#-A-F#-E) but disguised under a different rhythm appears in the second *Ogive* (marked as melodic fragment A2). Melodic fragment B1 in the second *Ogive* starts with pitches G-D-E-B-D is reflected by the opening melody of the fourth *Ogive* with pitches F-D-E-C-D marked as melodic fragment B2. While both fragments have two disjunct drops in melodic interval, the first fragment (B1) descends by a perfect fourth and the second (B2) drops by a third. For melodic fragment C1, pitches A-Bb-C-D-E-D-C in the third *Ogive* reappear in the fourth *Ogive* (C2), with the B flat note omitted and the rhythm altered. The ending notes of the first and third *Ogives* share the same ascending melodic contour of pitches C to D. Similarly, the ending notes of the second and fourth *Ogives* mirror each other with their descending contour of pitches B to A. The findings of melodic fragments that reflect and echo with one another establish a strong case to support Satie's symbolic gesture to provide symmetrical imagery through the use of melodies.

Another 'characterizer' component is the use of harmony. Details on how Satie avoided the use of tritone in *Ogives* have already been examined in the previous chapter.¹³⁷ Adding to this criterion, the chordal harmony that creates a thick texture also generates a full sound possibly mimicking the organ music or church

¹³⁷ Some of the contents in the following paragraphs from p. 112–115 have been published in Grace Gates, "Satie's Rose-Croix Piano Works", in *Erik Satie: Music, Art And Literature*, 1st ed. (repr., Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 49–66.

choir that often engulfs the religious building and it would be the kind of sound that Satie was familiar with during the year when he frequented the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Example 6.3 Similar melodic fragments in the set of *Ogives*, system 1

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Colour in music refers to either tone colour (timbre) or harmonic colour. I focus on the latter in the following discussion. Major chords are often associated with a brighter harmonic colour than minor chords and the inclusion of dissonance and chromaticism further varies the harmonic colour in a piece of music. As examined before that the use of dissonant chords are strictly prohibited in the

Ogives, the harmonic colour is therefore further limited. To me, the small range of harmonic colours introduced in these four pieces could be an inspiration taken from Puvis de Chavannes, a painter who Satie admired. One of Puvis de Chavannes' painting techniques was to 'keep a simple range of colours for each painting and use them consistently. The textures of his paint clearly differed as thick dry impastos and thin, lean layers that revealed the coarse texture of the canvas.'¹³⁸ In Satie's case, the 'simple range of colours' would be the exclusive use of major and minor triad chords in all four *Ogives*. Referring to Example 6.4, Satie harmonised the second and third crotchet notes of the main melody in the first *Ogive* with two different chords. Simply altering the note from G to F sharp, Satie achieved a subtle change of harmonic colour from having the first inversion G major chord to the root position B minor chord. Satie's carefully chosen and confined music materials reveal his attempt to deliver Puvis de Chavannes's 'limited pigments' principle in *Ogives*. As for the 'thick dry impastos' and 'thin, lean layers', Satie offered his best musical substitute by introducing the thick chordal texture that contrasts with the 'thin' single line melodies throughout the *Ogives*.

Example 6.4 Limited harmonic colours in *Ogive* no. 1, systems 2 and 3

¹³⁸ Ibid., 57.

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restrictions**

The gravitational pull towards the tonic and dominant chords has been intrinsic in Western music since the Baroque period. At the turn of the century, Satie, amongst his peers, began to explore the non-functional harmonies, which resulted in the lack of gravitational pull in the chord progressions. Such non-progressive harmonic schemes in *Ogives* that lack gravity towards the key chords, i.e. tonic or dominant, could be a direct response to another painting technique by Puvis de Chavannes, of which the gravity and weight of figures are eliminated. As Russell Clement commented of the French painter's works, 'To maintain the two-dimensionality demanded by wall paintings, Puvis nearly eliminated chiaroscuro (visual art terminology for high contrast) and produced figurations in which flat shapes and colours were dominant. Figures lost gravity, weight, and volume.'¹³⁹ Instead of providing the gravitational pull, the block chord harmonisation in the *Ogives* seemed, to me, to be there for the visual pillar effect: that is, to symbolize the vertical line of the cross, the ogive and cathedral structure. The striking visual effect by the pillar-like block chords and the symbolic vertical structure are significant as they give rise to

¹³⁹ Russell T Clement, *Four French Symbolists* (repr., Westport (Conn.): Greenwood Press, 1996), 32.

new interpretive criteria, the in-score visual stimuli and the extra-musical determinants (See Chapter Three, p. 62). Instead of providing its traditional tonic-dominant harmonic gravitational pull function, the block chord harmonies in *Ogives* could stimulate pianists to offer creative interpretations with no set boundaries. On one hand, pianists could focus on a chant-like performance delivery. On the other hand, they could emphasise the static character of the piece, with the aim to deliver the symbolised verticality of the physical space of a gothic building.

In regard to the ‘tempo’ criterion, ‘*très lent*’ is the only indication for each of the *Ogives* and there are no further markings for tempo changes. The slow tempo supports the tranquil atmosphere generated by the ‘characterizer’ components and its quasi-religious context. The unprogressive nature of the melodies and harmonies would challenge the relevance of applying tempo rubato during performance. But equally, tempo rubato could be applied as a gesture to mimic the performance practice of reciting a chant other than fulfilling the five different functions of rubato used by performers as Hellaby identified (See Chapter Three, pp. 58–59).

For the last interpretive criterion, the ‘sonic moderator’, *Ogives* follows the *p-ff-pp-ff* dynamic contrast for the four consecutive systems of music in the first two pieces. Slightly deviated from this is the third *Ogive*, which has dynamic marking left out in the third system and *f* is indicated for the last system instead of *ff* as used in the rest of the *Ogives*. The dynamic marking in the final system of the last *Ogive* is also left out by Satie. In the published version by Edition Peters (E.P.9620), an editorial *ff* is added on.¹⁴⁰ The 2016 Salabert version edited by Orledge suggests a

¹⁴⁰ For more discrepancies, the piano score of *Ogives*, (Leipzig: Edition Peters), No. 9620, 1986. Plate E.P. 13380 has dynamic marking *piano* without the bracket to indicate that the sign is editorial in the third line of the third *Ogive*.

uniform approach of *p-ff-pp-ff* for all four pieces.¹⁴¹ Orledge's edit is logical as he responds to Satie's changing texture over the four systems with thick texture associated with loud dynamics and vice versa. That said, it is also possible that Satie deliberately left out the final dynamic marking in order to free pianists to different interpretations of the ending of the piece. As a pianist, I would opt for a *pianissimo* dynamic or even a *decrescendo* to eventually reach *pp* for the final system of the last *Ogive* to gesture my departure from the cathedral. The highly contrasting dynamic markings in the set of *Ogives* could lead performers to all sorts of imagination. It could be the changing ambience, or the sound created by musical activities in the cathedral building. As a symbolic gesture, the loud and soft dynamic could simply be representing the brightness and dimness of light that shines into the religious architecture, the same way Haydn did in *The Creation* with the *fortissimo* dynamics to signify the moment of 'when there was *light*'. In a different view, pianist Egoyan expresses that the contrasting dynamics means to her 'the grand, booming cathedral spaces versus the monastic [spaces]; the booming organ versus the plainchant.'¹⁴²

Performance analysis and email interviews

Analysis of fifteen performances of *Ogives* ranging from 1965 to 2015 covers pianists from different countries and musical training backgrounds. This offers an international view of the performance interpretations of the predecessor of the rest of Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces. As the earliest recording of Satie's piano music, Poulenc's album did not include *Ogives*, which explains the choice of selecting Bill Quist as the earliest recording for performance evaluation. Table 6.1 shows the

¹⁴¹ Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 1*, 1st ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), 26–29.

¹⁴² Eve Egoyan Grace Gatesto, "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 11 April 2016.

names of the selected pianists for the case study and in chronological order, the years when the recordings were made.

Table 6.1: Recordings chosen for the performance analysis of *Ogives*

Name of the pianists (Name of the interviewees in bold)	Year of recording
1. Bill Quist ¹⁴³	1965
2. Aldo Ciccolini ¹⁴⁴	1967–71
3. Jean-Joë Barbier ¹⁴⁵	1969–1971
4. Cordélia Canabrava Arruda ¹⁴⁶	1979?–1988 ¹⁴⁷
5. Reinbert de Leeuw ¹⁴⁸	1977
6. Alan Marks ¹⁴⁹	1988
7. Jean-Pierre Armengaud ¹⁵⁰	1990
8. Ulrich Gumpert ¹⁵¹	1991

¹⁴³ Bill Quist, *Erik Satie – Piano Solos Of Erik Satie*, CD (repr., Stanford: Windham Hill Records, 1986), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7w6yjbanlcV2ZNuML2hp4e>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁴⁴ Aldo Ciccolini, *Satie: L'œuvre Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: EMI Classics, 2001), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A4VKeaKPvUpG885xti8yqko>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

¹⁴⁵ Jean-Joël Barbier, *Erik Satie Œuvres Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: Universal/ Accord, 1969–1971).

¹⁴⁶ Cordélia Arruda, *Erik Satie's Complete Piano Works - Volume I*, CD (repr., USA: Imagination Classics, 1980).

¹⁴⁷ Recording dates for Arruda's original LP of Satie's complete piano work is unavailable. Official website of Arruda states that the pianist discovered Satie in 1979 and since then carried out extensively research about Satie and his music before recording all of his piano works, which were all released in LP format by 1988. CD recordings released by Imagination Classics are remastered works of the original LPs. Hence the original date of the recording is unclear but could not be any earlier than 1979. I therefore note that all Arruda's recording years as 1979?–1988.

¹⁴⁸ Reinbert De Leeuw, *The Early Piano Works*, CD (repr., US: Philips Classics, 1998), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/5Z1XEpd86QnxpnRVWYJGG7>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁴⁹ Alan Marks, *Collected Items From A Silent Dream (A Very Special Encounter With The Piano Music Of Erik Satie)*, CD (repr., US: London Records, 1988).

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Pierre Armengaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: Bayard Musique, 2009), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4130aF2M0jVnyuAyPRuv14>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁵¹ Ulrich Gumpert, *Satie Trois Gymnopédies*, CD (repr., Germany: ITM Records, 1991), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0IK8AinVVIyTppxknrELyW>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

9. Klára Körmendi ¹⁵²	1993
10. Olof Höjer ¹⁵³	1993
11. Branka Parlić ¹⁵⁴	1999
12. Jean-Yves Thibaudet ¹⁵⁵	2001–2002
13. Eve Egoyan ¹⁵⁶	2002
14. Cristina Ariagno ¹⁵⁷	2006
15. Jeroen van Veen ¹⁵⁸	2015

As the research aim is to investigate the performance interpretations of *Ogives* as a result of performers' reactions to the key issues identified with Satie's piano music, the recordings chosen focus on displaying creative and original performance gestures in addition to interpretations that can be considered comparatively reserved. Amongst their various musical backgrounds and expertise, Barbier is the only first-generation pianist with French lineage. Second-generation pianists Ciccolini, Arruda and Armengaud as well as Thibaudet and Ariagno as later-generation pianists also specialize in French repertoire. Second-generation pianists Höjer, De Leeuw, Körmendi, Parlić and later-generation pianist Egoyan specializes in contemporary and new music. Höjer, Körmendi and Parlić's expertise also

¹⁵² Klára Körmendi, *Satie Piano Works Vol. 1*, CD (repr., Europe: Naxos, 1993), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0fOOsVICUOTC0uZuOclhIw>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁵³ Olof Höjer, *Erik Satie The Complete Piano Music Vol. 1*, CD (repr., Sweden: Swedish Society Discofil, 1996), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4NJUTx8nfNiFKB3zIbyg62>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁵⁴ Branka Parlić, *Erik Satie & Branka Parlić Initiés '88 – Initiés '99*, CD (repr., Yugoslavia: Radio Novi Sad, 1999).

¹⁵⁵ Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Erik Satie The Complete Solo Piano Music*, CD (repr., Europe: Decca, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3HtmWHWX1UEahlyasWzZXz>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁵⁶ Eve Egoyan, *Hidden Corners – Recoins*, CD (repr., Toronto: CBC Records, 2002), <https://eveegoyan.bandcamp.com/album/hidden-corners-recoins>.

¹⁵⁷ Cristina Ariagno, *Erik Satie Piano Works*, CD (repr., France: Brilliant Classics, 2006), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6A1fhMYiUcXVHGQShio25Y>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁵⁸ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., The Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 2016), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A00Q6wNwFIJAUE6Akz1oAOo>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

extends to specialize on the performance of Satie's piano music.¹⁵⁹ Diversely, later-generation pianist Thibaudet with French lineage, is also renowned for his versatile output as a classical pianist in addition to being a French repertoire specialist. Second-generation pianist Gumpert brings new perspective to the case study as a proficient jazz pianist. Quist and Marks both made the one-off Satie's piano music recording without any other musical releases on French or contemporary music, which could place them in the 'outsider' profile, offering perspectives to the interpretation of Satie's pieces, that is without preconception.

The outcomes

In response to the 'topic' criterion, different recordings provide evidence to support the notion of pianists' imagination being evoked by the piece title, which subsequently leads to specific performance interpretations and gestures.

Interpretations range from emphasising architectural and structural elements by giving the sense of physical space one experiences within Gothic churches. Egoyan expressed: 'I just feel the sense of architecture in Satie's music. "Ogives" refers to architectural details.'¹⁶⁰ Pianists such as Barbier, De Leeuw, Höjer, Egoyan, Thibaudet, Ariagno and Jeroen van Veen achieve so by creating an atmosphere that is peaceful and calm possibly to reflect the quasi-religious setting. In agreement with the above assertion, Parlić expressed that "'Ogive" are (*sic*) the monumental diagonal arch or rib across a Gothic vault with all its beauty, magnificence, peacefulness, greatness ...'¹⁶¹ For Gumpert and Marks, it is possible that the imagination of the physical presence of the gothic building leads them to explore the

¹⁵⁹ Branka Parlić, "Biography | Branka Parlić", Brankaparlic.Com, accessed 13 October 2019, <http://www.brankaparlic.com/en/biography>.

¹⁶⁰ Eve Egoyan Grace Gatesto, "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 11 April 2016.

¹⁶¹ Branka Parlić Grace Gatesto, "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 18 April 2016.

timeless concept by distorting the musical pulse and note duration to the extent that counting the beats becomes a redundant practice.

While both Parlić and Egoyan expressed in separate interviews that the title ‘Ogives’ inspired them to draw attention to the architectural characteristics, their performance interpretations and gestures are yet to show much similarities. Egoyan’s performance interpretation is a lot more straightforward and disciplined than Parlić’s version, suggesting that the former pianist aimed to bring out the orderly nature of the ogives while the latter focused on the peacefulness associated with the cathedral. Separately, Ariagno also provides creative gestures that suggest an inspiration from the title. Her performance gives the sound of the roomy physical space, which is often associated with churches by the use of sustain pedal despite the fact that no pedal marking has been provided by Satie. Instead of using the sustain pedal for legato effect and changing the pedal for each crotchet beat to avoid murky harmonies, Ariagno used the pedal to sustain a few chords each time. This controlled murky sound resembles the reverberation naturally incurred in a roomy space with high ceiling, reflecting the ogive architecture evoked by the piece title. Ariagno’s approach demonstrates originality. Quasi-impromptu pianism is demonstrated through her method of pedalling, which has created the echoing effect of the cathedrale despite the fact that Satie has not given any pedal markings. Her pedalling method for *Ogives* remains an uncommon practice as no other pianists of earlier recordings did so with similar effects.

Performances by Arruda and De Leeuw demonstrate how the articulation could differ as inspired by the piece title. With the level of dynamics alternating between *ff* and *pp*, Arruda played the *fortissimo* with great conviction and domination to give these chords a strong and bold character. De Leeuw also

performed *fortissimo* at the same juncture but his touch is less harsh in comparison. He also softened the last note of the *ff* melody, which gives a strong sense of restfulness. To me, Arruda's interpretation suggests that her focus lies on the bold structural aspect of the ogive while De Leeuw emphasises on delivering the sense of calm and relief that church-goers experience when visiting the religious building. In the *pianissimo* passages, Arruda replaces the bold articulation with an expressive lyrical touch. Similarly, Parlić also adopts the sensitive articulation for the quiet passages. Due to the technical challenge, Parlić needed to spread the large interval chords in the third system of the third *Ogive*. In order to do so without disrupting the peacefulness inspired by the title, she softened the spread chords without hurry, keeping the disruption of the spread chord to its minimum. Amongst all pianists, not all find lyrical touch the only resort for the *pianissimo* passages. Demonstrated by Körmendi's performance of *Ogives*, her articulation between *ff* and *pp* is equally impassive. Her spread chords were performed straightforwardly, which contrasts with Parlić's more thoughtful and sentimental execution. The diverse performance interpretations and interview results expose the impact of 'topic' interpretative criterion has on the selected pianists. The title alone has successfully provoked different imaginations and emotions amongst pianists, which leads to creative expression and gestures demonstrated by pianists from different generations.

In regard to the 'tempo' and 'duration manipulator' interpretive criteria and how pianists' tempos are measured and explained in the case studies, I have chosen to indicate an identified speed using a tempo figure, e.g. 60 crotchet beats per minute. The figure represents a steady pulse, which is created by consecutive crotchet or minim beats, excluding any sections that have tempo rubato being applied. For performances that display the frequent use of agogic accents and rubato

to the extent that pinning down a steady pulse as an overall tempo is no longer possible, tempo ranges such as 50–60 crotchet beats per minute will be used to represent the fluctuation of speed. Any tempo with less than 40 crotchet beats per minute, the phrase of ‘less than forty’ will be used to give the speed approximation. For performances that have an extremely slow tempo, a smaller rhythmic division, such as quaver beats per minute instead of the original crotchet pulse would be used to facilitate a more accurate measurement of the tempo.

In *Ogives*, the interpretation of tempo term ‘*très lent*’ by different pianists varies a great deal to the extent that the difference is by far greater than the 20 crotchet beats per minute range of possibilities suggested by Hellaby.¹⁶² The performance analysis shows that Gumpert performed in a tempo as slow as twenty-four beats per minute. Barbier, De Leeuw and Van Veen performed with a tempo that is less than forty beats per minute. On the other hand, Körmendi’s performance reached as fast as sixty-five crotchet beats per minute, a tempo that Barbier would consider ‘*lent*’ instead of ‘*très lent*’.¹⁶³ The large discrepancies in tempo for ‘*très lent*’ are caused by the combination of the absence of precise tempo marking by Satie, a habitual practice of the composer, and the absence of time signature, which would otherwise give a clear indication of the kind of pulse each of the four *Ogives* has. Without the time signature, the kind of pulse in *Ogives* is open to interpretation, adding to the ambiguity of the scores. For instance, applying a speed of forty beats per minute to a minim pulse instead of a crotchet pulse would result in the speed being doubled. As for other pianists, they stretched and manipulated the tempo during performance to a degree that there is a lack of regular pulse, which adds

¹⁶² Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation* (repr., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 42.

¹⁶³ Barbier has suggested 63 crotchet beats per minute in the second *Gymnopédie* alongside Satie’s tempo terms ‘*Lent et triste*’, published by Editions Salabert in 1969.

additional quality to the term '*trés lent*'.

Debates on the suitability of tempo range for Satie's piano pieces are not uncommon. Orledge raises a similar concern for *Gymnopédie* as some performances demonstrate an agonizingly slow speed, which he questioned whether the slow tempo should apply to dotted minim beats instead of crotchet beats. In the case of *Ogives*, I argue that it is the different rhythmic patterns and the deliberate reappearance of the same tempo term '*trés lent*' in each of the *Ogives* that guide some pianists to re-approach the tempo term differently at the start of each piece. I also speculate that Satie may have allocated specific rhythmical choices in each of the *Ogives* in order to hint at the change in the kind of pulse. The deliberate rhythmical choices can be seen in the first and third *Ogives*, where quaver notes are the shortest note value. In contrast, crotchet notes are the shortest note value in the other two *Ogives*. This would result in the first and third *Ogives* maintaining a similar tempo to the second and fourth *Ogives* without the latter sounding twice as slow. On the other hand, I could equally argue that '*trés lent*' is specifically placed at the start of each *Ogive* to reassure pianists to maintain the same kind of pulse, despite the fact that the second and fourth *Ogives* would end up sounding immobile as a result. Performance analytical outcomes show that both interpretations of the tempo term have been adopted by various pianists. The recognition of the change in the kind of pulse from crotchet to minim across four *Ogives* while maintaining the '*trés lent*' character is evident in the recordings of Ciccolini, Arruda, Barbier, Gumpert, Körmendi, and Armengaud.

To elaborate on two separate performances, Ciccolini's execution not only demonstrates a slight adjustment to the tempo for each piece to show the change in the kind of pulse, he also manipulates the basic tempo slightly in each of the *Ogives*

in order to show the overall structure of the four consecutive pieces. The tempo range that Ciccolini performed for the whole set was between forty to fifty-three beats per minute. With the '*trés lent*' tempo maintained throughout, the second *Ogive* shows a slight drop in tempo and the last *Ogive* marks the end of the set by slowing down further to reach the slowest tempo of forty minim beats per minute. The tempo reflects the overall structure of the work as 'slow', 'a little slower', 'slow' and 'much slower'.

Gumpert, who performed with the slowest tempo above all, has taken a straightforward approach and paced the entire *Ogives* in the tempo of approximately twenty-five beats per minute. What Gumpert has achieved through this wearily slow tempo is to free the performance from having a sense of regular pulse which is likely to be prompted by the lack of time signature and bar-lines. As the tempo becomes too slow for the pulse to be felt, the importance of maintaining the precise rhythmic proportion for different note values, i.e. quavers, crotchets, minims and semibreves ceases accordingly. In such case, minims and semibreves are nothing more than indications of longer notes. The different note values offer different durations, which are only approximately relative to each other. That way, a meterless performance style is given, echoing and also to an extent, distorting the performance style of Medieval church music. Gumpert's interpretation is significantly different from others, which I identify as an example of quasi-impromptu pianism because of his chosen speed for '*trés lent*' and also the way he exercised rhythmic flexibility for different note values. In Gumpert's case, quasi-impromptu pianism is made possible because of the three key issues identified in association with Satie's piano pieces (See Chapter One). Gumpert's performance approach of *Ogives* clearly emphasises on the tranquil atmosphere of the symbolised

gothic building other than its physical presence.

Conversely, performances by De Leeuw, Höjer, Egoyan, Thibaudet, Ariagno and Jeroen van Veen suggest that the crotchet pulse is maintained throughout the entire *Ogives*. Amongst their performances, the tempo for the second and fourth *Ogives* is sped up only slightly to avoid the music becoming utterly static. For example in Höjer's version, his tempo in the first *Ogive* is forty-three crotchet beats per minute. In the second *Ogive*, the tempo is raised to fifty-seven crotchet beats and a range of fifty to fifty-five crotchet beats per minute tempo is adopted for the third *Ogive* before Höjer finishing the fourth *Ogive* in the tempo of fifty-seven crotchet beats per minute. As a more straightforward example, Egoyan's performance suggests a steady slow tempo of 40 crotchet beats per minute for the first *Ogive*. For the subsequent *Ogives*, her chosen tempo is around sixty to sixty-three crotchet beats per minute. The change in tempo in *Ogives* exposes Egoyan's reaction to Satie's reduced performance direction in the score and her priority to deliver a performance with steady momentum and yet calm rather than the still atmosphere suggested by Gumpert's performance.

In regard to the change in tempo within a piece of music, in most cases when there are no written instructions given by the composer, pianists could apply rubato at their own discretion guided by the melody, harmony, structure and the inherited tradition of a piece of music. However, the combination of the repetitive and monotonous short melody and the static atmosphere brought by the slow tempo and the limited range of rhythmic variety in *Ogives* makes the application of rubato for the sake of fulfilling its conventional function unsuitable. Körmendi and Egoyan support the notion that it is irrelevant to apply rubato to *Ogives* as their performances show little use of agogic accents and tempo rubato. Egoyan explains her reasons for

not applying rubato in her performance of *Ogives*: 'I feel the music in large phrases, large time proportions. I do not use rubato because I am interested in hearing the movement of the inner voices. This is my focus. The details of the music are easily overcome, overshadowed, overwhelmed if larger rubato is imposed - I feel that rubato comes from another world. It does not belong to Satie.'¹⁶⁴ It is clear that the topic (the ogive title) and in-score visual stimuli (the block chords) interpretive criteria make an impact on Egoyan's decision on the use of rubato and resulted in her focussing on the small details and keeping the use of rubato to a minimum. Egoyan did not see the lack of bar-lines and time signature as reasons for tempo flexibility or relate such features to the performance practice of medieval music that does not always require a strict tempo. Egoyan explains from the point of view of an experienced performer of proportional notation: 'There is no need for bar-lines in *Ogives*. The divisions of time are clear within smaller notational units—bar-lines would disrupt the sense of longer phrase.' Her preference to focus on the overall structure with discipline while delivering inner details is clear in her performance. Having said that, slight tempo fluctuation is detected from Egoyan's playing, of which she commented: 'I would have preferred if there had not been such fluctuations—they happen because of the playing. Often if you play softer you play a little slower and vice versa...'¹⁶⁵ Hellaby regards this type of tempo fluctuation as fulfilling the 'interpretative function' since 'by bringing tempo into line with dynamic, the aural-structural attenuation of the passage is reflected.'¹⁶⁶ Credit to the three-way analytical approach, Egoyan is given the chance to clarify that the slight change in tempo was not intentional and therefore did not fulfill an 'interpretative

¹⁶⁴ Eve Egoyan Grace Gatesto , "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 6 April 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Eve Egoyan Grace Gatesto , "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 11 April 2016

¹⁶⁶ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation* (repr., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 107.

function' in the *Ogives*. Comments as such, with pianist admitting to providing unintentional gesture or expression during a performance, are crucial for performance evaluations as it avoids inaccurate speculation of a pianist's intention and offers more clarity on the verdict of their performance gestures.

A new type of rubato emerged among pianists in their recorded performances in *Ogives* showing how new tempo is introduced systematically for short sections. In these instances, each system of music is performed with a new tempo as if Satie has indicated a new tempo marking for each line of music. The new tempo would last for a section, which can be as short as a couple of bars or as long as a system of music. This is not the same way as applying tempo rubato as the newly chosen speed would begin abruptly and would also be consistent throughout. It is also different from agogic accents, which are only applied to specific notes to highlight the moment. In Arruda's performance, she plays the four systems of the second *Ogive* in a tempo of sixty-five, seventy-two, sixty-seven and eighty-two crotchet beats per minute respectively. This type of rubato, which I shall coin 'section rubato' was also detected in the recordings by Ciccolini, Barbier, Parlić, Höjer, Armengaud, Egoyan and Thibaudet. Amongst these pianists, some applied tempo rubato and the agogic accents in addition to the application of section rubato. I claim that the use of section rubato is driven by the *exact* repetitive melodic and rhythmic scheme (the color and *talea*) of *Ogives*, giving it a successive but non-progressive nature. The section rubato refreshes each of the repeated melodies and could potentially alter the existing mood or character associated with the melody, depending on the extent of the tempo changes. In the case of *Ogives*, the application of section rubato corresponds to the changes in dynamic levels with pianists performing a faster tempo *fortissimo* and slower tempo *pianissimo*.

Parlić applied rubato in order to express the freedom in tempo resulting from the lack of time signature and the in-score visual stimuli due to the absence of bar-lines. Parlić expresses: ‘With the lack of time signature, bar-line and with unusual instructions within the score[,] performers could follow (sic.) their own feelings, their understanding of the piece and their heart beat[s].’¹⁶⁷ Parlić further reveals: ‘For me as a pianist who was taught to respect all instructions which the literature of earlier periods requires, it was a great revelation (sic) and a great freedom to create the interpretation on (sic) my own way. The *Ogive* No. 4 has a slow tempo but some days the slow tempo is little bit faster and some days little bit slower. It depends on [the] tempo of my heartbeat and my breathing.’¹⁶⁸ The personal approach to tempo is not uncommon, as mentioned by Clive Brown explaining Mendelssohn’s view on tempo: ‘though in playing he [Mendelssohn] never varied the tempo when once taken, he did not always take a movement at the same pace, but changed it as his mood was at the time’.¹⁶⁹ Brown also proposes that Mendelssohn’s view on tempo ‘may go some way towards explaining Mendelssohn’s relative reluctance to supply metronome marks for his own works.’¹⁷⁰ This explains that the ambiguity provided by Mendelssohn was his aim to facilitate some degree of interpretive freedom for the performer, a notion that I believe Satie also shared.

Responding to the paucity of performance directions in the same piano score, the conflicting opinions by Egoyan and Parlić demonstrate how each of them has valid reasons to support their performance interpretations. While Parlić sees the paucity of performance directions as a path to interpretative freedom, Egoyan

¹⁶⁷ Branka Parlić Grace Gatesto , "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 18 April 2016.

¹⁶⁸ Branka Parlić Grace Gatesto , "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 18 April 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Clive Brown and Roger Norrington, *Classical And Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900*(repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 283–4.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 284.

understands it as Satie's reaction to avoid redundant information on the page.

Ciccolini, De Leeuw, Quist, Armengaud, Höjer, Thibaudet and Ariagno applied rubato for structural accentuation. For example, in the first *Ogive*, Ciccolini slows down the second half of each phrase when the melody is first introduced. In the second system, no rubato is detected. In the third system, he plays the last chord slightly earlier. The anticipation adds momentum to the slow pace before finally reaching '*ritardando*' to end the first piece. Although Ciccolini's performance shows the use of agogic accents and rubato that are not strictly harmonically or melodically driven, his use of rubato offers structural indication in a traditional sense rather than a reflection of the symbolised gothic building structure. The ebbs and flows in *Ogives* interpreted by Ciccolini may not be convincing for those who believe in the timeless and static characteristics of *Ogives*. Nevertheless, Ciccolini's performance style established a close connection among the four pieces and delivered the spirit of a suite to its full.

In regard to the rhythmic grouping in the second *Ogive*, performances show a high degree of diversity in the way pianists interpret the ambiguous rhythmic grouping. As shown in Example 6.5, by acknowledging Satie's tied crotchet note E as a hint to his rhythmic grouping, I claim that the notes are in minim grouping apart from the punctuation phrase (notes in boxes), in which notes are grouped in 2s, 3s and 4s, fulfilling the function of the rhythmic cadence. The punctuation cells, which are commonly featured in Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces, are easily identified by their recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns as well as the augmentation of rhythmic value towards the end of the punctuation cell. From a pianist's point of view, accentuation could be placed at any juncture marked 'X' in order to bring out the rhythmic grouping and further enhance the effect of the punctuation cell, unless a

static performance is desirable. In such case, accentuation to reveal the rhythmic grouping would be avoided.

Example 6.5 Punctuation cells and accentuation for different rhythmic groups in *Ogive* no. 2, system 1

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Ciccolini and Körmendi altered the minim A in the first punctuation cell to a crotchet rhythm, an execution that intrigued me by a great deal but I regret to not be able to seek the pianists' rationales behind such performance decision. I could only speculate that perhaps Ciccolini and Körmendi made their choice to maintain the two-crotchets rhythmic grouping that was set out at the beginning of the melody. Ariagno also made the same alteration for the second, third and fourth system but not for the first time, a performance decision which is equally puzzling.

For pianists who took a relaxed approach of following the given rhythm, the tie-note E was held for a lengthy amount of time, giving an impression of the note E is being paused. As a result, the subsequent B note contributes to the start of the punctuation cell. For those who followed the rhythm strictly, regular minim pulse could be heard before reaching the punctuation cells. With a very slow basic tempo of fifty crotchet beats per minute, Marks' performance of the second *Ogive* shows how he overstretches the duration of the minims and semibreves. He also manipulates the duration of crotchets and minims, making the differentiation

between the two different rhythmic notes impossible. Towards the end of each system, a long pause is also implemented. All these different ways of manipulating the rhythm leads to a pulse too irregular to be captured and results in a performance that is totally pulse and meter-free. Marks' quasi-impromptu pianism demonstrated in this *Ogive* gives a bold statement to the high degree of interpretative freedom performers can exercise as a result of the key issues identified with Satie's piano music and in this case, the lack of time signature, bar-lines and the irregular musical pulse. With his creative gestures, Marks' pulse-free performance effectively delivers the tranquil and peaceful mood commonly associated with cathedrals using unconventional means.

Parlić, who has only recorded the fourth *Ogive*, also aims to create a performance that gives a static and peaceful atmosphere. Despite sharing the same goal as Marks', Parlić adopts a different interpretive measure, which is to use rubato at specific moments to distort the basic pulse. Parlić holds the semibreves much longer than the given note value in the first system, placing agogic accents in the minim notes in the second system and also spreading the compound third chords in the third system slowly with *pianissimo* dynamic. The execution of those spread chords is unhurried and results in an expressive and lyrical sound, breaking up the consecutively rigid block chords despite the fact that the chords are spread to compromise her finger span rather than purely for expressive purposes. Parlić's decision to maintain the peaceful sound when spreading the chords in expense of keeping a regular pulse exposes her priority for the performance interpretation of the fourth *Ogive*. In agreement with the pucity of performance directions as a path to interpretative freedom, Parlić confirms: 'Since there are (sic) lack of bar-lines I didn't care much about precise musical pulse. For me the importance was to keep

constant and extremely static peaceful tempo and to give a lyrical touch ...'¹⁷¹

Conclusion on the quasi-impromptu pianism in *Ogives*

Performance evaluation outcomes from the fifteen recordings selected over the last six decades clearly show how the three key issues (the ambiguity of the piano score, the unconventional Rose-Croix musical language and the lack of Satie's authorial voice resulting from the lack of discussion and performance of his own piano music) as well as Satie's use of symbolism as an extra-musical determinant and in-score visual stimuli lead pianists to apply quasi-impromptu pianism in the performance of *Ogives*. Remarkably, it is the second-generation pianists Gumpert and Marks, who do not have the French lineage and are considered to be the 'outsider', explore the pulse-less concept to create a static atmosphere by exaggeratingly overstretching the slow tempo or manipulating the given note values. Not one pianist from the French lineage across the decades experimented with such approach. This, together with how second-generation non-French lineage pianists Ciccolini and Körmendi altered some of the note values in *Ogives*, could validate that the French lineage pianists follow the scores much more closely in most circumstances despite the key issues associated with Satie's piano works.

Satie's *Ogives* demonstrate the power of suggestion through the performance interpretative criteria of 'topic', 'tempo', 'characterizer', 'sonic moderator', 'in-score visual stimuli' and 'extra-musical determinants'. With the different interpretive focuses, pianists over the last six decades have chosen to present *Ogives* as a calm atmosphere, an orderly structure or simply familiar sounds that are associated with a

¹⁷¹ Branka Parlić Grace Gatesto , "Re: Regarding Erik Satie", email, 18 April 2016.

religious gothic building.

To sum up the performance practice of *Ogives*, this piece shows how pianists face ambiguities in performance directions, resulting in interpretive choices that can vary from one to another. In order to focus on creating the different atmospheres associated with the church setting, pianists in my sample demonstrate how they use articulation, dynamics, pedalling and tempo at their discretion to highlight a particular atmosphere that they have in mind. Contrastingly, the significant ogive structure could have played an important role in influencing pianists' performance choices and lead to performance styles that are considered more controlled and orderly. The performance practice of medieval church music could also be applied to the performance style of *Ogives*, given the piece's stylistic similarity with the medieval chants. This can result in performances that display different treatments of note values and consistency in the overall tempo.

Rose-Croix piano piece second case study—*Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* (Drame ésotérique de Jules Bois)

Musical analysis

Preludes originated from the preludial forms; French keyboard preludes have evolved from the 17th century as improvisatory, introductory movements in keyboard suites to become individual pieces by the 19th century with some have cryptic titles such as one of the *Préludes* by Debussy titled '*Voiles*', which could mean either 'veils' or 'sails'. Rhythmically, early preludes were required to perform with freedom. Hudson mentions that 'chords are to be played slowly, ornaments or

diminutions rapidly, and a high point preceded by a slight pause.’¹⁷² Stylistically, the improvisatory preludes are short in duration, which only feature a small number of rhythmic and melodic motifs. With its changing features from being an introductory piece to a standalone concert piece, musical forms in preludes vary over the centuries.

Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel was originally an introductory piece to the esoteric drama by Jules Bois as suggested by its full title. The drama involves a poet being sent forth by Christ to suppress the Virgin Mary, with the cult of Isis. Stylistically however, this prelude only goes as far as generating the quasi-religious, mystical atmosphere with its Rose-Croix musical language. As Orledge comments: ‘the occult never penetrated beneath the surface of his Rose-Croix music. Apart from being slow, hieratic and ritualistic, it is in no way descriptive of the play associated with it, for it has its own independent and purely musical logic.’¹⁷³ Orledge’s observation of the standalone nature of the prelude means that it would be impossible or necessary for pianists to draw connections between their performance interpretations and the esoteric play that this prelude associates with originally.

Sharing the aesthetic of other Rose-Croix piano pieces, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* also has paucity of performance instructions. To make the performance directions of this piece even more ambiguous, in-score texts that are descriptive for some and cryptic for others are added alongside the music itself. In regard to their function to inform performance choices, these in-score texts continue to baffle pianists due to the lack of Satie’s authorial voice through his own performance or discussion of the performance of this piece. The manner of how

¹⁷² Richard Hudson, *Stolen Time* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 9-10.

¹⁷³ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 44.

Satie included the cryptic in-score texts in this prelude contributes to the ‘in-score textual stimuli’, a form of stimulus that can influence performance decisions and is an unconventional feature to his piano music as well as works by his peers. As such, the ‘era’ and ‘authorship via score’ criteria that could contribute to informing performance interpretations are again undermined.

The in-score texts appear on eight occasions and in order of appearance, they are: ‘*calme et profondément doux*’ (calm and extremely gentle), ‘*superstiteusement*’ (superstitiously), ‘*avec déférence*’ (with respect), ‘*très sincèrement silencieux*’ (very sincerely silent), ‘*en une timide piété*’ (with timid devotion), ‘*éviter toute exaltation sacrilège*’ (avoid any sacrilegious exaltation), ‘*sans orgueil*’ (without pride) and ‘*obligeamment*’ (obligingly).¹⁷⁴ Volta’s categorization of Satie’s in-score texts as ‘Performance Indications’ (See Chapter Two) indicates that all of these in-score texts fulfil the ‘topical mode’ interpretive criterion. I disagree that all of them are qualified for such criterion as some of these texts, such as ‘*superstiteusement*’ would be better defined as an in-score textual stimulus given their ambiguity to provide performance direction.

In this prelude, it is challenging for pianists to rely on the in-score texts as traditional performance indications due to their cryptic nature. In-score texts such as ‘*éviter toute exaltation sacrilège*’ (avoid any sacrilegious exaltation) would not be as informative for interpretation in any degree. Even for the straightforward texts ‘*calme et profondément doux*’, which could direct pianists to an articulation that promotes the calm atmosphere, the texts could still be interpreted in different ways and it is impossible to know exactly Satie’s preferred meaning due to the absence of

¹⁷⁴ Translating taken from Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 1*, 1st ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), 132–133.

his authorial voice in the form of the lack of discussion and performance of his own piano music. According to David Fallows, ‘*doux*’ the French translation of ‘*dolce*’ indicated ‘mood and performing style, not dynamics’ and Fallows quoted that Brossard gave its definition in 1703 *Dictionnaire* as ‘*dolcemente* and *con dolce maniera*, in this manner.’¹⁷⁵ In 1768, Rousseau mentioned in *Dictionnaire* article ‘Doux’ that ‘*dolce, doux* and *piano* also meant simply ‘quiet’.¹⁷⁶ As the topical mode only suggests and implies performance directions with its non-prescriptive nature, discrepancies amongst pianists’ interpretations of the meaning of the same term or in-score text phrase are to be expected as a natural process. From a pianist’s point of view, I would interpret ‘*calme et profondément doux*’ as an indication to play softly, with a legato touch accompanied by the use of sustain pedal to create a calm atmosphere. The choice of having a soft dynamic responds well to its subsequent texts ‘*très sincèrement silencieux*’ (very sincerely silent). Understandably, apart from my proposed interpretive version, pianists would explore other ways to create the sense of calm and not be restricted to a handful of interpretive styles.

The rest of the terms ‘*superstiteusement*’ (superstitiously), ‘*avec déférence*’ (with respect), ‘*en une timide piété*’ (with timid devotion), ‘*éviter toute exaltation sacrilège*’ (avoid any sacrilegious exaltation), ‘*sans orgueil*’ (without pride) and ‘*obligamment*’ (obligingly) are in fact too cryptic to be providing any direct performance directions. However, I assert that these texts express a common notion of being courteous and modest, which could inspire a performance to be sympathetic and intimate, rather than one that is full of bold and expressive gestures. Despite Orledge’s view on the disconnection between the in-score texts and the esoteric play,

¹⁷⁵ David Fallows, "Search Results For Dolce | Oxford Music Online | Oxford Music", *Oxfordmusiconline.Com*, 2001, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/search?q=Dolce&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true>.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

I regard the submissive content of the in-score texts as fundamental in setting the mood prior to the start of the drama. These texts could be the reflection of the theme of power suppression (of Virgin Mary), which is the central plot of the play. In such case, instead of prescriptively directing pianists to a specific performance style, the in-score texts project a concept and mannerism, to which pianists could relate before deciding for themselves the appropriate performance gestures and interpretations that display courtesy and modesty.

Rhythmically, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* consists of mostly crotchet and quaver-notes, with one semibreve chord beneath the word ‘RIDEAU’ toward the end of the prelude that signals the rising of the curtain. The lack of rhythmic variety curbs rhythmic contrast and stimulation that smaller division of rhythmic notes can potentially offer, resulting in a mood coherent to Satie’s first performance indication—‘*calme et profondément doux*’.

