NOTE TO USERS

Page(s) not included in the original manuscript and are unavailable from the author or university. The manuscript was scanned as received.

xiii

This reproduction is the best copy available.
INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI®

UMI Microform 3257332

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346
ABSTRACT

Connecting Histories: Identity and Exoticism in Ernest Bloch, Rebecca Clarke, and Paul Hindemith’s Viola Works of 1919

by

Daphne Cristina Capparelli Gerling

Taking the end of the First World War as a starting point and the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Composition Competition as a meeting point, this study discusses three major works for viola of 1919: the Sonata for Viola and Piano by Rebecca Clarke, the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 by Paul Hindemith, and the Suite for Viola and Piano by Ernest Bloch. The thesis places each work within the context of its composer’s career and compositional development, focusing on key stylistic and historical features.

The study consists of five sections. First is a section establishing the historical background and cultural surroundings experienced by the composers and setting the stage for their work in 1919. In the three subsequent sections, particular attention is given to the stylistic features of each work in turn as well as to the influences that shaped them. Where possible, detailed biographical information about the compositional process is supplied; I then show how exotic influences and the heritage of the French style (through Debussy and Ravel) are present in each work. Other stylistic aspects are discussed on a piece-specific basis, namely the influence of Jewish traditional music in Bloch, English
modality in Clarke, and Expressionism in Hindemith. Musical examples are given to illustrate the analyses. To end, a concluding section traces parallels between the composers’ lives, the factors of greatest impact on their compositional identity, and the outcomes of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge’s composition competition, where the works by Bloch and Clarke took first and second places, respectively. (The work by Hindemith was not entered.)

The overarching goal of this study is to provide violists with a single comprehensive resource on these works and their shared history. To my knowledge, such a study is not currently available, and will be of use to performers wishing to learn more about these pieces, which are at the core of violists’ repertoire today.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Doctoral dissertations do not come into being on their own, nor through the isolated efforts of their authors! Many people and institutions have helped me through this process, and I wish to acknowledge them and thank them for their efforts on my behalf. I would like to thank the Shepherd School of Music, the Brown Foundation, and Mary Dix for giving me the opportunity and financial support with which to undertake my doctoral studies. I wish to thank all my teachers at the Shepherd School, especially Dr. Marcia Citron, my thesis director, for her elegant and inspiring scholarship; Karen Ritscher, my viola professor from 2001–2004, for her insightful teaching and personal warmth; Prof. James Dunham, who encouraged me throughout my studies, and welcomed me back to the viola studio on all my Houston visits; and Dr. Richard Lavenda, who advised me in his capacity as Director of Graduate Studies and replaced Ms. Ritscher on my committee after her departure. I would also like to thank Dr. Eugenia Georges from the Department of Anthropology, for agreeing to serve as my external reader. For their assistance at earlier stages of study I wish to thank Ms. Rachel Buchman, Prof. Leone Buyse, Dr. William Bailley, and Dr. Joyce Farwell. On the administrative end, Maya Nuesell kept me connected to the Shepherd School while I was in Cambridge, assisting with all the technical parts of this process, and helping me to keep a positive outlook. Suzanne Taylor has graciously stepped in and continued her work.

I would like to thank the Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge, for allowing me to be a Visiting Scholar between 2005 and 2007. Through their generosity I have been able to undertake all the research for this project, and have had access to a wealth of
materials in the Cambridge University Library. I wish to thank the staff in the Anderson Music Reading Room and the ILL division. At the Rice University library I wish to thank Mary DuMont for her many kindnesses, and for helping me to obtain titles unavailable in England.

I would like to thank pianist Charles Tauber, who performed two of the 1919 viola works with me in recitals, and violist Simon Rowland-Jones for working with me on the Bloch Suite in July 2006. I would also like to thank Jeffrey Irvine and Lynne Ramsey, who first worked with me on the Hindemith and Clarke sonatas, and Karen Ritscher again, for helping me to understand the works at a new level.

Several people helped me in the preparation stages of the document itself. I wish to thank Thomas Riebl and Edward Klorman for discussing the project when it was only an idea, in Austria in 2003; Liane Curtis for sending *A Rebecca Clarke Reader* when it was published in 2005; Danièle Pistone of Université de Paris IV (Sorbonne) for sharing excellent materials for the introductory chapter in October 2005; Lily Hirsch of Duke University for speaking with me about Bloch's identity as a Jewish composer in October 2006; and Stuart Taylor for preparing the musical examples in March 2007. I thank Melissa Fu for lending me her scanner and teaching me to use it, and for her friendly company. I thank Michelle Cheramy, Nathan Cook, Elise Pittenger, and Kirsten Yon for their encouraging conversations about the document, and for their constant friendship and support. Miriam Young, my grandmother-in-law, hosted me on three occasions in Houston while I was working on the thesis. I would like to thank her for her warm hospitality and for making sure that I worked hard under her watch. Ginger Young, my mother-in-law, was incredibly supportive, shared excellent stories about her own doctoral
adventures, and sent paper for the final printing. Robert Young’s numerous rides to and from the Houston airport were indispensable, and Mary Helen Dupree and Linda Gilbert’s excellent company and sense of humor made solitary work trips to Houston much more fun. In Cambridge, Anita Mackenzie Mills and Polly Waterfield were invaluable friends, and helped me keep poise and perspective. Thanks also to Sarah Hill, Stel.la Guillén Fábegas, Vicky Jackson, and to the parents of my students who always inquired about my progress.

I wish to thank my father, Fredi Gerling, who recommended calm and patience, and my grandmother Cora and sisters Ariadne, Adelaide, and Ingrid for their interest and support over many telephone conversations. Finally, there is my “team,” the two people without whom this project simply would not have happened. I wish to thank my mother, Cristina Capparelli Gerling, for sending excellent references to articles, for dispelling frustration, for reading through the first half of the document, and for taking great pleasure in advising from afar. Her sense of humor and love were absolutely vital. Last, but most importantly, I wish to thank my husband, Coulter George, for smiling at me every day, for believing in me, for inspiring me to strive toward my highest standards, and for sharing his prodigious editorial and formatting abilities with me in the final stages. (E secretamente, claro, gostaria de agradecer a sabedoria, amor e infinita paciência do Doutor Sommersprossen e dos Mings que me ajudaram a cada dia. Com vocês a vida é muito especial.)

Daphne Gerling

Cambridge, UK
26 March 2007
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS vii
TABLES AND MUSICAL EXAMPLES x
PREFACE xiv

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 1
   European Cultural Life in the Aftermath of World War I 1
   The Three Composers 2
   Significant Cultural and Artistic Movements of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 7
   The Confluence of the Exotic and the Oriental as Artistic Influences 12
   The Rise of Oriental Exoticism in Europe 17
   The Exposition Universelle of 1889 19
   Travel, Composers, and the Exotic 21
   Debussy's Interest in Exoticism and its Legacy 22

2. ERNEST BLOCH'S VIOLA SUITE OF 1919 26
   Introduction 26
   Biographical Profile 27
   Composing the Suite for Viola and Piano 32
   Versions of the Viola Suite 36
Critical Reaction 39

Compositional Influences in Bloch’s Music 43

Bloch’s Musical Materials 51

Movements of the Suite 55

Motivic Unity and Movement Structure 56

Appendix: Bloch’s Program Notes to the Suite for Viola and Piano 76

3. THE VIOLA SONATA OF REBECCA CLARKE 78

Introduction 78

Biographical Profile 83

Compositional Development and Stylistic Influences 99

The Sonata for Viola and Piano 107

4. PAUL HINDEMITH’S SONATA FOR VIOLA AND PIANO OP. 11, NO. 4 133

The Compositions in Opus 11 133

Current Scholarly Research 134

Questions of Inclusion 136

Biographical Profile 138

Compositional Style in the Early Opuses 143

The Role of Expressionism in Hindemith’s Early Works 145

Composing During the War 148

Connecting Debussy, the Sonata Op.11, No. 4, and the Exotic 152

The Sonata Op.11, No. 4 155

5. CONCLUSIONS 192
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindemith</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLES AND MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Tables

1: Compositions Related to Cultural and Political Events 18
2: Hindemith's Compositions 1914–1919 144

Musical Examples

2.1: Bloch, Suite for Viola and Piano (1919), Opening motive 53
2.2: Violin Concerto, Closing figure 53
2.3: Jézabel, Act I, Scene IV “Theme of the procession of faith” (first version) 54
2.4: Suite Hebraïque for viola and piano, First mvt., mm. 30–7 54
2.5: Suite for Viola and Piano, First mvt., mm. 1–15 57
2.6: Ibid., mm. 177–94 58
2.7: Ibid., mm. 256–69 59
2.8: Ibid., Rehearsal 20, mm. 251–5 60
2.9: Ibid., Fourth mvt., Rehearsal 14, mm. 249–55 61
2.10: Ibid., Rehearsal 24, mm. 416–26 62
2.11: a) Jézabel, Act II, the main Sukkot motive (from Móricz) 63
   b) A Passover Seder Song (from Kushner, reproduced by Móricz) 63
2.12: Suite for Viola and Piano, First mvt., mm. 75–80 64
2.13: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1–6 66
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.7: Ibid., Var. IV, mm. 139–47</th>
<th>167</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.8: Ibid., Third mvt., mm. 1–17</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9: Ibid., Var. VI, mm. 131–203</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10: Hindemith, String Quartet No. 2, Op. 10, mm. 72–87</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1–19</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12: Ibid., Third mvt., mm. 661–82</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13: Stravinsky, <em>Petrushka</em>, Fourth Tableau, Rehearsal 100</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15: Hindemith, Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, Third mvt., Coda, mm. 303–93</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Copyright Permissions**

I would like to thank the following publishers for permission to reproduce the musical examples in this thesis:

In Chapter 2, Aida Garcia Cole of Schirmer, for permission to print excerpts of Ernest Bloch’s Suite for Viola and Piano © 1920 (Renewed) by G. Schirmer, Inc. (ASCAP) and *Suite Hébraïque*, © 1954 by G.Schirmer, Inc. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission. Examples from *Jézabel* are quoted from David Z. Kushner’s *The Ernest Bloch Companion* and Klára Móricz’s article “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews: Changing Concepts of Jewish Identity in Ernest Bloch’s *Jézabel* and *Schelomo.*”
PREFACE

Ernest Bloch, Rebecca Clarke, and Paul Hindemith's compositions of 1919 have been mainstays in the viola repertoire since they were first performed. Embraced by great violinists of the twentieth century such as Lionel Tertis, Louis Bailly, and William Primrose, as well as by Hindemith and Clarke who were excellent players in their own right, these works are among the most frequently performed and recorded by violists in our time.

Despite their long-standing favor with performers and concert audiences, scholarly studies of these particular works have appeared only recently, and have invariably treated each work and its composer individually. Though several important articles and dissertations now discuss these works from both a theoretical and a historical point of view, there is to my knowledge no study that treats them collectively, examining the historical context in which they were created and the musical influences they share. The idea behind this project, then, is to provide exactly that: a resource for violists, treating the works alongside each other, able to reveal connections between the composers, their works, and the works' subsequent reception and place in the repertoire.

In order to establish these connections, the study encompasses two perspectives, one historical, the other musical and artistic. Historically, the study is couched in the resurgence of cultural life in Europe and America in the first year following World War I, while from a musical perspective it seeks to analyze specific musical developments in the late nineteenth century that come to affect the compositional style of Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith in 1919. These are, namely, Expressionism, Impressionism, Exoticism, and
Orientalism, which gained popularity as composers pursued new expressive paths in twentieth-century music. The history of these movements occupies the subsequent chapter, and as they are wide-ranging topics on their own, of far-reaching influence across several disciplines, I aim to contextualize them and establish relevant parameters in which to base this study. In particular, it must be noted that oriental and exotic effects manifest themselves with varying degrees of intensity in the music of each composer studied here, so as to be a concrete presence in the works of Bloch, an occasional one in those of Clarke, and a rather more abstract one in those of Hindemith. Furthermore, we will consider that the choice to feature the viola in these works was unusual, placing their works outside the compositional mainstream.

In addition to studying the presence of impressionist and oriental or exotic elements in their works of 1919, I look at the presence of such influences in other works the composers wrote over the course of their careers. In order to do this, I explore the circumstances of each composer's early training, and include in each composer's own chapter relevant works from other years which share characteristics with the works of 1919. Furthermore, as this study works toward producing not only a musical history of the works of each composer, but also toward presenting a broader picture of their life in connection to other artists and personalities of their time, each composer's connections to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge are considered, especially in light of her composition competition held in 1919. Biographical notes on artists with whom the composers interacted significantly throughout their careers are also included, as are, when possible, comments the composers themselves made about their works or about each other in more personal terms. Lastly, as the aftermath of the Great War colors all facets of practical and
creative life in 1919, it is fundamental to consider how much Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith suffered its effects both directly and indirectly while trying to forge their artistic identities.
1

INTRODUCTION

European Cultural Life in the Aftermath of World War I

When the conflicts of World War I came to an end on 11 November 1918, the Armistice heralded promises of peace, but the world itself had perhaps never found itself in so dire a situation. Around the world more than thirteen million civilians were killed, not only due to contact with the military, but also because of displacement from their homes, starvation, exposure, massacres, and the outbreak of an influenza epidemic late in the year. Adding to the civilian casualties, an estimated 8.5 million soldiers died either in conflict or from wounds and diseases resulting from conditions in the trenches.¹ Given that so many people in the cities of Western Europe were struggling simply to re-establish basic needs such as housing and health care, it is all the more wondrous that by the following year cultural institutions were working hard to re-open, and to present a full season of performances and exhibits. As economies recovered, investments in culture grew, and audiences along with them. As Peter Franklin explains: “The re-establishment of such institutions was often a key issue of national pride and sensed national identity as the nightmare of the war receded.”² If we take this setting as a starting point to this

chapter, the next logical step is to locate the three composers under consideration and examine how the war affected their lives and careers.

The Three Composers

To create a clear chronological picture, let us begin with Ernest Bloch, the eldest of the composers studied here. Bloch spent the early years of the war in Geneva, where he managed a family merchandising business, lectured at the Geneva Conservatoire between 1911 and 1916, and conducted several of his works with the Geneva Symphony Orchestra. He composed prolifically during these years, producing his first major collection of symphonic works, the Jewish Cycle, which followed in the wake of his controversial opera Macbeth, premiered at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1910. By 1916, certain that his career prospects in Europe were limited both by the economic difficulties of war and by a constant current of anti-Semitism, he went on tour to America in search of success.³ Though male and in his mid-thirties, he did not fight in the war because Switzerland was neutral, and therefore not directly involved in the conflict. Yet Bloch experienced the dangers and privations of the war in other ways: the near failure of his family’s business left him in an extremely precarious financial situation, while rationing of daily items such as food and household items made life uncomfortable and uncertain.⁴

³ Bloch was turned down as Musical Director of the Geneva Symphony Orchestra in favor of Ernest Ansermet, who had been his pupil. Meanwhile at the Geneva Conservatoire he occupied a non-remunerated position as an “honorary” lecturer, rather than a salaried chair as professor. See Joseph Lewinski and Emmanuelle Dijon, Ernest Bloch: Sa vie et sa pensée (Geneva: Slatkine, 2001), Avant-Propos.
⁴ The Bloch family business sold Swiss souvenirs and cuckoo clocks, and depended heavily on income from tourists visiting the city. When wartime difficulties kept them
He also writes about the presence of hostile submarines in the Atlantic when he crossed over to America, explaining that at one point his ship was nearly hit six hundred miles west of Bordeaux.

After a rather disastrous first year touring in the US, the tide turned, and he was able to settle in New York City in 1917, where he became a teacher at the Mannes School of Music. That year his works received important critical attention with premieres in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, and Schirmer became his exclusive publisher. With these improvements, he was able to bring his family to join him that summer in Manhattan—a brave choice given the danger of exposing his children to possible submarine attacks on the journey over.\(^5\) Bloch was profoundly affected by the war psychologically: he disagreed with it in principle, and was irate at the callousness and loss of life that it brought.\(^6\) He also fell victim to the 1918 influenza, though he was fortunate enough to recover, unlike some of his friends, who lost their lives to the illness.\(^7\) But by the war’s end he had achieved a position of relative stability, not only in that he was able to be reunited with his family, but also in that he was now able for the first time to support them through his work as a musician.

\(^5\) Of the three composers featured in this study, Bloch was the only one who was married and had a family during the First World War.
\(^6\) Bloch’s First Violin Sonata of 1920 is said to portray his bitterness concerning the war. Lewinski and Dijon, *Ernest Bloch*, 253.
\(^7\) Mrs. Harriet Lanier’s son succumbed to the illness. She was one of Bloch’s greatest benefactors during this period, in her capacity as chair of the New York Friends of Music. Bloch writes his mother about the epidemic on 17 March 1919: “Cette affreuse épidémie sévit avec rage ici; les gens meurent comme des mouches. Elle a fait plus de victimes aux Etats-Unis que la guerre; on dit plus de 500,000...” “This terrible epidemic rages on here; people are dying like flies. The epidemic has made more victims in the United States than the war; they say more than 500,000 have died...” (my translation). Ibid., 184, 189.
Rebecca Clarke spent the early years of the war in London, where between 1910 and 1916 she played in the Nora Clench Quartet, the Music Society String Quartet, the Classical Concert Society, and the Queen’s Hall Orchestra under Henry Wood. Due to a dispute with her father in 1910, she was thrown out of the family home with a mere twelve pounds sterling in hand and forced from that time to make her own living as a violist. In this she succeeded admirably, being one of the first six British women to hold a position in a professional orchestra, and excelling as a chamber player, in demand with several well-connected performers. Until 1916 she was able to earn her living as a musician in England despite the war (something that would not be the case during the Second World War, when she was forced to find work as a nanny to make a living while in the US). But in 1916 she left England for America along with her friend, the cellist May Mukle. Mukle had toured the US with great success in the 1907–08 season performing alongside violinist Maud Powell, and was thus able to secure professional engagements for herself and Clarke in several American and Canadian cities. Maria Baylock speculates that a growing anti-German sentiment among musicians in London may have contributed to Clarke and Mukle’s decision to leave the UK:

Clarke and Mukle both had German parents: Clarke’s mother, Agnes Helferich Clarke, and Mukle’s father, Leopold Mukle, were German. They certainly were aware of the growing anti-German sentiment in London, and it may have influenced their decision to tour abroad. Prepared to participate in the concert season of 1917–1918 in the United States, Clarke and Mukle left London in 1916. They may have realized that they were leaving England indefinitely, because since early 1915, the Germans had declared a submarine blockade around Great Britain. Any ship attempting to enter a British port, whether passenger, cargo, or navy vessel, was almost guaranteed to be attacked by German
submarines. The two friends stayed in the United States for the remainder of the war.\footnote{Maria Foltz Baylock “Clarke and the English Ensemble”, \textit{Rebecca Clarke: Essays on a Life in Music}, ed. Liane Curtis. [CD-ROM] accompanying \textit{A Rebecca Clarke Reader}, Rebecca Clarke Society, 2005.}

It is also possible that financial constraints posed by the war sufficiently curtailed artistic life so there were not sufficient engagements from which to earn a living. England was short one million men, and the private music clubs and societies that hired (female) performers regularly were not doing so. It is likely that no single factor, but a combination of circumstances, led Clarke to leave England during this time. By 1919 Clarke found herself dividing her time between the homes of her brothers, one of whom lived in Rochester, NY, and the other in Detroit. Though Rochester would serve as a recurring home base to her between 1918 and 1923, it is in Detroit that she reports having completed her viola sonata on 8 July 1919.

Paul Hindemith had an entirely different experience of the war, in which he was enlisted as a soldier for the German army, and in which he lost his father, who was killed in combat in Flanders in 1915. By this time, despite being only nineteen years old, Hindemith had already been appointed to the first violin section of the Frankfurt opera orchestra and made second violinist of the Rebner quartet. He also worked as a performer in cafés and theatres to support his mother and his sister until he was called into service himself in 1917. Initially he was posted to the band in his regiment, where he played the bass drum, but in 1918 his regiment moved from Alsace to Flanders and he was posted to the trenches as a sentry, sending messages between troops. His diaries from this time detail the dangers he encountered at the front and his luck at surviving several grenade attacks in the final months of the war. Remarkably, he managed to compose during the
war, working on *Mélancholie*, Op. 13, written in memory of his friend Karl Köhler (who died in battle in 1918), and composing *Wie es wär' wenn's anders wär'* with characteristic speed on 22 October 1918 while on retreat in Northern France.\(^9\) Perhaps most importantly, that same year he wrote his Quartet in F minor, Op. 10, on the front in Alsace. This was his most complex and mature work to date, and the fact that he could write such a tightly conceived composition surrounded by the horrors of war attests to unusually developed skills of concentration and survival. Of the three composers in this study, it is clearly Hindemith who had the most direct experience of the war conflict and its consequences.

A final item deserves consideration before proceeding to the next section of the chapter: it would seem that all three of the composers spent the first half of the war (1914–16) trying to “carry on” with life as usual. Then in 1916–17 major changes took place for all of them: Bloch and Clarke left their home countries indefinitely, and Hindemith was thrown into the war face first. It is quite clear that for Bloch and Clarke the decision to leave home was due in part to the fact that as the war lengthened and showed no signs of abating, they were forced to make decisions that would allow them better long-term opportunities. For Hindemith, however, conscription by his government changed his situation in a manner beyond his own control.

---

I would now like to put aside this historical perspective of events in the twentieth century, and examine musical developments over the preceding two centuries which led to the establishment of the following cultural movements: Expressionism, Impressionism, Orientalism, and Exoticism.\(^{10}\) As these are the leading artistic influences behind the works examined in this study, it is my goal to give clear descriptions of the movements (below), and in later sections of this study investigate in detail how such influences came to be present in Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith's music.

Expressionism

To begin, let us speak briefly of Expressionism, a cultural movement we will consider more extensively in chapter 4. A powerful force in German visual arts, literature, and music of the early twentieth century (c. 1900–1910), Expressionism found its strongest exponents in Schoenberg, Berg, and Kandinsky.\(^{11}\) The expressionist aesthetic is characterized in the visual arts by distorted, sometimes abstract or non-representational

---

\(^{10}\) I am making an organizational choice not to treat the movements chronologically here, but in an order that creates a cohesive chapter structure.

\(^{11}\) Schoenberg and Kandinsky knew each other and were in regular contact at this time. The connection between both artists is made more interesting by the fact that Schoenberg was himself an amateur painter of considerable skill, whose works in this medium are also expressionist. Schoenberg’s *Erwartung* is considered to be one of the most important expressionist works of music. See Robert P. Morgan, “Expressionism”, in *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 295.
images, and in music by dissonant sonorities that push past the boundaries of chromatic tonality. Expressionist works aimed to express the inner experience of the artist rather than external representations of a physical world.\textsuperscript{12} Hindemith is the composer in this study with the closest ties to this movement, whose influences he absorbed in Germany as a student keen to experiment and find his own compositional voice. Clarke and Bloch also came into contact with the style, but as it is not readily reflected in their viola works of 1919, I will confine further discussion of this movement to the chapter given specifically to Hindemith.

Impressionism and the French Style

While Expressionism had a stronger influence on Hindemith, developments in French music at the turn of the century, often considered under the umbrella term Impressionism, influenced the works of all three composers in this study. For this reason we will consider the French style not only here, but also in cross-reference with a later section of the chapter, pertaining to Debussy and the exotic. Originally an artistic movement arising in France in the 1870s, Impressionism was first associated with visual artists such as Claude Monet. His painting \textit{Impression: Soleil Levant} led the critic Louis Leroy to coin the term in 1874. In the visual arts, the style focuses on light, air, and fluidity as principal elements, aiming at a visual impression or overall effect of a subject, rather than at photographic portrayal of an image in minute detail.\textsuperscript{13} Meanwhile, in music the term

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
came into use in 1887, to describe Debussy’s work *Printemps*, and in 1894 his *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*. Robert P. Morgan tells us that “traditional descriptions of Debussy’s style suggest a number of parallels with visual impressionism: finely graded instrumental colors; static, non-climactic melodies, often circling around a single pitch; harmony conceived as a largely coloristic element; complex textures consisting of elaborate surface figurations, often suffusing whatever melodic material they contain; [and] continuously evolving forms without sharp sectional divisions.”

Such musical devices are present not only in the viola works of Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith studied here, but also in those of earlier French composers such as Chausson and Chabrier, and in the music of Debussy’s great contemporary, Maurice Ravel, who was born in 1875, in the decade before Bloch and Clarke. While Debussy himself disliked the term Impressionism, in this study the label itself is less important than the musical characteristics it attempts to define. These will undoubtedly play a significant role in subsequent discussions, but for now, let us continue to examine the two remaining movements.

Orientalism

Orientalism is a controversial term with multiple meanings. In political writings it is often linked with imperialism, colonialism, and Eurocentrism. It can also refer, in Great Britain, to the academic discipline studying any field related to the East—what in the United States would be divided into several disciplines such as Asian, Middle Eastern,

---

and African Studies. In the arts, Orientalism describes a style in which materials or themes from Eastern countries appear within a Western framework. Geneviève Balardelle divides oriental influences in nineteenth-century music into Sino-Japanese, Middle Eastern and North African, and Russian.¹⁵ Musicologists often use the terms “oriental” and “exotic” interchangeably, to signify an influence that is both Eastern and foreign in a Western work of art or music, regardless of whether the source is authentic, or the depiction historical or realistic. The term “Orientalism” came into use in the twentieth century, but instances of oriental borrowings into Western art and music are documented long before that, and were particularly popular in opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some composers in the twentieth century, such as Roussel and Bourgault-Ducoudray, became more concerned with collecting authentic materials to use in their works, but this was by no means a pre-requisite to composition in the oriental style.

Exoticism

The terms “exotic” and “Exoticism” first came into use in French artistic circles in the mid-nineteenth century as exotique and exotisme, following a surge of interest in exotic locations and their artistic depiction. This was brought on by political actions such as the French expedition to Egypt in 1798 and the conquest of Algiers in 1830. In its original context the term exotisme was a general descriptive term for non-Western (often Eastern) elements present particularly in Western opera plots. It can also be used to describe any

evocation of a foreign landscape, whether real or imaginary, in a work of art or music.\textsuperscript{16} The word "exotic" does not of itself specify a geographic location, though in the last two centuries countries as diverse as Spain, Italy, Turkey, North Africa, the Middle East, China, Japan, Indonesia, the Pacific Isles, the United States, and Russia have all been portrayed as exotic in works by French composers and visual artists.\textsuperscript{17} In the nineteenth century, musical evocations of the exotic were largely unconcerned with authenticity or accurate representation of a foreign culture. Pistone suggests, in fact, that composers at the time were required to provide just enough of the exotic color to "make the listener dream."\textsuperscript{18} Exoticism was at its height between 1889 and 1914, and though several compositions were written in this style after that time, the pressing concerns of modernism in the twentieth century and the legacy of the Great War eventually suggested other sources of inspiration, namely jazz.\textsuperscript{19} In addition, growing knowledge of foreign countries and their political and cultural development, and a heightened sense of social consciousness eventually altered the way in which cultural borrowings took place in music and art.

Comparing the descriptions of Exoticism and Orientalism above, we can see that there is a clear overlap between their meanings, which can lead to confusion. Both words are used as broadly descriptive terms across artistic disciplines, and in a number of sources they are used interchangeably to signify the presence of various non-Western elements in works of art or literature. The difficulty in providing appropriate definitions

\textsuperscript{17} Given the sheer number of countries listed, at some point one might seriously consider the possibility that to be exotic one must merely \textit{not} be French.
\textsuperscript{18} In reference to Berlioz's compositions in the 1820s; see Pistone, "Conditions historiques," \textit{RIMF}, 6 (November, 1981): 15.
\textsuperscript{19} Ballardelle, "Exotisme," ibid., 70.
for these terms is further compounded by the fact that in current American usage "orientalism" and "oriental" are considered politically incorrect, and are replaced when possible by more specific descriptors, such as "Asian" or "North African." Meanwhile, in works by British and French scholars, the terminology as it stands encompasses a broader spectrum of definitions but is still deemed current in writing about the arts and humanities. For all these reasons the discussion of Exoticism and Orientalism continues below.

**The Confluence of the Exotic and the Oriental as Artistic Influences**

**Defining Exoticism**

At a very basic level, *Webster's New World Dictionary* tells us that the word "exotic" can refer simply to that which is unfamiliar:

1. Foreign, non-native. 2. Strange or different in a way that is striking or fascinating. Strangely beautiful, enticing, etc. 3. (Noun)- a foreign or imported thing. 4. Formerly meaning outlandish or uncouth; extrinsic or alien.²⁰

A key feature to understanding the word "exotic" is that on its own, it is not attached to any particular group of people or geographic location. It has above all else the ability to attribute "otherness," and to distinguish the unusual from the usual or familiar. When coupled with a descriptor, the term can designate the exoticism of a particular place, as in *exotisme Maghrébin*, the French term for any exotic influence from North Africa, or *exotisme Extrême-Oriental*, for exotic influence coming from the Far East (China and

Japan, particularly). But while in French sources Exoticism almost always involves Eastern references, this is by no means obligatory. Herein lies one more clear difference between this movement and Orientalism. In this study it is most logical to consider "exotic" as a term describing the use of musical gestures in Western music evoking (possibly unspecified) non-Western or non-Western European elements or atmosphere. Or as Jonathan Bellman puts it most succinctly, "On one level, the idea of 'musical exoticism' is almost self-explanatory: it may be defined as the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference."