Melodically, this piece also relies on the use of repetition although not as extreme as found in the case of *Ogives*. The melodies are formed using recurring motifs. These melodic motifs or melodic cells, in their exact form, are rearranged to form new melodic phrases. Gowers commented that the *Prélude* has ‘a relatively large number (seventeen) of well-integrated short motifs within a short time-span, [and] an attractive recurring cadence figure to unify it.’¹⁷⁷ As these short motifs or melodic cells are self-contained, meaning that they do not flow from one cell to another under a strict melodic or harmonic scheme, their arrangement comes across arbitrary at times. For example, the same motif found straight after the cadence figure as if it has an opening function can appear in the middle of the melodic

¹⁷⁷ Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1, 18.

phrase, connecting the preceding and subsequent cells. Example 6.6 shows how motif X in the second system appears in the middle of two punctuation phrases is also found later in the seventh system as the first melodic cell immediately after a punctuation phrase, which can be seen as a representation of a traditional cadence. Due to the spontaneous nature of how the melodic cells are combined, the length of each of these melodic phrases, marked between two punctuation phrases, becomes irregular. The conventional performance approach to outline a melodic phrase in accordance with the melodic contour would be an irrelevant practice due to the fragmented nature of the melodic cells. Gowers coined the term ‘punctuation form’ which refers to a melodic scheme in which the recurring motifs, which are known as the punctuation cells give the rest of the motifs a sense of the musical phrase.¹⁷⁸ The punctuation cells can be seen as analogous to the commas or full stops in word sentences. From an audience point of view, Gowers suggests hearing the prelude as prose in order to ‘let the punctuation phrases slip by almost unnoticed and concentrate on the chain, thinking of it as far as possible as a whole, rather than as sections divided by a response in the manner of a litany.’¹⁷⁹ Gowers’ suggestion prioritises the melodic chains in their irregular lengths rather than listening out for individual phrases marked by the punctuation cells as musical elements that would eventually contribute to the appreciation of the overall musical structure.

Example 6.6 Punctuation phrases and a self-contained motif in *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, systems 2, 3 and 7

¹⁷⁸ Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1, 19.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*

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restrictions**

Harmonically, the consistent use of block chords as the main musical texture in *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* is iconic to Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces. These chords form the 'unprecedented sonority' that Roland-Manuel ascribed aiming at Satie's *Sarabandes*, provoking pianists to re-think the function of harmony and how to adapt their performance approach to harmonies that do not progress.¹⁸⁰

Gowers summarizes Satie's use of chromaticism in the Rose-Croix piano works:

[T]he use of chains of six-three chords, ... nearly always in four parts; they are freely chromatic and abound in false relations; the motion is predominantly note-against-note; the doubled note, indicated underneath each chord, is less often the root of the chord than the third or fifth, and usually lies in the soprano part; the harmony is almost never parallel, although consecutive octaves and fifths sometimes occur; the bass and treble tend to go in contrary motion.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter Four, footnote no. 88, p. 73.

¹⁸¹ Unresolved seventh and ninth chords are also common in Rose Croix piano music. See Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1, 18.

In James Haar's study of false relations and chromaticism in sixteenth-century music, he summarizes that chromaticism was used as a kind of melodic writing. False-relations in medieval music were genuinely welcomed by contemporary composers as an expressive device. The concept of the *freely* chromatic harmonies that are abound in false relations as expressive device in the medieval music can be transferred to Satie's prelude and offer pianists a reference should they wish to bring out the chromatic notes in their performances.

Most of Satie's Rose-Croix piano works are written in slow tempo with the tempo term '*lent*' or '*très lent*' with a few given '*modéré*' and '*avec calme*' as descriptive terms but never a tempo marking that indicates a faster pace than '*moderato*'. Within the slow tempo parameter, there are no tempo changing terms used in any of the Rose-Croix piano pieces, which appear in other Satie's piano music, for example '*retenu*' or '*1^{er} tempo*'. There is no exception for this prelude. However, as is the case in *Ogives*, it depends on pianists' discretion and their focus on what to express in the prelude, which could lead to their decisions to perform with some degree of tempo flexibility.

Although no dynamic marking is given in the piece, this interpretive criterion is the least problematic as in-score texts such as '*calme*' indicated at the start of the piece and '*très sincèrement silencieux*' appearing later on in the piece are explicit performance indications to influence pianists to opt for soft dynamic level.

Performance analysis and email interviews

Performance analysis is conducted on sixteen recorded performances *ranging from* 1955 to 2015 to expose diversity in musical interpretation of *Prélude de La Porte*

héroïque du ciel. Table 6.2 shows the names of the pianists for the case study and in chronological order, the years when the recordings were made.

Table 6.2: Recordings chosen for the performance analysis of *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*

Name of the pianists	Year of the recording
1. Francis Poulenc ¹⁸²	1955
2. Yuji Takahashi ¹⁸³	1976
3. Bill Quist ¹⁸⁴	1979
4. France Clidat ¹⁸⁵	1979
5. Cordélia Canabrava Arruda ¹⁸⁶	1979?–1988 ¹⁸⁷
6. Pascal Rogé ¹⁸⁸	1989
7. Olof Höjer ¹⁸⁹	1990
8. Jean-Pierre Armengaud ¹⁹⁰	1990

¹⁸² Francis Poulenc, *Socrate/ Messe Des Pauvres/ Poulenc Piano Pieces*, CD (repr., Cherry Red Records, EL, 2007), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6sb7RWjowOOIHfMIj5kEXP> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁸³ Yuji Takahashi, *Erik Satie Pièces Pour Piano*, CD (repr., Japan: Denon, 1985), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/25i0ZWse3kIyknEOgZVtD7> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁸⁴ Bill Quist, *Erik Satie – Piano Solos Of Erik Satie*, CD (repr., Standford: Windham Hill Records, 1986), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7w6yjbancV2ZnuML2hp4e> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁸⁵ France Clidat, *Erik Satie Œuvres Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: Forlane, 1985), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/68dMnrGt5by3UI7NfVNR4j> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁸⁶ Cordélia Arruda, *Erik Satie's Complete Piano Works - Volume II*, CD (repr., USA: Imagination Classics, 1980).

¹⁸⁷ Recording dates for Arruda's original LP of Satie's complete piano work is unavailable. Official website of Arruda states that the pianist discovered Satie in 1979 and since then extensively research about Satie and his music before recording all of his piano works, which were all released in LP format by 1988. CD recordings released by Imagination Classics are remastered works of the original LPs. Hence the original date of the recording is unclear but could not be any earlier than 1979. I therefore note that all Arruda's recording years as 1979?–1988.

¹⁸⁸ Pascal Rogé, *Satie Pascal Rogé Piano Works*, CD (repr., UK: Decca, 1989), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4nE7mRHW0BOSmFyyoEljpv> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁸⁹ Olof Höjer, *Erik Satie The Complete Piano Music Vol. 1*, CD (repr., Sweden: Swedish Society Discofil, 1996), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4NJUTx8nfNiFKB3zIbyg62> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹⁰ Jean-Pierre Armengaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: Bayard Musique, 2009), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4130aF2M0jVnyuAyPRuv14> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

9. Klára Körmendi ¹⁹¹	1993
10. John White ¹⁹²	1993
11. John Lenehan ¹⁹³	1998
12. Jean-Yves Thibaudet ¹⁹⁴	2001–2002
13. Bojan Gorišek ¹⁹⁵	2002
14. Linda Burman-Hall ¹⁹⁶	2004
15. Cristina Ariagno ¹⁹⁷	2006
16. Jeroen van Veen ¹⁹⁸	2015

Performed by Satie's acquaintance, who was also one of *Les Six*, Poulenc's 1955 vinyl recording offers an historical reference, an interpretation that is tempting to be considered as a near-authorial version for reasons such as their friendship and also the fact that Poulenc often played Satie's pieces on his behalf when the latter would often shy away from having to perform on the piano (See Chapter Four, pp. 81–82). When Poulenc recalled how Satie would ask for his permission to try out some musical ideas on his piano, this suggests that Poulenc would have had firsthand

¹⁹¹ Klára Körmendi, *Satie Piano Works Vol. 1*, CD (repr., Europe: Naxos, 1993), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0fOOsVICUOTC0uZuOcIhIw> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹² John White, *Erik Satie "Caresse" Piano Pieces*, CD (repr., Germany: Arte Nova Classics, 1995), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7JiuRBe98ELo9tC8FRnSnf> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹³ John Lenehan, *Satie Piano Miniatures Including 3 Gymnopédies*, CD (repr., UK: Classic FM, 1998), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4SeGPdhllHdoAbM4pInNn8> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹⁴ Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Erik Satie The Complete Solo Piano Music*, CD (repr., Europe: Decca, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3HtmWHWX1UEahlyasWzZXz> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹⁵ Bojan Gorišek, *Erik Satie Complete Piano Works And Songs*, CD (repr., Germany: Audiophile Classics, 2002), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4xHXDyd2HIuanH5rFPVJ4E> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

¹⁹⁶ Lina Burman-Hall, *Erik Satie: Visions*, CD (repr., MSR Classics, 2004), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Aalbum%3A62LzEABNTIV6zLXjK6PwLQ> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true".

¹⁹⁷ Cristina Ariagno, *Erik Satie Piano Works*, CD (repr., France: Brilliant Classics, 2006), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6A1fhMYiUcXVHGQShio25Y> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

¹⁹⁸ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., The Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 2016), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A00Q6wNwFIJAUE6Akz1oAOo> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

experience of hearing Satie play snippets of his own piano works in addition to performing Satie's work in the composer's request. The relationship Poulenc had with Satie suggests that Poulenc's interpretation of Satie's piano works might not be too far from Satie's original intent.¹⁹⁹ In Poulenc's article on Satie's piano music, his opinions on how Satie's piano pieces ought to be performed are delivered with conviction.²⁰⁰ Poulenc's point of view on the performance interpretation of Satie's piano music is significant as it is as close as one can obtain to understanding Satie's intention on how his piano works could be performed. Poulenc emphasised a few points on the use of sustain pedal and tempo in Satie's piano music as general rules, which provide a historical reference of the performance practice of Satie's piano music by the first-generation pianist:

Without a doubt, the role of the pedal is much less effective and essential than in music of Debussy and Ravel. But again, Satie innovates the use of sustain pedal. Many passages are played *dry*... Whenever you have to apply a lot of pedal... the effect must be *clair*, which Vines succeeded wonderfully, but not many pianists understand... Great rhythmic rigour is constantly needed in Satie's music. Most of the time the tempi are *successive* and not *progressive*.²⁰¹

The outcomes

The analytical outcomes of the recorded performances focus on three main points. Firstly, pianists' tempo choices in response to different interpretative criteria, with the focus being put on the 'topical mode', 'in-score textual stimuli' and the 'characterizer' will be examined; secondly, pianists' choices in the use of dynamics

¹⁹⁹ Francis Poulenc, *My Friends And Myself* (repr., London: Dobson, 1978), 70.

²⁰⁰ Francis Poulenc, 'La Musique de Piano d'Erik Satie' *La Revue Musicale*, 214 (June 1952), 23-26

²⁰¹ Francis Poulenc, 'La Musique de Piano d'Erik Satie' *La Revue Musicale*, 214 (June 1952), 26.

Original French texts : Sans nul doute, le rôle de la pédale est beaucoup moins effectif et indispensable que chez Debussy et Ravel. Dans ce domaine encore, Satie innove. Beaucoup de passages se jouent *à sec*, tel le début de la *Tyrolienne turque* (*Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*).

Lorsqu'on doit mettre beaucoup de pédale comme dans l'*Idylle des Avant-dernières pensées*, il faut cependant jouer *clair*, ce que Vines réussissait à merveille, mais qu'hélas beaucoup de pianistes n'arrivent pas à comprendre. Une grande rigueur rythmique est la constante de la musique de Satie. La plupart du temps les tempi sont *successifs* et non *progressifs*.

in response to the interpretive criteria will also be examined; Finally, two unusual features discovered in some of the recorded performances, the presence of silence not indicated by a rest sign and the missing of a section of music in Poulenc's recording, will be discussed.

Tempo choices by the sixteen pianists vary from thirty to seventy-seven crotchet beats per minute.²⁰² Van Veen has the slowest pulse that ranges from thirty to thirty-nine crotchet beats per minute, which contrasts with Quist's tempo of seventy-seven crotchet beats per minute at its fastest. Most pianists chose the slow pace of forty to sixty crotchet beats per minute, reflecting the performance indication of 'calme' at the beginning of the piece.

The use of rubato is also present in the performances of this prelude by various pianists despite the lack of tempo manipulation markings given by Satie. The different types of rubato applied include: agogic accents, tempo rubato, section rubato and lengthening certain notes in the manner of a pause. The evaluation outcomes suggest that the causes of tempo manipulation could result from the appearance of the quirky terminology throughout the score (in-score textual stimuli), the punctuation cells that act as quasi-cadences, the phrase structure as constructed by the chain of consecutive cells and punctuation cells, and lastly the absence of meters and bar-lines (in-score visual stimuli).

Poulenc alters the tempo noticeably at moments where cryptic texts appear (See Appendix I for full score with numbered chords, pp. 322–323). An agogic accent is placed at beat twenty-six where '*superstiteusement*' is shown (Time code

²⁰² Summary of tempo choices : m.m.= 30-39: Jereon van Veen; m.m.= 40-49: Reinbert de Leeuw, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Takahashi, John Lenehan, John White, Gorišek (40-60) and Ariagno (40-53); m.m.= 50-59: Poulenc, Arruda, Pascal Rogé, Clidat, Höjer, Armengaud (50-63) and Burman-Hall; m.m.= 60-69: Armengaud (partial); m.m. = <70: Bill Quist (73-77 with sections dropped consistently to 46, then 40), Kormendi (slowest at m.m.=50 and with brief moments as fast as at m.m.=85)

of beats 22 to 29: 00:27–00:36), at beat sixty-five with '*avec déférence*' (Time code of beats 61 to 68: 01:13–01:22), at beat 109 when '*en une timide piété*' appears (Time code of beats 104 to 114: 02:05–02:19). Quist's performance also suggests a change in tempo at points where in-score texts appear. He applies section rubato from beats twenty-two to twenty-five just before the appearance of '*superstiteusement*' (Time code of beats 18 to 29: 01:13–01:23). The effect of the use of section rubato on the four chords of beats twenty-two to twenty-five provides a bold character and stately mood, which contrast immediately with the following chords when '*superstiteusement*' appears and the music returning to its original tempo. At another juncture, agogic accent is used at beat 63 just before '*avec déférence*' appears (Time code of beats 61 to 68: 00:50–00:57). After 'RIDEAU', section rubato is applied between beats 189 and 198. A noticeable drop in tempo from 73 to 77 crotchet beats per minute to 46 crotchet beats per minute can be heard from the recording, suggesting a sense of closure and a calm mood. The tempo further declines to 46 crotchet beats per minute from beat 199 until the end of the piece (Time code of beats 174 to 198: 02:28–02:51). Takahashi's performance delivers a fairly constant slow tempo of 52 crotchet beats per minute throughout but after 'RIDEAU', the tempo gradually slows down to 40 crotchet beats per minute (Time code of beats 156 to end: 03:09–04:22). Although other recordings also show a slow down tempo after 'RIDEAU', Takahashi's application of ritardando for only the last system of music makes a big impact to deliver a sense of termination or suspense as if something is about to follow. To clarify, not all pianists applied rubato to where texts appeared. For instance, De Leeuw's performance shows that no pause is executed on the semibreve chords nor did he give extra silence duration to the

existing crotchet rest after the capitalised in-score text ‘RIDEAU’ appeared (Time code: 04:57–05:16).

For melodic cells such as crotchet beats 18 to 25, shown in Example 6.7a, and crotchet beats 36 to 40 in Example 6.7b, over half of the pianists placed agogic accents at the last crotchet beat of the cells, i.e. at beat 25 of chord A and beat 40 of chord D.

Example 6.7a *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 18 to 25

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 6.7b *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 36 to 40

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Other examples of the use of agogic accents can be found at beats 72 of chord A and the subsequent beats at 90, 99, 135, 183, 194, 198 all in chord D, as well as the final D octave. Agogic accents heard at these beats suggest pianists responding to the chord and the melodic cell as a whole, consolidating their function as ‘punctuation cells’ even though they are not strictly qualified as the punctuation cells under Gowers’ specification (See p. 143). Considering the octave D brings the piece to a close, pianists who opt to emphasise the note A or D in these melodic cells might have drawn on the tonic-dominant gravitational pull. With the use of agogic accents

by some pianists in these cells, the successive chain of mosaic-like musical cells are given more breathing space as they unfold one after the other.

Arruda uses agogic accents to highlight the specific chords, for example at the second quaver of crotchet beat 19 (Time code of beats 18 to 21: 00:21–00:25). Höjer alters the even quaver notes to dotted notes at beat 136 to possibly highlight the start of the melodic cell (Time code of beats 132 to 138: 02:22–02:29). He also stretches the crotchet notes of beat 71 and 72 to highlight the moment (Time code of beats 65 to 72: 01:08–01:17). Körmendi, Lenehan, Thibaudet, White, Gorišek and Ariagno use a combination of agogic accents, lengthening note values and ritardando to emphasise the specific A and D chords (Time code of beats 65 to 72 for Körmendi: 00:5–01:05). Armengaud, as well as using agogic accents, also applies section rubato to these moments. For example, in order to highlight the chord D at beat 40, he adopts a slower but consistent tempo from beat 36 to beat 40. As a result of the use of section rubato, a calmer mood is achieved. Subsequently, when a faster tempo abruptly takes over at beat 41 until the new tempo is introduced again at beat 47, the calm mood fades and is instantly replaced by an assertive mood (Time code of beats 26 to 54: 00:26–00:55). Burman-Hall, in addition to the use of agogic accents and ritardando to bring out these chords, would give accelerando before ritardando as a form of tempo rubato. Interestingly, Poulenc's interpretation, along with the other half of the pianists give no agogic accent at these musical cells, treating them the same way as the others and undermining any performance gesture tempted by the harmonies.

Tempo manipulation at punctuation phrases, as shown in Example 6.8, which correspond to beats 168 to 173, is clearly audible in most recordings evaluated.²⁰³

Poulenc expresses the punctuation phrases by applying a *ritardando* at the end.

Immediately afterwards, an agogic accent is placed on the following chord to outline the beginning of the next phrase (Time code of beats 162 to 173: 02:37–02:53).

Poulenc restricts the use of rubato for punctuation cells only, resulting in the punctuation phrases being brought out effectively.

Example 6.8 Punctuation phrase, beats 168 to 173

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Arruda, on the other hand, applies agogic accents, *allargando* and *ritardando* a lot more abundantly than Poulenc does. The application of rubato does not only limit to addressing the punctuation phrases, but also for cells that consist of inner voice melodies that Arruda wishes to highlight possibly for their melodic interests. While Poulenc concentrates on bringing out long phrases by holding back only at punctuation cells, Arruda places emphasis at different junctures of the long phrases. Arruda's approach weakens the build up towards the punctuation phrases and offers other melodic cells just as much attention as the punctuation phrases throughout the piece. The resulting performance that draws attention to individual cells one at a time suggests that Arruda prioritises spontaneity, which highlights the

²⁰³ In the 2016 Editions Salabert, Orledge edited the prelude and added phrase markings only to the punctuation phrases.

unconventional quality of these mosaic-like self-contained cells and the melodically fragmented nature of Rose-Croix piece. Thibaudet delivers his performance using rubato on the quasi-cadential chords most but without emphasizing the punctuation phrases. His approach facilitates Gowers' suggestion to audiences to 'let the punctuation phrase slip by almost unnoticed'.²⁰⁴

Burman-Hall's approach demonstrates yet another way the punctuation phrases can be interpreted. She initially lets them slip unnoticed for only the first half of the prelude but applies agogic accents at these phrases from the second half of the piece. For example, section rubato is applied to punctuation cells from beats 126 to 131 by dropping the tempo slightly to 48 crotchet beats per minute (Time code of beats 118 to 131: 02:34–02:51). At beats 156 to 161, section rubato is applied again, and the tempo is slowed down further to 45 crotchet beats per minute before applying *ritardando* for the last time from beat 168 to 173 (Time code of beats 148 to 173: 03:12–03:47). On these two occasions, the use of section rubato provides a tranquil mood as the piece approaches to an end. Burman-Hall's use of rubato, to my understanding, is what Poulenc referred to as '*progressive*' tempo, the type of tempo that he did not recommend for Satie's piano music.

As an additional interpretive criterion in the modified performance analytical model, the in-score visual stimuli, which I refer to as the absence of meters and bar-lines in this case study, have shown to influence some pianists' performance interpretations under evaluation. Gorišek's and Ariagno's playing allow the basic pulse to be stretched from note to note and cell to cell, resulting in the lack of consistent beat in the prelude. For example from beats 195 to 198, Ariagno lengthens

²⁰⁴ See Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 1-25, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1, 19.

and shortens the rhythm of the pairs of quavers to make them sound almost like long and short notes (Time code: 04:28–04:33). From beats 174 to 188, she speeds up the tempo abruptly for a few beats before slowing down (Time code: 04:01–04:19). The resulting performance sounds pulse-free and the effect is as if she is reciting a prose. On the other hand, Thibaudet’s playing shows a more consistent tempo. However, his choice to perform with the wearingly slow tempo of less than forty crotchet beats per minute makes the maintenance of a regular pulse irrelevant. Apart from the application of agogic accents and *ritardando*, Thibaudet also alters some of the note values. For example, the crotchet in beat 40 is played like a minim, and the quavers at beats 63 and 166 are also played twice as slow (Time code of beats 36 to 46: 00:54–01:03/ beats 61 to 64: 01:34–01:41/ beats 162 to 167: 04:13–04:22). Thibaudet’s performance with the wearingly slow tempo and the occasional distortion of note values resembles the performance of medieval chants. It is interesting to note that Thibaudet performs the given rhythm with some degrees of flexibility in duration in this prelude as well as in *Ogives* when crotchet notes would generally mean having longer duration than quaver but by no means in their exact proportions. Thibaudet’s choice, along with Ariagno’s and Gorišek’s to distort the rhythmic duration of some notes disagrees with Poulenc’s belief that ‘great rhythmic rigour is constantly needed in Satie’s music.’²⁰⁵ As a later-generation pianist with French lineage, Thibaudet performs with experimental gestures which marks a change in the performance approach by the first- and second-generation French pianists who would follow Satie’s scores most closely in most circumstance.

²⁰⁵ Francis Poulenc, ‘La Musique de Piano d’Erik Satie’ *La Revue Musicale*, 214 (June 1952), 26.

Burman-Hall's response to the absence of meter and bar-lines is through the insertion of pauses and the frequent use of rubato. Almost every few beats, rubato is applied either as a form of agogic accents, tempo rubato and long sustained notes (Time code: 00:00– 00:57). With a basic tempo of around fifty crotchet beats per minute, Burman-Hall's interpretation delivers a sense of freedom while mimicking the telling of a story. I would speculate that her intent was to deliver the prelude as an introductory piece for an esoteric drama, instead of a standalone piece, separating itself away from mystical connection with the associated drama.

In regard to pianists' dynamic choices, discrepancies amongst the sixteen pianists are evident in their recorded performances as some pianists see Satie's lack of dynamic marking (ambiguity in the score as one of the key issues) as an opportunity for open interpretations. The inclusion of additional dynamic and gradation of tones is purely creative and reflects personal choices simply because the musical phrases are formed by different numbers of consecutive cells with non-functional harmonies. Using different dynamics to project the seemingly arbitrary musical phrase or the non-existing harmonic progression would not be necessary in this case.

Körmendi chooses to apply the gradation of tone to outline the different phrase length. For example from beat 18 to 25 and beats 36 to 40, crescendo and diminuendo are used to mark the start and end of the phrase (Time code for bars 18 to 40: 00:14–00:34). Clidat starts the prelude with *mp* dynamics and uses gradation of tone to change the dynamic level excessively as the prelude goes on (Time code of beats 1 to 90: 00:00–01:43). She often outlines the melodic details by clearly projecting the different voicings (Time code of beats 100 to 109: 01:54–02:04). Her approach of using fluctuating dynamic levels seems to question whether the opening

text ‘*calme*’ should be interpreted as a performance instruction applicable to the entire piece. Clidat’s execution suggests an emotional journey in the second half of the piece with ups and downs gestured by the changing dynamic levels and the final dramatic fortissimo chord at ‘RIDEAU’ (Time code of beats 148 to 188: 02:47–03:33). Clidat also uses dynamics to highlight the structural moments. For example, by articulating the low quaver note G loudly at beat 173, she transforms the function of the note G from being the last note of the punctuation cell to being the start of the phrase for the following beats as annotated in Example 6.9a. Her gesture at beat 173 also responds to the opening octave, which marks the beginning of the prelude as shown in Example 6.9b.

Example 6.9a Clidat’s use of dynamic level at beat 173 for structural emphasis

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 6.9b First melodic cell, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Clidat’s way of articulating the note G at beat 173 not only reminds the listeners of the consecutive cells at the beginning of the piece, it also effectively signals the end

of the comparatively adventurous section in the second half of the prelude and returns to the calm and sweet *mp* dynamics. Clidat's performance is full of imagination and character, suggesting that she could be influenced by the title (topic), the topical mode (performance indications e.g. '*calm et profondément*') and the in-score textual stimuli (other mystical texts that are not explicitly performance indications).

Overall, Lenehan sets his dynamic level at *mf* with moments reduced to *pp* to highlight musical details, which is a reverse strategy in comparison to using a louder dynamic to draw attention. This gesture is applied at the 'RIDEAU' chord, as annotated in Example 6.10 (Time code of beats 174 to 188: 04:44–05:09). Despite the louder dynamic of *mf* has been applied overall to the piece instead of a softer dynamic ranging from *mp* to *pp*, the calm mood is maintained throughout. At '*très sincèrement silencieux*', Lenehan first applied crescendo before gradually quieting down to *pp* by beat 90 to make the moment of silence even more dramatic (Time code of beats 73 to 90: 01:52–02:21). Lenehan's use of dynamics demonstrates how, despite sharing the same interpretive goal, performance outcomes could differ as a result of their creative gestures.

Example 6.10 The change in dynamic level at 'RIDEAU', system 10

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Burman-Hall's recording shows frequent use of gradation of tone within the *mp* to *mf* dynamic range. Different dynamic levels are applied to outline the melodic contour and the punctuation cells (Time code of beats 100 to 114: 02:13–02:31). However, on some occasions, her choices of dynamic levels seem arbitrary (Time code for beats 132 to 155: 02:52–03:22). Burman-Hall's performance sounds spontaneous as a result of the changing dynamic levels in addition to her use of different types of rubato as previously discussed (See p. 153) Burman-Hall's creative performance interpretation is again made possible by the key issues identified with Satie's Rose-Croix piano music.

Ariagno applies ample gradation of tones throughout the piece but what makes her interpretations different from others is how she outlines different layers of voicing through her dynamic choices. Unlike others, who mostly emphasise the top voicing that contributes to the main melody, Ariagno personalizes her approach by bringing out other voicings in order to enrich her performance with contrasts and new ideas. For instance, as annotated in Example 6.11, Ariagno highlights the inner voicing of notes B and A as circled at beats 24 and 25 instead of bringing out the top voice with notes G and A, which is common practice (Time code of beats 22 to 29: 00:28–00:38). This creative gesture brings attention to the inner voice, which effectively anticipates her next gesture, which is to further emphasise the parallel fifths in the lower voice circled in blue against the parallel major sevenths circled in red from beats 26 to 28.

It is probable that Satie's in-score text '*superstitieusement*' is to reflect its harmonic content. I assert that the quasi-religious and mysterious content of this prelude has been successfully achieved by Satie's inclusion of the parallel fifths, which mimics the characteristic of parallel organum and the parallel major sevenths

(the dissonant intervals), which are prohibited in medieval religious music. Ariagno performance choice to highlight these harmonies has provided interpretive answers to the in-score text.

Example 6.11 Connection between the harmonic content and the in-score text,
Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel, beats 22 to 28

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In contrast to the above pianists' creative use of dynamic levels in the prelude, Takahashi and Van Veen have chosen to adopt a minimalistic approach and keep the soft dynamics throughout the whole piece, demonstrating another creative interpretive approach, given the ambiguity of the Rose-Croix prelude and the paucity of performance direction on the score.

When it comes to the quasi-cadences for chord A (at beats 25 and 72) and chord D (at beats 40, 90, 99, 135, 183, 194, 198), they are often emphasised by the use of agogic accents amongst pianists selected for this case study. Several performances also demonstrate that sudden change in dynamic level is applied as means to highlight the moment. Satie's use of harmony and melody in these melodic cells has impacted over half of the pianists, who choose to use expressive gestures at these junctures. For instance, chords D and A of beats 71 and 72 as seen in Example 6.12 have been treated with great caution by most pianists.

Example 6.12 High discrepancies in dynamic levels at the quasi-cadence, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 65 to 72

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Poulenc opts for a change to *forte* dynamics for both beats (Time code: 01:18–01:27) while Thibaudet only applies *forte* to beat 72 (Time code: 01:41–01:52). In contrast, Arruda chooses to play in *forte* at beat 71 and in *subito mp* for the subsequent beat (Time code: 01:20–01:32). Höjer and Rogé apply *subito piano* to both beats (Time code for Höjer: 01:07–01:16/ Rogé: 01:23–01:33). With a uniform dynamic level of *mf* throughout the piece, De Leeuw's only dynamic change happens to this quasi-cadence with *subito piano* applied. His dynamic choice reveals that these two beats, to him, mark an important structural moment for the entire piece. The high discrepancies in the use of dynamics at this quasi-cadence provide an excellent example of how creative gestures thrive as a result of the key issues identified with Satie's Rose-Croix pieces.

Apart from the quasi-cadential chords, the capitalized curtain cue 'RIDEAU' appears just after the semibreve note at beat 183, providing an excellent example for the in-score textual stimuli interpretive criterion. Poulenc and Arruda's interpretations show substantial differences that cannot be overlooked. After

'RIDEAU', Poulenc played *mp* for beats 189 to 194 but subsequently applied crescendo to reach *ff* by the end of the prelude to give a grand ending (Time code of beat 179 to end: 03:00 to 03:47). Poulenc's gesture resembles a roaring drum roll, hinting something important is about to begin, which I interpret is his way to show the start of the esoteric drama. In Arruda's performance, she lets the sound of the semibreve chord in beat 183 fade out completely and indulges the complete silence that lasts longer than the indicated crotchet beat before applying *mp* at beat 189. A crescendo towards beat 203 is applied briefly before *diminuendo* is implemented to bring the prelude to the softest dynamic level (Time code for beats 183 to end: 03:59–04:44). Arruda's approach gives a sense of closure, indicating the moment as the ending, a gesture that is completely opposite to the one executed by Poulenc.

For the last three points on the unusual features detected in the performance evaluation, the first is the implementation of silences that are not incurred as a result of rest signs by second-generation pianist John White, who specialises in performing experimental and contemporary new music. White is the only pianist in the case study, who adds silent breaks in the prelude as part of his expression. In addition to highlighting the quasi-cadential notes (See Example 6.7a, p. 147), White's performance suggests that he also implements the breaks in order to highlight the phrase structure. Shown in Example 6.13a, White places a brief silence at the end of beat 11 after the left-hand chord finished sounding (Time code of beats 1 to 17: 00:00–00:22). With the same phrasal structures of beats 2 to 5 and beats 6 to 10, White's treatment of beats 6 and 10 are different. He chooses to keep to the regular pulse for the opening eleven beats but allows the brief silent break right after beat 11. While this gesture slightly disrupts the pulse of the music, the long phrase

consists of melodic cells joining together (beats 1 to 11) and the punctuation phrase (beats 12 to 17) are clearly differentiated.

Example 6.13a The use of silence by White to anticipate the punctuation phrase, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 7 to 14

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Similarly, silence is inserted at the end of beat 25 as annotated in Example 6.13b, to reflect the quasi-cadence, which other pianists expressed with only the use of rubato or dynamics (Time code of beats 22 to 29: 00:27–00:37).

Example 6.13b The use of silence by White to emphasise the quasi-cadence, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 22 to 29

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Intriguingly, at the end of the punctuation cell at beat 131, shown in Example 6.14, White chooses to let the chord ring without acting on the quaver rest (Time code of

beats 126 to 135: 02:40–02:53). White also opts out of the use of rubato and at beat 132, *forte* dynamic is used to effectively dramatize the end section by giving it more momentum.

Example 6.14 White's creative performance decisions to dramatize the end section, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 126 to 135

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

White's creative gesture of applying additional silences in order to project the structural details of the piece is unique to his performance. I speculate that White's approach of including additional silence to his performance in the prelude could be inspired by Satie's piano notation in another Rose-Croix piano piece—*Danses gothiques*. In the latter Rose-Croix piece, Satie implemented empty spaces in his notation, leading to a visual interruption to the supposedly continuous flow of the notation, to which White responds by applying silences to these empty spaces (See Chapter Seven).

The second and last point for unusual performance features focus on Poulenc's recording, in which a section of the prelude from beats 122 to 155 is omitted for unknown reasons so far (Time code of beats 195 to 197 joined by beats 156 to 161: 02:19–02:35). It could be a quick answer to speculate that the omission of the 34 beats of music is resulted from the limited duration of vinyl recording in 1950s. However, I am not entirely convinced especially when the omitted section

has new musical cells that are yet to be introduced for the first time. The omission would therefore be largely inappropriate, unlike for example, omitting the repeat section of an exposition section of a piano sonata, which is accepted as common practice.

In more detail, as annotated in Example 6.15, the last cell (beats 118 to 121) before the omitted section begins and the last cell (beats 152 to 155) of the omitted section are the same, meaning that despite a section is taken out, the ‘edited’ point where the music is joined back together is connected by the same melodic cell. This specific circumstance leads me to question whether Poulenc’s performance intentionally exposes the flexibility in the formal and structural approach of the prelude, which could be a device to adapt to a flexible duration needed for the esoteric play. In another words, Poulenc’s performance could be one of many ways that the prelude can be performed in regard to the overall structure.

Example 6.15 Omitted section in Poulenc’s recording, *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, beats 122 to 155

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

As a pianist, I would explore other ways to connect the existing musical cells. To give an example amongst other possibilities of how to make use of the reappearance of identical cells, I could join beat 151 with beat 30, then proceed to beat 32, which will be joined by beat 198; Or alternatively, play through from beat 30 to beat 49 and then join beat 49 with beat 141 as different ways to lengthen the prelude. Although my proposition may sound radical, the concept of spontaneity in musical form is not unheard of in Satie's piano pieces. Evident in his later piano piece 'Endless Tango' of *Sports et Divertissements* (1914), pianists are challenged with the musical structure that has no end to it. 'Dal Segno' appears at the end of the piece with the sign placed at the beginning of the music while the important 'fine' to free pianists from the endless repeats is deliberately left out.

Performances by Höjer and Thibaudet also show performance gestures that suggest their questioning of the existing structural and formal plan of the prelude. In Höjer's recording, the prelude ends on the semibreve chord, above which is the text 'RIDEAU', resulting the entire section after the dotted lines being left out. His interpretation therefore suggests that the text 'RIDEAU' and the dotted lines represent an alternative ending of the music when performed without the play. The abrupt end also suggests that the part of the music that comes after the dotted lines could be part of the actual play, indicated by the curtain cue. Höjer's execution puts interpretive criterion—in-score textual stimuli (RIDEAU) and visual stimuli (the dotted lines) in highly influential positions. Likewise, Thibaudet's performance shows a similar understanding by regarding the dotted line as an ending sign. He does so by repeating the entire piece once and finishing the prelude at the 'RIDEAU' semibreve chord.

Both Höjer's and Thibaudet's interpretations (and in fact Satie's piano music in this instance) challenge the unquestionable practice of the last note of the music indicating the end of the music. Whereas, in the case of Poulenc's interpretation, if not caused by the limitation of the recording facility, mistakes occurred during recording or even the possibility of Poulenc performing with a score that has those bars omitted, his performance challenges the conventional sequence of musical notation and its natural progression. Despite the lack of Satie's authorial voice on the performance and discussion of this prelude, he once expressed in wit: 'I have always striven to confuse would-be followers by both the form and the background of each new work'.²⁰⁶ To confuse, Satie placed the dotted line before the music ends and gave no final bar-line as conventional sign to end the piece. The notational style in this prelude once again gives an example of how the ambiguity of Satie's music score leads to performance issues, which ultimately encourages creative interpretation of Satie's piano pieces.

Conclusion on the quasi-impromptu pianism in *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*

The analytical outcomes of the selected performances by French and non-French lineage pianists over the last six decades support my assertion that quasi-impromptu pianism occurs as a reaction to the ambiguity in the performance style of Satie's piano pieces caused by the three key issues as identified (See Chapter One). Pianists' interpretations demonstrate great discrepancies in their tempo choices, use of rubato, dynamic ranges as well as bold gestures to question the musical structure of the

²⁰⁶ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143.

prelude. Similar to the case of *Ogives*, some pianists explore the use of tempo flexibility and implement silences in response to the lack of time signature, bar-lines and tempo markings. Satie's compositional ideas of using self-contained melodic cells also lead to different interpretations of the length of the phrases, to which pianists gesture the various phrases using different means, for examples the contrasting dynamics and applying different types of rubato such as tempo rubato, agogic accents and section rubato, in addition to the use of silence breaks.

The ambiguity in Satie's performance directions in connection to his use of in-score texts have promoted, rather than curbed creativity and freedom in pianists' interpretations. The resulting quasi-impromptu pianism acts as evidence to the validation of in-score texts as contributive as performance cues despite their cryptic nature, which fail to fulfil the function of direct and precise performance indications.

It is crucial to acknowledge that amongst pianists with French lineage, they also give contrasting performances, with some interpretations being more reserved and others more dramatic and in search of new performance gestures. Armengaud, from the second-generation explores new/experimental performance gestures through the use of section rubato to outline the phrasal structure as well as to aid the change of mood within the piece. Thibaudet, from the later-generation, chooses to perform the prelude with a repeat and eventually ends the piece at the dotted line to question the musical form despite adopting a consistent tempo throughout the piece. Clidat's performance style, in contrast, is comparatively reserved as no new gestures have been identified in my evaluation. Various second-generation pianists with non-French lineage demonstrate freer interpretive approach, such as Burman-Hall's use of pauses on notes, White's implementation of silences, Quist's bold gesture in his use of section rubato at the end of the piece and Höjer's deliberate choice to end his

piece at the dotted line without reaching the final note of the score. All of their performance gestures bring the esoteric drama characteristics of the prelude to its full. That said, the reserved and experimental divide in performance approaches is also evident amongst pianists of non-French lineage, showing an overall effect of the ambiguity in the performance style of Satie's piano pieces across pianists in an international scale over the last six decades. Satie once commented: 'Before I compose a piece, I walk around it several times, accompanied by myself.'²⁰⁷ To my interpretation, this statement metaphorically implies that Satie would like his music to be multi-faceted, and to be able *to be* appreciated by both the performer and the audience from different angles. By exploring new gestures and be able to interpret the piece from different perspectives, pianists might have fulfilled Satie's ultimate wish. Otherwise, it seems illogical to deliberately exercise the degree of ambiguity in the performance directions of his piano pieces to such an extent through the three identified key issues.

To sum up the performance practice of *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, this Rose-Croix piece demonstrates how Satie's cryptic performance directions supply pianists with suggestive moods and feelings, which cannot be directly translated as performance instructions. The self-contained melodic cells also offer pianists an indefinable musical structure, which creates further ambiguity for performance interpretation. Given such freedom in the interpretation of the musical texts and their potential influence in performance, pianists are encouraged to decide whether to deliver the prelude as an introductory piece to an esoteric play or simply a standalone piece. The enigmatic atmosphere, which is often associated with Satie's Rose-Croix piano pieces would guide pianists to adopt a slow tempo in addition to

²⁰⁷ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 142.

providing performance gestures that are unexpected in order to heighten the mystical nature of the piece. Pianists are encouraged to explore new ways to deliver the esoteric atmosphere: the application of section rubato can be applied to indicate the sudden change in mood as a means to heighten the mystical effect of the Rose-Croix piano piece.

Chapter Seven

Quasi-impromptu Pianism in response to

In-score Textual and Visual Stimuli in *Danses gothiques* (1893)

Introduction

Subsequent to the previous Rose-Croix piano music case studies on *Ogives* and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, this chapter concentrates on exploring the performance interpretations of *Danses gothiques* demonstrated by twelve recorded performances between 1968 and 2015. Instead of re-examining the link between the Rose-Croix musical language and pianists' interpretations of *Danses gothiques* and including all the interpretive criteria in the discussion, this chapter focuses on 1) the validity of non-musical stimuli as interpretive criteria in the piece, 2) exposing *Danses gothiques*'s inter-disciplinary nature and 3) examining how pianists gesture non-musical stimuli on the score. By saying non-musical stimuli, which are subsequently regarded as one of the interpretive criteria in the modified analytical model, I refer to the in-score textual stimuli and the in-score visual stimuli. The former comprise of the interrupting cryptic titles and and the latter the blank spaces, which break up the continuous flow of the musical notation (See Chapters Three and Four). Satie's original manuscripts and edited piano scores of *Danses gothiques* are also scrutinized critically to show the discrepancies of the in-score visual stimuli amongst different editions. The found differences raise awareness on how interpretations could be majorly impacted as a result, questioning the editor's role on influencing performance interpretations of this particular piano piece.

I aim to disclose the extent to which these non-musical stimuli influence performance decisions. How do pianists react to the in-score textual and visual stimuli in *Danses gothiques*? Do they express such stimuli in their musical performances? Allowing non-musical stimuli to influence performance decisions as suggested by some of the recorded performances means that pianists have gone beyond conventional piano performance practice to seek interpretative answers and therefore accept the inter-disciplinary nature of the piece. Pianists are therefore provoked and granted the freedom to seek new possibilities in musical interpretations amongst themselves, which contributes to the quasi-impromptu pianism on the performance of Satie's piano pieces.

With regard to the inconsistencies of how *Danses gothiques* were notated amongst Satie's manuscript, the 1929 and 2016 Editions Salaberts, they illuminate the performance challenges pianists face in connection to the key issues identified in the Introduction Chapter. The inconsistencies between Satie's manuscript and the 1929 edition include the placement of his music notes, which are deliberately split up into separate chunks by blank spaces or titles (See Figures 7.1 to 7.4, pp. 174–178). The unconventional positioning of these music notes or motivic cells results in blank spaces being created on different section of the page. By comparison, the 1929 edition is closest to the way Satie notated the music of *Danses gothiques* as this edition preserves all the spaces that he originally allocated in the manuscript. However in the 2016 edition, all the blank spaces are taken out— a deliberate choice made by Robert Orledge, the editor. While other Rose-Croix piano pieces lack bar-lines, *Danses gothiques* includes them but only on a few occasions to indicate the end of a section. Again, inconsistencies occur amongst Satie's manuscript and the

two Salabert editions when the total number of bar-lines differs. These inconsistencies are central to the diverse interpretations of *Dances gothiques*.