In addition, Bellman makes two crucial points that distinguish Exoticism from Folklorism, a current we will consider more thoroughly when discussing Hindemith's work in chapter 4. The first is that a work of art is exotic relative to its audience; the second is that Exoticism and Folklorism fulfill contrasting roles as musical influences:

Both folklorism and exoticism use musical gestures derived from folk, indigenous, or popular musics to flavor an artwork and to evoke a particular geographical and cultural frame of reference. But a Balakirev symphony, for example, which to American concertgoers sounds boundlessly exotic and suggestive of Ancient Mother Russia (truncated phrasing, modal melodic and harmonic vocabulary, low sonorities characteristic of Russian Orthodox Church music, high string writing suggestive of bleak, snow covered landscapes), was intended more as a work of Russian nationalism, that is, Russian music for Russians. Conversely, the Gershwniesque inflections of Jim Parker's *A Londoner in New York* for brass ensemble might sound familiar to most Americans, but in reality have an exotic tint because they were penned by an English composer and project a bemused but excited visitor's unspoiled reactions to a new place and pace of life. For all the unmistakable musical codes, therefore, much depends on who is doing the composing and who the listening.

If we follow this logic, the sounds of traditional Chinese opera are not exotic to an audience in Beijing, because they are not unfamiliar. Meanwhile, Rebecca Clarke's piece

---

22 Ibid., ix, x.
*Chinese Puzzle* for viola and piano, which is based on pentatonic harmonies and open chords, employing entirely pizzicato string writing, would have sounded quite exotic to British and American audiences in the 1920s, for whom even an imaginary evocation of the Far East was an evocation of the unfamiliar. Thanks to Bellman’s reasoning we can point out a defining characteristic of Exoticism: its lack of preoccupation with authenticity. This is where Exoticism and Folklorism diverge sharply. Composers such as Bartók, Kodály, and Vaughan Williams were interested in gathering and preserving the authentic folk heritage of their countries. They sought to use musical materials from their song collections in works of Western art music not to evoke foreign landscapes, but to conserve ones indigenous to them (albeit in the modified setting of orchestral music). The emphasis in Folklorism is on showcasing a culture’s music not as something foreign, but as sound that characterizes a national identity. Meanwhile, composers seeking the exotic were more divided in their approach. Some used authentic materials, but the majority thought of Exoticism as a device to fire the listener’s imagination, without much regard for whether reality or authenticity played any role in their creation. The critical difference between them and nationalist composers is that European composers working with the exotic are presenting the featured culture in a framework that exalts its *distance* and its *otherness* in relation to its audience.

While the trend toward an imagined exotic was most dominant in the nineteenth century, in the section that follows we will see that artists were fascinated with foreign places and peoples long before that. Over time, the development of exotic manifestations in art was influenced by historical events and additionally, in the twentieth century, by increased possibilities for travel. Having explored further the nuances of Exoticism as a
cultural movement and its distinct role relative to Folklorism, let us now examine Orientalism and its historical manifestations in greater detail.

Defining Orientalism

Orientalism can denote not only the study of Eastern culture, but also "any trait, quality, or mannerism associated with people of the East." Other related definitions include:

Orient: the East
Oriental: designating or of the biogeographic realm that includes Southeast Asia south of the Himalayas, the Philippines, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and other associated islands. A native of the orient or a member of a people native to that region.
Orientalize: to make or become oriental in character, culture, customs, etc.²³

Essentially, what is important about the Orient in this study is its inherent distance from the composers and audiences targeted in our time period. A considerable amount has been written about the sociological position of the Orient in the world. If nothing else, it is important to remember that an eastern position itself is relative, because it is simply Eurocentric convention that has dictated the idea of a particular side of the world being east or west of the other, and of one side of the Earth being perceived as more occult and fascinating to another segment of the world's population. Perceptions of the Orient as "other" have their roots in colonialism; they were propagated over time by the powerful presence of the French and British Empires around the globe. As the vastness of the topic far exceeds the confines of this study, I will focus on the following relevant points. First, the Orient is considered exotic to the composers and audiences of this study because it is beyond the realm of their daily experience. Second, geographical interaction and

²³ Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, s.v. "orient".
increased access to travel are largely responsible for the influx of Oriental influence in mainstream European culture, and led (somewhat ironically) to certain regions eventually becoming less alluring once they became more accessible and well-known.  

Just as we observed earlier that distance and otherness are key factors in classifying something as exotic, the same is true of Western artists’ view of the Orient, because it is foreign to them. As Edward Said notes:

Orientalism is premised on exteriority, that is, on the fact that the orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and a moral fact.

Otherness, exteriority, foreignness: here are the meeting points joining exotic and oriental. Said implies that the Orient is inevitably exotic, regardless of any other qualities associated with it, if observed from a Western European perspective. Artists’ long-standing fascination with the Orient arises, then, because its riches were largely inaccessible to the average person in the nineteenth or early twentieth century.

---

24 North Africa, for example, provided inspiration for a number of French nineteenth-century works, but became immensely less popular in the twentieth century, when travel to the French colonies was easier. As artists traveled and witnessed a less romantic picture of the Orient than they wished to see (poverty, dirtiness, lack of opportunity) they lost their imaginary picture of what they wished it could be like. A similar phenomenon takes place with composers after their first exposure to authentic oriental music—they find the non-western tuning systems and lack of familiar tonal structures jarring, and struggle to accept that this is really the sound of the Orient with which they have been fascinated for so long. See Annegret Fauser. *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press), 144, 145. See footnote 30.

The Rise of Oriental Exoticism in Europe

The rise of interest in the Orient was gradual and shows strong links to two factors: historical events throughout the centuries that led to contact between cultures that otherwise had very limited interaction, and the eventual translation of certain Oriental works of literature into French and German, which made them widely available to the European public. We can place the first large-scale wave of interest in the Orient in the eighteenth century, when both China and Turkey provided the inspiration for many works (for example, Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), though Classicists would be quick to remind us that preoccupation with the East by Westerners dates back at least to Aeschylus’ play *The Persians* (472 BCE). If we leap forward to the Common Era, any number of examples can be given. In medieval times, when the visual arts centered on the Christian church, the Adoration of the Magi was a favored, much portrayed theme. In the Renaissance, the conquest of new territories and the occupation of Andalucía led to a longstanding fascination with Moorish subjects. By the Baroque period lands further afield became the subjects of operas, for example in Rameau’s *Les Indes galantes* (1735). The publication in 1704 of the *Thousand and One Nights* in French was no doubt an inspiration, as were translations of several Vedic texts, which inspired Goethe, Hugo, and others to try their hand at poetry in an Oriental style.26

A series of political events related to French and British colonialism in the 1800s, and later the broader interaction between countries just prior to the First World War, can

---

be considered responsible for the larger part of the Oriental (and other exotic) cultural influx coming into Europe in the post-Enlightenment, post-revolutionary age. A number of connections can be made between compositions and historical and cultural events, as shown in Table 1:  

Table 1: Compositions Related to Cultural and Political Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITICAL AND CULTURAL EVENTS</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>RELEVANT COMPOSITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening of Japan to the West</td>
<td>1853, 1872</td>
<td>Saint-Saëns, <em>La Princessse Jaune</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition Universelle in Paris</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Non-Western works played in Paris (Gamelan, Vietnamese dancing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sino-Japanese War</td>
<td>1894, 1898</td>
<td>Bloch, <em>Orientale</em> (orchestral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and Japanese intervention in China</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Bloch, <em>Hiver-Printemps</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory of Japan over Russia</td>
<td>1903-04, 1905</td>
<td>Ravel, <em>Schéhérazade</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1907-08, 1910</td>
<td>Debussy, <em>Pâges</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Roussel, <em>Poèmes Chinois</em>, Op. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Debussy, <em>Poisses D'Or</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Ravel, <em>Lai de l'Orante, imperatrice des pagodes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Clarke, unpubd. songs on Chinese texts (attrib. Su K'un T'u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Dukas, <em>La Peri</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War I (1914–1918)</td>
<td>1918, 1919</td>
<td>Roussel, <em>Evocations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delage, <em>Sept Huit Kain</em> and <em>Quatre Poèmes Hindous</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boulanger, <em>Vieille Prière Bouddhique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bloch, <em>String Quartet No. 1; Israel Symphony</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Migot, <em>Sept petites images du Japan and Le paravent de Laque aux sept images</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armistice (World War I)</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Roussel, <em>Padmavati</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandhi’s movement for Indian independence (1919–1922)</td>
<td>1921, 1923, 1924</td>
<td>Emmanuel, <em>Quatrième Sonate sur des modes hindous</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace settlements after World War I</td>
<td>1925, 1927, 1932</td>
<td>Bloch, <em>Suit for viola and piano</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke, <em>Sonata for viola and piano; Down by the Salley gardens (Yeats)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hindemith, <em>Sonata Op. 11, No. 4; Melancholie Op. 13</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Wie es war</em>, <em>wenn ‘anders war’</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bloch, <em>Violin Sonata No. 1</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke, <em>Piano Trio, Chinese Puzzle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke, <em>Rhapsody</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bloch, <em>Nuit Exotique; Violin Sonata No. 2 (Poème Mystique)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delvincourt, <em>L’Offrande a Shiva and 14 Uta japonais</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roussel, <em>Poèmes Chinois, Op. 2</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 This table is modeled on a table originally published by Geneviève Balardelle in “Exotisme,” *RIMF*, 6 (November 1981): 69. I have added several works and dates related to this study to show their context in time.
The Exposition Universelle of 1889

The determining event featured on this table, insofar as it had the most repercussions in the music world, was the six-month-long 1889 World Fair, or Exposition Universelle, in Paris. It was not the first event of its kind, as fairs had taken place in Paris in 1855, 1867, 1878, and were held again in 1900 and 1931, but it came at a defining moment. At the time, musicians in France were striving to break free from a long period of Wagnerian dominance, and were in search of new possibilities. Novelty of every kind was pervasive at the fair, and the resulting multi-ethnic spectacle of music, theatre, and dance has been described by one scholar as a “cosmopolitan jamboree” of performers from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. To these were added groups from Hungary, Spain, Romania, Finland, Norway, and Scotland, all of whom were suitably exotic to bourgeois French audiences at the time. One of the key reasons these expositions were so important is that for a number of composers and artistic leaders they were the first point of contact with actual sources of exotic music. Debussy was hugely influenced by the gamelan sounds he heard at the 1889 Exposition, where we know Saint-Saëns first heard the “atrocious” sounds of the Vietnamese theatre (which Debussy, conversely, loved).

---

29 Ibid., 157.
30 Fauser, Musical Encounters, 146.
Rebecca Clarke attended the 1900 Exposition in Paris with her father, and Berlioz first heard (and professed to hate) Chinese music at the London Exposition in 1851.

The fact that the 1889 fair was not a short run of one-off performances, but featured the attractions for a serious length of time, made Paris a unique cultural center that year. Annegret Fauser, in her fascinating and detailed assessment, translates journalist Julien Tiersot’s view of the fair as it appeared in Le Ménestrel:

Rome is no longer in Rome; Cairo no longer in Egypt and Java no longer in the East Indies. All of that has come to the Champ de Mars, on the Esplanade des Invalides, and to the Trocadéro. Thus, without leaving Paris, we have the leisure to study for the next six months, at least in their exterior manifestations, the practices and customs of the most distant peoples. And since music is one of the most striking manifestations of them all, none of the exotic visitors of the Exhibition have let themselves forget it. Without speaking of the large concerts of orchestral music, vocal music, and organ music which were just opened at the Trocadéro, we find, in the various sections of the Exposition Universelle, many opportunities to study the different musical forms specific to those races who understand art in a very different fashion from ours; and even when these should be considered by us as characterizing an inferior art, we nevertheless have to pay attention to them, because they show us new aspects of music, and are probably infinitely closer to the origins of our art that, today, is so complex and refined.

Tiersot makes at least two salient points. The first is that the possibility of studying the music of “races who understand art in a very different fashion from [his]” is a unique opportunity. Unfortunately, he has no qualms about considering that these peoples and their art are inferior to those of his own kind, a position that would have been standard at the time, but rankles in our own day. The second, and crucial, element he considers is the possibility for French artists of being able to study all these different art forms locally,

---

"without leaving Paris." This meant that even musicians of lesser means or those who had not traveled abroad could afford the opportunity to hear the rich panoply of foreign musics being showcased.

Travel, Composers, and the Exotic

The musicians listed in Table 1 can be grouped into those who traveled around the world and those who, either lacking or eschewing the opportunity, absorbed Oriental influences while in France. It is completely fascinating to discover, for example, that Ravel, Dukas, Migaut, Emmanuel, and Delvincourt never traveled to an Eastern destination (though perhaps we should give Ravel some credit for being the only one of those composers ever to venture to Texas!). Bourgault-Ducoudray, who was Debussy's teacher at the Conservatoire, traveled extensively to collect music, as did Albert Roussel (in China) and Szimanovsky (in Persia). One must also note Debussy’s travels with the von Meck family in Russia, which he found extremely enriching. It is nevertheless surprising that he never ventured further into Asia, considering his enduring love of Japanese art.

As for the three composers profiled in this study, the split is uneven. Bloch had a life-long fascination with his idea of the Orient, but never did travel there. Meanwhile, Hindemith actually worked in Turkey for a significant period (1935–37), though his travels postdate the period examined in this study. Clarke furnishes the greatest surprise

34 Pistone, "Conditions historiques," RIMF, 6 (November 1981): 72. Ravel visited Rice University (then the Rice Institute) while on a four-month-long tour around the United States in 1928. During his lifetime he also traveled to Great Britain, Austria, Holland, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland. See G.W. Hopkins, "Ravel, Maurice," in New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London: Macmillan, 1980), vol. 15, 611.
of all. She was the most well-traveled of the three: in 1922 alone, she performed in Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, India, China, Japan, the United States, England, and Hawaii.

For all of the composers whose first impressions of the Orient came not from authentic sources but from nineteenth-century Romantic works that included orientalizing features, the greatest challenge was to “bridge the gap between the fantasy world of musical exoticism and the actual music of the exotic Others,” which more often than not baffled their preconceived expectations. 35 This led artists like Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz to despair at what they perceived as cacophony—a likely result of their first associations between musical sound and the Orient having come from the nineteenth-century operatic music of Jules Massenet. This is why the journalist of La Vie Parisienne exclaimed in 1889: “Those who dream somewhat, who have fabricated for themselves an ideal Orient through the conventional lens of artists, are really disappointed.” 36

### Debussy’s Interest in Exoticism and its Legacy

Composers in the generation prior to that of Debussy (or those whose taste was more conservative) failed to connect with the actual music of the Orient, because their preconceptions led to a great disillusionment with sounds they ultimately could not embrace. Debussy, however, had already spent time away from what he perceived as a

---


strong French sense of artistic insularity. Tchaikovsky’s benefactress, Nadezhda von Meck, employed Debussy to teach piano to her children, taking him with her to Moscow, Interlaken, Rome, Naples, and Vienna in the summers of 1880, 1881, and 1882. During this time he was introduced to the music of Mussorgsky and many others, in addition to hearing Russian folk music. As Roger Nichols notes, “Russian music [would] impinge frequently in the coming years both on his own music and on that of his younger rival Maurice Ravel. Debussy’s further travels included a two-year period of residence in Rome and brief travels in 1888 to Bayreuth. By 1889 he felt the need to progress beyond the Wagnerian style, which seemed to absorb every young French composer. He was discontented with the stodgy compositional maxims of the Conservatoire establishment, and was thus all too eager to take in the soundscape offered him by the Paris World’s Fair. It is important for the purposes of this study to investigate further the influences felt most strongly by Debussy because, as a composer, he can be seen as a connecting figure, whose musical innovations eventually come to influence the style of Ernest Bloch, Paul Hindemith, and Rebecca Clarke. Roger Nichols, in his study of the composer, postulates the following:

We may presume that Debussy as a fifteen-year-old had gone to the 1878 Exhibition and heard the music of the Hungarian gypsies and the Tunisian and Algerian café orchestras. But we have no evidence, although he was later greatly moved by a gypsy fiddler on his visit to Budapest. The 1889 Exhibition brought the Annamite Theatre (from the central Eastern region of Vietnam, straddling the present North/South divide) and a group of four young female Javanese dancers [accompanied by gamelan].

---

38 Chausson, Dukas, and Ravel are among his other contemporaries who experimented with Wagner’s style.
John MacKenzie points out that Debussy was immediately affected by what he heard, and soon put it to use in his own compositions:

Debussy was captivated. The gamelan helped to form the kaleidoscopic harmonies and shifting tone colours, which his elusive Impressionist style was struggling towards. He became preoccupied with chimes, bells, echoes and moments of silence. His quartet of 1893, his Pagodes and many other works bore the mark of this oriental influence. (Interestingly, he also wrote a Marche Écossaise in 1891!) His most complete attempts at an oriental style were to be for the theatre, in his ballets Khamma and No-ja-li, both completed at the time of the First World War.\(^{40}\)

It is these last works, notably the Quartet and the ballets, which bring us full circle, connecting us back to Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith. The connections between Hindemith and Debussy’s quartet, and between Bloch and the ballet Khamma will be treated in greater detail in the chapters pertaining specifically to those composers. Meanwhile, in this chapter we will examine briefly what Debussy took from his exposure to Oriental music, and how it appeared in his own compositions. Though we can place him squarely in a long line of respected French composers who sought inspiration from Oriental themes, we can safely say that he was the first to do so in a way which signaled a transition into the style of the new (twentieth) century, and a break with the anecdotal, pictorial, romantic Orient of the nineteenth century. By the time Debussy completed the works mentioned above, he had distilled the elements he wished to take from authentic Oriental music, adding them not to a heavy syrup-laden tonal framework, but incorporating them into the brilliant innovations of the new Impressionist style. While several “musical signifiers” of the Orient such as augmented-second intervals and pentatonic passages had been used by earlier composers to imply an Oriental setting, Debussy uses these and other “signifiers” to create a more modern, abstract, and often

spare idiom. Among his triumphs are the use of whole-tone and octatonic scales to push past the conventional boundaries of functional harmony, a heavy reliance on tritones and chromaticism to create dissonant melodic contours, and the use of string and percussion elements in imitation of gamelan sonorities. By transforming these musical gestures so as to make them part of an evolving musical language, he provided inspiration to an entire generation, which included Ravel, and later Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith. Perhaps one could say that it was his gift to bring the Orient to the composers of the twentieth century.

In this chapter, we were able to look at large-scale cultural movements and their development over time, observing how certain trends influenced the work of artists and musicians in the early twentieth century. When World War I broke out in 1914, fascination with the exotic and Oriental had reached its high point, but it is not surprising that Bloch, Clarke, Hindemith, and other composers continued to take inspiration from it, even as the war directed their thoughts elsewhere. As the study continues in the chapters that follow, we will give our attention to each composer in turn. Shifting our focus from the larger aspects of Exoticism, Orientalism, Impressionism and Expressionism, we will explore the role of these movements in the formation of the three composers’ aesthetic and their use in the viola works studied here.

\[\text{41 Fauser addresses the use of “musical signifiers” representing the Orient in the music of nineteenth-century composers in } \textit{Musical Encounters, } 138, 140.\]
ERNEST BLOCH'S VIOLA SUITE OF 1919

Introduction

In this chapter, we will explore the circumstances that led Ernest Bloch to compose his Suite for Viola and Piano, examine the compositional influences we find within it, and analyze contemporary critical responses to the work and its author. Sections in this chapter will include a biographical study of the composer, followed by the history of the Suite's composition, and critical reactions toward the work in both its versions. By tracing compositional influences in Bloch's music, such as late Germanic Romanticism, French Impressionism, Exoticism, and traditional Hebraic music, we will consider his work in relation to the major cultural movements occurring between 1900–1920, and explore his connections to significant creative artists of his time.

When studying the music of Bloch, we immediately see that little scholarship was written about the composer after his death. While much was written about Bloch and the Suite for Viola and Piano in the 1920s, the first full-length study of the piece did not appear until 1983.¹ A number of contemporary writings about the Suite and its author allow us to recreate a history of the work and its reception. However, in most articles written during Bloch's lifetime, one is confronted with authors' penchant to label Bloch primarily as a Jewish composer, setting him apart from other mainstream composers of the time. The label is problematic because although it highlights one important aspect of

his music with which he wished to be identified, it ignores the fact that several works in his œuvre reflect other interests and cultural influences. Bloch’s identity as a Jewish composer is extremely controversial, and it is only very recently that scholars have attempted to see how this affected both his compositions and his statements relating race and religion to music.² For a period of time, Bloch was extremely proud to express his Hebraic heritage through music, and in this vein made some of his most lasting contributions to the repertoire. Yet, throughout his life he maintained a parallel interest in musical exoticism, which was a reflection of his fascination with the Far East and Indonesia. Bloch claimed the 1919 Suite was inspired by this idiom, which set it apart from the works in the Jewish Cycle (1912–1916). In this chapter we will see that the Viola Suite was a milestone in his compositional development and fundamental to the advancement of his career. With this work he won a prize in the 1919 Coolidge Competition, which led to increased recognition and fame. Even so, he remains known to the public primarily as a composer of Jewish works.

Biographical Profile

Ernest Bloch was born in Geneva, Switzerland, on 24 July 1880. His father ran a business that sold tourist merchandise and clocks, and the family was not especially musical, though his paternal grandfather was cantor for his synagogue and his sister played the piano. Bloch studied the violin from the age of nine, and decided at eleven that he would

be a composer. Encouraged by his family, he studied in Geneva with Émile-Jacques Dalcroze, the creator of Eurhythmics. When he was sixteen he was sent to Brussels to work with the great violinist Ysaÿe, who noticed his compositional talents and arranged for him to learn from François Rasse, a former pupil of César Franck. After three years in Brussels, he continued his studies in Frankfurt with Iwan Knorr (1899–1900), and in Munich with Ludwig Thuille and Max von Schillings (1901–1903). He then went on to Paris (1903–1904), where he came under the influence of Debussy and the French impressionist school, and developed a significant friendship with the critic, Robert Godet, which would have lasting consequences for his career and musical identity. While studying he composed his first large works: *Symphonie Orientale* (1896), and two symphonic poems entitled *Vivre-Aimer* (1900) and *Hiver-Printemps* (1904–1905). In 1904, realizing he would need a steady income to further his career, Bloch made the decision to return to Geneva, where he entered his father’s business. He married a pianist from Hamburg, Margarethe Augusta Schneider, on 13 August 1904. Together, they had three children: Ivan, Suzanne, and Lucienne.

Following his return to Switzerland and the end of his student years, Bloch composed his first opera, *Macbeth* (1907–1909), which premiered at the Opéra Comique in Paris in 1910. Meanwhile, he lectured on musical aesthetics and theory at the Geneva Conservatory and began work on several large-scale orchestral works including settings of Psalms 114 and 137, and *Three Jewish Poems*. These works would be the first of seven thematically related pieces in a series that became known as his *Jewish Cycle*, written between 1912 and 1916. Despite his concerted efforts to attain greater prominence in Switzerland, he was passed over for more important positions. Yearning for greater
recognition, he came to the United States for the first time in 1916, as the conductor for the Canadian-born dancer, Maud Allan, who had arranged a tour through the American Midwest. Debussy, writing to Bloch's friend Robert Godet that year, derided both Bloch and his decision to work for this dancer in America, foreseeing the doom of the tour. Though Debussy was correct in foretelling the trip's failure, Bloch's decision to stay in the United States the following year proved fortuitous. In New York, Bloch was introduced to Daniel Gregory Mason at Columbia University, and to David Mannes, who was just founding his conservatory in the city. David and Clara Mannes were able to hire Bloch through the generosity of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who provided an annual sum of $2000 toward his salary. Bloch and Coolidge's lives would later intersect on many other occasions in connection with Coolidge's composition competitions, for which Bloch was both a prize-winner and an adjudicator. In addition to support from Coolidge, Bloch was also greatly aided by Mrs. Harriet Lanier, who through her New York-based society Friends of Music was able to promote the first American concerts of Bloch's music on a larger scale. After a year working alone in New York, he felt his prospects

---

3 He arrived in New York on 30 July 1916. A notice that day in *The New York Times* entitled "Swiss Orchestra Conductor Here" reads: "Ernest Bloch, composer and orchestra conductor, arrived yesterday on the New York. Mr. Bloch will direct the symphony orchestra that will accompany Maud Allan, the dancer, on her second American tour. Miss Allan is now in London and will return to New York late next month. Mr. Bloch's home is in Geneva, Switzerland, and when he came through France he said the French authorities held up a number of his compositions because they were written on German paper. They also refused to let him carry through the country a letter from Romain Rolland, the French author, because it was written on German paper." Maud Allan achieved fame and notoriety for her stage portrayal of Salome, which was banned by Lord Chamberlain; she was compared with Isadora Duncan. She later worked as an actress in silent films.

secure enough to allow him to travel to Switzerland for the summer. He returned to New York in the fall of 1917 accompanied by his wife and three children.

Bloch’s correspondence indicates that during the first three years of his stay in America, he endeavored to find a permanent position as music director of either a prominent orchestra or a music school or department. He writes at various times of work possibilities that would have made him conductor of the Boston, Cincinnati, Rochester, and Hartford Symphony Orchestras, but none of these engagements came to pass, despite the fact that he did conduct his own works in guest appearances with these orchestras. While he searched for a situation, he supported himself by teaching at Mannes between November 1917 and October 1919. He simultaneously established a thriving private studio, and directed the Young Men’s Orchestra of York, which one could think of as a forerunner of current professional training orchestras such as the New World Symphony in Florida. Additionally, he traveled regularly to lecture in Hartford, Connecticut, at the school founded by his close friend, Julius Hartt.

To his great chagrin, despite intensive efforts of his own and of others on his behalf, no permanent offers of employment were made by musical organizations on the East Coast.5 In the meantime, he prepared his finished works for publication by Schirmer and worked tirelessly to promote his existing compositions. When the 1919 Coolidge prize brought him increased publicity, he was offered the directorship of the Cleveland Institute of Music, which he founded that year while dividing his time between New

---

5 See Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, Sa Vie et sa Pensée (Geneva: Slatkine, 2001), 162. “L’affaire Boston était compliqué; un comité indecis; une clique d’ ‘Européens antisémites’ contre moi.” (“My candidacy in Boston was complicated; the committee was indecisive—a clique of ‘anti-Semitic Europeans’ was against me.”) He goes on to speak of possibilities in Chicago.
York and Cleveland.\textsuperscript{6} Though his efforts were initially widely appreciated in Cleveland, over the years political divisiveness and a growing concern for Bloch's unorthodox methods led the Institute's board to ask for his resignation in 1925.\textsuperscript{7} This was a troubled time for Bloch, who had put every effort into the school, but moreover, it was a turbulent period in his personal life. When he left the Cleveland Institute, several faculty members left with him, including Roger Sessions, an American composer he had closely nurtured, and Anita Frank, a pianist on the faculty, with whom Bloch was personally involved at the time.\textsuperscript{8}

The departure from Cleveland signaled a shift in his family life. Although he did not divorce, his wife and two daughters moved to Paris for three years so that Suzanne and Lucienne would be able to undertake advanced studies in art and music; his son Ivan went to study engineering in New York. Thus, Bloch crossed the country to the West Coast on his own. He was asked to direct the San Francisco Conservatory between 1925

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{6} He made thirty-four trips between the two cities that year, which led him to re-settle his family in Cleveland in 1921.
\textsuperscript{7} Among his "unorthodox" methods was a profound aversion to textbooks, and to formulaic approaches of teaching music theory. Thanks to Bloch, CIM has to this day a strong tradition in teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics, introduced by his student, the Swiss teacher Jean Binet. See Lewinski and Dijon, \textit{Ernest Bloch}, 225. See also David Z. Kushner, \textit{The Ernest Bloch Companion} (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 54, as reprinted from \textit{A School in Action: A Symposium} (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1922). (No author given.) Here Bloch states: "Let me admit at once that I do not believe in the efficacy of books on music, treatises on harmony, or counterpoint, and all these scholastic and lifeless rules which are used in the official schools. These are on the border, only, of true art, and of life. On the contrary, the deep and assiduous study of the great works of all time seems to me indispensable to anyone who wishes to have a thorough knowledge of any art, music especially. It is the only way to penetrate the inner sanctuary. To help a child acquire the means to undertake this pilgrimage, to teach him to listen, observe, and judge, seems to me the only aim of a sensible musical education."
\textsuperscript{8} Klára Móricz suggests in her article "Sealed Documents and Open Lives: Ernest Bloch’s Private Correspondence" that Bloch’s extra-marital dalliances were a constant feature in his career. This may also have worsened his situation with the Institute’s board of directors. See \textit{Notes} 62, no. 1 (2005): 74–86.
\end{flushright}
and 1930, and freed from family tensions, was able to compose more prolifically. He also conducted many of his works in California, notably at the Hollywood Bowl. During his time in California, he made the acquaintance of Rosa and Jacob Stern, who would be the greatest benefactors of his later career. Through their generosity, he acquired enough financial freedom to compose during the larger part of the year and to teach only during the summers. They also endowed a professorship for him at the University of California at Berkeley, which he held until his retirement in 1952. The terms of this post were flexible enough to allow him to live in Switzerland between 1931 and 1939, while still returning to America at regular intervals. In 1939, when it became clear that the rise of the German National Socialist regime threatened his safety in Europe, he returned to the US, settling in Agathe Beach, Oregon, where he lived until his death in 1959. The relative isolation of Oregon did not cause Bloch to be immediately forgotten by America's musical circles, despite his private complaints that this was the case. His music was performed frequently throughout his life, and he was awarded several prizes and honorary doctorates for his services to music. These included a gold medal from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1947, and prizes from the New York Music Critics' Circle in 1947 and 1953.