Rose-Croix piano music third case study—*Dances gothiques*

Notational presentation analysis

The use of symbolism in *Dances gothiques* has already been examined in Chapter Five. To contextualise the unconventional elements of *Dances gothiques* amongst other Satie's piano pieces composed during the Rose-Croix period, this is the only published piano piece that incorporates the use of blank spaces and additional numbered titles, which appear across the score in such a way that they disrupt the would-be continuous visual flow of the music. In some of Satie's piano pieces, for example 'Le Porteur de grosses pierres' from *Chapitres tournés en tous sens* (1913) where a blank space can also be found alongside in-score texts such as 'attendez' to request a moment of silence, it appears at the end of a musical phrase, disrupting the visual flow of the melodic line.²⁰⁸ The main differences between the blank spaces found in the 1912–1914 piano pieces and *Dances gothiques* are that the latter has blank spaces being placed within a complete musical cell and therefore, visually splitting one complete motive into two separate parts. There is also no in-score text such as 'attendez' to confirm the silence request. Suggested by the way Satie notated *Dances gothiques* in his manuscript, his awareness of the relationship between the position of the musical notes and the blank spaces that surround them,

²⁰⁸ Poulenc explained that Satie would indicate a time of silence with terms such as *attendez*, *arrêt*, *tempo court*, *une pause s. v. p* in order to show a change in movement (tempo). Original French texts: 'Généralement on observera, pour ces changements de mouvement, un temps de silence que Satie indique ainsi: attendez, arrêt, tempo court, une pause s. v. p.' Francis Poulenc, "La Musique De Piano D'erik Satie", *La Revue Musicale* 214, no. (1952): 26.

together with the inclusion of titles to further break up the music means that the in-score visual stimulus plays a vital part for *Danses gothiques* to be considered as an interdisciplinary work. The blank spaces and titles could have an on-going impact during performances. This notion provokes pianists to explore the role of visual stimuli as interpretive criteria in performances, which may consequently have an impact on pianists' perceptions of the work.

Table 7.1 provides representative examples of the appearance of blank spaces in *Danses gothiques*. The table also exposes discrepancies found between the 1929 and 2016 Editions Salabert in comparison to Satie's original manuscript of *Danses gothiques*, which displays precisely the way he notated the musical notes and titles, and the resulting blank spaces in relation to the page. Pianists' performance reactions to the blank spaces and the interrupting titles have therefore become the focal point for the evaluation of performance interpretations. The outcomes of the performance evaluations will expose how these visual stimuli lead pianists to diverse performance interpretations. It will also verify the interdisciplinary nature of this piece and validate the in-score textual and visual stimuli as effective interpretive criteria to provide performance cues to pianists. As the latest chosen performance is recorded in 2015 by Jeroen van Veen, the 2016 Editions Salabert with Orledge's editorial choices would not have been consulted by any of the selected pianists in this case study. The performance interpretations of *Danses gothiques* are therefore evaluated in response to Satie's original manuscript and the 1929 edition.

Table 7.1: Discrepancies amongst different editions of *Danses gothiques*

Satie's manuscripts (MS 10048 BnF) ²⁰⁹	1929 Editions Salabert (edited by Darius Milhaud) ²¹⁰	2016 Editions Salabert (edited by Robert Orledge) ²¹¹
1. Line jump and blank spaces		
A line jump, annotated 'H', is indicated in the fifth titled dance, separating two complete motivic cells (Figure 7.1, p. 174).	Blank space is allocated instead of a line jump in Satie's original version, between the two complete motivic cells (Figure 7.2, p. 176).	No blank space is allocated. (See Appendix IV, pp. 338–344)
A line jump is indicated in eighth titled dance, annotated 'R' separating a complete motive into two parts (Figure 7.3, p. 177).	Instead of a line jump, blank space is allocated to separate the complete motive into two parts (Figure 7.4, p. 178).	No blank space is allocated.
Numerous spaces are found in second titled to ninth titled dance between two complete motives. (See Appendix II for Satie's manuscripts, pp. 324–330)	These blank spaces, annotated 'B, E, J, L, M, N, P, Q, T, U', are preserved in this edition although not in the same space size (See Appendix III for annotated full score, pp. 331–337).	No blank space is allocated.
2. The use of bar-lines (See Appendix II and III)		

²⁰⁹ Erik Satie, "Danses Gothiques" (Manuscript, repr., Paris, 1929), Bibliothèque nationale de France Département de la reproduction.

²¹⁰ Darius Milhaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano* (repr., Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1989), 91–97.

²¹¹ Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume I*, 1st ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), 123–129. Orledge's editorial decisions are based on his extensive research on the manuscripts of *Danses gothiques* and *uspud*, another early Rose-Croix work composed a year before *Danses gothiques*, in which Satie left similar blank spaces in the manuscripts but these gaps were not preserved by Salabert in the 1929 edition. The new edition of *Danses gothiques* is presented more coherently with the rest of the Rose-Croix piano works, even though the titles continue to interrupt the notation.

No bar-line is given throughout the whole piece until the final bar-line at the end.	Double bar-lines are given at the end of the first and fifth titled dance.	No bar-line is given throughout the whole piece until the double bar-line at the end.
	Double bar-line is added at the end of the third titled dance.	
Final bar-line is used to mark the end of the whole piece	Double bar-lines instead of a final to mark the end of the whole piece.	Double bar-lines instead of a finale to mark the end of the whole piece.
3. The inclusion of numbered titles leads to music being split up visually. There are also the appearances of blank spaces before the first chord of some of the titled dances. ²¹²		
The fourth title splits up the would-be ongoing music and the line drop for the appearance of the starting chord placed directly under the title at the centre of the manuscript and thus creating the blank space, annotated 'F' on the left side of the page (See Figure. 7.7a, p. 191).	A blank space, annotated F, is deliberately placed between the clefs and the starting chord of dance no.4 (See Appendix III).	No blank space is allocated between the clefs and the starting chord of the fourth titled dance.

²¹² See pp. 98–99, footnote 129 for the names of nine titles and their English translations.

<p>Title 5 splits up the supposedly ongoing music, with a small blank space, annotated 'G' appear before the first motivic cell (See Figure. 7.7b, p. 191).</p>	<p>A blank space, annotated G, is deliberately placed between the clefs and the starting chord of dance no.5 (See Appendix III).</p>	<p>No blank space is allocated between the clefs and the starting chord of the fifth titled dance.</p>
<p>Titles 7, 8, 9 separate a complete motivic cell into two parts respectively. Small blank space is allocated on the left side of the manuscript before the starting chord is notated. (See Appendix II)</p>	<p>Blank space, annotated O, is allocated between the clefs and the beginning of the incomplete motivic cell of the eighth titled dance.</p>	<p>No blank space is allocated between the clefs and the beginning of the incomplete motivic cell of the eighth titled dance.</p>

Performance analysis and email interviews

In regard to the selection of pianists, most that are selected for the previous Rose-Croix case studies are included here. Pianists Frank Glazer and composer-pianist Steffen Schleiermacher are the new additions to this case study. Glazer, who recorded *Danses gothiques* piano works in 1968, was also experienced in performing piano pieces of different eras, ranging from Baroque to contemporary pieces. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, mainly focuses on post-20th century piano music and had experience in performing experimental piano works and dealing with notational presentation that exceeds the convention of 19th century piano pieces. Due to their expertise in performing piano works with unconventional musical notation, both pianists would be more susceptible to approach *Danses gothiques* with new perspectives and adopt new performance gestures, which would potentially bring creative performance interpretations to the piece. Table 7.2 provides a list of selected pianists for *Danses gothiques* case study and in chronological order, the years when the recordings were made.

Table 7.2: Recordings chosen for the performance analysis of *Danses gothiques*

Name of the pianists	Year of recording
1. Frank Glazer ²¹³	1968
2. Reinbert de Leeuw ²¹⁴	1977
3. Cordélia Canabrava Arruda ²¹⁵	1979?–1988

²¹³ Frank Glazer, *Satie Piano Music*, CD (repr., US: VoxBox, 1990), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6g2XfyJxohPKauJmuGkj7Q> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²¹⁴ Reinbert De Leeuw, *The Early Piano Works*, CD (repr., US: Philips Classics, 1998), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/127HVeoTVF7SfjVv2SxvU> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²¹⁵ Cordélia Arruda, *Erik Satie's Complete Piano Works - Volume II*, CD (repr., USA: Imagination Classics, 1980). Website link is not available but the recording can be accessed on Spotify.

4. Jean-Pierre Armengaud ²¹⁶	1990
5. John White ²¹⁷	1993
6. Klára Kömendi ²¹⁸	1994
7. Olof Höjer ²¹⁹	1994
8. Steffen Schleiermacher ²²⁰	2001
9. Jean-Yves Thibaudet ²²¹	2001–2002
10. Linda Burman-Hall ²²²	2004
11. Cristina Ariagno ²²³	2006
12. Jeroen van Veen ²²⁴	2015

The outcomes

Pianists' performance interpretations as a reaction to the insertion of titles, blank spaces and additional bar-lines will be discussed in accordance with the three main points listed in Table 7.1. Of all the blank spaces incurred in Satie's notation, the most common type appears between two complete motives. For example, Figure 7.1

²¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Armengaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: Bayard Musique, 2009), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6rZGMWtrjgwqFtNIHqpt23h> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²¹⁷ John White, *Erik Satie "Caresse" Piano Pieces*, CD (repr., Germany: Arte Nova Classics, 1995), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/54aPSQJuKTt0MiVuYftilj> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²¹⁸ Klára Kömendi, *Satie Piano Works Vol. 2*, CD (repr., Europe: Naxos, 1994), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/2WQ6NyxH2HIjhygRkLnSuV> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

²¹⁹ Olof Höjer, *Erik Satie The Complete Piano Music Vol. 1*, CD (repr., Sweden: Swedish Society Discofil, 1996), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4eMw74J8QonMQEpowNVXlq> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²²⁰ Steffen Schleiermacher, *Erik Satie Piano Music Vol. 2, Sonneries De La Rose+Croix*, CD (repr., Germany: Musikproduktion Dabringhaus Und Grimm, 2001). Website link is not available but the recording can be accessed on Spotify.

²²¹ Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Erik Satie The Complete Solo Piano Music*, CD (repr., Europe: Decca, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/5uSdWTCaz0DU5HoNDyhzWe> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²²² Linda Burman-Hall, *Erik Satie: Visions*, CD (repr., MSR Classics, 2004), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3dllgfjDXXUuXQQds9b7LM> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²²³ Cristina Ariagno, *Erik Satie Piano Works*, CD (repr., France: Brilliant Classics, 2006), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/311ledpEWEXTCxtcF98GvX> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²²⁴ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., The Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/63Zd4hvABQbpTwp2P6dwWV> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

shows the blank space resulting from the line drop, marked 'H', visually separating the two complete motivic cells. To reflect this line drop, Milhaud edited in a blank space between those two complete motives, as seen in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.1 Line jump between two motivic cells in the fifth titled dance, *Danses gothiques*, Satie's manuscript²²⁵

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Figure 7.2 Blank space in the fifth titled dance, *Danses gothiques*, 1929 Edition Salabert²²⁶

²²⁵ Erik Sati, "Danses Gothiques" (Manuscript, repr., Paris, 1929), Bibliothèque nationale de France Département de la reproduction.

²²⁶ Darius Milhaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano* (repr., Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1989), 95.

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restrictions**

Similarly, in the eighth titled dance, Satie notated a line jump to split up a motivic cell into two parts. Figure 7.3 shows the line jump in Satie's notation marked 'R', and Figure 7.4 shows the omission of line jump and replaced by the blank space in the 1929 Salabert Editions.

Figure 7.3 Line jump splitting a complete motive in the eight titled dance, *Danses gothiques*, Satie manuscript²²⁷

²²⁷ Erik Satie, "Danses Gothiques" (Manuscript, repr., Paris, 1929), Bibliothèque nationale de France Département de la reproduction.

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restrictions**

Figure 7.4 Line jump splitting a complete motive in the eighth titled dance, *Danses gothiques*, Satie's manuscript ²²⁸

²²⁸ Darius Milhaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano* (repr., Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1989), 97.

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restrictions**

The tie associated with the chord prior to space R together with the other set of curved lines on the same level of the line drop in Satie's notation resembles the short-curved lines in Debussy's piano notation. As seen in Debussy's *Les collines d'Anacapris* shown in Example 7.5, the curved lines ask for the notes to continue vibrating—a type of performance practice that was well-known amongst French composers, and it would be unusual for Satie to not be aware of this.²²⁹ Due to the conventional piano performance practice for this type of ties, I argue that it could be the reason why all pianists in the case study unanimously respond to space R by allowing the chord to ring longer than the notated value instead of implementing a silence gap as a reaction to the visual blank space that follows the ties. The line drop indicated in Satie's manuscript and subsequently the line drop in the 1929 edition as a result of the inclusion of space R have provided pianists with an alternative interpretation to what is expected from a conventional tie. Pianists' performance decisions in association with the line drop and space R support my assertion that in-

²²⁹ Sandra P. Rosenblum, "Pedaling The Piano: A Brief Survey From The Eighteenth Century To The Present", *Performance Practice Review* 6, no. 2 (1993): 158-178, doi:10.5642/perfpr.199306.02.08.

score visual stimuli in *Danses gothiques* play a crucial part in influencing performance interpretations.

Example 7.1 Debussy, *Les collines d'Anacapri*, Prélude, Book 1, bars 5 to 6

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By examining how pianists interpret both spaces H and R, more contrasts can be heard amongst the selected recordings. Glazer, White, Höjer, Kormendi, Ariagno and Van Veen do not place any silence gap at space H. However, as they arrive at space R, the first three pianists do not implement any silence gap there while the remaining three lengthen the duration of notes with split-up ties resulting from the space (Time code for Kömendi: 08:20–08:22/ Ariagno: 00:29–00:31/ Van Veen: 00:31–00:35).²³⁰ In Van Veen's case, even though he does not apply silence gap at space H, his recording clearly shows the execution of a slight ritardando to the motivic cell that precedes the space (Time code: 02:09–02:22).²³¹ Armengaud and Schleiermacher take both spaces H and R as performance cues to first implement a silence gap at space H (Time code for Armengaud: 06:58–07:00/ Schleiermacher: 02:38–02:45) and later performs a longer sustained chord at the split tie/space R moment (Time code for Armengaud: 10:01–10:04/ Schleiermacher: 01:02–01:08).

²³⁰ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the eighth titled dance for Van Veen's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7sBlhWSazQmIjNigxV6XK8> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²³¹ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the fifth titled dance for Van Veen's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3o4j28p8PaCjzUsbjd5yP7> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

Unlike others, De Leeuw chooses to implement a silence break at space H (Time code: 08:34–08:37) but performs the notes with split ties and space R with no extra gesture, as if they are normal tie notes (Time code: 12:10–12:27).

Other examples of blank spaces between complete motives can be found in the 1929 edition, annotated B, E, J, L, M, N, P, Q, T, U (See Appendix III). At these junctures, interpretations by De Leeuw, Schleiermacher and Armengaud suggest that they take the blank spaces seriously as a form of performance cue. With an overall chosen tempo of about 45–50 crotchet beats per minute, De Leeuw includes a silence gap of two crotchet-beats at spaces B, L, M, N, P and Q respectively (Time code spaces L, M and N: 10:55–11:29). For spaces J, T and U, the duration of silence has increased to last around three crotchet-beats respectively with latter two spaces marking the final visual blank spaces of the whole dance piece (Time code: 12:40–13:30). To implement the silences between complete motives, the flow of the music is constantly disrupted.

Schleiermacher emphasises the blank spaces between complete motives to the greatest extent compared to all other recordings under evaluation. Noticeable silence at blank spaces marked B, E, J, L, M, N, P, Q, T and U in the 1929 edition can be heard. The duration of these silence breaks vary from the comparatively brief two-second gaps (Time code for space B: 00:43–00:49) to the lengthy seven-second gaps (Time code for space T: 00:09–00:16). Schleiermacher keeps a fairly steady tempo and uniform dynamic level throughout the entire piano work. Like De Leeuw's interpretation, the additional silence, especially the seven-second long silence breaks, minimizes the flow of the music. However, Schleiermacher's performance approach creates the meditative atmosphere when the sense of time becomes indefinite.

Armengaud's recording, on the other hand, demonstrates different musical expression at moments where blank spaces are found. For instance, in regard to how Armengaud responds to space B found in the second titled dance of the 1929 edition, he manipulates the tempo by slowing down the pace slightly for the motivic cell just before the space and stretches the duration of the crotchet rest. This makes the silence last longer than stated (Time code for space B: 03:47–03:50). At space N, which can be found in the seventh titled dance, Armengaud takes a similar approach to De Leeuw and Schleiermacher as he allows the silence to last longer than the indicated quaver rest duration (Time code for space N: 09:15–09:18). At spaces J (sixth titled dance) and P (eighth titled dance), silence that lasts roughly two crotchet-beats in the tempo of 50 crotchet beats per minute is applied respectively. Interestingly at space M in the seventh titled dance, Armengaud lengthens the last crotchet chord that precedes it, holds back the moment and slows down the flow of the music instead of implementing another silence break (Time code: 09:05–09:16). On three occasions, at spaces E, L and Q, Armengaud makes an exception and let the spaces pass by un-noticed. It is more often than not that Armengaud uses performance gestures to respond to the blank spaces found between complete motives. His varied approach to the visual stimuli demonstrates creativity, flexibility and diversity. Along with the other pianists, Armengaud's recorded performance provides evidence that in-score visual stimuli play a crucial part in leading to performance gestures, functioning as a new type of interpretive criterion despite the fact that he does not externalize the in-score visual stimuli through performance gestures at every occasion.

The second type of inconsistency found in *Danses gothiques* between Satie's manuscript and the two Editions Salabert is the use of bar-lines. In Satie's original

manuscript, there is no bar-line throughout the dance except the final bar-line at the end of the piece. In 1911, only the first titled dance was published in the March issue of music journal *La Revue Musicale (S.I.M)*. In the published version, a final bar-line is placed at the end of the piece, despite the lack of bar-lines in his original manuscript.²³² Such discrepancies complicate notational matters for subsequent editions and spark debates on whether final bar-lines should be placed at the end of each of the titled dances. In the 1929 Editions Salabert, Milhaud edited in a pair of solid lines as extra bar-lines to the end of the first, third and fifth titled dances respectively. Depending on which edition/version pianists choose to follow, the inconsistencies in the appearance of bar-lines would inevitably lead to different performance interpretations for the overall structure of the piece. To follow Satie's manuscript and guided by the absence of bar-lines, pianists would regard *Danses gothiques* as one continuous piece. Others could interpret it as a four-piece suite by following the additional bar-lines in the 1929 edition, resulting in different performance gestures in response to the form and structure of the piece. For those who consider the first titled dance as a single piece of its own as inspired by the 1911 published version with the final bar-line, *Danses gothiques* could be interpreted as a two-piece suite with perhaps, the first piece acting as an introduction to the rest.

Amongst all the recordings evaluated, performances by Arruda, Höjer and Thibaudet suggest a three-piece suite structure by holding back slightly at the end of the first, fifth titled dance. The other numbered titles that separate the music visually do not inspire these pianists to break up the piece into nine separate sections. In

²³² Erik Satie, "Mercure Musical, Le (La Revue Musicale S.I.M.) 15 March 1911 — Princeton Blue Mountain Collection", *Bluemountain.Princeton.Edu*, 1911, <http://bluemountain.princeton.edu/bluemtn/?a=d&d=bmntabh19110315-01.2.12&srpos=1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-danses+gothiques----->.

order to deliver the three-piece suite musical structure for *Danses gothiques*, Arruda applies section rubato and slows down the pace towards the last motivic cell of the first titled dance to indicate a mood of a temporary finale (Time code: 02:52–03:13). She then swiftly begins the second titled dance with no additional gestures to hint the disruption caused by the appearances of titles no. 3, 4 and 5. At the end of the fifth titled dance solid double bar-lines appear in the 1929 edition, Arruda applies ritardando to the last two motives and drops the tempo further from 54 to 50 crotchet beats per minute, clearly gesturing the end of a section (Time code of the fifth titled dance: 04:54–07:28). In the so-called third dance—the sixth to ninth titled dance, Arruda chooses to highlight the appearance of title that splits a complete motive into two halves. For examples, Arruda holds back the last two quavers of the sixth titled dance and implements a brief silence break at the beginning of seventh dance (Time code: 08:14–08:29) to address the mid-motive split by the appearance of the seventh title. That said, Arruda makes a conscious decision to not repeat the same performance gesture for every mid-motive split moment as demonstrated by how she lets the music slip through uninterrupted, avoiding any hesitation or silence gaps for the appearances of the eighth and ninth titles (Time code for the transition from the seventh to the eighth titled dance: 08:48–08:59).

Höjer's performance demonstrates a strong case of allowing titles to interrupt the flow of the music while still managing to emphasise the overall musical structure. Despite placing a silence break of two crotchet beats (in a tempo of 52 beats per minute) between each consecutive dance to gesture the visual disruption of the titles (See p. 99), Höjer applies ritardando only to the end of dances no.1 and 5 to highlight the three-piece suite musical structure (Time code for the end of the first titled dance: 02:49–03:12/ The end of the fifth dance: 07:11–07:38). In regard to the

in-score visual stimuli, Höjer raises the likelihood of *Danses gothiques* being an inter-disciplinary piece and as such, reacting to the title by providing the silence gaps as heard in his recorded performance:

Judging by the appearance of the manuscript, it seems that his [Satie's] main interest was the optical impression that the arrangement of the different parts would make on the score along with the headings. Perhaps this is an early example - maybe even the first - of a musical "mise en page", an artistically intended integration of music, notation and text, quite probably inspired by Satie's contact with contemporary poets.²³³

Höjer's performance and his opinions on Satie's notational presentation provide a strong piece of evidence on pianist validating in-score textual and visual stimuli as performance interpretive criteria, which subsequently make an impact on performance styles. His thoughtful application of rubato together with the short and consistent silence gaps between different titled dances enables *Danses gothiques* to be heard as a three-piece suite with brief interruptions but the effect is unlike the meditative atmosphere created by Schleiermacher, or the constantly interrupted impression provided by De Leeuw's performance (See pp. 189 to 190).

Thibaudet's performance is the most continuous and fluid as generous ritardando is applied only at the end of dance no.1 and no.5 where the double bar-lines appear in the 1929 edition. Thibaudet's decision to opt out of the application of ritardando at the end of dance no.3 could be influenced by the connection between the motivic cells between the end of the third dance and the beginning of the fourth since the same sequence of melodic cells repeats once more despite having different harmonisation as shown in Figure 7.5. In the so-called third dance, the sixth to ninth

²³³ Olof Höjer, *Erik Satie: The Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., Swedish Society Discofil SCD 1070, 1996), 18-20.

titled dance, Thibaudet keeps the flow of the music uninterrupted throughout and does not react by giving specific performance gestures to the visually interrupting titles (no. 7 to 9). No ritardando is detected at the end of dance no. 6 to 8 and it is until the very end of dance no.9 that Thibaudet holds back the tempo slightly and gives a strong sense of finale to end the piece.

Figure 7.5 Sequence of melodic cells between the third and fourth titled dance, *Danses gothiques*, 1929 Editions Salabert²³⁴

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Recorded performances by Armengaud, Burman-Hall and Ariagno give performance interpretations that suggest *Danses gothiques* as a four-piece suite. This

²³⁴ Darius Milhaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano* (repr., Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1989), 93–94.

is likely to be influenced by the 1929 Salabert edition, which has double bar-lines appearing at the end of the first, third, fifth and the ninth dance, visually dividing the music into four sections. Armengaud's approach is similar to Höjer's as he gives silence breaks at the end of each dance separated by titles. Despite the discontinuity, *ritardando* is placed at the end of the first, third and fifth titled dances, clearly gesturing the double bar-lines in the 1929 edition and reflecting *Danses gothiques* as a four-piece suite. Armengaud lengthened the last quaver at the end of the sixth and seventh titled dances, making the mid-motive split a little less abrupt (Time code of the end of the sixth titled dance: 08:39–09:04/ The end of the seventh titled dance: 09:19–09:40).

Burman-Hall's performance is comparatively the most straightforward in delivering the four-piece suite overall structure as she does not give extra gestures at moments where titles split up the music but only until the end of a dance, which has double bar-lines. Despite sharing the same goal, delivering *Danses gothiques* as a three-piece suite, Ariagno's performance demonstrates ample creative gestures. At the end of fifth titled dance, or the so-called second dance, Ariagno gives a noticeable *ritardando* to gesture the end of a section (Time code: 02:20–02:46).²³⁵ At the end of the sixth and seventh titled dance, Ariagno keeps the momentum going and does not place a silence break between the dances, making her intention to deliver the last three titled dances as a continuous section very clear. Similarly, at the end of the eighth titled dance, Ariagno performs with contrasting articulation by detaching the third and second last chords but resumes to legato chords at the start of dance no. 9 dance as an alternative means to anticipate the forthcoming title

²³⁵ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the fifth titled dance for Ariagno's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7Fv9ekCUqodkPxuHFt2BrL>" width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

interruption (Time code 00:37–00:44). Performances by Burman-Hall and Ariagno suggest that they consider the bar-lines as important performance cues on the overall structure of the piece and disregard the appearance of the dance titles as potentially influential to the structural interpretation. Their performance decisions highlight their conventional notational awareness, which suggests a less experimental approach.

Recordings by De Leeuw, White and Schleiermacher suggest that the delivery of a clear musical form is not the priority for these pianists. Overall, De Leeuw implements silence break of four crotchet beats at the end of each titled dance while keeping a constant tempo of around fifty crotchet beats per minute throughout the piece. Transitioning to the seventh and eighth titled dance with the titles causing mid-motive split (annotated as ‘K’ and ‘O’), De Leeuw approaches the last few chords of each of these dances without holding back and when the final chord is reached respectively, the music comes to a halt in an abrupt manner (Time code for ‘K’: 10:41–11:02/ ‘O’: 11:30–11:45). Such execution makes these half-motives sound jerky, fulfilling what Mallarmé regarded as the ‘unforeseen irregularity’, which is essential in provoking emotions.²³⁶ De Leeuw’s performance gestures at moments where the titles appear to visually split up the music validates again how in-score textual and visual stimuli can be an important interpretive criteria in Satie’s piano music, which are also crucial elements that lead to quasi-impromptu pianism.

In White’s performance, the long silence gap of around 17 seconds between each titled dance distorts the flow of the music to the greatest extent in comparison to the rest of the performances in this case study (See p. 190). Despite his efforts to

²³⁶ Stéphane Mallarmé et al., *Collected Poems And Other Verse* (repr., New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2009), 262.

emphasise the end of the dance no.5 as the end of a movement by applying a dramatic *fortissimo* and ritardando to highlight the final motivic cell, the extensive silence gaps have greatly undermined the structural emphasis in my opinion (Time code: 11:03–11:41).

In contrast to White's systematic approach to the duration of silence gaps between titled dances, Schleiermacher's performance approach demonstrates a high degree of spontaneity by implementing silence gaps of seemingly random duration between each titled dance. The duration of each of these silence gaps from dance to dance is, in chronological order, 8 seconds, 12 seconds, 10 seconds, 8 seconds, 16 seconds, 11 seconds, 8 seconds and 12 seconds respectively. Although the longest silence gap is applied after the end of fifth titled dance possibly to highlight the end of a substantial section, it is inconclusive to assert that Schleiermacher aims to use different duration of silence gap to highlight the overall structure of *Danses gothiques*. For instance, an eight-second silence gap can be heard at the end of the first dance where double bar-line is shown as well as at the end of the seventh dance where there is no bar-line and the dance is interrupted mid-motive by the appearance of the eighth title. The duration of the silence gap seems arbitrary and it does not necessarily gesture the end of a dance movement. Schleiermacher's performance effectively delivers a sense of spontaneity in addition to a sense of interruption as a response to the titles that disrupt the visual flow of a continuous dance. In my opinion, Schleiermacher's execution, similar to De Leeuw's, is in line with Mallarmé's belief that uncertainty is essential in arousing human feelings.²³⁷ I claim

²³⁷ Huret, J. *Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1913). pp. 55-65. The interviews first appeared in *L'Echo de Paris*, March 3-July 5, 1891. Mallarmé said, 'Is there not something abnormal in the certainty of discovering, when opening any book of poetry, uniform and agreed-upon rhythms from beginning to end, even though the avowed goal is to arouse our interest in the essential variety of human feelings! Where is inspiration? Where the unforeseen? And how tiresome!' Translation is

that Schleiermacher's performance has illuminated the unconventionality in association with Satie's *Danses gothiques*. He does so successfully by freeing the 'uniform and agreed-upon rhythms from beginning to end' and bringing in the arbitrary duration of silence breaks.²³⁸

The third point listed in Table 7.1 addresses the insertion of dance titles in the music, which causes the supposedly continuous visual flow of the music to be split up. Amongst these 'interrupting' titles, some appear between complete motivic cells, which I annotate as D, F and G on both Satie's manuscript and the 1929 edition, while others split up a complete motivic cell into two separate parts—spaces K, O and S. The insertion of dance titles also leads to another type of in-score visual stimulus as Satie sometimes notated the beginning chords in different part of the page. In the 1929 edition, Milhaud made a conscious effort to preserve Satie's intention but discrepancies can still be found between the two versions. However, in the 2016 edition, Orledge has edited out all the spaces in order to minimise interpretive confusion caused by the notation. For example, as shown in Figure 7.6, Milhaud places a big blank space at the beginning of the fourth titled dance and a smaller blank space for the subsequent dance to reflect the positioning of the starting chords in these two titled dances in Satie's manuscript (See Figures 7.7a and b).

provided by Henri Dorra. See Henri Dorra, *Symbolist Art Theories* (repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 141.

²³⁸ Ibid.

Figure 7.6 Insertion of blank spaces at the beginning of the fourth and fifth titled dances²³⁹

**Excerpt removed due to copyright
restrictions**

²³⁹ Darius Milhaud, *Erik Satie Intégrale Des Œuvres Pour Piano* (repr., Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1989), 94.

Figure 7.7a Title four split with ample blank space before the start of the motive, *Danses gothiques*, Satie's manuscript²⁴⁰

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 7.7b Title five split with blank space before the start of the motive, *Danses gothiques*, Satie's manuscript²⁴¹

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

²⁴⁰ Erik Satie, "Danses Gothiques" (Manuscript, repr., Paris, 1929), Bibliothèque nationale de France Département de la reproduction.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

In terms of the performance gestures at moments where titles appear in addition to the allocated blank space before the initial chord is notated, Glazer provides the same duration of silence break respectively at spaces F and G (Time code for space F: 03:28–03:30/ space G: 04:04–04:06) but when it comes to spaces K, O and S where the title and the blank space split up a complete motive, Glazer opts out any silence gap to allow an uninterrupted flow of a complete motive (Time code for space K: 06:46). In Arruda and Körmendi's recordings, both unanimously exclude the silence break at space O and S like Glazer does, but surprisingly implement silence at space K. Their inconsistent approach to applying silence gaps to one but not all mid-motive title split movements adds spontaneity to their performances, which has nothing to do with the meanings of the titles themselves. Their execution demonstrates interpretive freedom in response to *Danses gothiques'* notational presentation but through ways that are different from De Leeuw and Schleiermacher's approach.

White's performance contains the lengthiest silence at all the title split moments. To give a few examples, he implements silence breaks of 17 seconds when the second titled dance transit to the next (Time code: 05:39–06:24), at Title 4/ space F (Time code: 06:30–06:47), Title 5/ space G (07:36–07:53), Title 7/ space K (12:44–13:01) and O (13:42–13:59) respectively. At points where there are mid-motive splits (K, O), White adopts a more sympathetic approach by lengthening the last quaver slightly to make the mid-motive split sound less abrupt. At space S, which is the final mid-motive split moment of the entire piece, the duration of the silence break is slightly reduced to 14 seconds. These extensive silence gaps make *Danses gothiques* sound very disjointed even though White tries to compromise the abruptness by adjusting his articulation at certain motives. While White consistently

places silence gaps from one titled dance to the next, it is important to clarify that his use of silence breaks is not caused by the blank spaces in the notation. This is proven by the fact that White does not implement any silence breaks where blank spaces are *within* each dance. White's performance choices have placed in-score textual stimuli (insertion of titles) above in-score visual stimuli (blank spaces within the dance).

Thibaudet, in a similar approach to White's, also opts out of the implementation of silence break at any blank space moments on the score. Both White and Thibaudet's execution supports Orledge's opinion that 'the blanks are not indication for pianists to split up the motives'.²⁴² As Thibaudet keeps each dance flowing until the end, his interpretation facilitates Gowers' suggestion that the Rose-Croix piano music could be heard undivided and audience could concentrate on the chain of the motivic cells, which passes from one to another.²⁴³ It is important to clarify that both White and Thibaudet's performance are similar in a sense that both recordings show that the pianists do not react to the blank spaces within the dance by giving extra performance gestures. However, the major difference between the two performances is that Thibaudet chooses to disregard the appearance of dance titles and let the music continue uninterrupted from one dance to the next. In other words, Thibaudet has disabled both the in-score textual and visual stimuli as interpretive criteria to inform performance decisions. Thibaudet's comparatively conventional approach in performing Satie's Rose-Croix piano music is also evident in his recordings for *Ogives* and *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*.

²⁴² Robert Orledge Grace Gatesto, "Re: Danses Gothiques - New Edition", email, 2016.

²⁴³ Gowers suggests to listen to the piece as prose and 'let the punctuation phrases slip by almost unnoticed and concentrate on the chain, thinking of it as far as possible as a whole, rather than as sections divided by a response in the manner of a litany.' See Patrick Gowers, "Satie's Rose Croix Music (1891-1895)", *Proceedings Of The Royal Musical Association* 92, no. 1 (1965): 19, doi:10.1093/jrma/92.1.1.

Burman-Hall's performance also aims for continuity throughout the whole piece. There are several moments when she connects the end of one dance to the start of the next through sustained chords and applies a legato approach in order to avoid the music coming to a stop. The sustained legato chords can be heard when the fourth titled dance transition to the next (Listen to the very beginning of the track for the fifth titled dance).²⁴⁴ All split motives (space K, O and S) caused by title interruptions are performed with legato technique to ensure that the last chord of the previous titled dance is smoothly joined with the first chord of the next dance. Burman-Hall's performance has also disabled both the in-score textual and visual stimuli as interpretive criteria to inform performance decisions.

Ariagno's performance also relies on legato chords and the use of sustain pedal to connect dances that are separated by the numbered titles, namely between the seventh and eighth titled dances. For example, at the end of the eighth titled dance, Ariagno changes her articulation from the frequently used legato to a detached touch, which brings contrast to the legato playing of the second half of the mid-motif at the start of the ninth titled dance (Time code for the end of the eighth titled dance: 00:37).²⁴⁵ From a pianist's point of view, Ariagno's quasi-impromptu pianism reflects her awareness of the in-score textual and visual stimuli in *Danses gothiques*. However, she responds to these unconventional stimuli through traditional performance gestures rather than through more experimental expression

²⁴⁴ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the fifth titled dance for Burman-Hall's time code:
<https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3bHlGesw4r0A5mqHvmWkIw> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²⁴⁵ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the eighth titled dance for Ariagno's time code:
<https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0B6ibwhCdhwti0gwwF7Iy7> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the ninth titled dance for Ariagno's time code:
<https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/2MgezIYqKHMy3jvNnGbJRB> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

such as implementing silence breaks as other pianists have demonstrated in their recorded performances.

Conversely, in Van Veen's performance, despite the fact that he does not implement silence breaks to title 4/ spaces F, title 5/ space G, title 7/ space K, title 8/ space O and title 9/ space S, he consistently articulates the last chord of the preceding dance and the first chord of the subsequent dance with a clear split in the use of legato to disconnect the sustained sound as a gesture to highlight the in-score textual stimuli since the consecutive chords are indeed visually separated by the numbered title (Time code for the end of the sixth titled dance: 01:00)²⁴⁶. As Van Veen consistently applies legato to consecutive chords except for motive cells that consist of a rest for its last beat, the detached articulation is a clear indication of the influence of the in-score textual stimuli. For example, at the beginning of the eighth titled dance, Van Veen performs the opening chord, which is the second last beat of the incomplete motive, with a louder dynamic than the previous chord (the final chord of the seventh titled dance) giving it a bold character possibly to address the start of another dance.²⁴⁷ Similarly, the first chord in the ninth titled dance is also performed with slight accentuation gesturing it as the new beginning instead of a continuation of the second half of a motive cell that is interrupted by the title appearance.²⁴⁸ In line with Ariagno's approach, Van Veen dismisses the in-score visual stimuli (the blank spaces) as interpretive criteria but reacts to the in-score textual stimuli through traditional performance gestures.

²⁴⁶ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the sixth titled dance for Van Veen's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4xpsNRPPLbfGYeZgsXDXZr> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²⁴⁷ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the eighth titled dance for Van Veen's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/7sBlhWSazQmIjNigxV6XK8> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

²⁴⁸ Weblink for *Danses gothiques*, the ninth titled dance for Van Veen's time code: <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4tm0xweWTWMBOAsLY1VBHW> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media"

Additional performance-related issue

In the following, I aim to expose an indirect performance-related issue that is equally significant when evaluating pianists' recorded performances in this case study. The issue is caused by the post-production process of the recorded performances of *Danses gothiques*, which I focus on mainly the track release and additional editing effect. This has created a paradox in the structural delivery of the piece as a whole.

Amongst the twelve performances, recordings by Glazer, White, Höjer, Körmendi and Arruda are made with these pianists performing *Danses gothiques* as one continuous dance. Any silence breaks occurred between titled dances are in real time as they are not edited in during post-production. De Leeuw and Armengaud's recordings release *Danses gothiques* as one track but within the track itself, artificial silences are added in the track between titled dances in addition to the real time silence created during the live performance in the recording sessions. As for Schleiermacher, he is the only pianist who performed and recorded the nine titled dances separately and also released them as nine separate tracks. His recording choice is clear since real time silences are heard at the beginning of track 4, 5, 7 and 8 to reflect the respective titled dances with blank spaces at the start, imitating closely the notational presentation on the 1929 edition. Finally, recordings by Thibaudet, Burman-Hall, Ariagno and Van Veen released *Danses gothiques* as nine separate tracks to correspond to the nine titled dances. However, from some of the reverberation of the previous chord at the beginning of an opening track, it reveals that these recordings are made with pianists performing them as one continuous

dance.²⁴⁹

The inconsistencies of how *Danses gothiques* is recorded and released on recordings are significant. Contradiction occurs when the editing process alters the original intention given by the pianists, which could subsequently change the way audiences understand the piece. It is especially relevant to the performance evaluation as the focus of this chapter is on whether in-score textual and visual stimuli in *Danses gothiques* make an impact on performers' interpretations. For example, in Armengaud's case, does the joint presence of the real time and edited silence signify something important?²⁵⁰ Armengaud's recording of *Danses gothiques* with the different types of silence breaks raises questions on why these artificially edited silences are necessary and whether they are meant to deliver different meanings in his performance. In addition, why did Armengaud consistently perform the silence at the end of the last few dances but not before? As an audience, I perceive that 'the performed' silence at the end of the last few dances gives a sense of continuity even though the music has been split up in response to the title interruptions. I would speculate that the transition from using 'edited' silence to 'performed' silence towards the end of the dances is a metaphor of reaching the *real* state of tranquility and calm, enhancing the meditative appeal Satie expressed beneath the main title of *Danses gothiques*—'neuvaine pour le plus grand calme et la forte tranquillité de mon Âme'. Combining his performance interpretation and the post-production technique in delivery the different types of silence breaks,

²⁴⁹ Audible reverberation of the final chord of the preceding dance could be heard at the beginning of tracks 5 and 8 of Thibaudet's recording, track 2 of Burman-Hall's recording, track 3 of Ariagno's recording and track 8 of Van Veen's recording.

²⁵⁰ Edited silences of Armengaud's recording can be found at the end of the second titled dance (Time code: 04:09), third titled dance (Time code: 04:32) and fourth titled dance (Time code: 05:16) and real time silences can be found in the fifth to eighth titled dance (Time code: 07:56, 08:53, 09:31 and 10:17).

Armengaud's recording has found a unique way to express the visual stimuli caused by the notational presentation as well as the emotional essence of *Danses gothiques*.

As for pianists Thibaudet, Burman-Hall, Ariagno and Van Veen who have originally recorded *Danses gothiques* as one continuous dance but having to split the continuous performance into nine separate tracks seem to contradict their original musical direction for the Rose-Croix piece. The incongruent practice between the live recording and track release illuminates the dominating role the titles have, not only on performers, but also on producers and ultimately on audience's perception. It is crucial to re-think why is *Danses gothiques* commonly regarded as a nine-dances piece when musically, it suggests otherwise? Such query is a direct result of the key issues identified in the onset of this thesis: the ambiguity of Satie's piano scores and also the lack of his authorial voice through his own performance or discussion of his piano music. To my knowledge, *Danses gothiques* has so far been released as either one track or nine separate tracks in recordings. This suggests that pianists have been finding ways to explore the possibilities in delivering this piece. Until now, no attempt has been made to release *Danses gothiques* in four separate tracks to reflect the double bar-lines in the 1929 edition, or release in the number of tracks that would correspond to how pianists structure the overall piece, an interpretive freedom which I believe should also be realised in the formatting process of the recordings. I foresee that the 2016 edition with no bar-lines or blank spaces in the notation would change the way *Danses gothiques* is perceived and musically interpreted amongst pianists. It could also be influential to the way the piece would be released in future recordings. The treatment of the piece in the post-production process is worthy of further exploration as, in my opinion, it has a crucial role in preserving the way pianists unfold the nine titled dances during their live performances in the recording session.

Conclusion on the quasi-impromptu pianism in *Danses gothiques*

The detailed examination of the performance interpretations of *Danses gothiques* by historical and contemporary pianists shows that the unconventional notation with its in-score textual and visual stimuli has made an impact on some pianists' performance styles, which leads to creative gestures that are not usually applied to 19th century piano music.

The in-score textual stimuli (the insertion of titles that separate the would-be ongoing music) and the in-score visual stimuli (the insertion of blank spaces amid the musical notation) encourage pianists to respond in their performances through traditional performance gestures, such as the use of agogic accents, different articulation, tempo changes and dynamic changes; as well as more controversial and experimental performance gestures, such as implementing silent breaks in order to reflect on the unconventional stimuli. Amongst the pianists who do not impose any additional silences in their performances of *Danses gothiques*, they also express different interpretive aims. For Thibaudet and Burman-Hall, they dismiss the unconventional stimuli altogether as performance cues. As for pianists Ariagno and Van Veen, they acknowledge the textual and visual stimuli but choose to gesture these elements through traditional means. Ariagno and Van Veen, together with Glazer, De Leeuw, Armengaud, White, Kömendi, Höjer and Schleiermacher who opt for experimental gestures to address the unconventional stimuli, their rendition suggests their perception of *Danses gothiques* as an inter-disciplinary piece.