**Composing the Suite for Viola and Piano**

Bloch made an unusual decision when he chose to write his first new work in America for the viola. The instrument was gaining prominence around the world thanks to strong advocates such as Lionel Tertis, who regularly commissioned new works in various
genres. However, one could not say concert audiences regarded the viola as a popular solo instrument, and their knowledge of its repertoire remained limited.

Bloch’s decision loses its incongruity when we realize there was a practical reason behind the chosen instrumentation. Writing for the viola and piano allowed him to enter his composition into the 1919 Coolidge Competition, which promised a valuable prize of one thousand dollars. In addition to the prospect of monetary compensation, the winning composer could also look forward to widespread dissemination of his work, which would receive premieres in Massachusetts and New York. From a compositional standpoint, writing for viola and piano allowed Bloch the added advantage of creating a complete template for his later orchestral version of the piece.

Ernest Bloch had already been in America for three years when he started writing the work, and in that time he had experienced the full spectrum of the country’s fledgling musical culture. Even though he already had several important musical compositions under his belt at this point, it was still as a touring conductor, not a composer, that he first arrived in New York in 1916. Had he been less persistent in his efforts to bring forth what he considered to be a powerful musical message, he might have returned to Switzerland a failed touring conductor that very same year, and the Suite might have found a different fate.

Bloch had not been able to write any new works between 1916 and 1919. During his first year in America his time was mainly occupied with secondary compositional activity: arranging works by Debussy (the ballet Khamma) and Chopin (Préludes) for performances with Maud Allan, while supervising the first American performances of his
orchestral tone poem, *Hiver-Printemps.*\(^9\) The subsequent two years found him occupied with teaching at the Mannes School, and as he began to nurture the careers of aspiring composers, he lost the time to compose his own works.\(^{10}\) It was also more important at this stage to ensure the widest possible circulation of his existing works: not only *Hiver-Printemps,* but also *Poèmes d’Automne, Psalms 114, 137,* and *22,* and *Schelomo,* all of which he conducted several times and prepared for publication. During these first three years, he completed only one movement of a new work: the *Finale* of his String Quartet No. 1, which he had begun in Geneva in 1916, and which the Flonzaley Quartet premiered the following year.\(^{11}\)

He writes in his correspondence that the flu epidemic of 1918 made it very hard for him to concentrate on writing, because it caused illness in his family and the death of some of his close friends.\(^{12}\) Clearly he was too busy performing, teaching, and lecturing (privately and at Mannes) to be able to take on a completely new work. In summers, when he should have had more time, disagreements with his wife and the allegedly noisy location of his summer cottage kept him from progressing. Early in 1919, despite another bout with influenza, he began composing the viola suite, and even after a one-month

---

\(^9\) *Khamma,* incidentally, was not performed on the tour with Maud Allan in the end. It gained a private hearing at the publisher Durand on 10 December 1916. Debussy despaired of the idea that Bloch, whom he disliked, should tamper with his work. See David Z. Kushner, *The Ernest Bloch Companion,* 44.

\(^{10}\) Among Bloch’s students at this time were Roger Sessions, Randall Thompson, Herbert Elwell, Jean Binet, Bernard Rogers, Ethel Legsinska, and Hubbard Hutchinson. Lewinski and Dijon, *Ernest Bloch,* passim.


\(^{12}\) The son of his benefactress and friend, Mrs. J.F.D. Lanier, succumbed suddenly at the age of thirty-two, and Bloch grieved for the fragility of human life. His own family was gravely ill, and he fell ill again at the beginning of 1919. Ibid., 187.
delay caused by the illness, he was able to finish it by May 1919.\textsuperscript{13} Writing to his mother on 16 and 20 May 1919, he explains:

I have almost completed my great new work... I am working as fast as I can on the last section, which I hope to finish this week. If I deduct the month of illness in which I didn’t work, I can truly say I have put this piece together in two and a half months, which is excellent! [sic] if one considers the numerous lessons, interruptions, obligations of every kind, and the hellish noise of the Lexington Avenue trolleys.\textsuperscript{14}

The year was clearly a difficult one for Bloch, who was trying simultaneously to establish himself professionally, create a new work, support his family, and recover from serious illness. Once successful in these endeavors, he inscribed the dedication on the Suite’s manuscript with a passage from the philosopher Spinoza: “Sapientia, meditatio non mortis, sed vitae”, a clear indication of gratitude at his recovery in face of life’s obstacles.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Kushner states that Bloch began to write the Suite in 1918 and finished the orchestral version in 1920, but David Sills dates the opening piano flourish of the first movement and the main themes of the second movement to 1917–1918. Bloch’s letters state clearly that the remainder of the work was written entirely in 1919. See Kushner, Ernest Bloch Companion, 44; Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, 196; and David Sills, CD brochure notes to Ernest Bloch, Music for Viola and Piano: Two Piano Pieces, Simon Rowland-Jones, viola and Niel Immelman, piano, Etcetera Records KTC 1112, 1991.

\textsuperscript{14} “J’ai presque achevé ma grande nouvelle œuvre...Je travaille d’arrache-pied au final que j’espère achever cette semaine. Si je déduis le mois d’arrêt causé par mon influenza, j’aurais mis cette œuvre sur pied en deux mois et demi, ce qui est chic! [sic] si l’on songe aux nombreuses leçons, interruptions, obligations de toute sorte, et au bruit infernal des trams de la Lexington Avenue.” From a letter to his mother, 16 May 1916, reprinted in Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, 194. (My translation.)

\textsuperscript{15} The passage, taken from Spinoza’s Ethics, reads in translation: “Wisdom is a meditation not on death, but on life.” It is written on the manuscript filed at the Library of Congress, but did not appear in the published edition. Ibid., 196.
Versions of the Viola Suite

As already noted, two practical reasons led Bloch to compose the Suite in its original version for viola and piano. First, there was the possibility of entering the Coolidge Competition, which that year called for a viola and piano work, and offered a $1000 prize. Although Bloch was able to support his family modestly, he did not have a full-time position or any real financial security, and the prize was therefore attractive to him as a means of increasing his yearly income.\footnote{In a letter to his mother of 15 September 1919, he explains that one must have between seven and eight thousand dollars per annum to sustain a family in New York City. A prize of $1000 was therefore sizeable, and would now be worth many times more. For comparison: he reports charging $10 per hour for composition lessons, and mentions that Steinway gave him use of a piano at home, as he could not afford a new piano, which cost between one and two thousand dollars. In comparison, the annual salary for the head of music at the Library of Congress that year was $3000, while violinist Jascha Heifetz commanded $2250 per concert that season. See Lewinski and Dijon, \textit{Ernest Bloch}, 215; Joseph Horowitz, \textit{Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall} (New York: Norton, 2005), 337–8; and Cyrilla Barr, \textit{Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge}, 156.} The second reason for writing the piano version first was that it allowed him to complete the work more quickly, without needing additional time for orchestration. The work was thus ready for publication sooner and issued by Schirmer the following year. From a practical compositional point of view, it also meant that Bloch could try out the parts with his friend Alfred Pochon on the viola, reserving for later the need to check his coloristic and textured effects against a live orchestra. Lastly, it marked a departure for him from predominantly orchestral writing, and he himself was excited at the success of the piano writing, which he claimed was his first mature writing for the instrument:
For me this will have been a nice experience, because it is my first work for piano in twenty years! And this encourages me to continue! I am very happy to have been able to produce such a beautiful work under difficult circumstances...  

For Bloch, the piano version of the Suite was a catalyst, spurring not only further compositions involving this instrumentation, but also bringing him financial gain and increased recognition in the United States and, subsequently, throughout Europe. The Suite for Viola and Piano was voted the winning piece in the Coolidge Competition on 25 August 1919, by a panel of judges comprising the conductor Frederick Stock, the violist Louis Bailly, the pianist Harold Bauer, the composer Rubin Goldmark, the oboist Georges Longy, and the New York Times critic Richard Aldrich. But the vote was not without controversy. Cyrilla Barr gives a succinct yet detailed account of the affair:

The festival of 1919 was marred by a crisis of sorts, though at the time it could hardly have been known to anyone other than Elizabeth’s most intimate friends and the jury assembled for that year... After examining the seventy-two manuscripts entered [anonymously] in the competition, the balloting resulted in a tie between two of Elizabeth’s personal friends, Ernest Bloch and Rebecca

---

17 "Pour moi, c’aura été une belle experience, car c’est ma première œuvre pour piano, depuis plus de 20 ans!" Letter to his mother, 28 September 1919, in Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, 221. Bloch exaggerates—he had written the piano pieces Ex Voto in 1914 in Geneva, but he must not have wanted them to be published at the time. They were found in his papers after his death. He had also written for piano and voice at various times in the preceding ten years. The Suite’s piano writing was his richest to date, and inspired him to compose several piano works in the 1920s, including Danse Sacrée, Enfantes, Five Sketches in Sepia, In the Night, Nirvana, and Poems of the Sea. Several of these works continue to reflect Bloch’s Oriental and exotic bent rather than his Jewish heritage. Bloch writes, for example, that Nirvana “is all atmosphere, sonorities, impersonal and contemplative. A resurgent mysterious rhythmical pattern of repeated triads gives one the impression of the Orient.” In Suzanne Bloch and Irene Heskes, Ernest Bloch, Creative Spirit (New York: Jewish Music Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board, 1976), 59.

18 The harpist Carlos Salzedo is listed along with the other judges in an article that appeared in Musical America on 13 September 1919. Though he played through the piano parts for the assembled judges, he did not cast a vote. See “The Coolidge Prize Judges ‘Off Duty,’” reprinted in Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, 210; and Cyrilla Barr, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, 141–2.
Clarke. Coolidge was called upon to cast the deciding vote, and did so in favor of Bloch…thereafter the jury was made up of an uneven number of adjudicators.\(^1\)

The work received its premiere at the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on 27 September 1919, played by Louis Bailly, viola, with Harold Bauer as pianist. Subsequent performances took place at Aeolian Hall in New York, again with Bauer but with Émil Ferrir on viola, on 18 November 1919, and throughout Europe during the early 1920s: Béla Bartók (piano) and Zoltán Székely (viola) gave the Hungarian premiere in Budapest in 1922; Nadia Boulanger (piano) and Jean LeFranc (viola) gave the Parisian premiere at the Salle des Agriculteurs on 5 May 1922, and were followed by Émil Ferrir and Alfredo Casella (piano) at the Salle Erard on 13 June 1926. In England the piece was first played by Lionel Tertis (viola) and Harold Bauer in Wigmore Hall on 22 November 1922, and again by Tertis and York Bowen at the American Women’s Club on 6–7 July 1923. In Italy the premiere was at a Coolidge Concert at the American Academy in Rome, given by Lionel Tertis and Alfredo Casella in May 1923, and later by the same performers in Turin on 13 April 1926. In Austria the Suite was premiered in December 1924 with the pianist Friedrich Wührer in an alternative version for cello and piano, arranged by Alexandre Barjansky. Another arrangement of the Suite for cello and piano, recorded by Gabor Rejto and Adolph Baller, was published by Schirmer in 1925.\(^2\)

We know that Bloch completed the viola and piano version of the suite between early February and 29 May 1919, though he incorporated some sketch material dating from 1917–1918. He made two copies of the viola and piano manuscript: one was sent to

\(^{19}\) Cyrilla Barr, *Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge*, 141. I will examine the outcome of the vote and its consequences in further detail in the chapter dedicated to Rebecca Clarke.

the Coolidge competition, the other he kept with him, so as to begin the orchestral version in June 1919. He completed the orchestration in June 1920, and the Suite in this version was first played in Carnegie Hall, New York, on 5 and 7 November 1920 by Louis Bailly, viola, with Arthur Bodansky conducting the National Symphony Orchestra. The Philadelphia premiere was played on 4 and 5 November 1921, again by Bailly with Leopold Stokowski leading the Philadelphia Orchestra. The European premiere took place on 29 June 1923 in London’s Wigmore Hall with violinist Lionel Tertis; conductor Eugene Goossens led a small chamber orchestra organized for the occasion. It was followed by a French premiere played by Jean LeFranc with Gabriel Pierné directing the Orchestre Colonne on 25 October 1924 at the Théâtre du Châtelet. In Bloch’s home country of Switzerland, the piece was first played on 2 February 1928, by violinist Henri Sougné with Ernest Ansermet and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Violist William Primrose gave the Israeli premiere in Haifa on 9 October 1962, with Vladimir Golschman and the Israel Philharmonic.21

**Critical Reaction**

Critical reaction to Bloch’s works has always been somewhat divided. Earlier works such as *Macbeth* and *Hiver-Printemps* were both praised and disliked depending on the audience and the critic of the day. Guido Gatti, in a 1921 article for *Musical Quarterly*, gives a full retrospective of Bloch’s compositions through that year. Here we learn that in his view, *Hiver-Printemps*, written in the French style, shows “the finest characteristics

---

21 See Lewinski and Dijon, 200.
of Bloch the writer for orchestra—his calculated economy of sonorous power, the mellowness in the blending of timbres, the proneness to make each instrument a living personality...” while in the cello rhapsody Schelomo Bloch has “reached the perfection of his music.”22 In other sources we find only condemnation: Klára Móricz tells of a cartoon printed in Le Rire in 1910, describing Bloch’s opera Macbeth as “a potion composed of Debussyan dissonances and Wagnerian cacophonies.”23 The Suite for Viola and Piano was more warmly received, no doubt because as a winner of the Coolidge competition it immediately received high-profile performances and lavish attention from the specialized press. While Gatti states in his article that “this Suite marks a new orientation in the composer’s art and makes us look forward to his future with ever increasing confidence,” Oscar Sonneck, Bloch’s publisher and editor of the Musical Quarterly, adds valuable information about the premiere and its reception in a lengthy footnote to the article. Though he and Bloch had a thorny personal relationship, Sonneck spares no praise for the first performance, given by Bailly and Bauer, saying: “Even those who disliked the suite could not but admire the superlatively artistic performance.” Similarly, regarding the premiere given by Bailly and Bodansky in Carnegie Hall, he says: “The very difficult score received a reading which other conductors and orchestras will find hard to surpass.” Sonneck’s comments are too lengthy to quote in their entirety, but two significant excerpts regarding public and critical opinion of the Suite are reproduced below:

These memorable performances again sharply divided those who profess to be bored and repelled by what they call Bloch’s cacophony and general musical ugliness and those whom this Suite deeply moves with its fantastic but logical imagination, its uncompromising sincerity and individuality of utterance, its uncanny technique—and its beauty.