Amongst the highly contrasting interpretations, two main points can be summarised to offer clarity in pianists' approaches. Firstly, pianists such as Arruda,

Armengaud, Kömendi, Höjer, Thibaudet, Burman hall, Ariagno and Van Veen provide performances that suggest the delivery of *Danses gothiques* as prose or religious prayers in connection to the performance of a chant. In this approach, pianists respond to the Rose-Croix musical language by addressing the punctuation phrase to gesture the end of a phrase or the chain of motivic cells. Flexibility in tempo can also be detected amongst these pianists as a looser, unrestricted pace could serve as a reflection to the performance practice of early chants, of which the tempo was originally guided by the speed in the delivery of prayers. Secondly, the inter-disciplinary nature of *Danses gothiques* has opened pianists' minds to new performance interpretations and styles that would not be commonly applied to piano pieces of the same period. To some extent, pianists' reaction to the in-score stimuli resembles the reaction of a reader when scanning or reciting *Un coup de dés*, a poem by Mallarmé. In the preface of *Un coup de dés*, Mallarmé explains the importance of the blank spaces in the overall delivery of the poem, which I assert is highly relevant to how the blank spaces in *Danses gothiques* (in both Satie's manuscript and the 1929 edition) could impact pianists' overall delivery of the piano piece. Mallarmé wrote:

The "blanks" in *Un coup de dés* indeed take on importance, at first glance; the versification demands them, as a surrounding silence, to the extent that a fragment, lyrical or of a few beats, occupies, in its midst, a third of the space of paper: I do not transgress the measure, only disperse it... If I may say so, from a literary viewpoint this reproduced distance mentally separating word-groups or words from one another has the advantage of seeming to speed up and slow down the rhythm, scanning it, even intimating it through a simultaneous vision of the Page...²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Translation of the preface of *Un coup de dés* taken from Stéphane Mallarmé et al., *Collected Poems And Other Verse* (repr., New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2009), 262.

The disruption of the natural tempo explained by Mallarmé in the above quotation is fully reflected by the performance approach demonstrated by De Leeuw, Armengaud, Höjer and Schleiermacher, who allow the blank spaces to disrupt the flow of their performances, demonstrating the fragmented characteristics of *Danses gothiques* that may have been caused by the notational presentation. Separately, Marcel Cobussen highlights that in *Un coup de dés*, ‘the blank comes neither before, nor after the series; it intervenes between the semantic series in general; it liberates the effect that a series exists.’²⁵² The intervention that Cobussen refers to in the poem resonates closely to the title and space intervention found in *Danses gothiques*, to which most pianists, apart from Arruda, Thibaudet and Burman-Hall realise effectively in their performances.

In view of how *Danses gothiques* has been recorded and presented over the past fifty years shows significance on the changing attitude towards the importance of the inserted titles. Apart from the discrepancies found in De Leeuw and Armengaud’s recordings, the rest of the recordings made before 2000s (From Glazer to Höjer, See Table 7.2, p. 174) are completed with pianists performing *Danses gothiques* in one continuous take, which was then released as one complete track. All recordings from the year 2000 onwards (From Thibaudet to Van Veen, apart from Schleiermacher), have pianists performing *Danses gothiques* as one continuous piece but the post-production process has split the continuous performance into nine separate tracks. The changing attitude towards the importance of the inserted titles calls for a re-think on their overall function in the performance of *Danses gothiques* while at the same time further consolidating the inter-disciplinary nature of the piece.

²⁵² M Cobussen, "Cage, White, Mallarmé, Silence", Deconstruction-In-Music.Com, accessed 12 November 2013, http://www.deconstruction-in-music.com/proefschrift/300_john_cage/316_cage_and_silence/316a_cage_white_mallarme_silence/cage_white_mallarme_silence.htm.

It also illuminates how Satie's Rose-Croix piece continues to fascinate pianists and lead to original interpretations and quasi-impromptu pianism.

The imaginative and creative performance approaches as demonstrated in this case study validate the in-score textual and visual stimuli as performance interpretive criteria. For future implications, the silences provoked by the blank spaces spark the re-thinking of what is meant by continuity in music. Is a performance of *Danses gothiques* with silences considered less continuous than a performance that does not implement any silence breaks? As an alternative approach, the silences take on an important role to deliver the meditative atmosphere of the piece, or to manipulate the tempo of the piece, which means that the silences contribute actively to *Danses gothiques* as important motives of the music. On reception, would new performance gestures that are brought into the performance of *Danses gothiques* in order to express the visual stimuli on the score affect audience's perception of the piece in return? Has Satie's successfully created a new way to address the moments of rest that ought not to be countable and therefore granting pianists the freedom to execute their desirable duration of silence. From a pianist's point of view, I claim that the meter-free silence should be considered as part of the continuous music and to be performed as short or long as one would desire, in a way similar to how performers could interpret and articulate differently the dynamic markings in a piece of music. My proposition is supported by Satie's unique notational presentation in his manuscript, Milhaud's intention in the 1929 edition, the emphasis on the use of symbolism in the piano composition of the Rose-Croix period, and also the ultimate fact that Satie has been shown consistently to find ways to defy traditions and avoid standardising his musical work by following the mainstream trend (See Chapter

Four). Considering all these factors, it is logical to explore original ideas in terms of the performance delivery of this mysterious piece of piano music.

Salabert's 2016 edition of *Danses gothiques* continues to invite new interpretations of *Danses gothiques* with the removal of all bar-lines (apart from the double bar-line at the end) and blank spaces, bringing the segregated 'dances' together as one continuous piece. To make such drastic decisions, Orledge believed that the gaps between motives or the gap created as a result of the line drop in mid-motif were not meant as performance cues to split the music up in performance.²⁵³ In his opinion, these in-score visual stimuli are only there to 'confuse the Stupid'.²⁵⁴ Judging by the factors expressed in the previous paragraph, I disagree with Orledge's point of view. Besides, the parallels between the presentations of *Danses gothiques* and *Un coup de dés* are too prominent to be ignored. With Mallarmé's explanation on how the presence of the blank spaces in the poem can impact the way readers scan the words, such practice is too relevant to *Danses gothiques* to be dismissed as Satie's gesture to mock the fools. Overwhelmingly, the majority of pianists in the case study show in their recordings that the in-score visual stimuli have led them to creative performance gestures. Even if the notion of the blank spaces being definitive cues to split up the music in performance cannot be agreed amongst pianists, the impact of these gaps has on pianists can be implicit and vary amongst individuals. I strongly assert that by taking away the blank spaces as shown in the 2016 edition, it will prevent performers from exploring their performance options and responding to it as an inter-disciplinary piece. It may also take away the opportunity for pianists to act on the interpretive freedom Satie might have incorporated in the piece and it may

²⁵³ Robert Orledge Grace Gatesto , "Re: Danses Gothiques - New Edition", email, 2016.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

significantly undermine the quasi-impromptu pianism arising from the unconventional notational presentation of *Danses gothiques*. Such a detrimental effect would be similar to presenting *Un coup de dés* without any of the blanks and to re-position the words from left to right, top to bottom in a conventional manner.

To sum up the performance practice of *Danses gothiques*, this case study exposes how the interdisciplinary nature of the piece prompts pianists to decide whether the textual and visual stimuli should affect performance interpretation. The unusual appearances of blank spaces and interrupting titles amongst notations in the earlier editions of *Danses gothiques* bring new stimuli for pianists to ponder and to evaluate how these elements could affect them psychologically when scanning the music. The visual stimuli together with the corresponding emotional responses raises pianists' awareness on how they can externalise such feelings through their own performance styles. The blanks could also encourage pianists to re-think and re-interpret the meaning of 'rest', which could lead to performance gestures that are not necessarily audible but visible during a performance.

Chapter Eight

Quasi-impromptu Pianism in the Texted Piano Piece

Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois (1913)

Introduction

'Danse maigre' of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* is chosen to illustrate the impact in-score texts have on performance styles through the examination of twelve recorded performances by historical and contemporary pianists. Amongst all texted piano pieces, my decision to choose 'Danse maigre', the second of the three-piece set, to be the main discussion of this chapter rests in the fact that there is, so far, little to be known of any possible connection between the texts and the music. As my thesis explores how recording artists have responded to Satie's score, it is imperative to question this work, which has received little scholarly attention but many recordings.

Differentiating *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* from the previous case studies on piano pieces from the Rose-Croix period of 1892–94, which also contain in-score texts in the form of cryptic word-phrases that occasionally resemble performance indications or additional titles that segregate the on-going music, this piece belongs to a period of 1912–1915. During this period, Satie composed piano works, which include in-score texts of a narrative style. Due to their humoristic and sometimes absurd contents, Alan Gillmor began to address these pieces with the 'humoristic' label since 1988 to emphasise the quirky but amusing quality of the in-score texts.²⁵⁵ Subsequent Satie scholars such as Robert Orledge

²⁵⁵ Alan M Gillmor, *Erik Satie* (repr., New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 147.

and Steven Moore Whiting are also supportive of Gillmor's proposed term for these piano pieces.²⁵⁶ However, it is crucial to acknowledge that such label was a posthumous term, one that Satie might not have approved of. Indeed, the humoristic label for the 1912–1915 piano pieces with narrative texts has not been questioned by other musicologists until very recently when Caroline Potter re-labels these piano pieces as 'texted piano works'. Potter emphasises that other than providing humour to the performers, who would look at the amusing narratives besides reading the musical notations, the in-score texts could spark an extra-musical connection to an object, a place or set pianists to imaginations. To follow through with this notion, with which I strongly agree, the textured piano pieces would be considered inter-disciplinary, meaning that the in-score texts could play a contributive role in influencing pianists' performance interpretations.

I therefore begin this chapter by assessing the inter-disciplinary connection between the in-score texts and the music of Satie's textured piano pieces in general by evaluating opinions given by Satie's contemporaries as well as current musicologists on their interpretation of the possible connection associated with the two cross-disciplinary elements. To focus on the chosen case study as a representative example, I expose the close connections between the texts and music found in the first and last piece of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* to demonstrate that the pieces are indeed inter-disciplinary. This is followed by a thorough examination of 'Danse maigre', for which my interpretation of the in-score texts and a musical analysis in association with the texts are given in order to claim that the in-score texts of 'Danse maigre' provoke pianists' imagination and lead to

²⁵⁶ Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 2*, 2nd ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), XVII. Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 354–416.

new performance gestures and quasi-impromptu pianism. By proposing my new interpretation and translation of some of the in-score texts in ‘Danse maigre’, I reassess the function of these in-score texts in performance.

The evaluation outcomes of twelve recorded performances expose contrasting and creative performance interpretations of *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois*. These outcomes illuminate unconventional causes for interpretative freedom amongst pianists, such as the in-score textual stimuli and extra-musical stimuli, in addition to the key issues associated with the performance of Satie’s piano pieces (See Chapter One, pp. 1–2). The different interpretations of the meanings of the original French in-score texts of ‘Danse maigre’ amongst pianists, their decisions of whether or not to let the texts influence their performance style and finally, the last and most controversial factor, pianists’ discretion to reflect Satie’s witty and defiant persona through their performances, are different emphases to contribute to the diverse and creative performance interpretations. Through email interviews with pianists Peter Lawson, Philippe Entremont, and Van Veen, and Whatsapp video interview with Josu Okiñena, I obtained firsthand opinions on how the in-score texts and Satie’s persona have impacted them as pianists and performance interpretations of ‘Danse maigre’.

In-score texts as humoristic gestures or interpretive criteria

Poulenc expressed his opinions on the titles and in-score texts of Satie’s ‘humoristic’ piano pieces from a first-generation pianist’s point of view: ²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Francis Poulenc, "La Musique De Piano D' Erik Satie", *La Revue Musicale* no. 214 (1952): 25. Original French texts: ‘De même qu’il ne faut pas, *sous peine d’excommunication majeure*, Satie dixit, lire, *avant* ou *pendant*, les histoires et les indications bouffes dont il émaille sa musique (*C’est*

Just as it is forbidden, *on pain of major excommunication* as Satie said, to read, *before* or *during*, the stories and funny remarks with which he decorates his music ('They are the pianist's reward', he sometimes used to say),²⁵⁸ similarly it is forbidden, when starting on a piece like the second of the *Embryons desséchés*, to wink at the audience.

In response to what Poulenc mentioned regarding the in-score texts as exclusively the pianist's reward, in the preface for *Heures séculaires et instantanées*, Satie made his one and only announcement to explicitly direct performers to forbid reading the text out loud:

To whomever it may concern./ I forbid the reading out loud of the text during the performance of the music. All infractions of this matter would entail my righteous indignation against the offender. No exceptions to this rule will be permitted.

At moments where Satie's in-score texts give hints to his musical references, Poulenc expressed, using *Embryons desséchés* as an example, the need to restrain performance gestures that would expose easily Satie's intentions:

The quotation from Chopin's *Funeral March*, indicated by Satie as being taken from a well-known Mazurka by Schubert, will be all the more effective if played very simply and expressively and, [in the words of Ricardo Viñes, to give] "the impression of being unaware of anything..." On the other hand, exaggerate of course, as a joke, the hilarious major chords that conclude the first and third embryos. Think here of certain pieces of music played by certain pianists. This example should be followed in all the Satie pieces. To sum up, never *lead into* the musical quotations, so as to keep the effect of surprise.²⁵⁹

la récompense du pianiste, disait-il parfois), de même, il ne faut pas, en commençant une pièce telle que le second des *Embryons desséchés*, cligner de l'œil au public.'

²⁵⁸ English translation provided by Potter. See Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 124. Original French texts: 'A quiconque./ Je défends de lire, à haute voix, le texte, Durant le temps de l'exécution musicale. Tout manquement à cette observation entraînerait ma juste indignation contre l'outrecuidant. Il ne sera accordé aucun passe-droit.'

²⁵⁹ Francis Poulenc, "La Musique De Piano D' Erik Satie", *La Revue Musicale* no. 214 (1952): 25–26. Original French texts: 'La citation de la *Marche funèbre* de Chopin, indiquée par Satie comme extraite d'une célèbre *Mazurka* de Schubert, n'en fera que plus d'effet si on la joue très simplement, d'une façon *touchante*, en ayant <<l'air>>, comme disait Ricardo Viñes, <<de ne s'apercevoir de rien>>. On reprendra ensuite le ton du début. Bien entendu, exagérer, au contraire, dans le sens de la drôlerie, les hilarants accords parfaits que terminent le premier et le troisième embryon. Ici penser à certaines musiques jouées par certains pianistes. Cet exemple vaut pour toutes les pièces de Satie. En résumé, ne jamais préparer les citations musicales pour leur laisser l'effet de surprise.'

Poulenc's opinions suggest that there *is* a direct connection between Satie's in-score texts, at least some of them, and the music itself. To perform his musical jokes presented as disguised musical quotations or moments when musical conventions are being mocked, pianists are reminded to apply a deadpan approach or perform with dedicated exaggeration respectively. From my examination of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*, Satie gives clear indications to the use of articulation and dynamic markings alongside the in-score texts to hint at the musical references/jokes. As a result, the in-score texts do not strictly provide performance cues, but they add character, in other words they act as a proposition to the performer, to add extra performance gestures to the existing articulation and dynamic markings. For example, where Satie mocked the use of major chords as conventional compositional practice to finish the outer sections of the triptych, he wrote 'Grandiose' and 'De votre mieux' (Do your best) alongside the accented signs and *forte* marking. Similarly, he wrote 'Cadence obligée (de l'Auteur)' (Compulsory cadence (the Author's)) with *fortissimo* marking for the repeated tonic major chords. Pianists could exercise quasi-impromptu pianism by applying agogics, distorting the tempo in these junctures or exaggerating even further the *fortissimo* dynamics to mock the conventional use of major chords in specific structural moments.

Satie's lack of authorial voice to shed light on the meaning and function of his in-score texts in performance due to the lack of discussion and performance of his own piano music makes speculation inevitable especially for moments when no explicit musical jokes/references can be identified to be associating with the texts. Madeline Milhaud, who was Satie's long-term friend and the wife of *Les Six* member Darius Milhaud, admitted that Satie's in-score texts, which she referred to as 'performance indications', were often obscure and difficult to understand by

others. Despite exposing the challenge most pianists would face attempting to comprehend Satie's intentions hidden in the in-score texts, she expressed how these texts could be crucial and relevant to influencing performance styles:²⁶⁰

When it comes to music, titles and performance indications do not follow conventional practice either. They are dressed up as jokes in a Montmartre *chansonnier* [popular singer/reciter] vein (which many in the world of classical music found shocking), but for those that know how to decode them they provide the essential clues to the composition in question, or at least serve to underline its particular characteristics.²⁶¹

In 1921, French artist Claude Cahun's concert review illuminates the public reception of Satie's texted piano music, in particular to the responses received in regard to the piece's title and the in-score texts. Featuring *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* as part of the programmes, 'Danse maigre' was singled out at the final part of the review, in which Cahun addressed that the titles of the texted piano pieces bear no relationship with the rhythm or sound of the music itself. Cahun described the odd titles as a form of 'dissonance', which I interpret as qualifying Satie's titles as redundant and incongruent attractions to the texted piano pieces. By using the word 'dissonance' to describe Satie's titles, Cahun has dismissed the possible function of these titles to inform one's performance decisions.²⁶² Cahun also recalled that some audiences responded to Satie's texted pieces with laughter. The observation consolidates the humoristic nature of these texted pieces perceived during Satie's time even though it is unclear whether the audience intended to laugh *with* or *at* Satie's piano works.²⁶³ It is also significant that Cahun did not once

²⁶⁰ Ornella Volta also classified Satie's in-score text under the category of performance indications, see Chapter Two, 9. Erik Satie et al., *A Mammal's Notebook* (repr., London: Atlas, 1996), 46–49.

²⁶¹ Erik Satie et al., *A Mammal's Notebook* (repr., London: Atlas, 1996), 10.

²⁶² Claude Cahun, "Concert Erik Satie", *La Grebe* Février 1921, no. 29 (1921): 158. Original French text: 'Titres sans le moindre rapport saisissable avec les rythmes ou les sons — une dissonance superflue, à mon sens.'

²⁶³ Claude Cahun, "Concert Erik Satie", *La Grebe* Février 1921, no. 29 (1921): 158. Original French text: 'Musique spirituelle, plaideront-ils. Provoquer le rire. - c'est trop facile. Et songez, Satie, combien le rire d'un public est un résultat équivoque, dangereux.'

mention about the in-score texts in the review. This suggests that the texts might not be shown or read aloud to the audience during the performance, a speculated practice that agrees with Satie's announcement to forbid the texts to be shared with the audience.

Almost a century on since Cahun's review, Caroline Potter's studies on Satie's so-called 'humoristic' piano works focus on how Satie's in-score texts could offer an interpretative function by demonstrating that they can act as 'an additional trigger for extramusical associations' in order to set pianists' 'musical imagination in motion', other than seeing them simply as humour to laugh about.²⁶⁴ Considering how Poulenc and M. Milhaud perceived Satie's titles and in-score texts in these 'humoristic' piano pieces, what Potter proposed complements insights offered by Satie's contemporaries. The challenge of putting this notion in practice is to overcome the difficulty of discovering musical jokes or decoding hidden messages that are likely to be bygone issues for contemporary pianists. Second- and later-generation pianists' interpretations of the in-score texts could be educated guesses at their best. This uncertainty, however, is the key to quasi-impromptu pianism, resulting in new performance gestures and diverse performance styles of the same piece of music.

In-score texts of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*

Musical borrowing can be found in the first and third pieces of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* titled 'Tyrolienne turque' and 'Españaña'. In these two pieces, Satie provides hints through in-score texts to make the musical references

²⁶⁴ Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie* (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 98–137.

explicit to the performer.²⁶⁵ For example, in ‘Tyrolienne turque’, Satie quotes the main theme from ‘Rondo alla Turca’ (Turkish March) taken from the third movement of Mozart’s *Piano Sonata No. 11* and underneath the borrowed theme, in-score texts ‘*Très turc*’ (Very Turkish) appear. In ‘Españaña’, where the easily recognisable musical theme from Chabrier’s *España* appears, it is accompanied by in-score texts ‘N’est-ce pas l’Alcade?’. The in-score texts draw pianists’ attention to the Spanish connection of the theme as *España* was composed after Chabrier’s trip to Spain and ‘Alcade’ refers to a Spanish municipal magistrate. In addition to that, Satie’s in-score texts in ‘Españaña’ also hint the borrowing of Bizet’s opera *Carmen* with Whiting stating that ‘the quirky inscriptions take aim at Bizet’s most famous opera’ despite the fact that no further connection between the texts and music have been made.²⁶⁶ In the following, I demonstrate the discovery I made of the connection between the texts and music in connection to Bizet’s *Carmen* that Whiting had overlooked in order to show how Satie offered comparatively clearer textual hints to pianists to prompt their attention to a less explicit musical reference.

I claim that Satie skillfully incorporated the two musical works—*España* and *Carmen* in ‘Españaña’, possibly to poke fun at the similarities he found between them. *España*’s public premier took place in 1883, the same year when *Carmen* was revived in Paris since its first performance in 1875. Both pieces share a connection with the region of Spain: *España* was an inspiration upon Chabrier’s return to France from his trip in Spain; *Carmen*’s first act is set in Seville, a region in southern Spain. Through the in-score text ‘Comme à Séville’ (As in Seville), ‘La belle Carmen et le peluquero’ (Beautiful Carmen and the hairdresser) and ‘Les cigarières’ (The

²⁶⁵ More details on music borrowing can be found in *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 2*. Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 2*, 2nd ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), XVII.

²⁶⁶ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 382.

cigarette makers)’, Satie hinted at the parody of the opera by incorporating iconic details from the first act of the opera, in which Carmen and other women from the cigarette factory appeared in a square in Seville, surrounded by a group of soldiers. During the first act, Carmen sings ‘L’amour est un oiseau rebelle’, a familiar melody at the time when Satie composed *Españaña*. Perhaps a note-to-note reference would be far too obvious, Satie borrowed the musical ideas from ‘L’amour est un oiseau rebelle’ but transposed the melody and altered its rhythmic pattern as a form of disguise.

The descending melody and the appearance of texts ‘La belle Carmen et le peluquero’ parody the iconic opening theme of ‘L’amour est un oiseau rebelle’ as demonstrated in Examples 8.1a and b. The opening three crotchet notes in thirds in *Españaña* are also reflections of the three-notes conjunct melody from the middle section of ‘L’amour’ as shown in Example 8.2a and b. I claim that Satie incorporates the three-note motive throughout the piece with some degree of variations, e.g. by lengthening the rhythmic duration of the three-note motive (systems 1 and 5), altering the even rhythm (systems 14 and 15) and adding accidentals to one of the three notes as marked in brackets in Example 8.2b – systems 14 and 15. Straight after the literal musical quotation of Chabrier’s *España* in systems 13 and 14, the three-note motive reappears but this time with the third note flattened. At this exact point Satie provides in-score texts ‘*Les cigarières*’ adjacent to the altered three-note motive. In my interpretation of Satie’s intention, the texts are to prompt pianists’ awareness that somehow the ‘L’amour’ theme has returned. Both ‘Tyrolienne turque’ and ‘Españaña’ demonstrate that the in-score texts indeed have close connection to the music and could be perceived as a form of performance cue for

they add specific character to the associated melody, bearing a crucial role to inform performance decisions, which is more than just words to be laughed with.

Example 8.1a Carmen's theme in disguise in *Españaña*, No.3 of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*, system 4

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Example 8.1b Original theme of Carmen No.5 Habanera and its transposed version

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Example 8.2a The three-note conjunct melody for Carmen's Habanera second theme

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Example 8.2b The three-note conjunct melody in *Españaña* in systems 1, 5, 14 and 15

Systems 1 and 5

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restrictions**

‘Danse maigre’, unlike the other two pieces of the triptych, carries no obvious music quotations. So far, Orledge has proposed a link between ‘Danse maigre’ and Debussy’s *Prélude* no.4 ‘Les sons et les parfums’ and no.12 ‘Minstrels’ as well as identified faint musical references taken from Cyril Scott’s *Danse Nègre*.²⁶⁷ The title ‘Danse maigre (*à la manière de ces messieurs*)’ is deliberately obscure since Satie chose to use the noun ‘messieurs’ over real names of particular persons he might have in mind. Orledge and Whiting have mentioned composers such as Cyril Scott, Debussy and even Satie himself as the possible ‘messieurs.’²⁶⁸ While none of the propositions are overwhelmingly convincing, I question the possibility of the title as Satie’s way to mock the popular title format of ‘in the manner of (a certain composer)’ at the time while in fact, he did not aim at any composer in particular. In order to build on and give rationales to my proposition,

²⁶⁷ Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 2*, 2nd ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), XVIII. See section on ‘*Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois*’.

²⁶⁸ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 380–381.

the following section examines the possible meaning of in-score texts of '*Danse maigre*' to provide insight on the connection between the texts and the music in my own interpretation.

Similarities between in-score text in 'Danse maigre' and Debussy's performance indications

Two years before Satie began to compose his texted piano pieces, his contemporary Debussy published his piano *Préludes* (1910) with some titles that are equally cryptic or absurd as ones found in Satie's texted piano works. To give an example, one of Debussy *Préludes*' titles 'Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses' (Fairies are exquisite dancers) is as surreal as *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* (*Sketches and Irritations of a Big Wooden Fellow*) as they both personify imaginary subjects that are not real. Interestingly, when comparing the in-score texts in '*Danse maigre*' with performance directions in Debussy's *Préludes*, I discover similarities between the two, which should not be overlooked. I claim that what Satie has achieved in his in-score texts was to blur the definitive difference between conventional performance directions and images/thought-provoking narratives or segmented word phrases. By doing so, Satie has given pianists the freedom to interpret the in-score texts as performance directions or narratives of a story. Both choices provoke pianists' reaction to the texts, with the former being recognised as descriptive performance instructions while the latter as an incentive to execute performance gestures resulting from the interpretive freedom based on one's imagination. Below are the original French in-score texts by Satie and translations given by Orledge in the 2016 Editions Salaberts and Anthony Melville in *A mammal's notebook*, which are put in brackets and are only included when the

translations differ from Orledge's version.²⁶⁹ As this chapter aims to expose how Satie's in-score texts connect with the music and the possible influences they have on performance interpretations, it is imperative to highlight the different translations and how they could potentially lead to contrasting performance outcomes based on the different meanings proposed after the translation process. The in-score texts in 'Danse maigre' are:

De loin et avec ennui/ Sans rougir du doigt/ Remuez en dedans/ En dehors,
n'est-ce pas/ Sur du velours jauni/ Continuez/ Plein de subtilité, si vous m'en
croyez/ Sans bruit, croyez-moi encore/ Sec comme un coucou/ En un souffle.

Orledge and Melville's translations are :

From faraway and wearily (From a distance, bored) / Without your finger
blushing/ Stir it up on the inside/ Outside-all right? (Play out, don't you
think?)/ On yellow velvet/ Go on/ Full of subtlety, if you want to believe me/
No noise, believe me once more/ Dry as a cuckoo/ In one breath.

Before providing my own translation of the in-score texts, I turned to Debussy's performance terms used in his *Préludes*, as seen in Table 8.1, to make a reference to some of the similar in-score texts that Satie used in 'Danse maigre'. I also include some of Debussy's performance indications that are less prescriptive in nature in order to give context to how Debussy left room for imagination amongst pianists, a practice which I assert might have been borrowed by Satie through his use of in-score texts.

²⁶⁹ For Orledge's translation, see Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 2*, 2nd ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), 70–72. For Melville's translation, see Erik Satie et al., *A Mammal's Notebook* (repr., London: Atlas, 1996), 46–49.

Table 8.1 Comparison of Satie's in-score texts in 'Danse maigre' and Debussy's performance terms in *Préludes*

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Table 8.1: Comparison of Satie’s in-score texts in ‘Danse maigre’ and Debussy’s performance terms in *Préludes*

‘Danse maigre’ in-score texts	Translation of ‘Danse maigre’ texts by Orledge and Melville (in brackets) and their implications to performance style	Debussy’s performance terms and my proposed meaning and usage in <i>Préludes</i> Book I and Book II when stated otherwise
1. En dehors, n’est-ce pas	<p>Outside-all right?– Orledge’s translation provokes imagination</p> <p>(Play out, don’t you think?)– Melville’s translation could lead an interpretation similar to Debussy’s usage of ‘en dehors’, which reminds pianists to highlight a particular melody that is usually hidden in other voices or in a particular manner.</p>	<p>I: Doux mais en dehors: Bring out the melody sweetly</p> <p>II: doucement en dehors: Bring out the melody gently</p> <p>IV: En dehors: As performance direction appears beneath the bass part where the melody is, ‘en dehors’ reminds pianists to bring out the melody in the bass part</p> <p>V: Un peu en dehors: As performance direction appears in the bass part where the melody is, together with Debussy’s extra instruction– ‘Avec la liberté d’une chanson populaire’, ‘un peu en dehors’ reminds pianists to bring out the melody with the style of a popular song.</p> <p>VII : Très en dehors: Bring out the melody very clearly. Debussy also provide <i>fortissimo</i> dynamic marking alongside the performance direction.</p> <p>XII: En dehors: Performance direction clearly requests pianists to highlight the semiquaver inner voice</p>

<p>2. De loin et avec ennui</p>	<p>From faraway and wearily– Orledge’s translation could provoke performers’ imagination. As ‘wearily’ can also be interpreted as uninterested or tiring, creative performance gestures could arise as a result. (From a distance, bored)– Melville’s translation is also thoughts provoking. Creative performance gestures could aim at projecting a bored image/person.</p> <p>To adopt Debussy’s meaning and usage of <i>lointaine</i>, pianists would perform with a soft dynamic level to imitate sound coming from afar.</p>	<p>IV: Comme une lointaine sonnerie de cors: Performance direction appears alongside <i>pianissimo</i> dynamic marking, requesting pianists to mimic the sound of the distant horns.</p> <p>IV: Encore plus lointain et plus retenu: Even more distant and hold back further. Such performance direction indicates an even quieter dynamics and gentle touch.</p> <p>IX: Lointain: Performance direction is given alongside <i>pianissimo</i> dynamic marking, indicating a soft and distant sound.</p> <p>XII of book II: De très loin: Very distant, with <i>pianissimo</i> placed alongside the performance direction.</p>
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<p>3. Ambiguous texts that seem to bear no connection with the music itself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Remuez en dedans b. Sans rougir du doigt c. Sur du velours jauni d. Sec comme un coucou e. En un souffle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Stir it up on the inside b. Without your finger blushing c. On yellow velvet d. Dry as a cuckoo e. In one breath 	<p>Debussy' less prescriptive and definitive performance indications, which could provoke creative performance gestures through use of tempo, articulation, pedalling and dynamics at pianists' own discretion.</p> <p>VI: Ce rhytme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé: This rhythm must have the sound value of a sad and frozen landscape.</p> <p>XII: Nerveux et avec humour: Nervous and with humour</p> <p>III of Book II: Ironique: Ironic</p> <p>IV of Book II: Doux et rêveur: Sweet and dreamy</p> <p>VI of Book II: Dans le style et le Mouvement d'un Cake Walk: In the style and movement of the Cake Walk</p> <p>VI of Book II: Spirituel et discret: Spiritual and discreet</p> <p>VI of Book II: Sec: Dry, an indication that has appeared five times in the piece.</p>
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Gates' interpretations of the texts

Drawing similarities between Satie and Debussy's usage of the term *loin* or *lointain*, I would interpret 'De loin et avec ennui', the first texts that appear at the beginning of 'Danse maigre' as a partial performance direction as it agrees and supports the *pianissimo* dynamic marking provided by Satie (See Example 8.5, p. 226). As the *pianissimo* marking would lead pianists to a quiet sound, the text 'De loin' would give the quiet sound extra character, perhaps prompting pianists to provide a murky and faint sound through the use of ample sustain pedal performed in very low dynamic level. For Satie to add 'avec ennui' to 'De loin', from a pianist's point of view, the performance direction and in-score texts prompt my imagination of a scene taking from an area (possibly the plantation from Southern US) that is far away (from France) and mundane with people who could be physically or mentally tired (the slaves). My interpretation demonstrates how Satie's in-score texts could trigger an extra-musical association, a notion that Potter asserted. With Orledge and Whiting making connections between 'Danse maigre' and Debussy's *Minstrels* and Cyril Scott's *Danse Nègre* cakewalk, my assertion that the opening in-score texts draw pianists' imagination to the region where minstrels and cakewalk music originates is not far-fetched. Congruently, there is a common thread of bringing exoticism to the music in the other two pieces of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*, with the first piece making a Turkish reference, and Spanish for the last piece.

While Debussy uses 'en dehors' to remind pianists to bring out a particular melody that could be overlooked as it might have been hidden within multiple voicings or being transferred abruptly to the bass part, Satie ironically places 'En dehors, n'est-ce pas' above the music, which has a bare texture and a melodic line on the treble part that is impossible to miss, as shown in Example 8.3.

Example 8.3 Texture and melody at ‘*En dehors, n’est-ce pas*’, ‘Danse maigre’, systems 6 and 7

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As such, to interpret ‘en dehors’ as a performance indication to bring out an often-obscured melody seems to be a redundant instruction. Intriguingly, prior to the texts ‘*En dehors, n’est-ce pas*’, Satie wrote ‘*Remuez en dedans*’ in system four, another in-score text that is just as baffling for pianists to understand (See Example 8.10, p. 244). The inclusion of both ‘*en dedans*’ and ‘*en dehors*’ leads me to think of Satie’s possible intention to imply the dance movement ‘pirouette en dedans’ and ‘pirouette en dehors’ as another inter-disciplinary stimulus, which corresponds to his somewhat dance title.²⁷⁰ Satie uses the word ‘*Remuez*’ before ‘*en dedans*’ which could be translated as ‘stir’ or ‘move’ to indicate body movements, which makes my proposition even more plausible. Although these two in-score text phrases do not necessarily give pianists performance directions, the images and movements of dancers could prompt pianists to inject a brief moment of energy to contrast with the proposed weary performances. To further support my assertion, the dynamic levels at these two junctures also have dynamic levels changed to *forte* from the previous *pianissimo*.

To interpret ‘Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez (Full of subtlety, if you

²⁷⁰ In ballet, ‘en dedans’ refers to when dancer spins inwards on one foot, while ‘en dehors’ requires dancer to spin outwards.

want to believe me)’ literally, I would expect to perform in a subtle manner, providing restrained expression and most importantly, the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic features should also meet the subtlety request. In my interpretation, Satie humorously places the instruction-like in-score texts at the moment where there is a large disjunct interval for both treble and bass parts as well as an abrupt shift in harmony as shown in Example 8.4.

Example 8.4 Large disjunct interval before the appearance of texts ‘*Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez*’, *Danse maigre*, systems 8 and 9

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Judging by the musical content, I claim that the in-score texts ‘*Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez*’ is a sarcastic gesture by Satie. The incongruent match of texts and music could also be Satie’s way to metaphorically highlight the nature of the cakewalk dance, which involves exaggerating steps and body movements that are not at all subtle in any degree. As a pianist, I would perform this particular phrase with exaggerating gestures such as tempo manipulation or expressive articulation and dismiss the instruction to perform in a subtle manner as my choice to acknowledge Satie’s remark as being ironic.

‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ (Dry as a cuckoo) that appears towards the end of the piece gives another example of how in-score texts could carry a different connotation to its literal translation. According to Gene Stratton-Porter, the word

‘cuckoo’ has different meaning: ‘kook’-oo, kuk;-oo the Hebrew root from which the word shachaph is derived means “to be lean” and “slender”, and in older versions of the Bible was translated cuckow (cuckoo). The cuckoo translation has been mentioned twice in the Bible (Le 11:16, and De 14:15 the King James Version “cuckoo”), in the list of unclean birds.²⁷¹ The alternative meaning of cuckoo as lean and slender is congruent with the title word ‘maigre’, which also means lean and skinny. According to Collins Dictionary, the French word ‘sec’ can also be substituted by the word ‘maigre’, which also describes a spare and lean figure.²⁷² In its wider context, despite not necessarily suitable to the proposed translation in ‘Danse maigre’, ‘sec’ has multiple meanings, which could refer to a dry wine, a neat drink, a dry cloth, or a sharp/curt response.²⁷³

My proposition of the alternative meaning of ‘coucou’ as ‘lean’ and ‘slender’ also ties in well with another texted piano piece ‘Celle qui parle trop’ of *Chapitres tournés en tous sens*, in which the same in-score text ‘*sec comme un coucou*’ is used. ‘Celle qui parle trop’ first mentions the husband who is addressed as ‘*pauvre mari*’ (the wretched husband). Satie later announces again that ‘*Mademoiselle Machin épouse un homme qui est sec comme un coucou*’ (Miss What’s-her-name is marrying a man who’s dry as a cuckoo) which I would translate as Miss What’s-her-name is marrying a man who is weak and thin. As the narrative unfolds, Satie writes ‘*Le mari se meurt d’épuisement*’ (The husband dies from exhaustion). Significantly, in the ending of both ‘Danse maigre’ and ‘Celle qui parle trop’, the almost identical in-score texts ‘*en un souffle*’ and ‘*en un pauvre souffle*’ appear respectively. The ‘in one

²⁷¹ Gene Stratton-Porter and James Orr, "Cuckow; Cuckoo In The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.", International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Online, 1939, <http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/C/cuckow-cuckoo.html>.

²⁷² "English Translation Of “Sec” | Collins French-English Dictionary", Collinsdictionary.Com, accessed 24 July 2019, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/french-english/sec>.

²⁷³ Ibid.

breath' remark was placed alongside the slower tempo marking '*ralentir*' and a soft dynamic marking. The combination of the meaning of the texts, the chosen tempo and dynamic markings make it highly plausible that the diminishing energy in the performance is to depict the lean and exhausting subjects in these two pieces. I assert that the final phrase of the music where the texts '*en un souffle*' and '*en un pauvre souffle*' appear signifies the last breath that the cakewalk messieurs and the thin husband had in respective pieces. Putting '*Sec comme un coucou*' in perspective, I would perform the associated musical phrase with the feeling of exhaustion by dragging the tempo and bring out the accents and *forte* markings in a forced and reluctant manner. In contrast, pianists could adopt the conventional meaning of '*sec*' and provide a dry touch, an indication that Debussy frequently used in his sixth *Prélude* in Book II, a piece with an explicit aim to perform in the style of cake walk.

Characteristic of cakewalk music in 'Danse maigre'

The following section investigates the characteristic of cakewalk music in 'Danse maigre' as a response to the connections made previous by Orledge and Whiting in addition to my proposition that Satie links 'Danse maigre' to the Southern US where cakewalk music originates from. Paul Roberts commented cakewalk music 'appears to have originated as a slow, high-kicking dance by black workers on the American cotton plantations – imitating and parodying the polite elegance of white dancers.'²⁷⁴ In 'Danse maigre', in-score text '*assez lent, si vous le voulez bien*' (rather slow—if it's all right with you) appears at the beginning of the piece to set an overall slow

²⁷⁴ Paul Roberts, *Images* (repr., Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 214.

tempo for the piece, which matches the tempo usually required for cakewalk dances.

Roberts adds:

According to most authorities, the cakewalk was danced to slow ragtime. Ragtime itself was a form of syncopated piano music, close in style to the march... The time signature of ragtime was usually two-four...the music was characterized by a strongly syncopated right-hand rhythm set against the left hand's march-like beat.²⁷⁵

Despite the lack of bar-lines in 'Danse maigre', a two-four time signature, as shown in Example 8.5, is clearly implied by Satie's use of ties especially in the first system of the music.

Example 8.5 Implied two-four time signature in 'Danse maigre', system 1

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

In terms of the cakewalk rhythm, although Satie does not rely on the use of right-hand syncopation against the left-hand marching rhythm, he chooses to use the even-note syncopation, of which the weak beat, i.e. the second beat, is stressed with an accent or tenuto mark as seen in Example 8.6.

Example 8.6 The use of even note syncopation in 'Danse maigre', system 2

²⁷⁵ Paul Roberts, *Images* (repr., Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 216.

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Satie's rhythmic choices also reflect basic rhythmic pattern commonly used in minstrel music. According to Bob Winans, a banjo scholar, the rhythmic patterns of 'bum-diddy' (quaver followed by two semi-quavers), 'diddy-bum' (two semi-quavers followed by a quaver) and 'diddy-diddy' (four semi-quavers) are basic rhythm to 'black banjo syncopation' often heard in minstrel banjo playing.²⁷⁶

Example 8.7 shows how Satie applied these rhythmic patterns in 'Danse maigre'.

Satie's use of rhythmic pattern and placement of accents or tenuto markings to emphasise the weak beat could inform pianists the performance style of minstrel and cakewalk music, the same musical styles that Orledge and Whiting asserted Satie referenced.

Example 8.7 Different 'black banjo syncopation' rhythmic patterns in 'Danse maigre', system 2

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Performance analysis and email interviews

²⁷⁶ Bob Winans, "Learning Black Banjo Syncopation", Winansbjo, accessed 24 July 2019, <https://sites.google.com/site/winansbjo/learning-black-banjo-syncopation>.

In the performance analysis, I focus on examining whether pianists' execution is affected by the piece title and the in-score texts. The piece title and the in-score texts in 'Danse maigre' seem to be purposefully ambiguous with the main subject(s) constantly unstated. Is the ambiguity enough to drive pianists to ignore the title and in-score texts altogether? Or would pianists choose to perform with an experimental approach as a reaction to the ambiguous nature of the in-score texts? Would pianists adopt a humoristic approach based on the notion that these piano pieces have been classified as humoristic piano pieces in current musicology? For pianists who choose to bypass any potential effect of the in-score texts have on performance indications and respond only to musical elements—melody, rhythm, tempo, dynamic and articulation markings, do their performances sound comparatively reserved to others who allow themselves to be imaginative with Satie's words? Analytical outcomes of the performance interpretations will address pianists' tempo choices as well as giving specific examples of quasi-impromptu pianism, which give an overall account of the performance practice of Satie's texted piano pieces.