Whether or not the orchestral version of the suite be preferable to the original version with piano, is a matter of taste. In certain spots the original version sounds more convincing than the orchestral—and vice versa, but space forbids to analyze [sic] the reasons for this opinion. The essential fact remains that in either version Ernest Bloch has given us the greatest work for viola in musical literature, and what is more important, one of the most significant and powerful works of our time.24

Sonneck and other contemporary critics were prone to hyperbole to such an extent that one’s objective assessment of the Suite’s reception is somewhat hindered. Herbert Peyser, who covered the Berkshire Chamber Music Festival for Musical America in 1919, gave the following account in a similarly exalted style:

Mr. Bloch’s suite is a colossal, a staggering work, but so new, so unusual, so overwhelmingly original that the listener, to gain an adequate idea of its profundity, its vast significance, its incredible store of genial material must revisit it again and again. But the audience Saturday afternoon sensed its greatness and the plenary inspiration that lay behind it. The occasion was a triumph for the composer, for the work, for Messrs. Bauer and Bailly, who interpreted it like prophets inspired. Fittingly to encounter genius, the assemblage by common impulse rose to its feet when the two executants brought Mr. Bloch on the stage. And then it roared cheers and stamped its feet. A prize composition that is also great music! The miracle of miracles truly!25

Given this heightened response from critics who were supposed to take an impartial stance, it is not surprising that two of Bloch’s own friends would take a similar tone when describing their reaction to the work, whether publicly or in personal statements. Leopold Stokowski, for example, who was on very cordial terms with Bloch, wrote him on 19 November 1921:

Bailly played with us recently your Suite, and played it magnificently. You will be amused to learn the public hated it most cordially. I have received the most venomous and insulting letters about it, but all that does not make any difference. It is a wonderful work, and in my opinion one of the greatest things you have ever

---

24 Oscar Sonneck, footnote to Guido Gatti “Ernest Bloch,” 34.
done. I just wanted to write you a few lines to say how greatly I enjoyed rehearsing it with Bailly, and how profoundly I admire its great musical quality.\textsuperscript{26}

Stokowski’s admiration of the work despite the audience’s reaction provides a refreshing note of candor amid so many high-flying statements. Bloch’s friend Paul Rosenfeld, on the other hand, is somewhat critical of the work. He seemed to think that Bloch had restrained himself in writing this work, which he thought suffered a comparative “smallness of scale” relative to Bloch’s other works. He attributes this to “the difficulties of adjustment to the New World.” One wonders, however, why he did not take into account the fact that the Suite was originally a recital work, not a concerto, and that the viola, as an instrument with a smaller voice, required a more chamber-like setting. His statement seems to imply that only works on a monumental scale are really worthy, and that anything short of Bloch’s usual grandiloquence is somehow lacking:

The Viola Suite is perhaps not the most powerful of Bloch’s works. It has neither the grandiose full lyricism of the Psalms, nor the intensity and vehemence of the String Quartet... Moreover, Bloch is ripening aesthetically very rapidly; it may be he repressed himself a little in order to obtain greater control over his style. Still, the work has qualities that make it in many respects a signal improvement over anything else he has written... It is a capital piece of organization. There are no dead, no insignificant spots in it. It promises that when Bloch does succeed in mounting again to the heights attained in the Quartet and in the Psalms, he will mount in order to achieve works completer, more solid, formally harder even than they. It promises achievement in the grand region of the masterwork he has already achieved in the more circumscribed. It promises for Ernest Bloch attainments of which perhaps no other living composer is capable.\textsuperscript{27}

Gatti, Sonneck, Peyser, and Rosenfeld’s reactions to the 1919 Viola Suite, especially when read in their full length, are strongly redolent of another time and style. Their writings are replete with qualifiers emphasizing Bloch’s compositional virility.

\textsuperscript{26} Letter of Leopold Stokowski to Ernest Bloch, 19 November 1921, as quoted by David Sills in \textit{The Viola Suite of Ernest Bloch}, 5.
\textsuperscript{27} Paul Rosenfeld, “Musical Chronicle,” \textit{The Dial} 70 (January 1921): 117–18, as reprinted in David Sills, \textit{The Viola Suite of Ernest Bloch}, 5–6.
They are quick to make categorical statements regarding Bloch’s prophetic responsibility and his importance above all as a representative of the ideal music of his race. When read today, such commentary is problematic. It comes across as judgmental, hyperbolical, and somewhat unrealistic, as though these critics were in search not of a new musical work, but of the prophetic message of a super-human artist. From a modern instrumentalist’s point of view, the Suite’s musical merits are less apparent in these critics’ writings than they are in the fact that the work was quickly embraced by some of the most important performers of the time. With this in mind, it is more meaningful to violists today that musicians such as Bartók, Boulanger, Tertis, and Clarke championed the work: its enduring popularity as a work in performance and recordings seems a stronger testimony of its worth than the strong language of early reviews.

**Compositional Influences in Bloch’s Music**

Composers are inspired not only by the music they hear, but also by the works of other composers, the landscapes that surround them, and the intellectual currents that reach them through the arts, religion, philosophy, and literature. Bloch was an avid reader in at least three languages, a keen photographer, and a prolific writer on musical subjects. He once said:

> Most of my works have been inspired by a poetic or philosophic idea, even sometimes unconsciously. Art for me is an expression, an experience of Life, and not a jigsaw puzzle or an application in cold blood of mathematical theories—a laboratory dissection.\(^{28}\)

---

\(^{28}\) Quote by Bloch reprinted in CD brochure notes by Joseph Lewinski, Ernest Bloch: *Helvetia, Suite pour Alto et Orchestre, Suite Hebraïque pour Alto et orchestre*. Gerard
He strongly disliked the idea that he should belong to any particular compositional school, even though he garnered criticism for this, especially early in his career. Bloch’s studies in Belgium, Germany, and France exposed him both to Germanic and Francophone styles of music. Although today we would view this as an advantage, at the time it created a sort of hindrance, because Bloch’s early compositions could not be squarely identified as belonging to one school or the other. As Klára Móricz puts it, “Bloch’s amalgam of French and German aesthetics was considered unacceptable in an era so preoccupied with national essences in music.”\(^{29}\) His earliest compositional influences were strongly rooted in the late nineteenth-century symphonic tradition, and he held up as models Wagner, Franck, and Mahler. In Mahler he felt he had a kindred spirit, and though the two did not meet, they exchanged a sincere and appreciative correspondence in 1902.\(^{30}\) Bloch’s work in the earliest phase of his career was not always programmatic—his goal as a composer at that stage was simply to make his mark, not as a representative of a particular style or nation, but as a musician with his own voice. His first major works sought to command large orchestral forms. They are first more German (Symphony in C-sharp minor) and later French (\textit{Hiver-Printemps, Vivre-Aimer, Poèmes d’Automne}). His opera \textit{Macbeth} can be seen as a synthesis of both styles, and this is probably why it failed to be understood by so many who heard it. Some postulate that the opera’s mixed reception in Paris was what propelled him to take on a new compositional persona, as in the end he was not fully embraced by leaders of either the French or the

\footnotesize{Causse, viola, Lior Shambadal, conducting the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Cascavelle Records RSR 6170, 2003.}

\footnotesize{\(^{29}\) Klára Móricz, “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews,” 443.}

\footnotesize{\(^{30}\) David Z. Kushner, \textit{Ernest Bloch Companion}, 22.}
German schools. His greatest disappointment in Paris was the fact that Debussy, whom he so admired, and who was a close friend of his teacher, Eugène Ysaÿe, did not consider him, in the long term, worthy of his acquaintance. Even so, we can count the French master as a key influence in Bloch’s compositional development: he learned the nuances of Debussy’s art by studying his compositions intimately, if not by developing a collegial relationship.

Feeling himself an outsider to the musical traditions in which he was trained, Bloch’s eventual choice was to take on a new identity. He did not choose to represent his home country, Switzerland, but rather to portray in sound the biblical history of the Jewish people, to whom he was ethnically connected. Móricz says Bloch’s identity as a Jewish composer “was as much forced upon him as voluntarily assumed,” and that in an early twentieth-century socio-political context suffused by essentialism “Bloch would have felt he was expected to identify himself artistically as a Jew.”

Given Bloch’s eventual identification with Judaism, it is no surprise that this is the strongest extra-musical influence in his music. A second long-lasting source of inspiration for him was the imaginary and exotic world of the Far East, which is explored fully in the Viola Suite. Both of these influences are most strongly present in music written in the first half of his career. By the 1930s they were still felt but were distilled into a more neo-classical and abstract style, making overt appearances only when thematically or stylistically appropriate, for example in the Avodath Hakodesh (Sacred Service) of 1930–1933, or the Suite Hebraïque for viola and piano (or orchestra) of 1954.

---

Bloch’s interest in Judaism and in the Orient is linked both with his family history, and with two significant friendships established at the turn of the twentieth century. Judaism had been part of his upbringing and family circle to some degree, though his immediate family was not particularly religious, and his memories of attending synagogue in Geneva are mostly derisive (both of the services and of the persons in attendance). In recent years, both Móricz and Kushner have written in detail about Bloch’s religious views throughout his life. Their work highlights the many conflicting views Bloch seemed to harbor in his own mind: he owed the greatest part of his public recognition to his religiously inspired music, but was also capable of deriding those who practiced his religion.

Bloch’s friendship with the librettist Edmond Fleg was critical to the formation of his identity as a Jewish artist. Their extensive correspondence on the subject spans several years of their life, and is characterized by strong debate and Bloch’s constant tendency to idealize a form of religion that was out of his reach. Dissatisfied with the practice of religion around him, he wrote to Fleg on 18 March 1921:

I believe profoundly in the race! I believe one cannot live outside of it. And nonetheless neither you nor I can live in a fictitious milieu, created by our imagination... There are few true Jews these days, alas... I only think that the clash between our imagination and the present reality is particularly jarring. In what Jewish milieu can we live sincerely?... The lack of individuality exasperates me. Where are the Jews who correspond to our Judaism? I really think that the majority of Jews will be our worst enemies. But we don’t work for the majority.32

Móricz’s article unveils a more troubling side of Bloch’s religious views and effectively contrasts his view of himself as a prophet of “pure” Jewish music with his criticisms of

---
32 Móricz, “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews,” 447. The translation from the original French is her own. Móricz explores in detail the ideas of anti-Semitism and assimilation in Bloch’s career.
his co-religionists, which show him in a much more unfavorable light. As she aptly puts it, Bloch believed in an “unspoiled Jewish spirit,” but [his] “ideal Judaism existed nowhere in the real world. It had to be constructed in his art.”33 Bloch’s “edifice” to the religion he idealized was composed between 1912 and 1916: the works of the Jewish Cycle, which he foretells in a letter to Edmond Fleg in 1911. (Prior to this time, Hebraic themes had not been part of his music.)

I note here and there themes that are, without my willing it, for the greater part Jewish, and which begin to precise [sic] themselves and indicate the instinctive and also conscious direction in which I am going.... I do not search to give them a form. I am producing nothing so far, but feel that the hour will come and I await it with confidence, respecting this present silence imposed by the natural laws that know. There will be Jewish Rhapsodies for orchestra, Jewish poems, dances, mainly, poems for voice for which I have not the words, but I wish them to be Hebraic. All my musical bible shall come, and I would let sing in me these secular chants where will vibrate [sic] all the Jewish soul, in what it has profoundly national and profoundly human. New forms should be created, free and well defined, also clear and sumptuous. I sense them without seeing them yet before me. I think I shall write one day songs to be sung at the Synagogue, in part by the minister, in part by the faithful. It is really strange that all this comes out thus slowly, this impulse that has chosen me, whom my outer life have been a stranger to all that is Jewish.34

He did indeed write Jewish poems, Psalm settings, a cello rhapsody, and a monumental string quartet over the next four years, creating in this period the works that he is best remembered for, and which earned him recognition as a specialist in Jewish works. Two of the works in the Jewish Cycle connect particularly closely to the Viola Suite, which began the next phase of Bloch’s career: the cello rhapsody Schelomo,

33 Móricz, ibid., 447. Here one is reminded of Gatti, who characterizes Bloch’s music as stemming from the tradition of the “ancient” Jews, rather than from actual twentieth-century Judaism: “Nowadays such a race is inconceivable; it exists only as a splendid tradition.” His writings, which are too long to quote here, indicate that even Bloch’s apologists couched their praise in anti-Semitic sentiments of a complex nature. Gatti, “Ernest Bloch,” 27–8.
34 Suzanne Bloch and Irene Heskes, Ernest Bloch, Creative Spirit, 44. (Translation from the original French by Suzanne Bloch.)
because of its declamatory and dramatic writing for a solo string instrument closely related to the viola, and the String Quartet (1916), whose second movement contains overtly Oriental influences.

If Edmond Fleg was instrumental in awakening in Bloch the ideals of Judaism, Robert Godet merits credit for arousing Bloch’s interest in Exoticism and the Orient. Godet was a close friend of Debussy, and a correspondent and music critic for the French journal *Le Petit Temps*. His friendship with Bloch began when he wrote a highly favorable review of Bloch’s Symphony in C-sharp minor, which was first performed in Basle in June 1903, at the Festival of Swiss and German Composers.\(^{35}\) They exchanged a frequent and lively correspondence for several years, but the relationship was severed when Bloch discovered that Godet’s reasons for developing the friendship were less than honorable.\(^{36}\) Godet’s letters to Bloch about his travels to Indonesia, and an article he wrote for *La Revue Musicale* in 1896, entitled “L’âme javanaise,” were key to establishing the Oriental subject matter that suffuses not only the Viola Suite, but also the third movement of the String Quartet of 1916. Later works such as the slow movement of the first Violin Sonata (1920), inspired by Tibetan bells, *Nirvana* for solo piano, whose


\(^{36}\) In 1913, Godet presented Bloch with his translation into French of British philosopher Houston Stewart Chamberlain’s book *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, an openly anti-Semitic book explaining the superiority of the western Aryan people. It emerged that Godet had been working on the translation throughout the years of his friendship with Bloch, and that he befriended Bloch as a cruel and manipulative sort of social experiment. Though Godet wrote Bloch again in 1914, and Bloch wrote Godet in 1920, they were not in regular contact after 1913. See David Z. Kushner *The Ernest Bloch Companion*, 22–3 and 41; Móricz “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews”, 447–54; and David Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53–7, for a detailed examination of Godet’s influence on Bloch.
title is self-explanatory, and the second movement of the 1937 Evocations for solo piano, entitled Hounge-Ti, God of War reflect the same influence.\textsuperscript{37} The String Quartet of 1916 marks Bloch’s gradual transition away from the works of the Jewish Cycle, to which this piece still belongs, and into a new frame of reference inspired by the East:

In the Trio of this movement (scherzo), I was inspired by reminiscences of the painter Gauguin. There is some Tahiti in here, distant Pacific isles at any rate, especially in that ornamental passage where the four instruments, leaving their role for an instant, become almost exotic; here sonority alone and poly-rhythm is required. Should you perform this Quartet [sic], I don’t doubt that you will find the manner in which to render the color I intend, that I imagine.... Souvenirs of colonial expositions, in default of world travel experiences [sic] which has been beyond my means to date...\textsuperscript{38}

In this passage Bloch alludes to two other sources beyond Godet’s writings that furnished him with strong images of the Orient: the paintings of Gauguin, which he first saw in Paris in 1900, and which made a lasting impression, and the “colonial expositions,” or World Fairs, which he would have visited in Paris at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{39}