Second-generation English pianists Peter Dickinson and Peter Lawson are added to this case study to enrich the international perspective in the performance interpretation of Satie's texted piano pieces. They are not included in previous case studies simply because they have not recorded the Rose-Croix pieces in question. Second-generation French pianists Philippe Entremont, Gabriel Tacchino and Anne Queffélec, and later-generation non-French pianist Noriko Ogawa are the new additions to this case study for the bold performance gestures demonstrated in their recordings. Their performance approaches are worth examining in order to capture a wide range of quasi-impromptu pianism demonstrated in the performances of Satie's

texted piano pieces. As Entremont and Tacchino were both taught by Marguerite Long, with the latter being Poulenc’s only piano pupil, the teacher-pupil connection amongst these three pianists across two generations may illuminate whether the French lineage plays a part in preserving a unanimous way these pianists react to Satie’s in-score texts. As a Debussy specialist, Japanese pianist Ogawa would perhaps incorporate her knowledge of Debussy’s idiom and bring insights to the performance practice of French piano music of an era that Satie belonged. As I have been drawing similarities between Debussy and Satie’s use of texts (performance directions and in-score texts) around the same time when Satie’s textured piano works were composed, Ogawa’s approach to her understanding of Satie’s in-score texts may be instinctive and the resulting execution of ‘Danse maigre’ could offer valuable insights to the effect of in-score texts have on performance interpretations.

To make the analysis clear to follow, I include in Appendix V (See pp. 348–350) the 2016 Editions Salabert of ‘Danse maigre’, to which the numbered musical system corresponds in the following discussion. Table 8.2 provides a list of pianists for the case study of ‘Danse maigre’ in chronological order, the years when the recordings were made.

Table 8.2: Recordings chosen for the performance analysis of ‘Danse maigre’

Name of the pianists (Name of the interviewees in bold)	Year of recording
1. Francis Poulenc ²⁷⁷	1955
2. Aldo Ciccolini ²⁷⁸	1967–71

²⁷⁷ Francis Poulenc, *Socrate/ Messe Des Pauvres/ Poulenc Piano Pieces*, CD (repr., Cherry Red Records, EL, 2007), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/3ydEbQoeBHfZSUNJlfUMYH> "width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

²⁷⁸ Aldo Ciccolini, *Satie: L'œuvre Pour Piano*, CD (repr., France: EMI Classics, 2001), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A4VKeaKPvUpG885xti8yqko> "width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

3. Peter Lawson ²⁷⁹	1979
4. Philippe Entremont ²⁸⁰	1981
5. Gabriel Tacchino ²⁸¹	1988
6. Klara Körmendi ²⁸²	1988
7. Anne Queffélec ²⁸³	1988
8. Peter Dickinson ²⁸⁴	1990
9. Jean Yves Thibaudet ²⁸⁵	2001–02
10. Josu Okiñena ²⁸⁶	2015
11. Noriko Ogawa ²⁸⁷	2015
12. Jeroen van Veen ²⁸⁸	2015

The outcomes

The performance analyses outcomes unfold in the following order: 1) pianists' tempo choices, 2) performance interpretations of the minstrel/cakewalk music

²⁷⁹ Peter Lawson, *Satie: Piano Music*, CD (repr., London: Warner Classics, 1998), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A2SLbD5o6cPSNCHPkbYRC2u> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸⁰ Philippe Entremont, *Satie/Entremont: Piano/Klavier*, CD (repr., Europe: CBS Masterworks, 1982), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A0iu01rYiaTk8oMMue9kJZz> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸¹ Gabriel Tacchino, *Erik Satie, Gabriel Tacchino*, CD (repr., France: Disques Pierre Verany, 1989), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A2dkSVqpxV1iVTwuYSfYBV8> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸² Klára Körmendi, *Satie: Piano Works (Selection)*, CD (repr., Germany: Naxos, 1989), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A1IICsU1MiaTppqMOFcMJDgu> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸³ Anne Queffélec, *Satie: Piano Works*, CD (repr., England: Virgin Classics Limited, 1993), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A3BAZ0q9whTbqGmGwFjHG3u> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸⁴ Peter Dickinson, *Satie: Piano Music*, CD (repr., UK: Conifer Classics, 2002), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A5LRNKW3kk5o4XPsoWZZJWL> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸⁵ Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Satie: The Complete Solo Piano Music*, CD (repr., UK: Decca, 2003), Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Erik Satie The Complete Solo Piano Music*, CD (repr., Europe: Decca, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6IlrjrHn8iCBzejRKkZWSO> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

²⁸⁶ Josu Okiñena, *Erik Satie Silence*, CD (repr., Spain: Sony Classical, 2015), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A0o0ikKpz1n1NbIdAWfRZs3> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸⁷ Noriko Ogawa, *Satie: Piano Music Vol. 1*, CD (repr., BIS Records AB, Sweden, 2016), <https://embed.spotify.com/?uri=spotify%3Atrack%3A4oRTwaBcaXF38OBSi2v7vt> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true."

²⁸⁸ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., The Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0OQ6wNwFIJAUE6Akz1oAOo> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

reference suggested by the rhythmic characteristics in *Danse maigre*, 3) creative interpretations and performance gestures led by the in-score textual stimuli, 4) selected performances that showcase quasi-impromptu pianism that is triggered by other interpretive stimuli.

Perhaps during the year when Lawson recorded 'Danse maigre', it was about a decade before the beginning of the 1912–1915 texted piano pieces being regarded as the 'humoristic piano works' initiated by Gillmor, his performance interpretation appears to exclude any humoristic gesture. While a handful of pianists in this case study have chosen to give abrupt tempo changes to highlight the deliberate contrasts of the musical styles in the opening two systems of the music, Lawson begins 'Danse maigre' with a tempo of 58 crotchet beats per minute, and maintains a constant speed until system four where in-score text 'Sans rougir du doigt' appears. After that, the tempo increases slightly to 70 crotchet beats per minute and at the end of system seven, just before in-score text '*Sur de velour jauni*', the tempo is further increased to 75 crotchet beats per minute. By this point, the tempo stays more or less constant with the occasional use of rubato to bring out the phrasing. In the email interview, Lawson responded to his tempo choices in 'Danse maigre':

I don't take any of his [Satie's] tempo marks too literally. I don't think they necessarily correspond to the normally understood meanings of musical terms found elsewhere and though they don't necessarily contradict the norms, they often sow a seed of doubt...the tempi, rubatos, articulation I chose were guided by the marks on the score but also by my own instinct... My awareness of any other performances/performers of Satie or other works, which may have influenced him [Satie] may have subconsciously coloured my performances but I'd describe my playing as instinctive rather than scholarly.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Peter Lawson Grace Gates to , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2017.

Lawson's opinion on the interpretation of 'Danse maigre' shows that he mainly reacts to the ambiguity of Satie's performance directions more so than the humoristic tone of 'Danse maigre' when making performance decisions at his own discretion. I speculate that in addition to the ambiguity of Satie's performance directions, his wit as a composer (See Chapter Four, pp. 79–81) and the humoristic tone found in some of the in-score texts might have helped to undermine any in-score texts' potential function to act as genuine performance directions. This results in Lawson addressing how he would not take Satie's performance markings 'too literally' as they often 'sow a seed of doubt'. Lawson's remark of how he approached 'Danse maigre' 'instinctive[ly] rather than scholarly' gives strong evidence of how Satie's texted piano music, with the in-score texts' obscure meaning and uncertain function to inform performance decisions, lead pianists to interpretations that are not necessarily informed by musical/conventional interpretive criteria. In Lawson's case, the in-score textual stimuli and extra-musical determinants—Satie's persona, have made an impact on his performance style despite the influences do not strictly correspond to specific performance gestures.

Philippe Entremont, on the other hand, belongs to a group of pianists who choose to speed up the tempo from the second system even though there is no indication from Satie to increase the tempo at any point in the piece. Entremont changes his tempo from 74 to 107 crotchet beats per minute between the first two systems. Similarly, Poulenc's tempo changes from 65 and 99 crotchet beats per minute, Ciccolini's from 74 to 98, Okiñena's from 35 to 130, Thibaudet's from 80 to 87 and Queffélec's from 76 to 125. All of them unanimously choose to increase the tempo from the first to the second systems.

The performance gesture of giving such noticeable change in tempo between the first two systems as an example of quasi-impromptu pianism, has given the opening two distinctively different character and musical functions. The much slower tempo of the first system makes the music sound nostalgic, while the music that follows has the energetic, springy and dance-like character due to the change in rhythmic patterns and the placements of accented slurs, staccatos and tenuto markings, musical features that suggest the minstrel/cakewalk musical style (See Examples 8.5 and 8.6, p. 226).

With 107 crotchet beats per minute as the basic tempo for the rest of the piece, Entremont implements the use of tempo rubato, section rubato for example in system twelve where '*Sec comme un coucou*' appears and agogic accents, which disconnects consecutive phrases in order to manipulate the tempo further (Time code: 00:51–01:02). The use of section rubato at this juncture drastically changes the mood as all in a sudden, a sense of emergency and an unexpected excitement can be felt. These performance gestures make his performance sound witty and spontaneous, suggesting that he endores '*Danse maigre*' as a humoristic piano piece.

Entremont expresses in the interview that 'the term "*assez lent*" is indeed humoristic and certainly very far from any funeral march' as a justification to why a comparatively brisk pace to '*assez lent*' has been chosen as the opening tempo of the piece.²⁹⁰ He also confirms my claim that his performance approach of '*Danse maigre*' aims to express the humor and it is full of defiant gestures. Although Entremont has not directly commented on how he interpreted the meaning of '*assez lent*' at the start of the piece, his choice to make the drastic tempo changes reveals an

²⁹⁰ Philip Entremont Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2017.

approach which inclines to extremes, and further ridicules the proposed '*assez lent*' tempo marking by replacing it with an '*allegretto*' speed. Entremont's interpretation of Satie's tempo term defies conventional performance practice, providing another piece of supportive evidence to my assertion that Satie's persona (his wit and defiant character) functions as an extra-musical determinant, an interpretive criterion to influence pianists on how they interpret and execute Satie's performance indications.

The performance approaches by Lawson and Entremont demonstrate how performance styles of the same piece could greatly vary even though both pianists make performance decisions based on the same interpretive criteria. Satie's wit and defiant character sensed by both pianists lead to the former to take on a more reserved approach while the latter chooses to respond with high degrees of interpretive freedom and creativity.

As another contrasting example, Van Veen chooses a slow tempo of 60 crotchet beats per minute for the entire piece. Unless there is a specific tempo changing term, such as *retenir* and *ralentir*, Van Veen does not alter his basic tempo. While the adoption of slow tempo for 'Danse maigre' is also supported by Lawson and Dickinson, what differentiates Van Veen's performance to the rest of the pianists' approach is how Van Veen also takes on a minimalistic approach. He did so by limiting the use of expressive gestures. The unchanged tempo is accompanied by the uniform dynamic level and articulation. A good example can be found in systems 11 and 12 where the contrasts between dynamic markings *piano*, *forte*, *crescendo* and *decrescendo* as well as articulation contrasts between legato, staccato and accents are kept to its minimum (Time code: 01:42–01:59). Van Veen's execution minimizes expressive gestures in 'Danse maigre' through his use of tempo, dynamics and articulation is a one-off example amongst other performance

approaches in this case study. Van Veen's decision to establish his performance style by isolating and disregarding any stimuli from the piece title is clear and deliberate. In the interview, Van Veen explained that the rationale of his minimalistic expression in Satie's piano pieces in general, was inspired by the historical and cultural context that surrounded Satie at the time:

In general I think Satie meant slow, really slow. John Cage edited the Pages Mystiques and very slow = 44 on the metronome!!! But overall I think that Satie made a statement, he lived in the middle of the industrial revolution, the first cars, bikes, the first movies, the race of late just began, and as a reaction on daily life, in which he always survived, he wrote slow music, timeless (without bar-lines, many repeats, simple structures). His music is a kind of counterbalance to the rushing world...²⁹¹

Although Van Veen's opinions on how he perceives the meaning of Satie's piano music can come across as being subjective, the elements that Van Veen finds crucial to the extent that they influence his performance interpretations of Satie's piano pieces should not be overlooked. Van Veen's explanation justifies why he maintains the '*assez lent*' tempo throughout and dismisses altogether the possible reference to the style of minstrel and cakewalk music. From a pianist's point of view, I am not fully convinced by Van Veen's notion that 'Satie meant slow' and therefore restricting the tempo of Satie's piano pieces to the slow tempo group. Such execution would make the contrasting styles of his piano pieces mundane, a strategy that I claim is the least of Satie's preferences as a composer, who has shown great enthusiasm in exploring and experimenting with new compositional ideas and approaches. That said, with the lack of discussion of the performance practice of his piano pieces, the omission of Satie's authorial voice provides Van Veen the interpretive freedom to perform in a way he sees suitable based on the criteria that he prioritised as the most influential. Although Van Veen's choice of maintaining the

²⁹¹ Jeroen van Veen Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

slow tempo across 'Danse maigre' and generally applying a slower tempo to the rest of his piano pieces would limit contrasting expression, his choice to apply this unifying method across Satie's piano pieces is in itself an example of an experimental approach influenced by the extra-musical determinants.

With regard to performance interpretations of the minstrel and cakewalk music reference suggested by the rhythmic characteristics in *Danse maigre*, the performance evaluation outcomes expose contrasting approaches with some pianists performing with an energetic dance-like spirit, while others add humoristic gestures to the dance-like character by exaggerating particular musical features of the piece through the inclusion of wide tempo and dynamic ranges. The remaining group of pianists' performance approaches suggest that they may not support the minstrel and cakewalk music reference in 'Danse maigre' as the dance-like character is clearly absent in their performances.

Pianists such as Lawson, Entremont and Tacchino who give special attention to the tenuto marks at the second system (See Example 8.6, p. 226) highlight the use of syncopation, a common rhythmic device in cakewalk music. Tacchino also performs the second quaver in the 'bum-diddy' rhythm with a clear accent (See Example 8.7, p. 227), further emphasising the syncopated rhythmic feel despite the fact that Satie only gives the note a staccato marking (Time code: 00:05–00:08). In order to express the minstrel and cakewalk music character, the choice of tempo is also crucial. Lawson's pace of 58 crotchet beats per minute is arguably too slow to deliver a dance-like character and therefore his performance suggests that he did not prioritise the reflection of the possible musical reference Satie might have in mind despite his effort to highlight the use of syncopation. On the other hand, Entremont's much faster tempo of 107 crotchet beats per minute with his fluid use of rubato and

exaggerating articulation gives ‘Danse maigre’ an energetic dance-like character but in the form of a caricature (Time code of systems nine to twelve: 00:56–01:15). In Peter Dickinson’s performance, he adheres strictly to the ‘*assez lent*’ tempo marking by performing the entire piece in a very slow tempo of 50 crotchet beats per minute, which has completely undermined the musical reference of minstrel/cakewalk dance, suggesting a totally opposite approach as a reaction to the textual and musical elements in the piece.

In terms of pianists’ reactions to the appearances of the in-score texts in ‘Danse maigre’, I choose to focus on three specific moments where quasi-impromptu pianism is particularly apparent amongst pianists’ interpretations. Quasi-impromptu pianism demonstrated here refers to the performance gestures, which I claim are prompted by the in-score texts that stimulate pianists’ own imagination but not any other performance cues provided by Satie. The three musical moments in discussion are in systems 9, 12 and 14 when texts ‘*Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez*’, ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ and ‘*en un souffle*’ appear. While these in-score texts carry suggestive meanings, they are too ambiguous yet to be regarded as performance indications. It is their uncertain contribution as performance interpretive criteria that fuels quasi-impromptu pianism amongst performers, which illuminates the key issues that pianists face when performing Satie’s texted piano works (See Chapter One, pp. 1–2).

In system nine, in-score text ‘*Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez*’ appear alongside ‘*piano*’ dynamic marking (See Example 8.4, p. 223) could draw pianists to perform with subtle expression or with complete bold expression to highlight the possible sarcasm Satie might have intended as I previously asserted. While the majority of pianists in the case study perform the phrase with soft dynamic level,

Entremont performs in *crescendo* at the last four quaver notes to defy the suggested dynamic level and resist using *diminuendo* as common performance gesture to outline a descending melodic sequence (Time code: 00:55–01:00). His performance decision suggests his interpretation of Satie’s in-score texts as a tongue-in-cheek attempt, resonating with my assertion that Satie could be mocking the exaggerating moves of the cakewalk dance with his text. Apart from the unsubtle cakewalk dance move, the music also proceeds from its previous phrase, which consists of repetitive straightforward D minor chords over eight crotchet beats to its subsequent phrase that is briefly set in C sharp major before more accidentals take over to alter the harmonic colour further. In my interpretation, these brief and unrelated harmonic changes together with the text ‘*Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez*’ are gestures by Satie to facilitate the humour and mockery in this piano piece.

In system twelve, in-score texts ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ appears alongside the accented and staccato chords as shown in Example 8.8.

Example 8.8 Musical phrase with in-score text ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’, ‘Danse maigre’, system 12

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Since Lawson has chosen a traditional approach to interpret ‘Danse maigre’ as examined earlier, he performs the *forte* accompanying chords that are marked in staccatos, with some also have accents, with a dry tone achieved by quick release of

the chords and the absence of sustain pedal (Time code: 01:33–01:36). The word ‘*sec*’, a performance term that Debussy would use to indicate a dry touch could have led Lawson to such execution.

In Queffélec’s recorded performance, she clearly responds to the *forte* dynamic level and interprets the phrase with in-score text ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ with a dry touch. What makes her performance stand out amongst others is the way she forcefully brings out the accented chords, resulting in a sound that is not only dry and harsh but also resembles a distorted quacking bird (Time code: 01:00–01:03). I would speculate that such intriguing sound produced by Queffélec is to gesture the in-score text in correspondence to the ‘Dry as a cuckoo’ English translation.

In contrast, Van Veen’s performance style of the ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ phrase does not entirely follow Satie’s performance directions. He performs the *forte* dynamic indication with little increase in volume from the former *piano* dynamic level, minimising the contrasts of the consecutive phrases and conflicting with Satie’s intention (Time code: 01:42–01:58). In terms of the use of articulation, Van Veen executes his staccato touch without a clear bounce, providing an effect similar to a non-legato touch. The inconsistent use of sustain pedal over the accented chords also provides a heavy and wearisome feel to the playing. As Van Veen has explained in the interview that his performance style of Satie’s piano pieces is to reflect his belief that ‘His [Satie’s] music is a kind of counterbalance to the rushing world...’, his chosen articulation and the use of sustain pedal in this particular musical phrase is justifiable within his context.²⁹² Van Veen’s example shows how pianists could by-pass performance cues given in the score and contributes to quasi-impromptu pianism when impacted by other interpretive criterion that prompts their

²⁹² Jeroen van Veen Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

imagination. In Van Veen's case, the crucial interpretive criterion that leads him to performance decisions that disregard some of Satie's original performance directions is the extra-musical stimuli (See pp. 238–239). Other interpretive criteria have equally been undermined.

Entremont applies section rubato for the '*Sec comme un coucou*' phrase, performing the tempo of 125 crotchet beats per minute, which has increased abruptly from 103 crotchet beats per minute in the previous system, before slowing down at '*retenir*' indicated towards the end of the phrase (Time code: 01:10–01:14).

Entremont performs the *forte* dynamic as indicated with chords that are executed with a dry touch, which would inevitably be the result of the chosen fast tempo. Similarly, Tacchino also use section rubato for this particular phrase by abruptly changing his tempo from the previous 116 crotchet beats per minute (which lasted from system nine to eleven) to 125 beats per minute. The execution of the section rubato abruptly changes the pre-existing mood, which is comparatively calmer. The articulation for the accented chords are also evidently dry, crisp and short (Time code: 01:08–01:12). Entremont and Tacchino's application of section rubato is a form of quasi-impromptu pianism, which I claim arises under the influence of the in-score texts. To implement such degree of tempo change over musical passages that have no other performance cues to associate the change with may seem peculiar. The in-score text, however, remains the last stimulus on the score to justify such radical performance decision. The use of section rubato to abruptly increase the tempo also facilitates the dry tone, which responds well to the '*sec*' indication suggested by the in-score text.

In-score text '*en un souffle*', which accompanies the final phrase of '*Danse maigre*' has created another opportunity for quasi-impromptu pianism. As shown in

Example 8.9, prior to the moment where ‘*en un souffle*’ appears, there is a conventional tempo marking *ralentir* provided by Satie and from then on, no other tempo marking is given.

Example 8.9 Musical phrase with in-score text ‘*en un souffle*’, ‘Danse maigre’, system 14

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

In common performance practice, pianists could apply at their own discretion a slight *ritardando* towards the very end of the piece, perhaps the last couple of beats, to gesture the finale unless composers specifically indicate not to do so by stating *sans rit* as an example. To keep an unchanged tempo towards the end of the piece is not unusual, but to abruptly speed up for the final phrase before the end without the provision of any specific tempo changing terms such as *a tempo* or *accelerando* is rare. Performance interpretations of the final phrase of ‘Danse maigre’ demonstrate such unusual performance gestures, which lead me to assert that Satie’s in-score text has made an impact on pianists’ performance styles.

Lawson follows the performance indication of *ralentir* towards the end of the piece and a small *ritardando* is applied at his discretion to the last few semiquaver notes. Lawson’s performance style of the final system provides a sense of closure as

his tempo resumes to his chosen pace of ‘assez lent’ at the start of the piece. His tempo alteration suggests conventional performance practice, demonstrating an awareness of the overall structure of the piece. As such, it is rational to claim that the text ‘*en un souffle*’ does not lead to extra performance gestures and hence, does not play a role in influencing Lawson’s performance style.

Amongst other pianists, Tacchino, Körmendi, Dickinson, Ogawa and Van Veen change the tempo for the final phrase as if Satie had indicated ‘*a tempo*’ to request the manipulation of the existing speed. Instead of simply changing the speed, Poulenc alters his tempo by resuming to the original speed that he adopts in the first system for the beginning of the final phrase before he applies *ralentando* midway through the phrase (Time code of systems 13 to 14: 01:18–01:36). The performance by Okiñena, however, showcases a controversial approach by manipulating the tempo in a much more extreme measure. He addresses *ralentir* in the final system by adopting the very slow tempo of around 30 beats per minute after having previously performed at a fast tempo. Similar to Lawson’s performance, a clear sense of ‘recapitulation’ is also achieved by Okiñena when the chosen slow tempo for the final system echoes with the similarly slow tempo of 35 beats per minute in the first system, except that at the ‘*en un souffle*’ passage, he made the performance decision to perform with a presto tempo of 136 beats per minute as if he was trying to rush towards the finishing line. (Time code of systems 13 to 14: 01:33–01:58) Okiñena’s drastic and spontaneous tempo change for the last phrase leads to my claim that the text ‘*en un souffle*’ would be the only possible stimulus to cause such a performance decision, especially when he does not execute similar abrupt change in tempo anywhere else. Okiñena’s approach of the last phrase is also shared by pianists Entremont and Thibaudet despite the fact that their change in speed for the final

phrase is not as drastic as Okiñena's execution (Time code of systems 13 to 14 for Entremont: 01:15–01:30/ Thibaudet: 01:25–01:43).

As a pianist, I interpret the text '*en un souffle*' as a similar expression to 'one last breath', which signifies total exhaustion as discussed earlier (See pp. 221–222). My proposed performance of the final phrase would be with an effective *ritardando*, in the feel of *morendo* (dying away) in order to express the feeling of exhaustion, instead of simply holding back the tempo. The diverse interpretations of the final phrase, of which unconventional performance approaches are demonstrated show how Satie's in-score texts could lead to quasi-impromptu pianism, the outcome of which validates in-score textual stimuli as effective interpretive criteria to influence performance interpretations.

In the following, I single out performances by Poulenc, Ciccolini, Tacchino, Queffélec and Okiñena to expose the overall quasi-impromptu pianism applied to 'Danse maigre' as representative case studies. These pianists' performances are chosen for further discussion, as their execution is full of creative gestures that are worth exploring as a whole. By exposing one or two examples from each of these performances as I did in the previous section is insufficient to show each of these pianists' overall aims in their respective performance approaches. Poulenc, as the first-generation pianist for Satie's piano pieces, illuminates the performance practice of Satie's texted piano pieces in an era that they both belonged to. Together with performances by pianists of subsequent generations, such as Aldo Ciccolini and Anne Queffélec of the second-generation and Josu Okiñena of the later-generation, they expose the degree of impact Satie's power of suggestions has on musical interpretations of his texted piano works by pianists of different generations, through

their personal reactions to different musical elements and in-score texts in ‘Danse maigre’ as well as Satie’s humoristic and defiant persona as a composer.

Poulenc’s recorded performance demonstrates moments when he frees himself from following Satie’s written articulation. Despite the fact that it is not possible to prove whether Satie supported such flexible practice, Poulenc’s decision to alter some of Satie’s given articulation in his performance of ‘Danse maigre’ inevitably opens up avenues for freedom in expression and interpretation for second- and later-generation pianists as he would have initiated the performance tradition for Satie’s piano pieces. For instance, in Example 8.10, Poulenc articulates the F crotchet note, as circled, with a staccato touch instead of an accent as indicated by Satie (Time Code: 00:22–00:25). One could only speculate that perhaps the change in articulation is affected by the appearance of in-score text right above the note.

Example 8.10 Poulenc’s alternative articulation in ‘Danse maigre’, system 4

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

In Example 8.11a and 8.11b, where the pairs of semiquavers in the accompaniment part are indicated with the staccato touch, Poulenc performs some of the semiquavers with slurs, quite often towards the end of the phrase possibly to highlight the phrase structure for example in systems 5 and 6 (Time Code for Example 8.12a: 00:31–00:36) and in system 10 Example 8.8b (Time code: 01:02–01:07). While this execution outlines the individual phrases clearly, it also accentuates the weak beat in

a witty manner, which suggests that Poulenc could be gesturing the even note syncopation.

Examples 8.11a Freedom in expression and articulation by Poulenc over the staccato quaver notes, 'Danse maigre', systems 5 and 6

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 8.11b, Freedom in expression and articulation by Poulenc over the staccato quaver notes, 'Danse maigre', system 10

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

After the 'Continuez' phrase in systems 8 and 9, which comprises of repetitive chords, a very brief silence gap is implemented to lead into the start of the next

phrase with texts ‘Plein de subtilité, si vous m’en croyez’ (See Example 8.4, p. 223. Time code: 00:02–01:01). The silence gap draws attention to the abrupt change of musical character between the two phrases by slightly disrupting the flow of the music. This gesture by Poulenc responds to Satie’s ‘*Plein de subtilité*’ polite request with wit.

In my opinion, Poulenc’s performance style of ‘Danse maigre’ does not necessarily dramatise the humor in this piece and yet his performance is imbued with creative and imaginative gestures. The tempo change for the first and second systems of music, the flexible approach to the use of articulation and the additional silence gap as highlighting purposes are all expression that Poulenc executes in a stylish but never too exaggerated manner. Although many of these performance decisions are not direct, literal responses to performance markings on the score, Poulenc’s performance has provided ample examples of quasi-impromptu pianism found in Satie’s texted piano pieces.

As a second-generation pianist, Ciccolini’s performance of ‘Danse maigre’ suggests his recognition of the piece as humoristic. Ciccolini effectively uses tempo changes to give the piece a lively, playful character and dismisses the ‘*assez lent*’ and ‘*ennui*’ indications on the score. When applying the gradation of tone, such as the *crescendo* that is marked across the four crotchet beats in system four (See full score in Appendix IV), Ciccolini performs it with wit by giving them a lively and bouncy staccato (Time code: 00:17–00:21). In the subsequent phrase, he increases the tempo from 98 to 107 crotchet beats per minute until he reaches the accented crotchet note where ‘*Remuez en dedans*’ appears. By the time Ciccolini reaches system six, his tempo has increased to 124 beats per minute, injecting much energy and momentum to the music despite no tempo changing markings indicated on the

score (Time code: 00:22–00:34). At the ‘*En dehors, n’est-ce pas*’ phrase at the end of system six, Ciccolini gradually slows down the tempo until he finishes the phrase by the end of system 7 with a generous *ritardando* (Time code: 00:33–00:39). In system 12 where ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’ appears, a fast tempo of 136 crotchet beats per minute is reached before Ciccolini holds back the pulse at *retenir* and then further slows down the phrase until the end of the semiquaver passage at the beginning of system 13. Having slowed down at ‘*ralentir*’ in the last system, Ciccolini gives a last push in tempo and plays the last phrase with ‘*En un souffle*’ at 140 beats per minute to finish off the piece (Time code: 01:01–01:18).

Ciccolini’s imaginative gestures contribute to quasi-impromptu pianism, which is displayed effectively through his interpretive freedom in the use of tempo rubato in ‘*Danse maigre*’. The bold tempo changes and the energetic and lively atmosphere Ciccolini delivers through his performance add humor and wit to the piece. Although it is impossible to confirm which specific interpretive criteria lead Ciccolini to such performance style, Ciccolini’s execution suggests parody and spontaneity as one of many other possible ways to approach Satie’s texted piano pieces.

Tacchino’s performance suggests that he articulates the piece with a strong sense of direction in order to express the musical intent he has for ‘*Danse maigre*’. By keeping his tempo more or less around 91 crotchet beats per minute for the first six systems, Tacchino projects these systems by giving an impression that they are to be considered as an opening section. From then on, the tempo changes more frequently through the use of tempo rubato and section rubato, giving the rest of the piece a comparatively more spontaneous character and less nostalgic mood before returning to the original tempo in the second last system of the piece. There is one

particular gesture by Tacchino, which stands out amongst other pianists'. He performs the repetitive D minor chords where '*Continuez*' appears with a gentle touch and an abruptly pulled back tempo, keeping the expression straightforward as if the chords are not trying to seek attention from the audience (See Example 8.4, p. 223/ Time code: 00:50–01:00). His execution resembles a theatrical interval of some sort, during which music would stop and lights would be dimmed while scenery and props on stage would be changed before a new scene (new melody in Satie's case) to be revealed. Tacchino also uses agogic accents and on some occasions, his execution of the agogic accents create brief silence breaks, which outline separate phrases and give each of them a new character.²⁹³ I claim that Satie's in-score texts would have filled Tacchino with abundant imagination, resulting in his quasi-impromptu pianism in '*Danse maigre*' that displays contrasting character amongst different melodic phrases and the resemblance of a musical soundtrack to a theatrical show.

Queffélec delivers '*Danse maigre*' with boundless energy and fast tempo in a way that is similar to Ciccolini's approach. She defies the '*assez lent*' instruction by drastically increases her tempo from 76 to 125 crotchet beats per minute after the first system and maintains the fast pace throughout the rest of the piece (Time code: 00:00–01:12). Queffélec also implements agogic accents that resemble additional silence breaks at times, for example the moment just before the beginning of the phrase with texts '*En dehors, n'est-ce pas*' in system six (Time code: 00:31–00:35) and the moment just before '*Plein de subtilité*' in system nine (Time code: 00:45–00:52). These disjointed moments give spontaneity to the piece as if Queffélec is about to announce a new character after each of the silent breaks. I claim that

²⁹³ Tacchino's use of agogic accent/silence breaks can be found at the end of system three, the '*Remuez en dedans*' phrase in system four and moment just before '*Sur du velours jauni*' in system eight.

Queffélec's performance interpretations are greatly impacted by Satie's in-score texts as she introduces different touch, tempo and agogic accents at points where in-score texts appear. Queffélec's performance style suggests her recognition of the inter-disciplinary nature of 'Danse maigre', which also validates Satie's in-score texts as an important interpretive criterion in the performance of his texted piano pieces.

Okiñena's performance demonstrates a spontaneous approach as a result of his use of tempo rubato, section rubato and agogics at different junctures of the piece. The abrupt tempo changes are highly noticeable throughout the piece. It can vary drastically from one system to the next, or even showing multiple tempo changes in just one system of music. Okiñena also lengthens the duration of Satie's quaver rest in system two, as annotated in Example 8.12, creating a longer than indicated silence break like Poulenc and Queffélec did (Time code: 00:31–00:33).

Example 8.12 Lengthened quaver rest by Okiñena, 'Danse maigre', system 2

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Okiñena's use of dynamics is also versatile and imaginative, creating extra effects that are not indicated by Satie on the score. Examples 8.13a shows how Okiñena gives an echo effect in the musical phrase by executing his own dynamic changes despite Satie's original indication of a *forte* dynamic level (Time code for: 00:38–00:41). Okiñena also defies and alters, though his quasi-impromptu pianism, what

Satie has originally indicated in *pianissimo* as annotated in Example 8.13b (Time code: 01:07–01:11).

Example 8.13a The use of different dynamics by Okiñena, ‘Danse maigre’, system 4

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 8.13b The use of loud dynamics by Okiñena at Satie’s *pianissimo* indication, ‘Danse maigre’, system 8

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

During the interview, Okiñena comments on his quasi-impromptu pianism when performing ‘Danse maigre’. He expresses how his performance interpretations are stimulated by the in-score texts and some of his gestures are indeed free from the guidance of Satie’s performance indications. As a later-generation pianist of Satie’s texted piano pieces, Okiñena’s explanations form vital evidence to support my assertion that in-score textual stimuli is an important performance criterion for Satie’s texted piano music. In response to the bold tempo changes at the first two systems of ‘Danse maigre’, Okiñena explains:

My understanding of these [Satie’s performance] indications is always different. With Satie, it [his music] is an imaginery (*sic*) reality... what provokes me is *to build*, because when I play, when I interpret, when I perform, I create a new world with this piece. There is a scenario: a landscape full of imaginery (*sic*) human beings, running fast from one side to another. For example, the beginning I played very slow... I connect to open the theatre, [revealing] a landscape of people running from here and there.²⁹⁴

The connection that Okiñena makes between the in-score texts and the music does not necessarily mean that he relies on the texts to give interpretive cues to the music. Instead, they work together to evoke imaginary scenarios in his mind, which in turn sparks Okiñena’s creative interpretations. While his spontaneous gestures vary from phrase to phrase and system to system, what unifies his performance is the collection of ever-changing expression. Okiñena believes that there is no specific musical structure in ‘Danse maigre’ and the outburst of emotion and colour is key to his performance. He expresses:

[‘Danse maigre’ is all about] scenario, imagination of people, also the world of colours, much more than the world of structure. Structure does not exist at all here. Everything flashes, it is *not* from beginning to end with a train of thoughts. There is a connection that everything is separated but has a unity. This is the way I see it.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Josu Okiñena, Regarding Erik Satie, Grace Gates interview by , in person via Whatsapp video call (repr., Spain, 2019).

²⁹⁵ Josu Okiñena, Regarding Erik Satie, Grace Gates interview by , in person via Whatsapp video call (repr., Spain, 2019).

Okiñena's opinions clarify that the inclusion of in-score texts to piano piece such as 'Danse maigre' contributes to the formation of the piece's character. The fun and dynamic performance style demonstrated by Okiñena could be seen as humoristic gesture to highlight Satie's texted piano pieces, which have been commonly perceived as humoristic piano pieces. However, Okiñena's clarification unfolds the imaginative world he created during the performance of 'Danse maigre' at the time of the recording. When prompted during the interview of whether his spontaneous and unconventional approach to the performance of 'Danse maigre' might have been encouraged by Satie's defiant persona as a composer, Okiñena's response is: 'he [Satie] is a genius because he has created many possibilities to perform his pieces. He [His piano pieces] opens many different ways [for pianists] to perform them, and this is what Art should be!'²⁹⁶

Ogawa's interpretation of 'Danse maigre' demonstrates flexibility on one hand, and control on another. Apart from dismissing the '*assez lent*' tempo indication and begins the piece in a brisk pace, Ogawa follows the rest of the score closely by fulfilling most of Satie's performance indications. I argue that by being a Debussy specialist, she might have adopted her understanding of the performance practice of Debussy's piano music to Satie's case based on the logic that they were each other's contemporaries and they shared the performance practice of the same era. By doing so, Ogawa shows clear contrasts of different articulation markings in her performance; for example, in system four where there are four tenuto chords followed by the accented minim chord, as well as the subsequent staccato notes followed by the accented crotchet beneath the text '*Remuez en dedans*' (Time code:

²⁹⁶ Josu Okiñena, Regarding Erik Satie, Grace Gates interview by , in person via Whatsapp video call (repr., Spain, 2019).

00:14–00:19). The same can be said to Ogawa’s projection of dynamic range. From systems five to seven, where Satie marked ‘*pp*’, which is then changed to ‘*f*’, she makes the dynamic change very noticeable. More importantly, to address the phrase with in-score text ‘*En dehors, n’est-ce pas*’ (See Example 8.3, p. 222), Ogawa clearly shifts the balance from the more or less equal volume of the two parts in the previous phrase to a much more prominent right-hand part and a faded left-hand part. This gesture suggesting her reflection of the text ‘*en dehors*’, of which in the performance practice of Debussy’s piano music would be a request for pianists to bring out a particular melody (Time code of systems 5 to 7: 00.23–00:31) In system twelve with the phrase alongside text ‘*Sec comme un coucou*’, her execution of the left-hand chords is short and brief with no use of the sustain pedal. This gesture again suggests her reflection of the text ‘*sec*’, which would mean to perform with ‘a dry touch’ in the case of Debussy’s piano music (Time code: 00:58–01:02). Ogawa’s performance approach blends together her knowledge as a Debussy piano music specialist and her interpretation of Satie’s texted piano pieces.

Conclusion on the quasi-impromptu pianism in ‘Danse maigre’

From Auric addressing Satie as ‘Musicien humoriste’ to his 1912–1915 piano pieces being regarded as humoristic piano pieces by subsequent musicologists, Satie’s texted piano works continue to baffle pianists with his deliberately absurd or cryptic piece titles and in-score texts.²⁹⁷ The uncertain function of these texts as performance cues results in some pianists dismissing the possible inter-disciplinary

²⁹⁷ George Auric, "Erik Satie Musicien Humoriste", *Revue Française De Musique*, no. 4 (1913): 138–142.

connection and turn to adopt a conventional performance practice approach, while others would take the opportunity of such ambiguity to experiment with new gestures or perform in a style that exposes humoristic gestures to match the category these piano pieces proposed in recent Satie musicology. Performance gestures that imply humor are displayed through pianists' use of articulation, dynamics and tempo in an exaggerated and abrupt manner. Despite the fact that the in-score texts often do not directly reflect pianists' performance styles at a particular moment, the outcomes of the performance evaluations and the opinions given by interviewees confirm that, to some of them, in-score texts indeed play a part in stirring up pianists' emotions, which encourages them to make performance decisions that could highlight the humoristic tone in their interpretations or even create a scenario personal to the pianist. As the evaluation outcomes show that the performance interpretations of 'Danse maigre' are so diverse, this case study sets an excellent example in demonstrating how flexible performance approaches could be applied to Satie's texted piano piece. In response to my research question, pianists who choose to dismiss the potential interpretive function of the in-score texts, their performances tend to sound more reserved than those whose performances are shown to be more imaginative. It is also crucial to clarify that in this particular piece, some of Satie's in-score texts could be interpreted as carrying an interrogatory tone rather than being sarcastic, for example "Plein de subtilité, si vous m'en croyez (Full of subtlety, if you want to believe me)". For pianists who choose to interpret some of the in-score texts such as this as an appeal from Satie to go along with his performance suggestion, the outcome could equally lead to a more reserved performance style if taken literally.

Regarding the new inter-art genre in these pieces, Potter rightly raised the issue that whether traditional performance practices ought to be applied.²⁹⁸ She questions: ‘should the media of music and text have equal status?’²⁹⁹ From the evaluation outcomes, I argue that while the text has its driving force, the answer to Potter’s question depends hugely on pianists’ own discretion. From a pianist’s point of view, I support the notion of allowing music and text to share equal status in influencing performance decisions as to me, Satie’s intention is clear. Inclusion of these in-score texts produces an inference that pianists should take them into account. As a pianist, it seems logical to me that the in-score texts have implications for interpretation, but equally I accept that they could be viewed as commentary on the fashionable exoticism at the time. As examined in ‘Danse maigre’, the position of the in-score texts shows relevance to the music they associate with. I, therefore, agree with Potter’s notion that ‘by including texts in a piano score, Satie is inviting his performer to see links between music and words, to consider the work as a totality.’³⁰⁰ Even though contemporary pianists may not be able to decode Satie’s texts fully, as Madeline Milhaud points out, it does not mean that the texts are therefore redundant and serve no purpose in influencing performance styles.

This chapter has drawn attention to an area that is worthy of further research, which is to examine and reveal possible meanings carried by the in-score texts of other piano works in relation to how these texts could further enrich performance interpretation. My evaluation outcomes have also illuminated how the intuitive mind plays a part in the performances. Even for pianists who decide not to be affected by the in-score texts, their choice to by-pass the texts is indeed a reaction to the work

²⁹⁸ Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 137.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 137.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 104.

(music and words) as a totality to an extent. While some pianists choose to perform with performance gestures that exaggerate or defy original indications for humoristic effect, it is true to say that it is just one of many other approaches that pianists adopt for the performance of the texted piano pieces. With regard to humour, I conclude by claiming that the term ‘humoristic’ can be misleading to the understanding of performance approaches, especially for those whose interpretations are influenced by their imagination, which may have nothing to do with it.

Another conclusion that I draw from the outcomes is that the French lineage pianists, namely Poulenc, Entremont, Tacchino and Queffélec, do not necessarily perform Satie’s texted piano pieces in similar ways. However, what they have in common is that their interpretations of ‘Danse maigre’ offer a high degree of flexibility and creativity to what is provided on the music score. By comparison, performance approaches adopted by English pianists Dickinson and Lawson are relatively reserved as their interpretations mostly correspond to the performance indications found on the score without extra creative gestures. Debussy specialist Ogawa’s approach indicates her awareness of applying conventional meanings to some of Satie’s in-score texts as well as allowing her decisions to defy some of Satie’s indications. In sum, Satie has created a genre that serves to expand pianists’ horizons of the way written performance indications can be understood. Satie has offered pianists the extra layer of interpretive stimuli, which contributes to the shaping of one’s performance in addition to the conventional performance indications. Without the in-score texts, and the associated ambiguity, the power of suggestions diminishes and pianists’ freedom to imagine, interpret and express would also be curbed by being pushed into specific performance directions.

As Howat expresses: ‘Debussy’s descriptive exhortations are aimed at our sensibility, Ravel’s *sans expression* is a clever prescriptive use to deter us from botching the inbuilt expression by emoting.’³⁰¹ To my claim, Satie’s performance directions, piece titles and in-score texts are not to direct or curb pianists’ expression and emotion but act as open-ended stimuli to free pianists to interpretive possibilities. They add character and style to the music that are considered central and personal to individual performers. Quasi-impromptu pianism is fueled by the reliance of a high degree of subjectivity when decoding Satie’s possible jokes or obscure meaning in the in-score text, which will forever be open to different interpretations. The highly diverse performance styles as demonstrates in this chapter should be acknowledged as typifying performance practice of Satie’s piano music.