One remaining source of Eastern influence in Bloch’s music is noted both by his contemporary, Paul Rosenfeld, and more recently by Klára Móricz. This is the influence, via Godet, of Mussorgsky’s music, which Bloch studied closely throughout 1903–1904.\textsuperscript{40} Rosenfeld wrote an article in the 1923 book Musical Portraits about Orientalism in Bloch’s music, in which he profiles the Viola Suite and all the possible sources of Oriental influence from which it draws. Rosenfeld comments on the powerful exchange

\textsuperscript{38} Reprinted from Bloch’s complete program notes for this work, as presented by Suzanne Bloch and Irene Heskes in Ernest Bloch, Creative Spirit, 53.
\textsuperscript{39} For the significance of the World Fairs, see chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{40} In chapter 4 we will see that Hindemith was studying Mussorgsky’s music in the early 1910s—his own early student years.
of cultures that takes place between East and West in all artistic disciplines at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century:

And in music certainly, the East is on us; has been on us since the Russian five began their careers and expressed their own half-European, half-Mongol natures. The stream has commenced setting [sic] since the Arabian nights, the Persian Odalisques, the Tartar tribesmen became music. And the Chinese sensibility of Scriabine, the oriental chromatics of the later Rimsky-Korsakov, the sinuous scales and voluptuous colours and silken textures of Debussy, the shrill fantastic Japanese idiom of Strawinsky, have shown us the fusion was near. But in the music of no composer is it as plainly evident as it is in that of Ernest Bloch. In a work like this composer’s suite for viola and piano, one has a sense of a completeness of fusion such as no other gives. Here, the West has advanced furthest east, the East furthest west. Two things are balanced in the work, two things developed through a score of centuries by two uncommunicating regions. The organizing power of Europe is married to the sensuousness of Asia. The virile formative power of the heirs of Bach is here. An extended form is solid as mountains, projects volumes through time. One four-square movement is set atop another. There is no weakening, no slackening, no drop. One can put one’s hand around these brown-gold blocks. And at the same time, this organizing power makes to live a dusky sensuality, a velvety richness of texture, a sultriness and wetness that sets us amid the bronzed glowing wood-carvings of Africans, the dark sunsets of Ceylon, the pagodas in which the Chinaman sits and sings of his garden. The lyric blue of Chinese art, the tropical forests with their horrid heat and dense growths and cruel animal life, the Polynesian seas of azure tulle, the spice-laden breezes, chant here. The monotony, the melancholy, the bitterness of the East, things that had hitherto sounded only from the deathly gongs and tam-tams of the Mongolians, speak through Western instruments. It is as though something had been brought out from a steaming Burmese swamp and exposed to the terrible heat of a New York thoroughfare, and that out of that transplantation a matter utterly new and sad and strange, favoring both father and mother, and yet of a character distinctly individual, had been created.41

In Rosenfeld’s writing we are reminded of how much modern sensibilities to other cultures have changed since the early twentieth century—his amalgamation of so many foreign elements into one description, forcefully proposed, is not of a kind one would aim to write today. However, it is included here precisely because it allows us to see what perceptions of the Orient were common at the time Bloch wrote his Suite, and

what ideas might have been percolating in his imagination. Rosenfeld was in close
contact with Bloch at the time of the Suite’s composition, and gives us a glimpse of the
Oriental images Bloch would have considered portraying through music. Furthermore,
Rosenfeld’s writing reminds us how much Bloch’s (and other composers’) fascination
with Oriental and exotic subjects at the time was based on an imaginary vision of the
Orient, with little grounding in reality. They treat the entire Orient as a collection of
culturally interchangeable distant images, unconcerned by the possibility that Chinese,
Russian, and Burmese music might not actually sound the same at all. Bloch’s goal was
not an authentic or studious recreation, but rather the loose evocation of a dream-filled
landscape. The plunge into Oriental subject matter was a departure from the Jewish
Cycle, but was not entirely new to him, as it can be traced back as far as his 1896
Symphonie Orientale and to the books of sketches written in 1911 and 1919 for his
unfinished opera Jézabel.42 In the following section of this chapter, the musical materials
Bloch used to give way to his vision of the Exotic and Oriental will be explored, followed
by formal outlines of each movement of the piece.

Bloch’s Musical Materials

Several questions about Bloch’s musical materials, stylistic features, and sources of
inspiration present themselves. In particular, as Bloch himself distinguishes the Viola
Suite from other works in the Jewish Cycle, it is important to verify the distinct stylistic

42 For a discussion of thematic material in Symphonie Orientale see Alexander Knapp,
“The Jewishness of Bloch: Subconscious or Conscious?” Proceedings of the Royal
and Righteous Jews,” 455–77.
features and musical gestures that appear in these works. Throughout the Jewish Cycle Bloch tends to employ long, lyrical melodies, often with a vocal or “wailing” quality, and declamatory, speech-like lines. The contour of these melodies is usually chromatic. Certain intervals, such as the semitone, the augmented second, and the tritone, feature prominently. Chromatic, and thus dissonant sound clusters or chords are frequently employed, and accented and syncopated rhythms, especially the “Scottish snap,” are used throughout.

As a counterpart to this list, and taking the Viola Suite as point of departure, we can identify gestures that contribute to the Oriental sounds Bloch seeks in his new work, whether Indonesian, as Bloch intended, or Chinese, as proposed by Knapp.⁴³ These gestures include the use of octatonic and whole-tone collections and the frequent presence of pentatonic melodies, with a predominance of perfect fourths and fifths occurring both melodically and harmonically. In faster movements there is a tendency toward rhythmic liveliness, with the use of percussive accents and pizzicato. Additionally, simpler, more repetitive rhythmic patterns and shorter, more regular phrase-lengths are employed, which contrast with the more unmeasured, long-winded declamatory phrases often present in the solo string writing of earlier works, such as Schelomo.

Creating lists of Bloch’s musical gestures allows us to identify influences present in distinct works. However, lists present with them the danger of over-simplification, as if one could classify the entirety of a composer’s style into a couple of paragraphs. The difficulty we encounter is that in this study it is not possible to take into consideration the

⁴³ See footnote 50.
totality of Bloch's œuvre. Many of the musical gestures just mentioned are also found in his opera *Macbeth*; in *Helvetia*, his symphonic poem on Switzerland; and *America*, his symphonic homage to his adopted country. Bloch does not shy away from using closely related materials in different works. There is an overlap of gestures, for example, between the opening motive of the Viola Suite and the final motive of the Violin Concerto, and between *Jézabel* and the later 1954 *Suite Hebraïque* for viola and piano. See Examples 2.1–2.4.

**Example 2.1: Suite for Viola and Piano (1919), Opening motive**

![Example 2.1: Suite for Viola and Piano (1919), Opening motive](image1)

**Example 2.2: Violin Concerto, Closing figure**

![Example 2.2: Violin Concerto, Closing figure](image2)
Example 2.3: Jézabel, Act I, Scene IV “Theme of the procession of faith” (first version)

(b)

Example 2.4: Suite Hebraïque for viola and piano, First mvt., mm. 30–7

In all of these works, both Jewish and non-Jewish themes are explored. It follows, then, that many of the musical elements in his pieces, such as highly chromatic melodies, augmented and diminished intervals, abrupt key changes, dissonant cluster chords, unusual modulations, and dancing dotted rhythms, are not necessarily so much

---

Jewish or Oriental as they are simply an integral part of Bloch’s expressive palette. Furthermore, it is important to consider the fact that Bloch, in his own writings, does not distinguish the idea of “Jewish” from that of “Oriental,” often mentioning the two interchangeably, as he does in the following passage:

In all those compositions of mine which have been termed Jewish, I have not approached the problem from without, i.e., by employing more or less authentic melodies… or more or less sacred “oriental” formulas, rhythms or intervals! No! I have hearkened to an inner voice, deep, insistent, burning, an instinct rather than any cold, dry reasoning process, a voice which seemed to come from far beyond, beyond myself and my parents, a voice which surged up in me on reading certain passages in the bible.45

Ultimately, it may be more interesting to consider the overlap between Oriental and Jewish gestures, rather than their differences, and to note, for example, that regardless of the style chosen, Bloch uses these elements in his music as tools of expression and not as an end in themselves. The most important outcomes shared by all his compositions are a penchant for mystery, the continuous exploration of sound colors and timbral combinations, and a marked tendency toward overly eloquent longueur.

**Movements of the Suite**

Each movement of the Viola Suite has a very distinct character, and incorporates different aspects of Bloch’s style. Over the course of the piece, he makes use of several signature musical elements, which reveal both Oriental and Jewish influence. Sills, in his study of the piece, does not focus on these sources of influence, but instead provides a wealth of information on Bloch’s tonal organization and choice of harmonic language.

---

His work on Bloch's use of octatonic collections and his exhaustive comparison of the orchestral and piano versions of the work are an excellent reference for those readers seeking more information on those topics. Sills also discusses Bloch's writing for the viola, comparing it to other works of the period from a technical point of view. In the present study, an overview of each movement's formal and motivic features allows us to see where each of the two influences is more strongly present. We are aided in this task by Bloch's own program notes for the work, which I include in their entirety as an appendix to this chapter.

**Motivic Unity and Movement Structure**

First movement: *Lento—Allegro—Moderato*

This movement is, according to Bloch, "the most complicated in form, and aims to give the impression of a very wild and primitive nature." Clearly structured in three sections with subsections, the work follows loosely the overall shape of a sonata-form movement:

- **Introduction (Lento—Meno lento):** mm. 1–74
- **Allegro** (in three subsections): mm. 75–145, mm. 146–210, mm. 211–50. (The *Moderato* that Bloch alludes to in the title lasts from mm. 225–50.)
- **Conclusion** (Largamente): mm. 251–69

Of particular interest to the formal unity of the movement is Bloch's use of the opening viola theme at the beginning (Example 2.5), then again as a transitional theme transposed up a whole step at Rehearsal 14 (Example 2.6), and lastly as the closing theme of the *Largamente* section (Example 2.7), ten bars before the end of the movement. In this way the theme frames the movement.
Example 2.6: Ibid., mm. 177–94

48

177
erico

114
largamente

182

186

190

(iargamente)
Example 2.7: Ibid., mm. 256–69
Bloch’s principal aims in this movement are to make the listener aware of the large-scale dimensions of the piece, and to establish harmonic and melodic materials that will make subsequent appearances in later movements. Bloch’s greatest unifying gesture is to bring viola themes from the first movement into the fourth movement, recalling them at structurally significant points. First, the *Largamente* theme originally heard at Rehearsal 20 (Example 2.8) in the first movement (in the orchestral version played by the solo French horn, then by the viola) reappears at Rehearsal 14 (Example 2.9) of the fourth movement, this time played at once by the viola. Though Bloch then digresses through short *Animato non troppo* and *Presto* sections, he ultimately returns to a *Largamente* at Rehearsal 24 (Example 2.10), setting up the triumphant return of the viola’s opening first-movement theme:

**Example 2.8: Ibid., Rehearsal 20, mm. 251–5**
Example 2.9: Ibid., Fourth mvt., Rehearsal 14, mm. 249–55

Largamente (♩, 6n)

molto largamente

dim.

alarg.

mf
Example 2.10: Ibid., Rehearsal 24, mm. 416–26
Though the movement ends with a short *Molto vivo* coda section, the use of the first-movement theme in the fourth movement provides a motivic frame for the entire work, functioning as a cyclical element that gives strength and cohesion to the work’s overall structure.

In the first movement, the opening theme of the *Allegro* section is also of interest, due to its contrasting character (see Example 2.12). The energetic eighth notes in this passage are similar to material employed by Bloch to depict the Jewish festival Sukkot in Act II of *Jézabel* (Examples 2.11a and 2.11b).\(^4^6\)

**Examples 2.11a and 2.11b:**

a) *Jézabel*, Act II, the main Sukkot motive (from Móricz)

b) A Passover Seder Song (from Kushner, reproduced by Móricz)

\(^4^6\) This theme from *Jézabel* is shown in Móricz, “Sensuous Pagans and Righteous Jews,” 469. An alternative interpretation of this material is suggested by Kushner, who thinks the first movement *Allegro* theme is related to the popular medieval melody *L’Homme Armé*, which is possible given Bloch’s extensive knowledge of the medieval and renaissance choral repertoire. Kushner discusses possible medieval influences in *The Ernest Bloch Companion*, 51. I find this option diverges rather strongly from the exotic content Bloch says he wished to portray, nor does he mention it himself in his program notes. But, considering the variety of influences Bloch amalgamates in the work, the possibility cannot be ruled out.
This suggests that Bloch changes emphasis from his opening portrayal of a wild and exotic nature to a theme inspired by his Jewish music. In the orchestral version of the \textit{Suite}, the clarinets play this theme, which Bloch states in his program notes is "perhaps a little Jewish, in my sense." In the piano version of the suite, shown in Example 2.12, the clarinet part is in the right hand of the piano part.

\textbf{Example 2.12: Suite for Viola and Piano, First mvt., mm. 75–80}
As the clarinet is similarly employed in the second movement of the work, in a passage that recalls Klezmer sonorities, the similarity of influence between themes is strengthened.\footnote{See also Example 2.14 below.}

Second movement: *Allegro ironico*

Bloch writes that this movement is difficult to define, as it continually presents sharp changes of character in alternation. He does not specify whether the movement is specifically Jewish or exotic, but rather asks the listener: "Are these men, or animals, or grinning shadows? And what kind of sorrowful and bitter parody of humanity is dancing before us, sometimes giggling, sometimes serious?" Instead of answering this question, he points us to other works of his in which he hears similar sounds, and it is through them that we can establish the key influences for the movement. He explains the movement is structured as a rondo, with the following subdivisions:

- *Allegro*: mm. 1–57
- *Grave*: mm. 58–74
- *Allegro*: mm. 75–111
- *Sostenuto* (cadenza): mm. 112–19
- *Allegro*: mm. 120–56
- *Grave*: mm. 157–64
- *Animato*: mm. 165–70

Throughout the movement, Bloch explores characters ranging from the grotesque to the fantastic. The prominent use of clarinets in the orchestral version, as alluded to above, contributes much to the ironic, sarcastic passages of the movement, beginning with interjections in mm. 3–5 (Example 2.13), and culminating in a fast-paced "chase"
between the viola and the winds in mm. 105–11 (Example 2.14). Again, examples shown are from the piano and viola version; the clarinet motives appear in the upper staff of the piano part.