To sum up the performance practice of ‘Danse maigre’ from *Croquis et agaceries d’un gro bonhomme en bois*, the case study brings awareness to pianists of how Satie’s in-score texts could enrich pianists’ understanding of the music. The in-score texts could reveal the subtle musical quotations, which are mostly in disguise or they could conjure up a particular mood, serving as the backcloth of a particular story that Satie could have had in mind. To dismiss the connection between the in-score texts and the music itself would miss the opportunity to appreciate the whole canvas of the music composition, whether or not pianists perceive a close relationship between them to exist.

³⁰¹ Roy Howat, *The Art Of French Piano Music* (repr., New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 209.

Chapter Nine

Quasi-impromptu pianism in the Texted Piano Piece

Sonatine bureaucratique (1917)

Introduction

Sonatine bureaucratique was composed within the period of 1914–1919 that sees the output of other ‘humoristic’ or texted piano pieces. Due to the way Satie implements the connection amongst the musical references, the music and in-score texts, *Sonatine bureaucratique* stands out to be different from the rest of his piano oeuvres. Instead of borrowing snippets of musical quotes from other composers’ works as seen in the examples of *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois*, Satie references heavily on Clementi’s *Sonatina in C*, op. 36, no.1 by giving the piece its three musical movements to mimic the conventional structure of a sonatina. At a glance, Satie’s musical reference of Clementi’s *Sonatina in C* is clear as he not only blends Clementi’s melodic contours, rhythmic patterns, phrase structures and tempo markings for the corresponding movements with his newly composed materials, he also directly quotes Clementi’s themes in a transposed key. For example, in bar 17 of the final movement, Satie announces through in-score texts ‘Un piano voisin joue du Clementi (A neighbouring piano is playing Clementi)’ while musically displaying the familiar theme from bars 17 to 20.³⁰² In terms of the notational presentation, Satie re-introduces the use of time signature, key signature and bar-lines, and also abolishes the use of blank spaces on the score. Therefore, visually, *Sonatine*

³⁰² English translation of the original French in-score texts is based on Orledge’s edited score of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. Robert Orledge, *Erik Satie Complete Works For Piano Volume 3*, 1st ed. (repr., Édition Salabert, 2016), 1–8.

bureaucratique resembles a conventional piano work in the classical period. Traditional tempo or tempo changing terms are also used, such as ‘*allegro*’, ‘*andante*’, ‘*très ralenti*’, ‘*ralentir*’ and ‘*a tempo*’. That said, a witty exception can be found in the final movement when Satie provides the made-up term ‘*vivache*’, likely to mock Clementi’s original *vivace*. In regard to the in-score texts in *Sonatine bureaucratique*, the narrative describes a bureaucrat’s taskless working day in his office with an emphasis on his self-gratification and fulfilment despite nothing in particular has been achieved. This positive emotion is soon replaced by sadness and self-reflection, and finally leads to his departure of the office, a workplace that he initially travels to with great contentment.

Apart from the incorporation of in-score texts in *Sonatine bureaucratique*, the change in compositional and notational style in comparison to the rest of Satie’s ‘humoristic’ or texted piano pieces has led musicologists such as Orledge and Whiting to regard *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a neoclassical work. In different opinions, Belva Jean Hare and Ann-Marie Hanlon both challenge Satie’s sincerity in adopting the neoclassical style in *Sonatine bureaucratique* as they both see the piece as having a heavier weighting on mocking rather than endorsing the neoclassical style even though it is true that the neoclassical style does incorporate the use of parody in music compositions. Having critiqued previous musicologists’ opinions on *Sonatine bureaucratique*, I argue that the extreme music exaggeration that is considered a parody by Hanlon and Hare, points at Satie mocking the neo-classical practice adopted by his peers and in this regard, I call it supra-stylistic. I assert that Satie composed this piece in order to criticize on his peers who endorsed the neoclassical style by having to rework the technique of the past rather than moving forward and experimenting with new compositional techniques.

This chapter examines how the supra-stylistic criticism I propose Satie brings in this work can be suggested by the combined roles of the musical features and in-score texts, which will subsequently justify the inter-disciplinary nature of the piece. To do so, I bring Satie's in-score texts to the foreground and investigate how in-score texts and the music work together to give the message of aesthetic criticism. I also put forward my understanding of Satie's musical meanings and to offer my perspective as a pianist and an analyst in order to establish that the supra-stylistic approach is one interpretative choice of several to be considered. In the performance evaluation, I expose how pianists gesture the neo-classical or supra-stylistic traits of the piece, at their own discretion and illuminate quasi-impromptu pianism as a response to the inter-disciplinary nature of the piece.

Musicologists' viewpoints on *Sonatine bureaucratique*

By definition, in accordance with Arnold Whittall, neoclassicism is 'a movement of style in the works of certain 20th century composers, who, particularly during the period between the two world wars, revived the balanced forms and clearly perceptible thematic processes of earlier styles to replace what were, to them, the increasingly exaggerated gestures and formlessness of late Romanticism'.³⁰³ Whittall clarifies: 'since a neo-classicist is more likely to employ some kind of extended tonality, modality or even atonality than to reproduce the hierarchically structured tonal system of true (Viennese) Classicism, the prefix 'neo-' often carries the implication of parody, or distortion, of truly Classical traits.'³⁰⁴

³⁰³ Arnold Whittall, "Neo-Classicism | Grove Music", Oxfordmusiconline.Com, 2001, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19723>.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

Regarding *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a neoclassical work, Orledge expresses: ‘writing against a pre-set and familiar musical backcloth appealed to both composers (Satie and Stravinsky), and especially to Satie, who found composition more difficult. Indeed, it [*Sonatine bureaucratique*] is a tribute to his constant desire to forge the path ahead for others to follow that he only indulged in one such neoclassical work.’³⁰⁵ Recognising *Sonatine bureaucratique* as one of the early neoclassical examples, Whiting denotes that the piece provides the ‘basic postures associated with neo-classicism from the 1920s on’.³⁰⁶

More recently, Belva Jean Hare puts forward a different claim to what Orledge and Whittall infers as she proposes that Satie might have adopted the neoclassical compositional style of *Sonatine bureaucratique* in order to critique the role of sonata form.³⁰⁷ Hare examines the musical borrowing in this piano piece and explores the paraphrases in detail, discovering that Satie’s extended paraphrases aim to ‘distort their procedures and pair them with absurd or inconsequential scenarios’ instead of embracing the neoclassical spirit of reviving balanced forms as Whittall defines.³⁰⁸ The technique of creating the absurdity and ‘joking about its [musical] identity’³⁰⁹ invites Hare to regard *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a piece of irony, as she argues that *Sonatine bureaucratique* ‘seems to critique the role of sonata form and those who would perpetuate that role.’³¹⁰ As an example, Hare demonstrates how Satie repeated the four identical cadential bars before reaching the double bar-lines to end a section. For her, this is Satie’s gesture of ‘manipulating traditional priorities

³⁰⁵ Robert Orledge, *Satie The Composer* (repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 26.

³⁰⁶ Steven Moore Whiting, *Satie The Bohemian* (repr., Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 488.

³⁰⁷ Belva Jean Hare, "91", *Repositories.Lib.Utexas.Edu*, 2005, <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/2441/hareb78915.pdf>.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

in extended paraphrases ... [in order to critique] the oppression of creativity that results with the unnecessary adoption of musical conventions'.³¹¹ The 'traditional priorities' point directly to the conventional musical gestures in a classical sonata piece, which involves, for example, the use of standard sonata form, contrasting themes that ought to be developed, predictable key changes, cadential points and the fast-slow-fast tempi across the three movements. Hare's opinions establish an opposite viewpoint to Orledge and Whiting who jointly claim that *Sonatine bureaucratique* sincerely celebrates and endorses the neoclassical style, whereas for Hare, the piece is Satie's tool to criticise the reworking of old forms. In response to the contrasting proposition, I use my qualifying terms 'sincere' or 'insincere' neo-classical style to differentiate between Satie's possible intention of endorsing and celebrating the neo-classical practice and the possible alternative, which is to apply the neo-classical practice with the supra-stylistic subtext for the aesthetic criticism to recycle old forms.

Ann-Marie Hanlon also expresses that 'Satie reworks Clementi's piece with the aim of destroying many of the elements that situate it historically: the use of Alberti bass, regular periodization, diatonicism (Satie incorporates instances of bitonality) and traditional development which he avoids through musical repetition in order to make the piece comply with his non-developmental approach to composition... Satie uses various forms of musical surprise in order to subvert Classical principles through situational irony in this piece.'³¹² Hanlon's opinion suggests that Satie aimed to use parody in *Sonatine bureaucratique* to criticize his

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ann-Marie Hanlon, "Satie And The Meaning Of The Comic", in *Erik Satie: Music, Art And Literature*, 1st ed. (repr., Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 45.

peers' aesthetic recycling of Classical principles and as such, the emphasis reflects the 'insincere' approach to the use of neo-classical style.

Relationship between in-score texts and music in *Sonatine bureaucratique*

To assert that the narrative in *Sonatine bureaucratique* has a strong connection with the music, I examine closely from a pianist's point of view, how the in-score texts respond to the musical references as the music progresses from the first to its last movement. One of the in-score texts 'Combien cela est triste (How sad it is)' appears for the first time in bars 25 to 26 of the final movement, which I interpret and claim that it is Satie's ultimate statement to express that it is sad for composers to confine oneself to Classical conventions in line with the neoclassical principles. To make the subsequent discussion of the relationship between the music and the in-score texts clear to follow, I include the full score of *Sonatine bureaucratique* in Appendix VI.

In the opening section of the first movement—*allegro*, which includes bars 1 to 23, Satie introduces the main theme and in-score texts '*Le voilà parti (He's off)/Il va gaiement à son bureau (He goes merrily to his office)/ en se <<gavillant>> (whistling as he goes)/ Content, il hoche la tête. (With a contented nod of his head)*'. I interpret 'he' and the happy emotion of journey to the office as metaphor for 'composer' and his contentment to follow the Classical principles of the sonata form or to extend this notion further, any existing musical conventions. A bureaucrat's daily office work, which is often considered repetitive and mundane, can be used to symbolise the practice of following compositional conventions, a practice that was equally repetitive and mundane in Satie's mind as a composer. As shown in Example 9.1, the typical ascending melodic lines that help build up in the first section with its

standard two-bar phrase appears four times from bar 8 to 15 is a typical feature in classical sonata pieces.

Example 9.1 Standard two-bar phrases with the ascending melodic lines, first movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 8 to 15

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

During these measures that display cliché musical gestures, in-score texts '*Il va gaiement à son bureau (He goes merrily to his office)*' and '*en se <<gavillant>>* (whistling as he goes)' appear, which I interpret as Satie metaphorically expressing that other neo-classical composers feel fulfilled and happy to compose by adhering to conventions. To follow, there is the typical gesture of the provision of tonic broken chord with the dominant key change, which is indicated by the D sharp accidentals in bars 17 and 18 as shown in Example 9.2, to prepare for the arrival of the development section. Satie's supra-stylistic use of musical exaggeration and in-score texts appear from bars 19 to 23 as he repeats the tonic broken chord measure three more times possibly to mock the cliché often found in classical sonata pieces,

an observation that Hare also supports.³¹³ Accompanying these repeated bars is the narrative ‘*Content, il hoche la tête. (With a contented nod of his head)*’, which emphasises the criticism carried by the musical exaggeration once again through the use of in-score texts.

Example 9.2 Typical tonic broken chords and dominant modulation, first movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 17 to 23

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

By the same token, in-score texts ‘*Assis dans son fauteuil il est heureux, et le fait voir (Sitting in his armchair, he is happy, and he shows it)*’ that appear at the end of the first movement from bar 54 are also accompanied by the recurring tonic broken chords in its expected return of the original A major. Putting the two endings together, the respective narrative that emphasises on a happy and fulfilled bureaucrat, the repetitive musical gestures and the conventional key changes show that the music and the in-score texts are closely connected and as a joint effect,

³¹³ Belva Jean Hare, "62–64", *Repositories.Lib.Utexas.Edu*, 2005, <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/2441/hareb78915.pdf>.

expresses that the mundane and uncreative setting brings happiness and contentment to the bureaucrat or a neoclassical composer as I would interpret.

In the second movement, Satie's in-score texts focus on the bureaucrat's desire to be promoted in order to get a pay rise and to move away from his existing abode. I claim that the narrative could be an analogy of a composer's desire to progress and explore new compositional styles, implying that the neoclassical movement that revived Classical principles lacked inspiration. Musically, the use of tonality in this movement also demonstrates the slight departure from the Classical principles. While Clementi closes his first theme by modulating to the sub-dominant, Satie responds to his tonal scheme by providing a series of modulations to remote keys within only ten bars. Beginning with D major, the music first modulates to its dominant A major in bar 5, followed by three bars of shifting tonalities before firmly modulating to E minor in bar 11 and then to the opening key of D major as shown in the annotated Example 9.3. After the unexpected tonal changes, the cadential point in bar 22 brings the middle movement to a close with the *expected* tonic D major key, which imitates Clementi's tonal plan of returning to its tonic in bar 12. I argue that Satie's decision to closely follow a sonata form's harmonic scheme in the first movement, then introducing the unexpected modulations and tonal shifts in the second movement before bringing to a close with the conventional modulation of returning to its tonic key represents the small and initial steps taken to depart and defy Classical principles.

Example 9.3 Satie's shifting tonalities, second movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 4 to 13

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

As for the final movement, Satie's tempo term, harmony, tonality and the way he uses the musical references take on a different direction, so do his in-score texts, which demonstrate a change in content and delivery style. First of all, Satie begins by introducing the nonsense term '*vivache*' as the opening tempo marking to correspond to Clementi's *vivace*. Satie's decision to introduce the made-up word creates contrast with the first two movements, which have the same terms '*allegro*' and '*andante*' to correspond respectively to Clementi's first two movements. Through the use of texts, in this case as a form of quasi-tempo, Satie clearly sets the tone for further exaggeration and explicit supra-stylistic mockery. In terms of the narrative, instead of focusing on office-related topics such as his journey to the

office, the office armchair, his promotion and pay rise, it specifically introduces the ‘*vieil air péruvien (an old Peruvian air)*’, which delivers Satie’s newly composed theme that shares the same rhythm and phrase structure of Clementi’s theme in his final movement. Despite the fact that Satie still follows the rhythmic pattern of Clementi’s last movement theme for his newly composed melody, this time, the theme clearly has its own melodic contour, unlike the way he mimics the opening theme of Clementi’s first movement, which shares similar melodic shape between the two themes as shown in Example 9.4a and b. The ‘*vivache*’ theme, which has less resemblance with Clementi’s ‘*vivace*’ theme provides another instance to show how Satie metaphorically further departs the classical convention by composing this ‘*vieil air péruvien*’ theme that has a melodic contour which deviates progressively more from the original theme as the music enters its final movement.

Example 9.4a Opening themes of *Sonatine bureaucratique* and *Sonatina in C*, first movement, bars 1 to 4

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 9.4b Opening themes in *Sonatine bureaucratique* and *Sonatina in C*, third movement, bars 1 to 8

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The close connection between the in-score texts and the music in *Sonatine bureaucratique* is effectively displayed by Satie quoting Clementi's theme in its transposed version and engaging it as part of the narrative as shown in Examples 9.5a and b. In addition, whenever the transposed Clementi theme interjects Satie's theme, the in-score texts such as '*Un piano voisin joue du Clementi (A neighbouring piano is playing Clementi)*' at bar 17, '*Le piano reprend son travail (The piano starts work again)*' at bar 37 and '*Le piano continue (The piano goes on)*' at bar 69 (See Appendix VI) also appear above the theme to depict that the Clementi theme has now become part of the story and do not only act as a tool for the neo-classical compositional style. In more musical depth, when the transposed Clementi theme first appears with texts '*Un piano voisin joue du Clementi*' from bars 17 to 20, it retains much of the original style of the accompaniment with Satie providing the A octave ostinatos in response to Clementi's pedal notes C, as shown in Example 9.5a and 9.5b.

Example 9.5a Clementi's theme in transposition, *Vivache* movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 17 to 20

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Example 9.5b Clementi's original theme, *Vivace* movement of *Sonatina in C*, bars 17 to 20

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

Similarly, in bars 37 to 40 as the transposed Clementi theme continues, Satie adopts the same style of accompaniment as the original, as shown in Example 9.6a and 9.6b.

Example 9.6a Clementi's theme in transposition, *Vivache* movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 37 to 40

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Example 9.6b Clementi's original theme, *Vivace* movement of *Sonatina in C*, bars 25 to 28

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When the transposed Clementi theme appears for the third time from bars 97 to 100, the narrative that addresses the return of the neighbouring piano is no longer present. It is instead replaced by in-score texts '*Hélas! Il faut quitter son bureau, son bon bureau*' appearing from bar 93, which is four bars earlier than the arrival of the end part of the transposed theme as shown in Example 9.7. The hint of 'the departure' is reflected musically in Satie's chosen style of the accompaniment, which has departed from the previous Clementi-style accompaniment to a scale-like pattern. I assert that the newly adopted accompaniment style, which forms the harmonic interval of parallel fifths with the melody is a clear gesture by Satie to express the *departure* of Classical principles through the abandonment of the triadic harmonization. The use of parallel fourths or fifths as harmonization can also be found in other Satie's piano works, for instance, in the second system of 'La Pêche' in *Sports et divertissements* (1914) and in bar 8 of the second *Nocturne* (1919) as shown in Example 9.8a and b respectively.

Example 9.7 Second and third appearances of Clementi's transposed theme with interrupting bars, *vivache* movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 84 to 116

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restrictions**

Example 9.8a Parallel intervals in ‘La Pêche’, *Sports et divertissements* (1914), system 2

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Example 9.8b Parallel intervals in *Nocturne* no. 2 (1919), bar 8

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

In my view, the new style of harmonization and accompaniment for the transposed Clementi’s theme in bars 97 to 99 therefore symbolises the departure of Classical principles in exchange for Satie’s own musical style. Although musically the new style of harmonization can be construed as ‘sincere’ neoclassicism, the integrated text as I proposed above adds a supra-stylistic dimension, resulting in my perspective on Satie being ‘insincere’ when endorsing the neoclassical style.

In addition to the constant interruptions of Satie’s ‘*vieil air péruvien*’ theme caused by the appearances of Clementi’s transposed theme in different junctures of the final movement, another type of interruption emerges that splits up Clementi’s transposed theme. As shown in annotated Example 9.9, the transposed Clementi theme lasts from bars 17 to 48. However, in bars 24–25, 29–36 and 41–44, new musical materials are introduced, which I labelled ‘Interruption’ as musically and stylistically, the new materials are clearly not part of the ‘*vieil air péruvien*’ theme and are incongruent to the rest.

Example 9.9 First appearance of Clementi's theme from bars 17 to 48 and the introduction of 'Interruption' bars, *Vivace* movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 14 to 52

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I assert that the incongruent ‘interruption’ bars have strong connections with the in-score texts, which jointly create a scenario to symbolise Satie’s successful journey to the breakthrough of musical traditions. I also claim that the in-score texts play an important part in reflecting the different emotional responses that Satie might have experienced as a composer who criticised the neoclassicism aesthetic shared amongst his peers. For example, the narrative changes from the happy bureaucrat’s journey to the office and his overall contentment in the first movement to the mentions of ‘*Combien cela est triste (How sad it is)*’ at bars 25 to 26 and ‘*Tout cela est bien triste (This is all very sad)*’ at bars 33 to 36 of the final movement. Consistently, these in-score texts that reflect negative emotions only appear along the ‘interruption’ bars, which consist of repeated alternating chords with little melodic interest (See Example 9.9). The musical function of these bars is to split up Clementi’s transposed theme (b.25–26/b.77–78, b.33–36/b.85–88/b.93–97, b.41–44). I propose that the abrupt change in the musical style of these ‘interruption’ bars in conjunction with the sad emotion expressed in the texts could be Satie’s gesture to express that it is sad to cling on to Classical principles/ musical traditions. Besides, the incongruent musical ideas in these ‘interruption’ bars that are typical of neo-classicism provide a vehicle for his defiance and also provide moments for reflection in order to challenge the common practice to follow musical traditions. The inclusion of incongruent musical ideas of a few bars length is in fact one of Satie’s compositional styles. For example, in *Danse maigre* as shown in Example 9.10, the repetitive alternating chords that form a second melodic interval as a musical device to split up a continuous musical idea highly resembles the style and character of the ‘interruption’ bars found in the examples of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. To my claim, Satie has utilised Clementi’s theme to represent Classical principles and the

‘interruption’ bars to represent moments of defiance to musical traditions as to be expected in the neo-classical genre.

Example 9.10 The use of repetitive alternating chords in ‘Danse maigre’, systems 8 and 9

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restrictions**

Functionally, these ‘interruption’ bars disrupt the flow of the theme, heighten the anticipation of the subsequent arrival of the theme while put the story on pause and insert movements for reflection. Indeed, Satie makes his intention slightly clearer at bar 41 when the in-score text explicitly says ‘*Notre ami s’interroge avec bienveillance (Our friend questions himself gently)*’ (See Example 9.9, p. 274).

Although the in-score text is subject to different interpretations, the positioning of the texts that suggest self-reflection appearing above the ‘interruption’ bars demonstrates the close connection the in-score texts have with the music.

Lastly, after moments of pondering and reflection, Satie writes ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il. (“Courage: let’s be off!” he says.)*’ at bar 101 which I interpret as Satie’s confirmation of his departure from musical traditions and Classical principles in order to explore new compositional possibilities. Adjacent to the in-score texts is Satie’s melody, which no longer mimics Clementi’s diatonic scale that is built upon the expected tonality as he did on two previous occasions (See Example 9.9 bars 37 to 40, Example 9.7 bars 89 to 92). Instead, Satie introduces, from bars 101 to 104,

the F major scale beginning on its leading note and accompanied by the A tonic pedal notes in bars 97 to 100 (set in the A major key signature) to create the bitonality (See Example 9.7, p. 272). To end the piece, Satie gives one last defiant gesture to correspond to the ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il.*’ notion as he introduces the use of alternate mediant (iii) to submediant (vi) chords, in bars 105 to 110, instead of a traditional dominant (V) to tonic (I) progression to harmonise the E and A notes (See Example 9.7) before ending on the final A major chord.

To sum up, it is clear that the music and published literature support that the neoclassical style is present in this piece, with Satie exploiting the potential of the style for exaggeration and surprise. To extend Hare and Hanlon’s perspectives, I claim that within neoclassicism, the narratives provide a commentary on the style itself by comparing the neoclassical composer with a bureaucrat. In other words, the narratives provide another layer of commentary, parodying and questioning the neoclassical aesthetic itself as practised by his contemporaries. I speculate that Satie was not just working the piece in a technical way, but used the neoclassical style of composing as a tool to question the backward looking aesthetic, mindset and reverence to the past while calling upon the neoclassical composers to forgo musical traditions and to explore new techniques and ideas

Performance analysis and email interviews

In the evaluation process, I choose to focus on examining the performance interpretations of the first and third movements of *Sonatine bureaucratique* by contemporary pianists in order to identify pianists’ performance approaches. The outcomes would also illuminate whether there is a change in pianists’ performance

styles to include more quasi-impromptu and experimental gestures as the piece progresses to the final movement, which displays a higher degree of defiance to the use of classical principles than in the first movement. Pianists' quasi-impromptu pianism would support my perspective of regarding *Sonatine bureaucratique* as an inter-disciplinary work when the in-score texts function as a form of performance interpretive criterion, working closely with the music in order to enrich and deepen the existing musical meanings and to influence pianists' performance decisions.

Amongst the list of pianists shown in Table 9.1, second-generation French pianists Michel Legrand and Bruno Fontaine are the new additions for their distinctive approaches as well as their musical background.³¹⁴ Legrand was a composer and arranger for film and television as well as a jazz pianist and similarly, Fontaine is also a composer and arranger for film music. As both pianists have ample experience in dealing with inter-disciplinary music, I predict that their interpretations would bring new lights to the performance style of *Sonatine bureaucratique*.

Email interviews with pianists Peter Lawson, Bruno Fontaine and Jeroen van Veen provide vital information on how they interpret the in-score texts and music of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. They also clarify whether the inter-disciplinary elements have any impact on their performance decisions and express their opinions in regard to *Sonatine bureaucratique* being interpreted as a neoclassical piece that Satie genuinely endorsed or as a tool to mock and criticise the aesthetic that his peers shared. Amongst the different interpretations, performances with more reserved and controlled expression would suggest a classically aware approach, which supports

³¹⁴ Bruno Fontaine, "Site Officiel De Bruno Fontaine | Biographie", Bruno-Fontaine-Piano.Com, 2016, <http://www.bruno-fontaine-piano.com/music/biographie/biographie.php>.
Michel Legrand, "Biography – Michel Legrand", Michellegrandofficial.Com, accessed 29 August 2019, <http://michellegrandofficial.com/biography>.

the notion of *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a neoclassical piece. In contrast, performances with abundant creative and exaggerated gestures suggest an experimental approach that illuminates *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a parody.

Table 9.1: Recordings chosen for the performance analysis of *Sonatine bureaucratique*

Name of the pianists (Name of the interviewees in bold)	Year of recording
Peter Lawson ³¹⁵	1979
Cordélia Canabrava Arruda ³¹⁶	1979?–1988
Anne Queffélec ³¹⁷	1988
Gabriel Tacchino ³¹⁸	1988
Peter Dickinson ³¹⁹	1990
Michel Legrand ³²⁰	1993
Cristina Ariagno ³²¹	2006
Bruno Fontaine ³²²	2015

³¹⁵ Peter Lawson, *Satie: Piano Music*, CD (repr., London: Warner Classics, 1998), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/2r5W7ieLYkwh9nX2V7ZSFk> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³¹⁶ Cordélia Arruda, *Erik Satie's Complete Piano Works - Volume V*, CD (repr., USA: Imagination Classics, 1995). Weblink is unavailable but recording can be accessed on Spotify.

³¹⁷ Anne Queffélec, *Erik Satie, Anne Queffélec*, CD (repr., Europe: Virgin Classics, 1988), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6sQdEQfFa1Y9q9CDHcudJX> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³¹⁸ Gabriel Tacchino, *Erik Satie, Gabriel Tacchino*, CD (repr., France: Disques Pierre Verany, 1989), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/5weB9brigUccwPlMddXJJW> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³¹⁹ Peter Dickinson, *Satie: Piano Music*, CD (repr., UK: Conifer Classics, 2002), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/1V146ZtS4DrFUko98jgYNB> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³²⁰ Michel Legrand, *Satie Piano Works*, CD (repr., Europe: Erato, 2001), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/4s7r1ypN1cSPMDTwxmJLAV> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³²¹ Cristina Ariagno, *Erik Satie Piano Works*, CD (repr., France: Brilliant Classics, 2006), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/5i5vwj5WpZUX88rp8ZFdGL> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³²² Bruno Fontaine, *Erik Satie*, CD (repr., Aparté, 2015), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/0dJO4UgAg0nObIBFFiOeIT> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

Jeroen van Veen ³²³	2015
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The outcomes

Lawson, Tacchino, Dickinson and Van Veen perform the first movement with a reserved approach that displays refined and controlled expressiveness, demonstrating a classically aware performance style. Lawson expresses: ‘*Sonatine bureaucratique* is modeled on the (classical) Clementi C major sonatine so I approach the Satie with hopefully the same classical awareness (i.e. clean textures, discrete pedal, classical phrasing etc), albeit it tinged with a certain tongue-in-cheek performance-smile.’³²⁴

Lawson’s explanation of his approach is evident in his recording. He performs with a steady tempo of 125 minim beats per minute for the *allegro* tempo marking. There is no tempo rubato or section rubato applied in this movement apart from the occasional use of agogics to emphasise the beginning and the end of a phrase or section, as demonstrated by his execution of bars 24 to 27. As shown in Example 9.11, Lawson performs the accented notes in bars 24, 25 and 27 with agogic accents rather than the traditional accent that requires the articulation with an extra force, which would otherwise disturb the lyrical phrase in the assigned *piano* dynamic level. The accented minim in bar 27 is performed sympathetically to end the phrase instead of providing an absurd accent on the weak beat for comedy effect as pianists such as Legrand and Fontaine do (Time code for Lawson’s execution: 00:22–00:25/ Legrand: 00:19–00:22/ Fontaine: 00:23–00:28).

³²³ Jeroen van Veen, *Satie: Complete Piano Music*, CD (repr., The Netherlands: Brilliant Classics, 2016), <https://open.spotify.com/embed/track/6oqe0phcTftuLsd2Y6AVi6> width="300" height="380" frameborder="0" allowtransparency="true" allow="encrypted-media."

³²⁴ Peter Lawson Grace Gatesto, "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016. Transcription has not been edited, all words are Lawson’s own.

Example 9.11 The use of agogic accents by Lawson, first movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 24 to 27

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Tacchino has chosen a much faster tempo of between 138 and 146 minim beats per minute for the *allegro* first movement in comparison to Lawson's tempo choice. The faster tempo and shorter staccato articulation in his performance makes the movement naturally sound livelier. From bars 8 to 15, shown previously in Example 9.1, p. 260, Tacchino uses crescendos to gesture the build-up suggested by the ascending scale-like melodies despite the lack of dynamic markings given by Satie. The louder dynamic level is then sustained through to the end and a clear accented chord at the end of bar 23 finishes the section, shown in Example 9.2, p. 261 (Time code: 00:06–00:20). Tacchino's performance is delivered with more expression and gestures in comparison to Lawson's version but the performance style is still considered to be classically aware, as his execution can often be rationalised to be reflecting the musical structure and melodic contours.

Similarly, Dickinson performs the *allegro* movement with a steady tempo of around 120 minim beats per minute and applies no tempo rubato or dynamic changes throughout. In regard to bars 19 to 23 as shown in Example 9.2 where Satie lengthens the cadential passage and places a staccato chord in the weakest (last) beat of each of these bars possibly for defiant gestures, Dickinson responds by maintaining his classically aware approach and avoids striking the chords with extra

force like Legrand and Fontaine do. By doing so, Dickinson curbs the opportunity to manipulate the natural metrical accent and in turn, makes his performance aim very clear through his thoughtful and meticulous execution.

Van Veen starts the *allegro* movement with a tempo of 100 minim beats per minute and keeps the pulse consistent apart from the end of bar 27 where he applies *ritardando* to gesture the end of a phrase (See Example 9.11). From bars 8 to 12, as shown in Example 9.1, Van Veen meticulously avoids playing the accents in the left-hand part with extra force in order to let the music flow as smoothly as possible. Dynamics are kept at the same level for the ascending passages with no intention of creating any build up before reaching the first bar of the extended cadence at bar 19. Only then, Van Veen applies *crescendos* until the end of the section to give an affirmative ending (Time code: 00:05–00:28). His execution in the first movement supports the classically aware performance style with controlled expressiveness and clarity.

Pianists Arruda, Queffélec, Legrand, Ariagno and Fontaine demonstrate the experimental approach right from the first movement, suggesting that they detect gestures of mockery in *Sonatine bureaucratique* and aim to deliver the piece as a parody through bold and humoristic expression. Arruda applies section *rubato* in the *allegro* movement. She chooses to perform with a moderate tempo of 90–95 minim beats per minute for the opening bars. In bars 10 and 11, see Example 9.12 for the comparison of corresponding themes by Clementi and Satie in bars 8–11, Satie introduces the descending thirds in the right-hand part and transfers the ascending melody of Clementi's original setting to the lower register to subvert build up as Clementi had intended.

Example 9.12 Satie's reference of Clementi's sonatina theme in bars 8 to 11, first movement

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

At this juncture, Arruda applies tempo rubato and pulls back the tempo to reflect the drop in register for the ascending melody, which has now become the accompaniment part and the descending thirds in the right-hand part as the melody. From then on, a tempo of 110 is heard from bars 16 to 18, which drops to 102 beats for the extended cadential phrase from bars 19 to 23 (Time code for bars 8 to 23: 00:09–00:28, See Appendix VI for full score). Arruda's execution of tempo fluctuation in bars 9 and 10 in addition to the use of section rubato to disrupt the steady tempo of the opening section display a performance style that is not classically aware, which possibly reflects Satie's supra-stylistic compositional approach.

Queffélec performs with a high degree of clarity over a fast tempo of 145 minim beats per minute for the *allegro* movement. The ascending passages from bar 8 to 15 (see Example 9.1, p. 264) are performed with *crescendo*, generating a surge of energy. Queffélec's performance also reveals her awareness of Satie's use of

descending thirds to subvert the would-be build up in bars 10 to 11. In my opinion, she gestures this change in a witty manner by allowing the energy to expand but abruptly wilt at bar 19 with her unexpected drop in dynamic level (Time code of bars 1 to 23: 00:00–00:20). Perhaps Queffélec aims to provide a casual ‘contented nod’ gestures through her performance as a reflection of the in-score texts. In my opinion, the abrupt change of dynamic level does not only subdue the energy initially generated from bars 8 to 15, it also gives an underwhelming finish to the first section despite the extended cadential passage.

Legrand’s performance is full of humorous gestures. With a consistently fast tempo of 144 minim beats per minute with no application of agogic accent or tempo rubato, the first movement sounds deliberately rushed, like an *allegro* movement being fast forwarded. Legrand keeps his dynamic level constant instead of the commonly applied crescendos to reflect the ascending passages before he reaches the final cadence (Time code of bars 1 to 23: 00:00–00:19). In my interpretation, Legrand’s performance gestures aim to reflect that the conventional build up is non-existent in Satie’s case here. His treatment of the extended cadence from bar 19 to 21 is also atypical of a classically aware performance style as he accents the last beat of each of these bars to upset the regular metrical pulse. On a separate occasion, Legrand also manipulates his dynamic range for humoristic effects. He chooses to ignore the *crescendo* indication in bar 34, as shown in Example 9.13 and keeps his dynamic level to *piano*. This performance decision offers him the opportunity to deliver a *subito forte* dynamic at bar 36 where the main theme reappears (Time code: 00:25–00:30). With not even a slight *ritardando* or agogic accent applied at the end of bar 35, listeners would have no time to adjust to and anticipate the sudden change in dynamic level, creating a shock/humoristic effect for the re-entry of the main

theme. Legrand's performance sounds witty, which gives another example on the freedom of interpretations in *Sonatine bureaucratique*.

Example 9.13 Freedom in interpretations by Legrand in b.34–36 in the first movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*

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Ariagno begins the first movement in a moderate tempo of 92–99 minim beats per minute while applying sustain pedal for the opening phrase. The plentiful sustain pedal leads to the reduction in clarity in Ariagno's performance, which does not support a classically aware performance style and is not a gesture shared by any of the pianists in this case study. For bars 8 to 16 (See Example 9.1, p. 264), Ariagno applies rubato and agogic accents to pull back the tempo. As annotated in Example 9.14, Ariagno performs the staccato notes in bars 11 and 13 with slight tenuto instead of a lively bounce, making the piece sound labored. In terms of the use of agogic accents, they are placed at the beginning of the ascending running passage in bar 12, at the end of bar 15 preceding the descending melody that follows, at the beginning of bar 19 where the extended cadential passage begins and just before the final bar of the section in bar 23. The execution of agogic accents and subtle tempo changes effectively curb the build up and momentum for the first section (Time code of bars 1 to 23: 00:00–00:30).

Example 9.14 Freedom of interpretations by Ariagno in the first movement of
Sonatine bureaucratique, bars 10 to 23

**Excerpt removed due to copyright
restrictions**

At another cadential point in bar 35 (See Appendix VI), just before the main theme returns, Ariagno performs an exaggerated *ritardando*. Although Ariagno's creative and expressive gestures do not boost humour like Fontaine and Legrand do in their performances, her performance style departs from a classically aware approach and leans towards the experimental approach.

Bruno Fontaine's performance style stands out to be the most unconventional amongst all performances in this case study as he adopts radical gestures to deliver the *allegro* movement, reflecting Satie's supra-stylistic exaggeration in this piece. As annotated in Example 9.15, Fontaine begins the piece in a fast tempo of around 140 minim beats per minute and exaggerates the accents at the first beat of the left-hand notes at bar 8 and 12 respectively in addition to placing the extra accent and staccato

for the first beat of bar 5. He also adds ample personal expression that result in altering some of Satie's original articulation in the first section. In bar 15, he chooses to perform with a noticeable *marcato* for the third beat of the bass note, at which Satie marks staccato. At the first bass chord of bars 17 and 18 respectively, they are performed with harsh sounding accents. All of the staccato chords in the fourth beat of the extended cadential passage (bar 19 to 23) are also heavily accented. In terms of the use of dynamics, in the ascending passages, Fontaine plays with unpredictable and arbitrary choices of dynamic levels. For instance, in bar 8 where the ascending scale-like melody first appears, he applies *crescendo* briefly before suddenly dropping the dynamic level in bar 9. However, in bar 13, which has a similar melodic contour to bar 9, Fontaine decides to perform the crotchet chords with *diminuendo* instead, while in bar 10, the non-*crescendo* dynamics could be understood as Fontaine responding to the descending thirds in the treble part despite the ascending passage rising from the lower register. This is, however, followed by the application of sudden *forte* dynamic for the subsequent crotchet chords (Time code of bars 1 to 23: 00:00–00:23). Although it is not uncommon for pianists to give articulation that differ from the composer's original markings as seen in Poulenc's interpretation for *Croquis et agacerie d'un gros bonhomme en bois* (See Chapter Eight, pp. 245–247), I propose that Fontaine's personal articulation choices are provocative and humorous. Fontaine's performance style emphasises on the freedom in musical interpretations and liberating himself from adhering to conventional interpretive criteria to inform performance decisions.

Example 9.15 Creative interpretive gestures by Fontaine, first movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 5 to 23

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The following section examines the performance styles of the third movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. The discussion illuminates how Satie's music and in-score texts prompt quasi-impromptu pianism amongst pianists, which suggests a departure from the classically aware performance style. Musically, the classical traits in this final movement are gradually taken over by Satie's musical language in terms of the use of melodies, harmonies and tonality. I argue that the

way Satie references Clementi's *Sonatina* has also changed in this movement when compared to the first movement since he introduces Clementi's original theme in its transposed version in the final movement to form part of the narrative. In my perspective, the function of the inclusion of Clementi's transposed theme acts as a disruption of Satie's own '*vieil air péruvien*' theme in order to express that the continuous practice of music conventions is sad and mundane as discussed earlier in the chapter (See pp. 275–276). While some pianists stick with the same approach from the first to the last movements, others demonstrate a change in stylistic approach when they reach the final movement. I assert that the change in performance styles to include more experimental gestures by some pianists in the last movement could be motivated by the supra-stylistic approach that Satie might have demonstrated, which intensifies towards the final movement of the piece. In order to unfold contrasting performance interpretations of this movement, I begin with versions by Lawson, Dickinson and Van Veen as representative examples for performance approach that preserves the classical style. For the rest of the pianists in this case study, their performances suggest the experimental approach, with some choosing to exaggerate their performance gestures further as the music progresses.

Lawson chooses a tempo of 100 dotted crotchet beats per minute for this supposedly fast movement. When it comes to the 'interruption' bars that split up Clementi's theme, for example bars 25 and 26 (See Example 9.9, p. 274) with the in-score texts addressing sadness for the first time '*Combien cela est triste (How sad it is)*', my analysis detects Lawson's use of section rubato with tempo dropping abruptly from 100 to 92 dotted crotchet beats per minute. Despite the effect is not aurally explicit, section rubato occurs again in bars 33 to 36 when tempo drops further to 88 dotted crotchet beats per minute. Adjacent to the music is in-score text

addressing sadness for the second time—‘*Tout cela est bien triste (This is all very sad)*’ (See Appendix VI for full score; Time code for bars 17 to 40: 00:10–00:25). In bar 101, where the ascending scale in F major with the A pedal notes form the bitonal harmony accompanied with in-score texts ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il (“Courage, Let’s be off!” he says)*’, Lawson resumes to the original tempo of 100 dotted crotchet beats per minute, which eventually accelerates to reach the tempo of 111 dotted crotchet beats by the end of the piece (Time code for bars 93 to 116: 01:01–01:17).

For Lawson to apply section rubato and tempo rubato in the final movement but not in the first shows that his performance style has changed over the course of the whole piece. While the first two instances of the use of section rubato are subtle, the final change of tempo in bar 101 and the subsequent *accelerando* is clearly heard towards the end of the piece. To my surprise, Lawson clarifies that the bold *accelerando* is not influenced by the in-score texts:

If I hurry towards the end of the last movement, it was definitely NOT to reflect any narrative in the text. I don’t think it was anything more than generating a natural musical momentum. I don’t think the recording’s producer would have allowed me to get away with an unmusical “accel”.³²⁵

Lawson’s comments on his change in tempo, which has not been influenced by the in-score texts is significant since the clarification suggests that Satie’s musical idea has the suggestive power to provoke a natural response that leads to the manipulation of tempo in various forms—tempo rubato and section rubato. For Lawson to regard a narrative-induced *accelerando* as ‘an unmusical accel’, this reveals his disapproval of the narrative to act as a form of interpretive criterion. It also illuminates Lawson’s disagreement of *Sonatine bureaucratique* being an inter-disciplinary piece of music.

³²⁵ Peter Lawson Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

In response to Lawson's statement of 'it was definitely NOT to reflect any narrative in the text', I asked the pianist if he was making conscious decisions to not let any narrative in the text affect his performance decisions and also if he would perform *Sonatine bureaucratique* more or less the same way should there be no in-score texts displaying alongside the notation, to which he replied with a certain degree of ambiguity: 'No conscious decision was made, for or against [the text]. The performance would be the same with or without text.' Lawson's clarification is crucial to the performance evaluation process as it dismisses my assumption about the influence Satie's in-score texts have on his performance of *Sonatine bureaucratique* and minimises speculation and subjectivity raised unavoidably in musical performance analysis.

Dickinson starts the final movement with an opening tempo of 80–85 dotted crotchet beats per minute. Similar to Lawson's case, Dickinson does not apply any rubato and keeps to a steady tempo for the first movement but uses section rubato in the final movement despite the application being sparse. For example, at bar 97, where the parallel 5ths descending scale begins alongside in-score texts '*Hélas! Il faut quitter son bureau son bon bureau. (Alas! He must leave his office, his lovely office.)*', the tempo increases slightly to 87 dotted crotchet beats per minute. At bar 101 where the bitonal harmonies occur with in-score texts '*Du courage: partons dit-il ("Courage: let's be off!" he says)*', tempo is increased more drastically to reach 101 dotted crotchet beats per minute but then stays constant until the end of the piece (Time code of bars 93 to 116: 01:09–01:27). On another occasion, as shown in Example 9.16, where Satie suddenly changed the musical style and composed the four bars of waltz-like music with accompanying narrative '*Il ose valse! (Lui, pas le piano) (He dares to waltz! (Him, not the piano))*' possibly as another 'interruption'

gesture, Dickinson responds by accenting the first beat of each bar and gives the second and third quavers more bounce, clearly depicting the rhythmic style of a waltz (Time code: 00:21–00:24). I claim that his execution to highlight the dancelike style is also prompted by the in-score texts in addition to the musical elements provided in these four bars.

Example 9.16 Waltz-like melody in the third movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 29 to 32

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

I argue that the connection between the in-score texts and the intensified musical exaggeration towards the end of the piece have a joint effect on Dickinson's performance style as he uses more tempo rubato, section rubato and offers performance gestures that reflect the narrative, which emphasises the change in mood. Interestingly, at the incongruent 'interruption' bars, Dickinson does not give specific expression to highlight the abrupt change in musical texture and melody (Time code of bars 29 to 40: 00:21–00:29). As Dickinson does not exaggerate his expression even with the slight change in performance style, it is clear that his overall aim is still at maintaining a classically aware performance style for *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a whole.

Van Veen is the third and last pianist in the list to show a reserved performance style with classical awareness for the final movement. Adopting a slower tempo of 72 dotted crotchet beats per minute to begin with, Van Veen also

uses section rubato in a subtle manner as Lawson and Dickinson do. The difference is that Van Veen does not apply section rubato to bring out the abrupt change in musical materials, such as the interruption bars, or to articulate certain phrases in the piece. Van Veen's performance suggests that he uses section rubato in order to outline the musical structure of the final movement, which also contributes to the delivery of a slight change of mood that can be associated with the musical structure of a sonata form. I claim that the presence of the in-score texts has an impact on how Van Veen determines the musical structure. Table 9.2 gives an overview of Van Veen's application of section rubato in the final movement in response to the appearances of in-score texts.

Table 9.2: The application of section rubato applied by Van Veen in the third movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*

Bar no.	Metronome marks per dotted crotchet beats	Structural significance/ characteristics/ in-score texts
1–28 (Exposition)	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satie’s ‘<i>vieil air péruvien</i>’ melody is introduced for the first time through the music and the narrative (bars 1 to 16). • Clementi’s <i>Sonatine in C</i> melody is introduced for the first time through the music and the narrative (Bars 17 to 24, 27 to 28,). • The first appearance of ‘interruption’ bar (Bars 25 to 26) to indicate the first pondering moment with in-score text ‘<i>Combien cela est triste (How sad it is.)</i>’
29–52 (Middle section)	67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Interruption’ bars in the form of a waltz-like dance are introduced with in-score texts ‘<i>Il ose valse! (Lui, pas le piano) (He dares to waltz! (Him, not the piano))</i>’ (Bars 29 to 32). • Clementi’s theme continues after being interrupted (Bars 37 to 40, 45 to 48). • Interruption bars as the second pondering moment: ‘<i>Tout cela est bien triste. (This is all very sad.)</i>’ (Bars 33 to 36). • Interruption bars as the third pondering moment: ‘<i>Notre ami s’interroge avec bienveillance (Our friend questions himself gently.)</i>’ (Bars 41 to 44, 49 to 52).
53–100 (Recapitulation)	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satie’s ‘<i>vieil air péruvien</i>’ melody returns (Bars 53 to 69) • This section marks the recapitulation with the same structural materials of bars 1 to 40. • The fourth pondering moment to indicate the thought of departure: ‘<i>Hélas! Il faut quitter son bureau son bon bureau. (Alas! He must leave his office, his lovely office.)</i>’ (Bars 93 to 96). • The final appearance of the final four bars of Clement’s theme (Bars 97 to 100).
101 (Coda)	82	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coda section with new tonality (Bitonality and iii-vi chord progressions in replace of the usual V-I progressions as cadential passages) • The final narrative to indicate the action of departure ‘<i>Du courage: partons dit-il (“Courage: let’s be off!” he says)</i>’ (Bars 101 to end)

The breakdown of tempo figures and their corresponding musical and textual features in each of these sections give evidence to Van Veen's use of section rubato as a tool to highlight the musical structure as well as to deliver a slight change in mood for the final movement. His intention is clearly expressed especially when he associates the return to the original tempo of 72 dotted crotchet beats per minute for bars 53 to 100, which I interpret as the recapitulation section. As the narrative progresses to be more and more assertive: beginning with sad, very sad, to self-reflection, contemplation of departure and the eventual courage to leave, Van Veen's tempo changes deliver effectively the emotional journey provoked by the narrative. Besides the use of section rubato, Van Veen places agogics at the end of a phrase, for example, at the end of bar 16, 20, 24, 26, 33 and 36 and applies tempo rubato between bars 45–52 to mark the end of a small section before the Satie's '*vieil air péruvien*' theme returns (Time code of bars 1 to 52: 00:00–00:47). The clarity in phrasing, the controlled use of tempo rubato and the subtle use of section rubato to bring out the imitated-sonata form demonstrate Van Veen's classical awareness in his performance.

Van Veen expresses in the interview that *Sonatine bureaucratique* is 'Erik Satie's ironical reaction to the classical form' and he supports my interpretation of the in-score texts '*Du courage: partons dit-il ("Courage: let's be off!" he says)*' as a metaphor of dismissing the use of traditional forms.³²⁶ As such, it is a twist for Van Veen to choose to perform with classical awareness while in his mind, fully appreciates the ironic elements in this piece. He also expresses that the narrative does not affect his interpretation much as 'it could give a direction in which Satie thought, but often it has little to do with the music.' Drawing from his own

³²⁶ Jeroen van Veen Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

experience of exploring different performance approach for *Sonatine bureaucratique*, Van Veen mentions: ‘We [Van Veen and the narrator] once experimented with speaking out the lines while playing; [it was] not a great success.’³²⁷ Van Veen’s comments illuminate how he does not fully dismiss the contribution of the in-score texts to performance interpretations, while at the same time, he would not execute on a specific gesture based on the content of the narrative. As a matter of fact, his performance sums up this notion effectively. Significantly, by ‘speaking out the lines while playing’ in one of his live performances of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, Van Veen admits to considering the piece as an inter-disciplinary work with the textual stimuli as a crucial element to impact performance styles. Despite the reception of that performance being underwhelming to the audience as Van Veen pointed out, his performance choices have validated my newly proposed interpretive criteria stimuli (See Chapter Three, pp. 61–62) and also offered the in-score texts an inter-disciplinary function accessible to an audience. Above all, Van Veen’s comments expose the suggestive power Satie’s texted piano piece has on provoking pianists to experiment with different performance styles, giving a vivid example on how the key issues associated with Satie’s piano pieces (i.e. the lack of Satie’s performance authorial voice and ambiguity in his musical contributed by the inclusion of unconventional in-score texts as part of the notational presentation) leads to quasi-impromptu pianism and interpretive freedom.

Moving on to the next category of performance approach, I begin with the examination of Tacchino’s interpretation to show how he retains a classically aware performance style for the first movement (See p. 281) and displays a swift change in performance style that gives exaggerated expression and gestures only in the final

³²⁷ Jeroen van Veen Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

movement. Tacchino continues to use conventional performance gestures, such as agogic accents, contrasting articulation and tempo rubato to deliver the final movement but not the use of section rubato, which has seen to be a common interpretative feature adopted by other pianists for Satie's piano pieces. For example, Tacchino places agogic accents to gesture the start and finish of Clementi's melody at the end of bars 16 and 24 (Time code of bars 1 to 28: 00:00–00:18/ bars 61 to 80: 00:41–00:55). By the same token, he places agogic accent at the beginning of bar 33 and at the end of bar 36 to gesture the 'interruption' bars (Time code for bars 29 to 40: 00:19–00:27). An interesting gesture by Tacchino is the way he highlights the dotted crotchet E and F sharp notes of the left-hand part from bars 1 to 8, as shown in Example 9.17, to bring out the recurring major second melodic intervals (Time code: 00:00–00:05).

Example 9.17 Recurring major second melodic intervals in Satie's '*vieil air péruvien*' theme, third movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, bars 1–8

Excerpt removed due to copyright restrictions

The major second melodic interval is an important motive as it is the only melodic interval that Satie uses in all of the 'interruption' bars (See Example 9.7, p. 272 and Example 9.9, p. 274). Tacchino's gesture to highlight the major second intervals right from the start of this movement suggests that he is aware of an important function the intervallic motive carries later in the movement. In terms of the use of

tempo, despite starting the movement with a steady tempo of 94 dotted crotchet beats per minute, Tacchino takes a surprising turn and displays quasi-impromptu pianism to the full by accelerating the tempo from bar 101 onwards to eventually reaching a presto tempo of 158 dotted crotchet beats per minute by the final bar (Time code of bars 53 to 116: 00:36–01:19). The implementation of the dramatic increase in tempo as performance gesture only at the last sixteen bars of the final movement sends a significant message as a performer as if he has decided to forgo the classical principles in replace of new, daring interpretive gestures in order to reflect the in-score texts ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il (“Courage: let’s be off” he says)*’, which I claim is a departure from following musical traditions.

Arruda begins the last movement with a tempo of 73 dotted crotchet beats per minute. Similar to the performance approach adopted for the first movement, section rubato is again applied in the final movement with Arruda dropping the tempo to 52 dotted crotchet beats per minute to highlight the change in mood in the ‘interruption’ bars at bars 25 to 26 and 33 to 36 (Time code from bars 1 to 40: 02:30–03:07). From bar 101 onwards with in-score texts ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il (“Courage: let’s be off” he says)*’, Arruda speeds up to reach 85 dotted crotchet beats per minute before dramatically pushes further to 120 beats per minute by the end of the piece, nearly doubling the tempo at the start of the movement, a performance gesture that is similar to Tacchino’s execution as previously discussed (Time code for bars 93 to 116: 03:59–04:16).

Queffélec starts the final movement with a fast tempo of 100 dotted crotchet beats per minute and applies the use of tempo rubato and section rubato effectively. At bar 17, when Clementi’s *Sonatina* theme is first introduced, she pushes up the tempo to 107 beats per minute to highlight the moment but soon drops back

noticeably to 86 dotted crotchet beats per minute for bars 25 to 26 and 33 to 36 where there are the ‘interruption’ bars suggesting her awareness to bring out the change of mood caused by these incongruent musical materials. When reaching the waltz-like melody in bars 29 to 32 in conjunction with the texts ‘*Il ose valse! (Lui, pas le piano) (He dares to waltz! (Him, not the piano))*’, a suitable speed of 95 dotted crotchet beats per minute is chosen to effectively reflect the quick three-beat dance. At bar 97, where the parallel 5th descending scales marks the final appearance of the fragmented Clementi transposed theme with the narrative expressing that the bureaucrat contemplating on leaving his lovely office before finally gathering the courage to depart as suggested in the narrative ‘*Du courage: partons dit-il (“Courage: let’s be off!” he says)*’ at bar 101, Queffélec bounces to a dramatic tempo of 110 beats per minute. This fast tempo is then accelerated further to reach 124 beats per minute by the end of the piece (Refer to the recording of the whole final movement). Queffélec’s performance gives different phrases different character shown by the contrasts in tempo between Satie’s ‘*vieil air péruvien*’ melody and Clementi’s *Sonatine* theme. This performance gesture effectively brings the narrative to life. In my opinion, Queffélec’s performance creates a scenario to let audience indulge Satie’s melody, before their concentration is interrupted by Clementi’s *Sonatina* theme hinted by the in-score texts. In other words, Queffélec has successfully achieved the ‘melody within a melody’ effect. By doing so, Queffélec’s performance suggests that she might endorse *Sonatine bureaucratique* as an interdisciplinary work and the in-score texts have made fundamental contribution to her performance style, which validates my assertion that in-score textual stimuli can act as a form of interpretive criteria in Satie’s texted piano music.

Legrand delivers the final movement with the approach consistent to the way he performs the first movement by maintaining a uniform tempo throughout. Performing with a constant speed of 104 dotted crotchet beats per minute throughout the movement, Legrand gives no additional gestures of any kind, such as changes in articulation and dynamic to highlight the presence of in-score texts, musical phrases or the structure/form of the final movement. Despite the uniform performance expression, I consider it as a form of quasi-impromptu pianism. It can be argued that Legrand's interpretation of the last movement is straightforward and closely following Satie's musical notation which does not provide any other performance cues for pianists to follow. However, the uniform tempo across the entire piece with no room to breathe between phrases has created an unnatural and machine-like performance, which is outrightly not a classically aware performance and in my opinion, reflects the supra-stylistic traits of the movement. The music sounds rushed and humorous as a result, as if a fast-forward button has been pressed for the entire movement.

Ariagno performs the final movement with section rubato, in addition to the use of agogic accents, tempo rubato and ample sustain pedal. Ariagno applies agogic accents to highlight the entries of Clementi's melody, for example at bar 17 (Time code: 00:12–00:14) as well as to gesture the 'interruption' bars with for example in bars 76 and 77 (Time code: 01:06–01:08). In terms of the use of section rubato, she chooses to distinguish Satie's '*vieil air péruvien*' melody by performing a steady tempo of 76 dotted crotchet beats per minute, and delivers the 'interruption' bars at a tempo of 66 dotted crotchet beats per minute at bars 33 to 36 with in-score texts '*Tout cela est bien triste (This is all very sad)*'. Her performance clearly delivers the change of mood through the use of section rubato, a quasi-impromptu gesture

prompted by the contrasting and incongruent compositional materials. Towards the end of the piece, Ariagno's increases the tempo to 83 dotted crotchet beats per minute for the ascending semiquaver scale accompanied with in-score texts '*Du courage: partons dit-il ("Courage: let's be off" he says)*', a subtle tempo change in comparison to execution by Arruda and Queffélec (Time code of bars 53 to 116: 00:46–01:41).

On one hand, Ariagno's performance does not incorporate any humoristic or exaggerated gesture, which suggests a classically aware approach. On the other, her application of the sustain pedal suggests Romantic expressiveness, which contradicts with the classically aware performance style. I argue that Ariagno's performance approach attempts to reflect the essence of this piece, which consists of both classical and romantic period characteristics. Above that, she also aims to deliver musical elements that defy conventions in *Sonatine bureaucratique* contains and as such, she experiments with new performance styles without solely adhering to the classically aware approach. Undeniably, the sustaining instead of springy staccato chords in her chosen tempo at the end of the piece could have drained the energy of the final movement in my opinion and makes the performance sound deliberately non-*vivace*. However, strictly speaking, Satie did wittily wrote '*vivache*' as a quasi-tempo nonsense term for the final movement instead of the unambiguous *vivace*. It is therefore in Ariagno's right to challenge the common choice of performing this movement in a fast pace. In this instance, her tempo choice illuminates how Satie's ambiguous use of the a modified performance indication lead to interpretative freedom.

Bruno Fontaine's performance interpretation of the final movement share little common ground with approaches chosen by the rest of the pianists. His

performance decisions seem spontaneous and dramatic, as if he were playing a film soundtrack. For example, the accented C notes in the right-hand part of bars 2 and 6 (See Example 9.17, p. 297) and similarly in bars 10 and 14, are played in an unsympathetically blunt attack even though there are accented signs provided by Satie. The use of section rubato is frequent and drastic. For example, Fontaine performs in a tempo of 110 dotted crotchet beats per minute for bars 37 to 40 where Clementi's transposed theme is (See Example 9.9, p. 274). This is followed by a decrease in tempo to 91 dotted crotchet beats per minute for bars 41 to 44 in order to highlight the 'interruption' bars with in-score texts '*Notre ami s'interroge avec bienveillance (Our friend questions himself gently)*'. Immediately afterwards until bar 48, when a fragment of Clementi's melody resumes, the tempo drops further to 74 dotted crotchet beats per minute (Time code of bars 1 to 52: 00:20–00:40). Such frequent and dramatic changes of tempo can be heard throughout the movement, which displays fast and erratic mood changes that have not been heard in other performances in this study. From bar 97 where the descending semiquaver passages in parallel fifths present for the final time a fragment of Clementi's transposed theme, with the in-score texts reflecting the bureaucrat's intention to leave his lovely office, Fontaine's tempo abruptly jumps to 126 dotted crotchet beats per minute to finish the movement with a energetic ending (Time code for bars 93 to 116: 01:11–01:26).

Fontaine's execution of the ending of *Sonatine bureaucratique* has effectively provoked imagery in my mind of the bureaucrat dashing off his office with courage. His performance style is without a doubt the least classically aware. I argue that Fontaine's musical expression for *Sonatine bureaucratique* incorporates the Dadaist spirit, which is to disobey normal rules and to create opportunity to

offend while ignoring conventional aesthetics. In reply to my assumption of the application of Dadaist spirit in his performance of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, Fontaine confirms and adds:

[M]y choice of treating the *Sonatine* as a fully parodic piece, opened for me the road to a « no limit » interpretation...And again the reference to Chaplin, Keaton, or even Laurel and Hardy were prominent in my mind...And of course, your reference to Dada is completely accurate !!!³²⁸

Fontaine's creative approach has been misunderstood by critic Philip Clark who criticizes his interpretation:

Of all the ill-advised and inappropriate strategies to deploy when performing the solo piano music of Erik Satie, pretending that such pieces as *Trois Gymnopédies*, *Sept Gnossiennes* and *Sonatine bureaucratique* might benefit from being brushed with 19th-century Romanticism tops the list of interpretative taboos... *Sonatine bureaucratique* projects raw self-importance in a way I'm sure Satie didn't intend.
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Fontaine's interpretation is admittedly uncommon, provocative and does not deliver the 'delicate-admittedly nebulous-balance' that indicates for Clark 'the hallmark of good Satie playing'. Clark's criticism however, fails to understand the motivation Fontaine has behind his performance choices is to gesture defiance and to experiment with creative interpretations rather than exploiting expressiveness in order to reflect 19th-century Romanticism.³³⁰ In terms of his choices to perform with provocative gestures, Fontaine explains how the Dadaist spirit in Satie's later works and the in-score texts in *Sonatine bureaucratique* play an influential part in his performance style:

[I]n a previous recording of mine, I played the Ragtime *Parade* [with the Dadaist spirit], which I had treated a little bit the same way [as I played *Sonatine bureaucratique*]. The *Sonatine* gave me the opportunity to go even further, in a kind of « destructive » manner!!!!... In the recording of the CD, I constantly used Satie's words as an inspiration going either in the mood he would described [sic], or

³²⁸ Bruno Fontaine Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016. Any grammatical, spelling discrepancies and punctuation marks incurred by Fontaine have not been edited.

³²⁹ Philip Clark, "Satie Piano Music", Gramophone.Co.Uk, 2016,

<http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/satie-piano-music-1>.

³³⁰ Ibid.

sometimes, in a completely different idea paying [sic] in my mind, adding a more surreal feeling even!!! So, I could probably say that his words were highly influential, implicitly AND explicitly!!!... I decided to play the *Sonatine*, as if it was a soundtrack for a slapstick comedy! When I recorded it, I had my eyes more on the words than on the music... These crazy images proposed by Satie were stimulating my imagination, not as I was trying to illustrate in my interpretation the situation he describes, but more a way of escaping from real world, and translating Satie's lunatic thoughts in my own world and playing! ³³¹

The 'crazy images' that Fontaine refers to backs Potter's assertion that the in-score texts can act as 'an additional trigger for extramusical associations' in order to 'set his musical imagination in motion', other than seeing it simply as humour to laugh about (See Chapter Eight, p. 205).³³² Fontaine's explanation of the impact of Satie's narrative has on him as a pianist gives an authorial account of the repercussion of the in-score texts could have had on other pianists, regardless of whether it was Satie's intention or not. While declaring that he disregards *Sonatine bureaucratique* as a neoclassical piece but a pure parody as inspired by Satie's in-score texts, Fontaine clarifies that '[t]he Clementi sonata representing for me the boring hours spent on a piano by a non-gifted pupil... and becoming the nightmare of the neighbors!!!' ³³³

Without being prompted by in-score texts such as '*Un piano voisin joue du Clementi (A neighbouring piano is playing Clementi)*', which are followed immediately with '*Combien cela est triste (How sad it is)*', Fontaine would be less likely to give such an interpretation of Clementi's theme. Fontaine's case study illuminates how Satie's in-score texts act as in-score textual stimuli, a new interpretative criterion that I assert is contributive to the quasi-impromptu pianism in Satie's texted piano pieces.

³³¹ Bruno Fontaine Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

³³² Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 98–137.

³³³ Ibid.

Conclusion on the quasi-impromptu pianism in *Sonatine bureaucratique*

Identified as a neo-classical piano piece by Satie researchers in the late 20th century, *Sonatine bureaucratique* is re-examined and re-evaluated in this case study as a piece that showcases Satie's supra-stylistic approach as a tool to criticise his peers' neo-classical aesthetic practiced amongst them. As *Sonatine bureaucratique* is regarded as a neoclassical work by researchers, majority of the recorded performances from 1979 to 2015 chosen in this case study illuminate performance approaches that apply quasi-impromptu pianism with less emphasis on classical awareness. Pianists Arruda, Queffélec, Tacchino and Legrand unreservedly project the texted piano work with experimental gestures, highlighting the supra-stylistic character of the piece. Interestingly, both English pianists, Lawson and Dickinson adopt a reserved and classically aware approach, which I question if the geographical factor could be an influential element when determining the performance style of this piano piece. For the 21st century performances, Ariagno, Fontaine and Van Veen showcase contrasting interpretive styles with each of them having an individual performance aim, which results in such diverse styles as demonstrated.

The evaluation outcomes also identify several interpretive criteria that influence performance interpretations of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. These criteria vary from the conventional factors used in Hellaby's and my modified analytical model, such as the era, topic, characterizer, tempo, sonic moderator to my newly proposed stimuli such as in-score textual stimuli and extra-musical determinant. In 1990, the Gramophone music review by Christopher Headington mentions that 'Peter Dickinson expressed himself that he has aimed here "to represent the best of

Satie's unique personality in mystical, comic and popular veins".³³⁴ In order to achieve this in his performance, he "sought to present the Essential Erik Satie (the name of the album), both by his selection of the works and by stripping away any inessential indulgencies of interpretation".³³⁵ Dickinson puts his emphasis on representing Satie's 'unique personality' through his performances, suggesting that Satie's music and his personality are inseparable when it comes to interpreting his music. On the other hand, Van Veen explains his choice for adopting a slower tempo as a general measure for all of his piano pieces, as examined in the previous chapter (See Chapter Eight, pp. 235–236), which is also evident for the *vivache* movement of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. Van Veen's interpretation of this piece with the much slower tempo choice for the supposedly fast movement is therefore affected by an extra-musical determinant, as he expresses that the slower tempo choice reflects Satie's music being 'a kind of counterbalance to the rushing world.'³³⁶ For Lawson, who expresses that no conscious decision is made to let or not to let the narrative affects his interpretation, his performance highlights that it is ultimately impossible for pianists to completely cut themselves off from any influences given by the in-score texts even if they intend to do so. Perhaps, from a musicologist point of view, one can analyse the music separately from the in-score texts in order to arrive to an opinion of what *Sonatine bureaucratique* is about. However, as performers who would have to study the score alongside the texts, *Sonatine bureaucratique* would prompt pianists to approach it as an inter-disciplinary piece of music regardless whether their intended performance approaches would reflect such element of the

³³⁴ Christopher Headington, "The Essential Erik Satie", Gramophone.Co.Uk, 1990, <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/the-essential-erik-satie>.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Jeroen van Veen Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

piece. In regard to the performance interpretations in Satie's texted piano pieces,

Caroline Potter addresses:

Beyond questions about the meaning of Satie's in-score texts and their interaction with the music, we also need to consider whether these texts are private messages from composer to performer, whether they should be shared with the listener or even whether they should be part of a performance.³³⁷

The evaluation outcomes illuminate that it is impossible to give a direct and absolute answer to Potter's concerns given the highly diverse performance styles with some but not all pianists' interpretations significantly influenced by the in-score texts.

Besides, the notion of giving a definitive answer to whether the in-score texts are private messages from composer to performer, whether they should be shared with the listener or whether they should be part of a performance contradicts with the interpretive freedom Satie had granted to performers through the way the in-score texts are incorporated in the music. Even if Satie did had answers to the above, the definite truth can never be retrieved. Combining the evaluation outcomes of all the previous case studies that address pieces with in-score texts of all sorts, my verdict to Potter's questions would be that it all depends on individual pieces, with some but not all appearing to be private messages from composer to performer. I propose that pianists could share the texts with the listener/audience during performances should the performances incorporate textual stimuli as a form of interpretive criterion. That said, I do not support the practice of reading the words aloud as it could be disruptive to the overall musical performances. In this specific case study, I strongly propose that the texts are not to be shared with the audience. My recommendation is supported by my assertion that the in-score texts are not simply there to provide a

³³⁷ Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: A Parisian Composer And His World*, 1st ed. (repr., Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 104.

story for the audience to laugh with but to add an extra layer of criticism for Satie to question the neo-classical aesthetic amongst his peers.

To sum up the performance practice of *Sonatine bureaucratique*, this piece provides another example to show the close connection pianists could draw between Satie's in-score texts and the music. Similarly, to dismiss the connection between the in-score texts and the music itself would miss the opportunity to appreciate the whole canvas of the music composition. This case study especially highlights how Satie's piano music supplies pianists with essential musical ideas without restricting their choices of musical expression. While ambiguity in Satie's piano music leads to freedom of interpretation, the latter makes the interpretative process a complex journey. Pianists' performance decisions vary not only in their use of tempo, articulation, dynamics and so on but also their choices of possible moods that the music could bring. This so-called freedom of interpretation should be calculated and guided by all the compositional elements, i.e. the visual and textual stimuli in addition to the music itself. Only then, pianists could explore experimental gestures with the confidence that such freedom is not an arbitrary exercise.

Chapter Ten

Final Conclusions

Findings

By analysing recorded performances of international pianists of the past six decades, this dissertation has shown how Satie's piano pieces in combination with the key issues identified, directly and indirectly lead to interpretive freedom, which contributes to quasi-impromptu pianism amongst pianists.

International perspective

Having evaluated performance styles of Satie's piano pieces by pianists of both the French and the non-French lineage, first of all, it is true to say that each of the French pianists performs Satie's piano works with a different approach. This is supported by the evidence found in each of the case studies, which shows that performance choices are mostly down to individual's preferences. In addition, pianists such as Thibaudet would vary his execution from one Satie piano piece to another, demonstrating how contrasting performance styles can be applied to pieces that share similar compositional style, as seen by his changing performance gestures applied over the three Rose-Croix case study pieces. These findings are crucial to my research topic as the evidence obtained from the recorded performances of the past six decades validates that contrasting and creative interpretation is a given characteristic to the performance practice of Satie's piano pieces.

Chronologically, there are no clear trends in regard to the changing pattern in the performance styles of Satie's piano pieces over different generations of French

pianists. While the first-generation pianist Poulenc displays some degree of interpretive freedom for Satie's piano pieces, some of the second-generation pianists, such as Legrand, Entremont, Tacchino, Armengaud, Queffélec and Fontaine give creative and unconventional performance gestures, which contrast with the performance styles demonstrated by second-generation French pianists such as Clidat and Rogé as well as third-generation pianist Thibaudet. Amongst these three pianists, their approaches are considerably more reserved by comparison.

To put the second-generation French pianists' experimental performance styles of Satie's piano pieces against approaches adopted by English pianists Dickinson and Lawson, the evaluation result shows that the latter tend to focus on letting the musical elements inform performance decisions rather than allowing other unconventional stimuli, such as the in-score texts or blank spaces within the music notation to influence their performance decisions. Despite the evaluation outcome shows a clear divide between performance style of French and English pianists, it is important to clarify that the number of performances being evaluated by English pianists is much smaller than the number of performances by French pianists. This difference in performance style of Satie's piano music in relation to pianists' geographical ties could potentially be an area for further research.

Individual perspective

As Satie specialists, pianists such as Ciccolini, Höjer, Armengaud, Thibaudet, Ariagno and Van Veen have recorded the complete Satie piano works. Their recorded performances are chosen to give a final overview of whether each of these international pianists from different generations perform different types of Satie's piano music with a consistent performance approach. The horizontal analytical

thread of the performance evaluations signifies whether quasi-impromptu pianism is applied to a piece-to-piece basis or whether it is intrinsic in all Satie's piano works. As the latter is evident in recorded performances of the above chosen pianists, it illuminates that the application of creative performance gestures and styles to the performance of Satie's piano works is an international phenomenon and not responses given only by the French pianists. The stress on interpretive creativity puts great emphasis on pianists' contribution to imaginative playing of Satie's piano works in place of the conventional practice of seeking performance directions based on musical features such as performance indications/expression markings provided by the scores. In other words, performers of Satie's piano music take the lead in realising the music and further enriching Satie's piano compositions by delivering performances that carry an inspiration or a feeling which is personal. Simply put, Satie's piano compositions provide an opportunity for pianists to explore different performance styles and gestures instead of restricting pianists' performance choices.

The following summarises how these six pianists execute interpretative freedom in their performances and identifies, for individual pianists, whether quasi-impromptu pianism is evident in all of the case studies. Ciccolini's performances of *Ogives* and 'Danse maigre' of *Croquis et agaceries* are thoroughly examined to demonstrate his creative approach that focusses on bringing out Satie's musical structures and witty elements using tempo manipulation, together with the application of stark articulation and dynamic changes to emphasise specific moments of interest. I consider Ciccolini's performance approach as well controlled but not under the reserved category as performances demonstrated by the English pianists. Although Ciccolini's performances of *Danses gothiques* and *Sonatine bureaucratique* are not included in the case studies, by simply listening to his

execution of these two pieces, his reaction to the use of interrupting titles in *Danses gothiques* and the use of section rubato to give the sense of spontaneity in *Sonatine bureaucratique* is clear, vivid and can be easily identified. This shows that Ciccolini's expressive gestures for Satie's piano music are consistent throughout among all case studies.

Höjer's performances of Satie's Rose-Croix pieces demonstrate his constant effort to illuminate and bring to attention the unconventionality found in Satie's piano pieces as I examined. To my surprise, such consistency in performance approach of Satie's Rose-Croix piano piece is not applied to his texted piano works. The recorded performance shows that Höjer adopted a comparatively reserved interpretive approach for the texted piano pieces evidenced by his use of restrained expression in terms of dynamic, articulation and tempo changes. As there are no additional creative performance gestures identified in the recordings of the texted piano pieces, this suggests that Höjer follows the musical notation only and denies the in-score texts of having a function of interpretive stimuli. Höjer's performance style across the different types of Satie's piano music shows that he responds with changing attitudes instead of applying one approach across the different categories. It also highlights that he does not endorse the idea of incorporating Satie's wit and humour in the performances of his texted piano works, which have been commonly known for decades as humoristic piano pieces.

Armengaud, as a second-generation French pianist, gives clear aim in his performances of Satie's Rose-Croix piano music to experiment with new performance styles through creative gestures in response to the ambiguity found in the music. As a classical pianist, Armengaud's performance approach demonstrates his goal to explore expression that do not only confine to conventional means as

shown by Poulenc's performances of Satie's piano music. Armengaud's experimental spirit in performing Satie's piano works is also shown in 'Danse maigre' and *Sonatine bureaucratique*. His articulation, balance between voices, dynamics and the way he paces himself are distinctive, illuminating how quasi-impromptu pianism could be achieved as an overall atmosphere and impression in addition to particular performance gestures.

As another second-generation French pianist, Thibaudet's performances also show similar creative spirit. He demonstrates his experimental approach mainly through the manipulation of tempo, which is consistent throughout his performances of different categories of Satie's piano music.

Ariagno and Van Veen are both later-generation non-French pianists. Respectively, each of their performance approaches of Satie's piano pieces has a common thread. The most noticeable are Ariagno's ample use of sustain pedal and Van Veen's choice to implement slower tempo range across all case study pieces. Their marked contrasts in performance styles of Satie's piano pieces in comparison to the rest of the pianists reflect heavily on the interpretive freedom in association with Satie's piano music. While Van Veen explains his intention for the slow tempo choices, Ariagno's abundant use of sustain pedal in the performance of Satie's piano music prompts further investigation.

Period instrument appeal

The possible link between the adoption of particular performance styles of Satie's piano music in correspondence to the use of a period instrument, an Erard piano, remains inconclusive. Interpretations and performance styles by Arruda, Burman-Hall and Ogawa, who performed on an Erard piano in each of their recordings, have

shown to be diverse through their use of articulation, dynamic range and the use of sustain pedal. For example, Burman-Hall applies much more sustain pedal in both case studies (*Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel* and *Danses gothiques*), showing marked contrast to Arruda's and Ogawa's execution, which are closer to Poulenc's version as they both demonstrate clarity and do not intend to blur the harmonies in their performances. Arruda's pedalling reflects Poulenc's statement of 'Whenever you have to apply a lot of pedal... the effect must be *clear*...' (See Chapter Six, p. 144).³³⁸ In my opinion, the execution has more to do with her informed performance choices rather than to reflect the speciality of the period instrument, which produces clearer sound due to the straight-stringing method found in Erard pianos than the over-strung modern pianos. As shown in the case studies that the changing character of the different types of Satie's piano music stimulates pianists to question the limitation of conventional notational presentation, musical language, and musical structures, so the performance focus has shifted away from the mechanical response of the instrument and re-direct pianists' reactions to the new interpretive stimuli. The quasi-impromptu pianism weakens the period instrument appeal as shown by the inconclusive outcome of a possible connection between the instrument and distinctive performance styles in comparison to the rest of the selected recordings with pianists performing on modern pianos.

The contrasting performance styles of Satie's piano pieces across generations and geographical locations signify that the increasing interpretive freedom found in the performance style of Satie's piano pieces is a unanimous response to the three key issues that I initially identified (See Chapter One, pp. 1–2). The pianists' verdicts confirm my assertion that the key issues faced by pianists of Satie's works

³³⁸ For full details and original French texts, see footnote 200, p. 146.

fuels quasi-impromptu pianism. From *Ogives*, which has an unusual and interesting form and structure to *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, which has the Rose-Croix musical language that displays self-contained melodic cells arranged in a kaleidoscopic but also prose-like manner together with the quasi-performance directions above the musical notation; from *Danses gothiques* with its interrupting cryptic titles and empty blank spaces to ‘Danse maigre’ from *Croquis et agaceries d’un gros bonhomme en bois* that gives no apparent link between the use of in-score texts and music; and lastly *Sonatine bureaucratique* which suggests the possible link between the texts and music while oscillating between the compositional style of neoclassicism and outright mockery, pianists respond to different layers of ambiguity through increasingly diverse performance interpretation and experimental gestures. Crucially, Satie’s piano music provokes pianists to find *new* ways to express their own perception of the music. Their priority is to explore, rather than to painstakingly find an interpretation that would be considered most *appropriate*. As Branka Parlić comments: ‘Satie is the first composer who gave free hand to musicians regarding understanding and interpreting the music.’³³⁹

Limitation and changes

To begin with, the first limitation of the research process lies in the number of pianist interviews that could be carried out. As my methodology demonstrates how the three-way performance analytical method provides a more robust research outcome, I would have hoped to be able to obtain more personal insights from the French classical pianists as the final step of the analytical process in order to

³³⁹ Branka Parlić Grace Gatesto , "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

compare their opinions with those given by pianists of other lineages as well as pianists who engage with music of other genres. Unfortunately, during the period of my research, their unanimously busy schedules made it an impossible task.

The limitation on the provision of historical concert reviews of performances by Satie or the first-generation pianists who were dedicated to performing his piano works largely restricts the potential examination of whether there is a changing trend in the way Satie's piano works are understood and interpreted from the composer's era to the present day. Despite the provision of Poulenc's recorded performances of *Prélude de la Porte héroïque du ciel* and *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois* in addition to his discussion of how Satie's piano music should be approached provides valuable insights on the performance style of Satie's piano work with an authorial voice as the first-generation pianist, it would be inconclusive to give a verdict on the performance trend from Satie's era to the present day based on only one historical pianist's execution.

Given the scope of the research carried out on the comparison of different editions of *Danses gothiques* in order to investigate the role of visual stimuli in the performance interpretations of this Rose-Croix piano piece, I could not include detailed editions comparison for the case of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. I anticipate that examining the discrepancies found in different editions of *Sonatine bureaucratique* in regard to how these texts are positioned in correspondance to the melodic phrases would provide another example to justify the relationship between performance interpretations, textual and visual stimuli. Editions Peters re-edited *Sonatine bureaucratique* in 1986 which shows discrepancies from the 1929 Salabert version. It is problematic that the traditional tempo terms such as 'ralentir' and 'a tempo' are placed precisely in their corresponding position in comparison to the

former edition but when it comes to the narratives/in-score texts, the positioning of these texts vary. For example, in-score texts '*Il aime aussi son porte-plume, ses manches en lustrine verte et sa calotte chinoise*' are spread out in the score from bar 28 to bar 35, accompanying the complete melodic phrase before Satie's main theme reappears in bar 36. However, in Edition Peters, the narrative is placed within bar 28 and the beginning of bar 31. Intriguingly, in 2016 Editions Salabert, the texts of '*Il aime aussi son porte-plume, ses manches en lustrine verte*' are placed in bars 28 and 29. This is then followed by consecutive bars with no in-score texts. The last few words of the narrative sentence '*et sa calotte chinoise*' appear in bar 35, before Satie's main theme resumes in bar 36. The marked differences in the positioning of in-score texts suggest a disregard of the possible relation between the in-score texts and the music. Further investigation in this area could reveal a relationship between the melody, in-score texts and performance interpretation of *Sonatine bureaucratique*. It would also challenge the appropriateness of allowing a casual editing approach in preserving precise positioning of these in-score texts amongst different editions of the same texted piano works by Satie. Further investigation could highlight the impact of such discrepancies may have on performance decisions as well as pianists' perception of the in-score texts' as relevant contribution to performance interpretations.

Future implication

Based on these conclusions, pianists should consider the obscurity found in Satie's piano pieces, be it texted or not, as elements deliberately embedded in the musical notation by the composer as means to influence performance decisions. The

ambiguity occurs in his music together with the absence of authorial discussion of how his piano pieces could be approached do not seem to be an oversight by Satie, but rather, his intention to grant performers interpretive freedom and to provoke pianists to re-think and challenge existing musical convention. My proposition resonates with Satie expressing that ‘There is no such thing as a School of Satie. Satieism could never exist. I would be opposed to it.’³⁴⁰ Even though Satie’s words direct at his own composition but not the performance style of his piano pieces, the emphasis on compositional ideas that should continue to evolve and the avoidance of seeking an absolute and consistent representation of his works is a very revealing statement by Satie to express that changes *are* key. Pianists should also consider transferring this notion to the performance practice of Satie’s piano music and to welcome and explore contrasts in performance interpretations and the perception of his piano music. Perhaps Lawson’s ambiguous reaction of the narrative in *Sonatine bureaucratique*, to which he expresses ‘No conscious decision was made, for or against [the narratives]’ is true to what Satie have intended performers to react to his piano works.³⁴¹ To acknowledge and endorse the interpretive freedom as an essence of the performance practice of Satie’s piano works is an important idea in the area of performance practice research as it recontextualises the weighting of performer’s authorial voice to performances. Future studies in performance interpretation could address the reworking of the hierarchical order of the importance and relevance of creative input amongst composer’s score, musical analysis and pianists’ personal insights when bringing a piece of music to its audible form.

³⁴⁰ Pierre-Daniel Templier, *Erik Satie* (repr., Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1932), 44.

³⁴¹ Peter Lawson Grace Gatesto, "Regarding Erik Satie", email, 2016.

In response to the three-way performance analytical method as evaluation tool to study performance interpretations, the additional interpretive criteria have shown to be highly relevant and contributive to the final outcome: Satie's quasi-performance terms and in-score texts as textual stimuli, the insertion of blank spaces together with interrupting titles amongst notations as visual stimuli to affect performance decisions and Satie's persona as extra-musical stimulus. These new criteria re-define and enrich the library of musical or performance cues. My discovery of unconventional stimuli as influential factors to performance decisions of Satie's piano pieces therefore expands Hellaby's performance analytical model, providing analysts with a new yardstick to seek rationale behind performance gestures that cannot be straightforwardly explained by existing interpretive criteria. The unclear motivation of certain performance gestures are to be explained by performers themselves through the final stage of the methodological process, namely the post-performance interviews. As pianists' insights contribute to the knowledge of different perception of the same piece of music, their individual viewpoints could play an active part in unfolding the musical meanings a piece of music and their subsequent response to the music.

My newly identified and coined 'section rubato' as a form of new performance gesture that serves as an intuitive or methodical response to Satie's musical materials by pianists of different generations adds to the existing performance practice knowledge and is a crucial aspect of the piano performance practice of Satie's piano pieces. Section rubato expands the existing functions associated with the use of rubato (See Chapter Three, pp. 57–58, 61) by acting as a new performance tool, which allows pianists to deliver a change of mood through the application of an abrupt change in tempo. It is important to clarify that examples

such as the performances of *La cathédrale engloutie* by Debussy in 1913 and other pianists such as Cortot in 1931 and the more recent Bavouzet in 2007, where a sudden change in tempo can be identified in two sections (bars 7 to 12 and 22 to 83), such tempo alterations are not regarded as section rubato.³⁴² Even though an abrupt change of tempo can be identified in these recordings, the motivation behind the abrupt change of tempo in Debussy's case is not to reflect an unexpected mood change or to highlight incongruent musical ideas (such as the interruption bars), which in Satie's case often disrupt a pre-existing mood, as in the case of watching advertisement breaks in between shows. Clearly, the changing meter of 6/4=3/2 provided by Debussy at the beginning of the piece leads to the change in tempo applied by pianists. More importantly, the new tempo applied to the two sections of *La cathédrale engloutie* is proportional and controlled, which differs from the volatile ones identified in Satie's case studies. Future research could explore whether section rubato is also applied in performances of other composers' works of different periods, styles and genres. It could also reflect on whether the use of this type of rubato carries other functions that are new to the ones identified in Satie's case studies.

This thesis contributes knowledge to the performance studies of Satie's piano pieces, an important part of the performance practice of French piano music at the turn of the century that has so far been completely overlooked. My research summarizes the performance interpretations of the different types of Satie's piano pieces by international pianists of the last six decades, which provides a comprehensive view and rationale of the highly diverse and sometimes contradictory

³⁴² Rui Pedro Pereira, "La Cathédrale Englouie: Is Musicology Changing The Way We Perform?", *International Symposium On Performance Science* 978-90-9022484-8 (2007): 109–114.

performance styles of these case study pieces, which would be an unusual condition for the performance practice of other French piano music by Satie's peers. This thesis fills the missing piece in the existing performance practice research literature, which continues to exclude Satie's piano œuvres in all sorts of discussion (See Chapter Two, pp. 33–37). By gathering historical and current observations on the performance practice of Satie's piano pieces, this thesis closes the gap by contributing knowledge for the understanding of how his musical language, notational presentation, in-score texts and even his persona could inform performance decisions and subsequently how such performance decisions lead to creative interpretations and pianism due to the key issues related to Satie's piano works.

In a wider context, the performance of Satie's piano music should be encouraged as his piano works offer pianists opportunity to re-think their answers for the fundamental question in musical performance: what do we perform? It is beneficial for pianists to acknowledge Satie's piano composition as a starting point to experience how an interpretation of a piece of music could reveal the pianists' choices of a more literal approach or in opposition, a more creative approach in a sense that a higher degree of quasi-impromptu pianism is applied. With an open mind, performers can see the importance of allowing a composer's work to be a guide in order for them to justifiably free themselves from performance conventions. This innovative mindset can bring an alternate path in performance studies to existing music repertoire.

Appendix

Appendix I. *Prélude de La Porte héroïque du ciel*, 1929 Editions Salabert

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Appendix V. 'Danse maigre' of *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*,
2016 Editions Salabert

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Appendix VII. Email interviews.

1. Email interview with Eve Egoyan, with texts in blue as Egoyan's in-line reply and texts in red as Gates' in-line reply.

On Apr 5, 2016, at 7:18 AM, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Eve,

I am very grateful that you agree to answer my questions. I am investigating the creative pianism of Satie's piano music using as early as Poulenc's recordings (1950s) to present recordings. Your responses would offer me much insight on your interpretations. Please may I obtain your permission to use some of the contents in my thesis. Rest assured, there will be full references and acknowledgement for your contributions. The following questions are as open-ended as possible, please feel free to express your ideas and opinions.

Here they are:

- 1) How do you, as a pianist, respond to Satie's lack of time signature (meter) and bar lines in *Ogive* No.4. In another words, how was your performance affected by the lack of meter and bar lines? (I noticed that you kept the use of rubato and agogics to the minimum)
- 2) In my opinion, your interpretations of the *Ogives* are very true to the musical text, i.e. with very restricted additional personal interpretations. Do you regard *Ogive* No.4 as a minimalist piano piece instead of a piece of music with ample room for creative/personal interpretations as a result of the limitation in notation/performance direction?
- 3) I like the way you held back a little in systems with pianissimo/piano dynamic markings while pushing forward a little for fortissimo passages. Are there reasons behind such execution?
- 4) It is ironic that Satie emphasised the importance of compose music that is predominantly French, and yet it is impossible to apply French pianism to a piece as unusual as this. Do you agree? Has your musical training and specialism in performing contemporary music lead you to approach this 1889 composition in a 'modernised' way?
- 5) As a performer, what would you like audiences to capture while listening to Satie's *Ogives*? (OR tailor to your case, what is it to capture through your interpretations?)

Thank you very much for taking part and I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Regards,
Grace W K Gates

On 6 Apr 2016, at 23:08, Eve Egoyan wrote:

Dear Grace,

Dear Eve,

I am very grateful that you agree to answer my questions. I am investigating the creative pianism of Satie's piano music using as early as Poulenc's recordings (1950s) to present recordings.

Very interesting.

Your responses would offer me much insight on your interpretations. Please may I obtain your permission to use some of the contents in my thesis. Rest assure, there will be full references and acknowledgement for your contributions. The following questions are as open-ended as possible, please feel free to express your ideas and opinions.

OK.

Here they are:

1) How do you, as a pianist, respond to Satie's lack of time signature (meter) and bar lines in *Ogive* No.4. In another words, how was your performance affected by the lack of meter and bar lines? (I noticed that you kept the use of rubato and agogics to the minimum)

I question notation all the time for myself and how bar lines in particular create artificial units of music. I also have experience performing scores in proportional notation - without barlines.

There is no need for bar lines in *Ogives*. The divisions of time are clear within smaller notational units - barlines would disrupt the sense of longer phrase. I feel the music in large phrases, large time proportions. I do not use rubato because I am interested in hearing the movement of the inner voices. This is my focus.

2) In my opinion, your interpretations of the *Ogives* are very true to the musical text, i.e. with very restricted additional personal interpretations. Do you regard *Ogive* No.4 as a minimalist piano piece instead of a piece of music with ample room for creative/personal interpretations as a result of the limitation in notation/performance direction?

You use the word minimalism as though it is restrictive. The beauty of Satie's music is its HUGE simplicity. The closer you look, the larger his world becomes. The details of the music are easily overcome, overshadowed, overwhelmed if larger rubato is imposed - I feel that rubato comes from another world. It does not belong to Satie. Yes, he wrote dance hall music, but dance itself is within a compact meter without much rubato...

3) I like the way you held back a little in systems with pianissimo/piano dynamic markings while pushing forward a little for fortissimo passages. Are there reasons behind such execution?

Actually, I would have preferred if there had not been such fluctuations - they happen because of the playing. Often if you play softer you play a little slower and vice versa...

4) It is ironic that Satie emphasised the importance of compose music that is predominantly French, and yet it is impossible to apply French pianism to a piece as unusual as this. Do you agree? Has your musical training and specialism in performing contemporary music lead you to approach this 1889 composition in a 'modernised' way?

I approach all of Satie from the point of view of the visual arts world he inhabited, not the musical world. I feel like his music suffers when interpreted within the French musical tradition... his musical voice is totally unique. If I were to associate his music with another musical world, I would place him closer to Stravinsky's neoclassicism.

5) As a performer, what would you like audiences to capture while listening to Satie's *Ogives*? (OR tailor to your case, what is it to capture through your interpretations?)

Architecture. Feeling of a large structure - the contrast between the resonant and reflective, interior and exterior.

I can say more. Just ask more!

Eve

On Apr 11, 2016, at 1:19 PM, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Eve,

Thank you very much for your responses. Your answers have opened my mind to quite a few things.

Please see my in-line reply in RED.

Warm Regards,
Grace

You use the word minimalism as though it is restrictive. The beauty of Satie's music is its HUGE simplicity. The closer you look, the larger his world becomes. The details of the music are easily overcome, overshadowed, overwhelmed if larger rubato is imposed - I feel that rubato comes from another world. It does not belong to

Satie. Yes, he wrote dance hall music, but dance itself is within a compact meter without much rubato...

Would you be able to elaborate a little your meaning of 'the closer you look, the larger his world becomes'. I would interpret your meaning as: Despite the simplicity of Satie's music, there are many details within the simplicity that could easily be distorted or buried if larger rubato is applied in the playing.

3) I like the way you held back a little in systems with pianissimo/piano dynamic markings while pushing forward a little for fortissimo passages. Are there reasons behind such execution?

Actually, I would have preferred if there had not been such fluctuations - they happen because of the playing. Often if you play softer you play a little slower and vice versa...

I am glad to have asked!

4) It is ironic that Satie emphasised the importance of compose music that is predominantly French, and yet it is impossible to apply French pianism to a piece as unusual as this. Do you agree? Has your musical training and specialism in performing contemporary music lead you to approach this 1889 composition in a 'modernised' way?

I approach all of Satie from the point of view of the visual arts world he inhabited, not the musical world. I feel like his music suffers when interpreted within the French musical tradition... his musical voice is totally unique. If I were to associate his music with another musical world, I would place him closer to Stravinsky's neoclassicism.

Would you be able to explain a bit more on the meaning of 'approach all of Satie's music] from the point of view of the visual arts world? Do you mean you see Satie's work closer to a piece of visual arts, or do you mean Satie's work reminds you of painters' concepts and technique? Or are you applying [French] painters' principles while performing Satie's music. (This could be a difficult question: I studied a bit about Puvis de Chavannes's work and how it is related to Satie's *Ogives*. Is there a particular painter/ a piece of visual arts that you can relate *Ogives* to?)

5) As a performer, what would you like audiences to capture while listening to Satie's *Ogives*? (OR tailor to your case, what is it to capture through your interpretations?)

Architecture. Feeling of a large structure - the contrast between the resonant and reflective, interior and exterior.

I find it hard to grasp the full essence of 'the resonant and reflective, interior and exterior'. Would you be so kind to elaborate a little more.

I can say more. Just ask more!

Eve, you have been amazingly kind and generous with your time and giving me invaluable insights in just a few lines. According to my research plan, sometime in July/August, I will be listening to Satie's Nocturnes and if you are happy for me to raise a few questions to you again, I shall be in touch.

Conversely, please let me know if I have taken up too much of your time. I felt that I have already asked more than my fair share!!

On 11 Apr 2016, at 18:42, Eve Egoyan wrote:

Hello again!

You use the word minimalism as though it is restrictive. The beauty of Satie's music is its HUGE simplicity. The closer you look, the larger his world becomes. The details of the music are easily overcome, overshadowed, overwhelmed if larger rubato is imposed - I feel that rubato comes from another world. It does not belong to Satie. Yes, he wrote dance hall music, but dance itself is within a compact meter without much rubato...

Would you be able to elaborate a little your meaning of 'the closer you look, the larger his world becomes'. I would interpret your meaning as: Despite the simplicity of Satie's music, there are many details within the simplicity that could easily be distorted or buried if larger rubato is applied in the playing.

I feel that finding the perfect tempo for a piece by Satie is the most important interpretative element for a performer to consider. The music has its own internal perpetual motion... I think of his playing in dance halls. Once the motion has been established, it should be maintained. The music then reveals itself clearly. If the perpetual motion is distorted, then, what I consider to be most important - the pulse - becomes weakened when it is in itself the pillar of the music. Not sure if this makes sense.

I approach all of Satie from the point of view of the visual arts world he inhabited, not the musical world. I feel like his music suffers when interpreted within the French musical tradition... his musical voice is totally unique. If I were to associate his music with another musical world, I would place him closer to Stravinsky's neoclassicism.

Would you be able to explain a bit more on the meaning of 'approach all of Satie's music] from the point of view of the visual arts world? Do you mean you see Satie's work closer to a piece of visual arts, or do you mean Satie's work reminds you of painters' concepts and technique? Or are you applying [French] painters' principles while performing Satie's music. (This could be a difficult question: I studied a bit about Puvis de Chavannes's work and how it is related to Satie's *Ogives*. Is there a particular painter/ a piece of visual arts that you can relate *Ogives* to?)

There is no particular piece. I just feel the sense of architecture in Satie's music. *Ogives* refers to architectural details. I feel that Satie's sensibilities aligned

much more easily with the younger generation of visual artists in Paris and the Dada movement rather than the musicians.

Architecture. Feeling of a large structure - the contrast between the resonant and reflective, interior and exterior.

I find it hard to grasp the full essence of 'the resonant and reflective, interior and exterior'. Would you be so kind to elaborate a little more.

The forte sections vs. the piano sections - the grand, booming cathedral spaces vs. the monastic - the booming organ vs. the plainchant.

I can say more. Just ask more!

Eve, you have been amazingly kind and generous with your time and giving me invaluable insights in just a few lines. According to my research plan, sometime in July/August, I will be listening to Satie's Nocturnes and if you are happy for me to raise a few questions to you again, I shall be in touch.

Conversely, please let me know if I have taken up too much of your time. I felt that I have already asked more than my fair share!!

I will ask you questions someday soon as I hope to return to interpreting Satie - take a break from the new music path I am on.

Wishing you well.

Eve

2. Email interview with Branka Parlić, who replied using word documents with my questions in blue and her answers in black as the original.

**On Tue, Apr 5, 2016 at 12:49 PM, Grace Wai Kwan
Gates wrote:**

Dear Branka,

I am very grateful that you agree to answer my questions. I am investigating the creative pianism of Satie's piano music using as early as Poulenc's recordings (1950s) to present recordings. Your responses would offer me much insight on your interpretations. Please may I obtain your permission to use some of the contents in my thesis. Rest assured, there will be full references and acknowledgement for your contributions. The following questions are as open-ended as possible, please feel free to express your ideas and opinions.

Here are my questions:

1) How do you, as a pianist, respond to Satie's lack of time signature (meter) and bar lines in *Ogive* No.4/ In another words, how was your performance affected by the lack of meter and bar lines? (I can hear that you deliberately take more time for the semibreves and agogics are detected in some minims.

2) Do you regard *Ogive* No.4 as a minimalist piano piece or a piece of music with ample room for creative/personal interpretations as a result of the limitation in notation/performance direction?

3) I like the way you arpeggiated the compound third chords in the third system of *Ogive* No.4, it feels like you were deliberately distorting the musical pulse while being expressive and provided a lyrical touch in response to the pianissimo passage. Do you agree with my observation/ Was that your intent?

4) It is ironic that Satie emphasised the importance of compose music that is predominantly French, and yet it is impossible to apply French pianism to a piece as unusual as this. Do you agree? Has your musical training and specialism in performing the music of minimalist and post-minimalist composers lead you to approach this 1889 composition in a 'modernised' way?

Thank you very much for taking part and I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Regards,
Grace W K Gates

On 18 Apr 2016, at 09:29, Branka Parlic wrote:

Dear Grace,

I'm sending you the answers on 3 of 4 questions you asked me. Soon I will send the rest.

Let me know, please, how do you find it. Is it sufficient and clear?
Sorry, my English is not good enough, I'm aware of it.

Best regards,
Branka

- 1) How do you, as a pianist, respond to Satie's lack of time signature (meter) and bar lines in *Ogive No.4*? In another words, how was your performance affected by the lack of meter and bar lines? (I can hear that you deliberately take more time for the semibreves and agogics are detected in some minims.

Satie is the first composer who gave free hand to musicians regarding understanding and interpreting the music. With the lack of time signature, bar line and with unusual instructions within the score performers could follow their own feelings, their understanding of the piece and their heart beat. Besides great atmosphere and sounds this is what attracted me to Satie's music the most. Now, as you can see almost all of New Music has the same concept regarding interpretation. Cornelius Cardew and Terry Riley once said that performer in some way has to cooperate with composers in creation particular piece. Satie's lack of instructions, bar lines and time signature are the same instruction but said on his own way. What is the most interesting is that this happened at the end of 19 Century. Sati's music more correspond with today's music then with the music at his own time. For me as a pianist who was taught to respect all instructions which the literature of earlier periods requires, it was a great revelation and a great freedom to create the interpretation on my own way. The *Ogive No. 4* has a slow tempo but some days the slow tempo is little bit faster and some days little bit slower. It depends on tempo of my heartbeat and my breathing. I felt free to follow my breathing while I was playing, therefore the agogics you can hear on this record is not the same each time I play this piece. At the same time I was aware that *Ogive* are the monumental diagonal arch or rib across a Gothic vault with all its beauty, magnificence, peacefulness, greatness ...

The beauty of Satie's music is also in fact that there are many differences in interpretation and none of them are wrong. Those different interpretations just show, should I dare to say, the state of mind of the interpreter.

- 2) Do you regard *Ogive No.4* as a minimalist piano piece or a piece of music with ample room for creative/personal interpretations as a result of the limitation in notation/performance direction?

Satie's work was a precursor to later artistic movements such as minimalism, post minimalism, ambient music, happening, performing arts ...name it. In my opinion in four *Ogives* he present both a minimalist piece and a music with ample room for creativity for interpreter. As *Gymnopedies* and *Gnossiennes* are as well. In *Avant*

dernieres Pensees he used a repetition which was very uncommonly at his time. He undeniably inspired and influenced many later artist such as John Cage, American minimalist, British minimalists, Brian Eno, and many composers of the 21st Century

3) I like the way you arpeggiated the compound third chords in the third system of *Ogive* No.4, it feels like you were deliberately distorting the musical pulse while being expressive and provided a lyrical touch in response to the pianissimo passage. Do you agree with my observation/ Was that your intent?

Yes, your observation is quite right, but I did not do it deliberately. Since there are lack of bar lines I didn't care much about precise musical pulse. For me the importance was to keep constant and extremely static peaceful tempo and to give a lyrical touch as you have noticed correctly.

On 16 May 2016, at 09:36, Branka Parlic wrote:

Dear Grace,

finally, I'm sending the answer on your last question.

Sorry for such a delay !!

The book Erik Satie: Music, Art and Literature looks very good and comprehensive. Congratulation !!

I would really like to meet you and Dr. Helen Julia Minors some day and maybe to establish some kind of cooperation regarding Satie's music and his influence on today's New Music,

Best regards,
Branka

4. It is ironic that Satie emphasised the importance of compose music that is predominantly French, and yet it is impossible to apply French pianism to a piece as unusual as this. Do you agree?

Yes, I totally agree.

The French composers did decide to find their own way like the French painter did find their way of expression, successfully.

But, after the listening of *Pelléas et Mélisande* by his friend Claude Debussy, Erik Satie writes to a friend:

“Nothing to do with that side; must look for something else or I am lost. ”

Satie's music is something quite different and cannot be placed neither in typically French music nor in some other well-known or some entirely new direction. It was and still is just Satie's music!

Besides this new sound which he brought to music, his relevance is, by all means, in establishing a new characteristic for film music. His idea for the music for the silent film *Entr'acte* was very radical for that time. The music includes short motifs which should be repeated several times and should be changed along with the each shot of the film. Since the music was not descriptive the impact of images is thus substantially increased.

I have lectured on this topic at Hope University in Liverpool 2013. During the second part of the lecture I played the music of today's film music composer (Nyman, Glass, Mertens) who applied Satie's idea in their film music.

4. Has your musical training and specialism in performing the music of minimalist and post-minimalist composers lead you to approach this 1889 composition in a 'modernised' way?

I have met early American and English minimalism back in late seventies playing in the well-known *Ensemble for Different New Music* in Belgrade/Serbia while I was studying. Almost ten years later, in 1986 I discovered Satie and his music. While I was having vacation in Paris I bought the sheet music with Satie's piano pieces and start to work on it. I have experienced and have interpreted this quite new and fresh sound very freely on my own way not knowing much about Satie and his ideas. It was pre computer era and looking for valuable and required information was not an easy task. I have noticed a sort of similarity between Satie's music and music of minimalist which I already knew playing in *Ensemble for Different New Music*, by all means. My later work on interpretation of minimalism certainly had to do with my interpretations of Satie's music from 1986, but not that I was aware of it at the beginning. Few years later when I was deep in minimalism and postminimalism I realized how significant influence Satie's music had on minimalism.

So, as you can see, the work, understanding and interpretation of these two music were mutual very interwoven in my case during all those years.

3. Email interview with Peter Lawson

On 2 Nov 2016, at 13:26, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Mr Lawson,

Please pardon my abrupt introduction, my name is Grace Gates, a current music PhD student at Kingston University UK. I am researching Erik Satie's piano performance practice with Professor Robert Orledge as my oracle and Dr. Caroline Potter as my first supervisor.

My methodology involves examining Satie's piano music recordings over the past decades in search of the creative pianism of Satie's piano music performances. I came across your performance of *Sonatine Bureaucratique* in the 1979 release and I wonder if you are happy to answer a few questions relating to your interpretations and insights of this piano work. With your permission, I hope to include some of the email contents for my thesis.

Below are my proposed questions:

- 1) Your recording shows the use of steady tempo, reserved dynamic range and articulation, am I correct to say that you adopted the 'classical style' to introduce the Neo-classical piano work?
- 2) I incline to regard this Neo-classical work as a satire to expose Satie's reluctance to adopt the sonata form in his music (Satie hints to leave the Sonata form -Leaving the office at the end of the piece). Your performance speeds up toward the end of the piece even though there is no change of tempo indicated by Satie. Is your performance decisions reflecting the narrative (text) in the music?
- 3) How do you interpret the term 'Vivache' in the last movement?

Thank you for taking time to read my email and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Grace Wai Kwan Gates

Co-author of Erik Satie: Music, Art and Literature published in September 2013:
<https://www.routledge.com/products/isbn/9781409434214>

On 2 Nov 2016, at 20:40, Peter Lawson wrote: Hello Grace,

Good to know you're researching Satie. 150 years since his birth provides an additional prompt!

To answer your queries:

- 1) Yes, as you know, the sonatine bureaucratique is modelled on the (classical) Clementi C major sonatine. So I approach the Satie with hopefully the same classical awareness (ie clean textures, discrete pedal, classical phrasing etc), albeit it tinged with a certain tongue-in-cheek performance-smile.
- 2) If I hurry towards the end of the last movement, it was definitely NOT to reflect any narrative in the text. I don't think it was anything more than generating a natural musical momentum. I don't think the recording's producer would have allowed me to get away with an unmusical 'accel'!
- 3) Satie often cheekily mis-quoted traditional musical terms. I understood vivache to be vivace - which to most performers (myself included) simply suggests 'lively'.

Hope this helps.

Please give my very best wishes to Robert Orledge who I remember well from joint events in Liverpool and Aldeburgh.

Peter

Peter Lawson / tutor in piano / tutor in contemporary piano

On 3 Nov 2016, at 10:43, Grace Gates wrote:

Dear Peter,

Good morning to you and thank you for the very prompt reply. Your answers are very helpful and provide the necessary evidence to my assertion. As for answer no.2, would you be so kind as to clarify a couple of points for me?

You mentioned: 'If I hurry towards the end of the last movement, it was definitely NOT to reflect any narrative in the text. I don't think it was anything more than generating a natural musical momentum. I don't think the recording's producer would have allowed me to get away with an unmusical 'accel'!'

Are you making conscious decisions of not letting any narrative in the text to affect your performance decisions? In other words, you would perform more or less the same way should there be no text on the page and would solely concentrate on the musical notation provided by Satie.

In terms of your comment on the recording producer's role, did he/she play an important (or even an active) part in influencing your performance decisions of Sonatine Bureaucratique? I think that this is an interesting issue because the final

version of the performance may not necessarily reflect the pianist's understanding of the piece IF the producer and pianist have very different interpretation/viewpoints of the musical notation. Did you encounter that problem while recording Satie's pieces?

Thank you again, I am very grateful for your help. I will pass on your best wishes to Robert.

Regards,
Grace

On 3 Nov 2016, at 11:27, Peter Lawson wrote:

Hello Grace

Q1. No conscious decision was made, for or against. The performance would be the same with or without text.

Q2. The producer is there to faithfully record what the pianist wants to do, not to alter it. He or she might express an opinion (for example, between 2 'takes' which might sound similar to the performer whilst playing but which may sound slightly different in the producer's control booth) but generally no more. The relationship between performer and producer may vary of course, particularly if the performer is very inexperienced, but I think most professional players would expect the producer to 'rubber-stamp' their musical intentions. That was the situation with my Satie recording.

Regards,

Peter

On 5 Apr 2017, at 15:49, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Peter,

Hope this email finds you well. Sorry to trouble you again, I am in the process of finishing the last research chapter and have a few more questions regarding 'Danse Maigre' from *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*. I would be delighted if you could kindly give me some of your thoughts again, like the last email interview I did with you.

1) Unlike other pianists who choose to have a moderately fast tempo for the second movement, you opt for a slower (round about 58-75 crotchet beats) tempo for the piece. Is your tempo choice purely a reaction to Satie's 'assez lent' instruction in the first system of the music, which you believe should apply to the rest of the piece?

2) Danse Maigre has been associated with pieces such as Debussy's *Minstrels* and Cyril Scott's *Danse Negre* by scholars over the years as where Satie drew his

inspirations from, do you agree with such reference? From your recording, I assume that you did not draw such link between Danse Maigre and the other two pieces, given the rather slow tempo choice. However, you did accentuate the weak beats with tenuto marks which leads me to think whether you were conscious of the syncopated rhythm during the performance. Would you be able to clarify this for me?

3) At the end where 'en un souffle' appears, pianists often speed up the tempo noticeably to give an abrupt ending to the piece. However, your performance offers a slow ritardando, as if you are recapitulating the 'tired' and 'wearily' remark at the first system. - is my observation correct?

Thanks ever so, Peter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Grace

On 6 Apr 2017, at 10:03, Peter Lawson wrote:

Hello Grace,

I think the best way I can answer all 3 queries is to say that I don't take any of his tempo marks too literally. I don't think they necessarily correspond to the normally understood meanings of musical terms found elsewhere and though they don't necessarily contradict the norms, they often sow a seed of doubt. So, in the examples you quote, the tempi, rubatos, articulation I chose were guided by the marks on the score but also by my own instinct. If that doesn't quite correspond with others, that's fine; we're all different! My awareness of any other performances/performers of Satie or other works which may have influenced him may have subconsciously coloured my performances but I'd describe my playing as instinctive rather than scholarly.

Regards,
Peter

4. Email interview with Bruno Fontaine with pianist's in-line reply highlighted in blue.

On 10 Nov 2016, at 11:00, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Bruno,

Thank you for the speedy reply and offer to help me with the proposed questions. I would need to ask your permission if I could use the email content in my thesis.

My questions are:

1) As Satie modelled *Sonatine Bureaucratique* on Clementi's C major sonatine, I and several other scholars regard this piece of work as a neo-classical composition. From what I gathered in your performance in the 2016 releases, you opt for a fresh approach which does not focus on the classically-aware performance style. Instead, you perform in a rather expressive approach as if you are purposefully telling the story inspired by the narratives/text in the music. (resemble the musical soundtrack to a film) Is my observation and assumption correct?

2) If my assertion is correct in question no.1, do you see *Sonatine Bureaucratique* entire a parody and not a neo-classical piece?

3) The very expressive articulation that you apply is often comedic and unexpected and if you allow me to say, sometimes unusual and bizarre. e.g. the big agogic accent in bar 6 of the middle section, the expressive use of rubato, the dry and blunt staccatos ...etc. I gather that you do so with particular reasons and motivation behind, would you be able to explain to me? I am guessing that you try to perform this with a Dada twist, perhaps inspired by *Parade* which was composed at the same time of *Sonatine Bureaucratique*?

4) If the narrative is not present on the score, would you perform more or less the same way? In other words, do you let the narrative influence your performance decisions, either implicitly or explicitly?

Thank you very much for this, I am so grateful for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,
Grace Gates

On 10 Nov 2016, at 11:21, Bruno FONTAINE wrote:

Dear Grace
Just got your mail...!
Your questions are most interesting and quite accurate...!

I'll take them with me over this next week end in my country house, and I'll try to get back to you with my answers very beginning of next week !

All the best

Bruno

<Signature Bruno Fontaine.jpg>

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<https://soundcloud.com/brunofontaine>

On 28 Nov 2016, at 13:05, Bruno FONTAINE wrote:

Dear

Grace

Just did it !

Tell me if you need more....

Hope my english is OK !

Sorry for the delay !

All the best

Bruno

Le 10 nov. 2016 à 12:00, Grace Wai Kwan Gates a écrit:

Dear Bruno,

Thank you for the speedy reply and offer to help me with the proposed questions. I would need to ask your permission if I could use the email content in my thesis.

My questions are:

1) As Satie modelled Sonatine Bureaucratique on Clementi's C major sonatine, I and several other scholars regard this piece of work as a neo-classical composition. From what I gathered in your performance in the 2016 releases, you opt for a fresh approach which does not focus on the classically-aware performance style. Instead, you perform in a rather expressive approach as if you are purposefully telling the story inspired by the narratives/text in the music. (resemble the musical soundtrack to a film) Is my observation and assumption correct?

You are absolutely right !

I decided to play the Sonatine, as if it was a soundtrack for a slapstick comedy !

When I recorded it, I had my eyes more on the words than on the music...
These crazy images proposed by Satie were stimulating my imagination, not as I was trying to illustrate in my interpretation the situation he describes, but more a way of escaping from real world, and translating Satie's lunatics thoughts in my own world and playing !

2) If my assertion is correct in question no.1, do you see Sonatine Bureaucratique entire a parody and not a neo-classical piece?

Oh, very much so !!!

The Clementi sonata representing for me the boring hours spent on a piano by a non gifted pupil...

and becoming the nightmare of the neighbors !!!

3) The very expressive articulation that you apply is often comedic and unexpected and if you allow me to say, sometimes unusual and bizarre. e.g. the big agogic accent in bar 6 of the middle section, the expressive use of rubato, the dry and blunt staccatos ...etc. I gather that you do so with particular reasons and motivation behind, would you be able to explain to me? I am guessing that you try to perform this with a Dada twist, perhaps inspired by Parade which was composed at the same time of Sonatine Bureaucratique?

You read my mind....!

As a following to your previous question, my choice of treating the Sonatine as a fully parodic piece, opened for me the road to a « no limit » interpretation...And again the reference to Chaplin, Keaton, or even Laurel and Hardy were prominent in my mind.

And of course, your reference to Dada is completely accurate !!! Also, in a previous recording of mine, I played the Ragtime Parade, which I had treated a little bit the same way.

The Sonatine gave me the opportunity to go even further, in a kind of « destructive » manner !!!!

4) If the narrative is not present on the score, would you perform more or less the same way? In other words, do you let the narrative influence your performance decisions, either implicitly or explicitly?

Not at all the same way !!! Even if I always tried not to use the narrative at « first degree »... In the recording of the CD, I constantly used Satie's words as an inspiration going either in the mood he would described, or sometimes, in a completely different idea paying in my mind, adding a more surreal feeling even !!! So, I could probably say that his words were highly influencals, implicitly AND explicitly !!!

Thank you very much for this, I am so grateful for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,
Grace Gates

5. Email interview with Philippe Entremont with Marie-Hélène acting as Entremont's agent/ personal assistant

On 6 Apr 2017, at 12:28, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Marie-Hélène,

Thank you for the delightful reply and Mr. Entremont's kindness to agree to help. Please pass on my utmost gratitude to him.

My questions:

1). Danse Maigre has been associated with pieces such as Debussy's *Minstrels* and Cyril Scott's *Danse Negre* by scholars over the years as where Satie drew his inspirations from, do you agree with such reference? From your recording, I can hear clearly that you accentuate the weak beats with tenuto/accents which leads me to think whether you were conscious of the syncopated rhythm during the performance. Was that your conscious intention to address the syncopated rhythmic characteristics of the cakewalk dance which Satie might have intentionally distorted in this piece? Would you be able to clarify this for me?

2) How does the title 'Danse Maigre' influence your performance decisions and do you find 'assez lent' in the first system a form of humoristic touch from Satie? Perhaps 'assez lent' was a tempo mark that Satie wrote to tease pianists? What's your opinion on this?

3) My general perception of your performance is that it defies traditional expectations in piano works of early 20th century performance style, for example the way you apply accentuations at unexpected beats within the regular pulse and phrases. Am I correct to assert that Satie's persona (the association with humour and defiance as a composer) has encouraged you to perform his pieces with such characteristic as well?

4) You gave an energetic finish to the end of Danse Maigre as you sped up around 140 crotchet beats per minute for the semiquavers at 'en un shuffle' - What prompted you to take this decision? Was it the text 'en un shuffle' or something else?

5) Overall, how did Satie's absurd text inform your performance? e.g. text such as 'sur du velours jauni' often baffles pianists!

I look forward to hearing from you and Mr. Entremont. And many thanks again for contributing to my research.

Warm regards,
Grace Gates

On 2 May 2017, at 16:47, Marie Helene GROSOS wrote:

Dear Grace,

Sorry for the delay to answer your questions but Philippe Entremont has been quite busy those last weeks.

Here are his remarks about Danse Maigre by Erik Satie

1/ Danse Maigre can be associated in some ways with Minstrels by Debussy but as far as Philippe Entremont is concerned this a perfect example of the originality of Erik Satie that you can also find in his ballet for orchestra Parade.

2/ the term "assez lent" is indeed humoristic and certainly very far from any funeral march and in general you are absolutely right to associate humour and defiance.

The end of Danse Maigre, which is quite energetic, is perfectly coherent with Philippe Entremont vision of the work.

Finally having not been exposed to "velours jauni" disqualifies Philippe Entremont to make any remarks...

Philippe Entremont sincerely hopes these few remarks will help you.

Warmest thoughts

Marie Helene

www.philippeentremont.com

@OfficialPhilippeEntremont

6. Email interview with Jeroen van Veen with pianist's in-line reply in red as the original.

On 7 Jun 2016, at 10:23, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Jeroen,

Thank you for your kindness and support. Below are my questions regarding *Prelude de la porte héroïque du ciel* :

1) You have chosen a very slow tempo, in fact, possibly the slowest of all other interpretations that I have examined. Why is it necessary to be this slow? Are you trying to highlight the 'calme' characteristics provided by Satie with the sense of immobility? Has the lack of bar lines and time signature influence your choice of tempo in any way?

2) According to Gowers, Satie wrote this piece by 'stitching' cells in a sort of arbitrary/mosaics manner with punctuation cells to give the piece the structure it needs. Apart from utilising the punctuation cells, do you have in mind any particular note that may give a similar function to the traditional cadence? Chord A (before superstiteusement) or Chord D (say near En use timid piete)?

3) Has your performance been affected in any ways by Satie's esotericism planted in this piece, e.g. the title as well as the quirky terminology that appears throughout the piece?

4) How do you interpret RIDEAU and the dotted line afterwards? I can see that some pianists understood the music after that as a coda, but some see it as the beginning of something new -e.g. Poulenc's version.

May I please have your permission that some of your opinions may contribute to my PhD thesis on the creative pianism of Satie's piano music. There will be full acknowledgement and reference of your contribution.

All the best and thanks again for taking part and allow me to understand your performance with greater depth.

Warm regards,
Grace

On 2 Nov 2016, at 11:33, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Jeroen,

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for agreeing to answer my questions regarding my PhD research on Satie. I have in fact sent you an email back in June

enclosing questions for *Prelude de la porte héroïque du ciel* but I have to draft my chapter by August and can't wait any longer for your reply.

I have now examined numerous recordings for *Sonatine Bureaucratique*, and your interpretation for this piece stands out as quite different from the others. Below are my questions if you are happy to answer them:

- 1) From what I gather in your recording (2015), am I correct to assert that you adopt the classical period performance style when performing this Neo-classical piece? I see evidences such as clarity in texture, more controlled use to rubato and reserved dynamic range in your playing.
- 2) I incline to think that Satie's Neo-classical piece is a satire to the use of sonata form, e.g. 'let's be off' - imply leaving behind sonata form. What is your opinion on this?
- 3) In the middle movement, your playing becomes a lot more expressive, I would say, with a Romantic period style, e.g. more generous use of rubato. Is that your way of delivering the contrasting middle section, highlighting the mix of romantic/20th century style with the classical style?
- 4) How much do you let the narrative (text) affect your interpretation of the piece?
- 5) I find that you generally adopt a slower tempo for Satie's piano pieces. What is the motivation behind your choice of tempo? e.g. the last movement is comparatively slower than other recordings, and your performance of the final systems is very controlled with a moderato tempo.

Thank you for offering your insights into my project. I sincerely look forward to your reply.

Warm Regards,
Grace Wai Kwan Gates

On 8 Nov 2016, at 00:14, Jeroen van Veen, GM wrote:

Crazy times here, but I'll try to answer below in red

- 1) From what I gather in your recording (2015), am I correct to assert that you adopt the classical period performance style when performing this Neo-classical piece? I see evidences such as clarity in texture, more controlled use to rubato and reserved dynamic range in your playing.

Correct! It's Erik Satie's ironical reaction on the classical form; The Sonatine/ Sonata form. As well as his view on classical music in general; his love for 3 movement compositions; in my view all a renaissance of the classical era.

2) I incline to think that Satie's Neo-classical piece is a satire to the use of sonata form, e.g. 'let's be off' - imply leaving behind sonata form. What is your opinion on this? I agree! The fast-slow-fast; and the analyses of the first movement, exposition, themes and development all showing a satire on the sonata form.

3) In the middle movement, your playing becomes a lot more expressive, I would say, with a Romantic period style, e.g. more generous use of rubato. Is that your way of delivering the contrasting middle section, highlighting the mix of romantic/20th century style with the classical style?

Yes indeed, in my opinion the second is more romantic than the first and last movement

4) How much do you let the narrative (text) affect your interpretation of the piece?

Not very much, it could give a direction in which Satie thought, but often it has little to do with the music. We once experimented with speaking out the lines while playing; not a great success.

5) I find that you generally adopt a slower tempo for Satie's piano pieces. What is the motivation behind your choice of tempo? e.g. the last movement is comparatively slower than other recordings, and your performance of the final systems is very controlled with a moderato tempo.

The last movement is more dancing in a little slower tempo, that's maybe why I took it a little slower.

In general; I think Satie meant slow, really slow. John Cage edited the Pages Mystiques and very slow= 44 on the metronome!!!

But over all I think that Satie made a statement, he lived in the middle of the industrial revolution, the first cars, bikes, the first movies, the race of late just began, and as a reaction on daily life, in which he always survived, he wrote slow music, timeless (without bar lines, many repeats, simple structures).

His music is a kind of counterbalance to the rushing world; in a way after the digital revolution minimalism, and the new age genre gained a lot of attention and new audiences, even today many concert series have their own Minimal series. The popularity of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, John Adams, Arvo Pärt, Michael Nyman, Yann Tiersen; they all benefit from the inventions from Erik Satie. Satie was the first to write this kind of 'repetitive easy' music. In my view Satie was in the middle of all mayor changes in music!

I hope this helps you!

Jeroen

7. Email interview with Josu Okiñena

With a few follow-up emails, I managed to conduct the interview with Okiñena in less than two years after the initial email. The emails below shows our correspondences and Okiñena's suggestion to have a direct face-to-face conversation in replace of interview via email conversations. The video call took place via Whatsapp on 20 July 2019 at 11:35am. The conversation gravitated towards my initially proposed questions despite the fact that I did not deliver the questions word by word as would be in an email. Some of the sentences in the conversations were inevitably fragmented. As such, the DVD-R attached at the end of the thesis includes the entire interview (recorded using my MacBook Pro in my office) in order to provide the full content should hearing the full conversation is necessary.

On 22 Mar 2017, at 20:11, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Josu,

Thank you ever so much for agreeing to take part in the interview! I am very grateful.

Below are my questions and I hope you don't mind me leaving them as open as possible.

1) Researchers proposed that there could be a link between 'Danse Maigre' and Debussy's Minstrel/ Cyril Scott's Danse Negre, do you agree? Do you think the style of 'cakewalk' affects you at all in your performance as a result of the piece title?

2) You have chosen an extremely slow tempo for the first system (around 35 crotchet beats per minute) in order to respond to 'Assez lent' but decided to give a big contrast afterwards (reaching around 130 crotchet beats). Are you treating Satie's texts (the words) as a temporal remark rather than the conventional function of tempo description which normal affects the entire piece? What made you give such decision on tempo changes? (Was it the texts on the page or the rhythmic character?)

- I really liked the way you adopted the very slow tempo again for the final system (except 'en un souffle') - it gives a sense of 'recapitulation' using the means of tempo.

3) When you perform 'Danse Maigre', did you approach it in some sort of poetic way? What I mean is, the pulse of the music reflect the rhythm of the story telling in your own discretion.

4) Did you find Satie's rather strange texts affect your performance decisions? e.g. the way you see the structure of the piece/ your mood/ imagination..etc.?

Words such as ‘Remez en dedans’/ Sur du velours jauni seem unrelated to the music - do you find yourself having to give them some sort of meaning during your performance?

I am very excited to hear your point of views, and look forward to receiving your reply.

Thank you again for answering these questions for me.

Warm regards,
Grace

On 6 Apr 2017, at 14:19, Josu OKIÑENA wrote:

Dear Grace:

Sorry for being so late, but I was really busy!!! This weekend I will send you all the answers!

Sincerelly,
Josu Okiñena

On 15 Jul 2019, at 17:32, Grace Wai Kwan Gates wrote:

Dear Josu,

I contacted you a couple of years ago in search of some answers/inspirations for my phd thesis on performance practice of Satie’s piano pieces. We lost the thread because of the busy working schedules.

I am now two months before my submission deadline and want to try my luck once again to see if you by any chance have a short window to answer the questions below. I would be so grateful and thrilled if you have the time to answer them as I thoroughly enjoyed your version of Danse maigre and would like to share your insight on the performance of Satie’s texted (humoristic) piano pieces. Thanks everso.

Warm regards,
Grace Gates

On 19 Jul 2019, at 14:03, Josu OKIÑENA wrote:

Hi there!!! Yes!!! Sorry for not having answered you!!! Would you mind if we do it through a videocall?

Yours,
Josu Okiñena

On 19 Jul 2019, at 14:30, Grace Gates wrote:

Dear Josu,

Oh! I would love that! I assume that you would be happy for me to record the video all so that I can have the transcription included on my phd thesis?

Warm regards,
Grace

On 19 Jul 2019, at 14:35, Josu OKIÑENA wrote:

Sure!!! No problem at all to record it!! Is it ok through messenger- facebook or Skype?

Transcription of the Whatsapp video call (selective contents)

Point 1: Any connection between ‘Danse maigre’ and the cakewalk dance? (Time code: 08:43)

JO: Satie has created this repertoires, he wants to celebrate the freedom interpretation. He created much more different possibilities to perform his pieces. He opens man many different ways to perform them and that’s what arts should be. (Time code: 13:50 - 14:22)

JO: In my opinion, he is a genius because he creates mamy impossibilities to perform his pieces. He opens many different ways to perform them, and this is what Art should be. (Time code: 14:22 - 14:51)

Point 2: Okiñena’s application of tempo rubato in ‘Danse maigre’

JO: My impression - humoristic - giving music to imaginary story in pianist’s head

JO: Everytime I approach to this piece I feel it different way. My understanding of these indications is always different. (Time code: 7.20 - 8.27) With Satie, it is [the music] a imaginery reality... what provokes me is to build, because when I play, when I interpret, when I perform, I create a new world with this piece. ..There is a scenario. A landscape full of imaginery human beings, running fast from one side to another. For example, the beginning I played very slow... I connect to open the theatre, [revealing] a landscape of people running from here and there.

JO: Scenario, imagination of people, also the world of colours, much more than the world of structure, structure does not exist at all here.

JO: Abrupt change in tempo - leads to explosion of ideas. Big connection - Spanish tradition at the time. French composer... tried to perform in German tradition. More mediterranean, I imagine that the music is Spanish for me. My feelings as a Spanish, I perform with my instinct.

JO: It is instinct. I know very well, I have tried out many different possibilities to do it. Now when I listen to it, I will not perform it this way. Completely different changes me as a human being, approach to Satie more rich.

Point 3: Commenting on Satie's outburst of emotion (Time code: 17:39 - 18:13)

JO: everything flashes, it is not from beginning to end, with no smooth train of thoughts... There is a connection that everything is separated, but has a unity. This is the way I see it.

JO: There is no rule to form his pieces. And that is really art.

Point 4: The influences of in-score texts in performance decisions

JO: The words, evoke your imagination, but it is not performance indication. Overall stimulation. Imagination help build the piece.

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Appendix IX. Published paper 'Satie in performance, with historical recordings'

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