Example 2.13: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1–6

These fast passages with prominent clarinet passages resemble angry fast passages from the second movement of the String Quartet No. 1, *Allegro frenetico*, rife with strong accents and articulated sixteenth-note figures.
Another device Bloch employs in the Viola Suite's second movement is the use of chromatic parallel fifths, such as in mm. 12–22 (Example 2.15), an effect also present in the quartet, with an added chromatic twist.
Example 2.15: Ibid., mm. 12–25

Similarities between the second movements of the Quartet and the Suite continue in the slow passages, which are closely related in mood and content. Bloch explains that the *Trio* in the second movement of the Quartet was inspired by Gauguin—a clear link to the exotic. The materials of the *Trio* are replicated in the Viola Suite’s *Grave*, making use of *tremolo, sul ponticello* and *pizzicato* textures, as well as murky chromatic soundscapes
and minor melodies. Bloch’s powers of melodic invention appear stronger in the Viola Suite, where he shows a shimmering lightness of touch not found to the same extent in the Quartet. Even so, both works are strongly hued portraits, revealing an angrier side of Bloch, who at the time stated his “view of humanity was not too kindly,” given the war and the challenges he faced. Perhaps because of this the repeated contrast of Allegro and Grave sections is even more relevant—Bloch’s retreat into the exotic Grave can be seen as a refuge from the cares of modern life.

Third Movement: Lento

The third movement is the shortest and simplest in form of the four. Sills tells us that three main melodies, one in two phrases, are arranged in an arch form, followed by a coda re-introducing themes from the first movement. He presents the structure thus:

Theme I: mm. 1–21
Theme II: mm. 22–8*
Theme III: mm. 29–39*
Theme II: mm. 39–48*
Theme I: mm. 48–55*
Coda: mm. 56–62*

In the starred (*) sections, Bloch uses materials from the first movement, transforming them by making them a part of the viola line or by placing them in the piano (or orchestral) part. He ends the movement by overlapping this movement’s Theme III with the memorable clarinet motive from the work’s first movement. This gesture reinforces the cyclic nature of the work. In Example 2.16, the clarinet motive appears in the upper staff of m. 60–1, in the right hand of the piano.

---

48 Sills, The Viola Suite of Ernest Bloch, 50.
Example 2.16: Ibid., Third mvt., mm. 54–62
We know from Bloch’s own words that Robert Godet’s letters to him about the Orient were the inspiration for this movement’s program:

This very simple page expresses the mystery of tropical nights. I remembered the wonderful account of a dear friend who lived once in Java, —his travels during the night... their arrival at small villages in the darkness... the distant sounds of curious, soft, wooden instruments with strange rhythms... dances, too...

Bloch creates a veiled and mysterious picture of this scenery by placing the muted viola melodies above dark chords, using, in the orchestral version, the timpani to represent the “soft, wooden instruments” he was told of. In his correspondence, it is this movement he recalls most fondly, writing to Godet in 1920, years after they had fallen out of touch:

I was afraid of whether I could write for orchestra this nocturne, with its tropical and mysterious poetry. And then! I was stupefied myself... It wasn’t about notes anymore, but about perfumes, and direct sensations, distant [and] exotic, arising from the orchestra... And several of my friends to whom I have often spoken of you, told me: “Godet would have been delighted.”

Fourth Movement: *Molto vivo*

Bloch liked to refer to this movement as “the most cheerful thing [he] ever wrote.” In it he rejects the anger of the second movement and the melancholy of the third. He concentrates instead on creating a colorful picture that is at once full of lightness, yet infused with the grandeur and epic proportions of the first movement. Though Bloch

---

49 Letter of Ernest Bloch to Robert Godet, 13 November 1920: “J’avais si peur de ne jamais pouvoir réaliser à l’orchestre, ce nocturne, sa poésie tropicale et mystérieuse... Eh bien! J’ai été stupéfait moi-même... Ce n’était plus des notes, mais des parfums; et des sensations directes, lointaines, étranges, qui sortaient de l’orchestre... Et plusieurs de mes amis, auxquels j’ai souvent parlé de vous, me disaient: “Godet aurait été ravi.” Reprinted in Lewinski and Dijon, *Ernest Bloch*, 275. (My translation.)
himself refers to the movement as "an obvious A-B-A," Sills further clarifies this, noting the last three sub-sections of the movement are a coda:

- **Section A:** mm. 1–224
- **Section B:** mm. 225–56
- **Section A:** mm. 256–376
- **Coda:** *(Presto)* mm. 376–415
  - *(Largamente)* mm. 416–38
  - *(Molto Vivo)* mm. 438–64

In this movement, Bloch employs a tried and true arsenal of orientalizing devices to enrich the exotic picture he envisions for the work. Several of these gestures are heard more clearly and gain texture and detail in the orchestral version of the work, though the piano version fully conveys the joy and energy of the work, even if it lacks textural specificity. Timbrally, the loss of the percussion instruments in the piano version means that the gamelan sonorities evoked in the orchestral version of the piece are not nearly as discernible. Even so, Bloch makes the Oriental character of the movement immediately apparent in both the piano and orchestral versions, by using a pentatonic melody as his principal theme, and by making sure that variants and fragments of this theme (Example 2.17) appear in every section of the movement.\(^{50}\)

---

\(^{50}\) Musicologist Alexander Knapp suggests that this is one of three works in which Bloch employs "traditional Chinese elements," but he does not specify what they might comprise, other than the pentatonic scale. See brochure notes to Ernest Bloch: *Israel Symphony; Suite for Viola and Orchestra*, Yuri Gandelsman viola, Dalia Atlas leading the Atlas Camerata and Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, ASV CD DCA 1148, 2003.
Example 2.17: Ibid., Fourth mvt., mm. 1–11

IV

Molto vivo (1:152)

As he has in the other movements, Bloch regularly uses modal and octatonic collections, and melodies based on whole-tone fragments. His orchestration of the work is masterful in its variation of color and timbral effects, and he uses the harp, percussion, and flute in especially evocative ways, creating surprising effects and seamless transitions between the movement's sections. One might view this movement as Bloch's summation of all that has happened in the previous movements. To confirm the cyclic nature of the work, he makes use of material from the first movement throughout, overlapping it with fourth-movement themes in the B section, and crowning the movement by bringing back the opening viola theme of the first movement in the final Largamente, as discussed earlier (see Example 2.10). He then varies the tempo and energy of the sections so that
each one feels fully expressed. At the same time, he generates forward-moving energy that drives the movement steadily toward its climactic ending. Bloch's choice to end in an exuberant and shimmering frenzy seems to confirm his strong belief that music should be nothing less than a celebration of life.

The impact of the Viola Suite on Bloch's career has already been treated in earlier sections of this chapter. Similarly, we have already examined critical and public reactions to the work, and spoken of performers who championed it through their performances. For this reason, instead of providing a summary of conclusions already given elsewhere, I close this chapter with the following idea: that Bloch's amalgamation of Jewish and Oriental influences in the Viola Suite is above all intensely personal, and aimed not at satisfying trends of the time, but at expressing his own powerful and eloquent musical voice. Perhaps Rebecca Clarke, to whom this study turns next, puts it better than anyone else:

His effects, though dramatic and full of originality, never give the impression of having been made for their own sake, but are always essential to the deeply-felt [sic] meaning of his ideas. His music is in essence simple and straightforward in spite of its seeming complexity, and that makes it stand out among the works of present-day composers. At a time when music too often aims at a somewhat passionless perfection, sacrificing sincerity to technique and vitality to polish, his glowing works, almost elemental in their directness, bring the breath of a new and powerful life.\(^5\)

Bloch can certainly be credited with giving violists a satisfying and imaginative work, which beautifully showcases the instrument in an imaginary Oriental atmosphere. In the following chapter we will see he may also have inspired Clarke to "bring the breath of a new and powerful life" to her own Viola Sonata of 1919.
Appendix: Bloch’s Program Notes to the

Suite for Viola and Piano

First of all my Suite does not belong to my so-called “Jewish works,” though perhaps, in spite of myself, one may perceive here and there, in a few places, a certain Jewish inspiration. It is rather a vision of the Far East that inspired me: Java, Sumatra, Borneo—those wonderful countries I so often dreamed of, though I never was fortunate enough to visit them in any other way than through my imagination. I first intended to give more explicit—or picturesque—titles to the four movements of the work, as: (1) In the Jungle; (2) Grotesques; (3) Nocturne; (4) The Land of the Sun. But those titles seemed rather incomplete and unsatisfactory to me. Therefore, I prefer to leave the imagination of the hearer completely unfettered, rather than tie him up to a definite program. The following however, is what I believed that I myself saw in the music:

1. Lento—Allegro—Moderato

The first movement, the most complicated in inspiration and in form, aims to give the impression of a very wild and primitive Nature. The Introduction Lento begins with a kind of savage cry, like that of a bird of prey, followed immediately by a deep silence, misterioso, and the meditation of the viola. Other motives follow, and a small embryonic theme that later assumes very great importance. All these motives will be recalled further, either in the first movement or in the following ones, with more or less transformation.

The following Allegro brings a motive of joyful and perhaps exotic character which is answered by the viola. There is a new motive for the viola, and there are transformations of earlier material. The second part of the Allegro begins with a new idea—perhaps a little Jewish, in my sense. There is a climax worked out from the most important themes. Then follows a decrescendo that leads to the conclusion of the Allegro—again in silence and slumbering mood. Like a sun rising out of clouds in the mystery of primitive Nature, one of the earlier viola motives arises in broader shape, Largamente, and the movement ends, as it began, with the meditation of the viola.

The movement is an Allegro, in—roughly speaking—three divisions, preceded by an Introduction and followed by a Conclusion; these are chief features of the form.

2. Allegro ironico

Rather difficult to define is the second movement. It is a curious mixture of grotesque and fantastic characters, of sardonic and mysterious moods. Are these men, or animals, or grinning shadows? And what kind of sorrowful and bitter parody of humanity is dancing before us—sometimes giggling, sometimes serious? I myself do not know, and cannot explain. But I find traces of this kind of humor in parts of my

---

former works: in the Scherzo of my First Symphony (1902), in the Witches of my opera Macbeth (1904-07), in the Scherzo of my String Quartet (1916). But here of course, it has a different color and significance.

The musical form follows closely the expression in its alternating moods. It is a sort of rondo-form... The first group of motives (Allegro) is made up of short fragments. The following section is based on a quite different motive (Grave).

3. Lento

This very simple page expresses the mystery of tropical nights. I remembered the wonderful account of a dear friend who lived once in Java,—his travels during the night...their arrival at small villages in the darkness...the distant sounds of curious, soft, wooden instruments with strange rhythms...dances, too... Many years have passed since my friend told me all this; but the beauty and vividness of his impressions I could never forget—they haunted me; and almost unconsciously I had to express them in music. There is first a dreamy melody in the solo viola, above dark chords; then a second and third motive; and as if from far away reminiscences of motives from the first movement.

4. Molto Vivo

The last movement is probably the most cheerful thing I ever wrote. The form is extremely simple—an obvious A-B-A, the middle part being a more lyrical episode, built on motives from other movements treated in a broad and passionate mood.

The first motives are constructed on a pentatonic scale. A later motive, more lyrical, seems to be a transformation of the first. The middle part (Moderato assai) uses subjects from the third and fourth movements. A Presto leads to a Largamente, where a subject from the first movement is triumphantly recalled. The solo viola remembers the motive of the meditation from the first movement. A short and cheerful Allegro vivace concludes the work.
3
THE VIOLA SONATA OF REBECCA CLARKE

Introduction

Legacy and Identity

If Rebecca Clarke were to visit the musical world of the early twenty-first century, she might be very surprised to see the honored place it now accords her. Averse to publicity, and long retired from the working musical world when she passed away in 1979, Clarke did not actively seek to leave us the important musical legacy we are now aware of.\(^1\) Despite a long career in London and New York, surrounded by the most important musical practitioners of her time, in retirement her early successes as a composer were entrusted to the memory of a privileged circle of colleagues and family members. Clarke would likely be quite surprised to find that today she is considered one of the most important twentieth-century composers of music for the viola. Though certainly honored, she might be almost embarrassed to know she is the subject of numerous research articles, dissertations, and books, with a musicological organization dedicated to the study of her life and work. The Rebecca Clarke Society, founded by Dr. Liane Curtis at Brandeis University in 2000, has made available a wealth of new published material about Clarke’s career and her compositions, allowing researchers in recent years to construct a much

\(^1\) Liane Curtis ascertains that Clarke did not mention her music in her will, and made no provision for its care, preservation, or promotion. A *Rebecca Clarke Reader* (Waltham, MA: Rebecca Clarke Society, 2005), 160.
more finely hued portrait of this remarkable and doubly talented artist. The publication, in 2005, of the *Rebecca Clarke Reader*, has brought together not only a significant collection of essays about the composer, but has for the first time grouped her own published writings and broadcast interviews into a single source, enabling the study of her own work, which was previously difficult to obtain.

Increased interest in Rebecca Clarke’s music, and in her role as a twentieth-century composer and performer have led to a surge in recordings of her work, and to the gradual publication of several pieces unknown until recently. We are now aware that her output numbers circa one hundred compositions, not the three she spoke of in interviews with Ellen D. Lerner in 1978.\(^2\) Curtis reports that as of 2004, at least fifteen recordings of her Viola Sonata were commercially available, making it one of the most recorded works for that instrument in the twentieth-century repertoire. As a result, her music has received increased performances throughout the world, not only by groups specifically interested in promoting the music of women composers, but also by instrumental and choral organizations traditionally less concerned with gender.

Feminist Perspectives on Clarke’s Life and Work

In the field of musicology, the question of Clarke’s gender remains central, and is studied by musicologists whose approaches differ radically. It is impossible for us to know what view Clarke herself would take of feminist studies in musicology, especially when used to interpret her life experiences and composition methods. We know that Clarke was a

---

\(^2\) Ellen D. Lerner, interview with Rebecca Clarke Friskin, 14 September 1978, reproduced in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, 203–24, at 214.
quiet but firm supporter of women's suffrage and was active in the British Society for Women Musicians from its inception in 1911. She was well acquainted with the most formidable female musical activist of her generation, Dame Ethel Smyth, and as an orchestral player, was one of the very first women to work professionally in England. Even so, Clarke's own writings suggest a moderate, overly modest, self-effacing temperament, and a non-militant approach when it came to questions of equality.

Although late in life she recognized that gender had played a role in limiting her career opportunities, in 1922 she adamantly stated to the press: "Art...has nothing to do with the sex of the artist. I would sooner be regarded as a sixteenth-rate composer than be judged as if there were one kind of musical art for men and another for women." In the mid-1940s, Clarke delivered a talk regarding the status of female composers entitled: "The Woman Composer, Then and Now." In it, she discussed the improvement to women's career prospects within her lifetime, and the historical impediments faced not only by women composers but also by noted women writers, who seem to her more numerous and well respected than their musical counterparts. Clarke appears to make light of the difficulties she encountered. With her severely self-deprecating sense of

---


humor, she tells her audience that a female composition student in her generation was a rarity, "about as much of a freak as the bearded lady of the circus."\(^5\)

Even though she acknowledges the importance of Dame Ethel Smyth's efforts to fight prejudice against women's music, she also thinks Smyth "went on fighting after there was nothing left to fight for" and that she "made herself an awful nuisance."\(^6\) Clarke does not seem to recognize the contradiction she sets up by claiming simultaneously that "by the time my generation came along we weren't up against very much," stating that in fact concert organizers were "too anxious to be fair" about letting women's works be performed, and then proceeding to recount the dichotomous reviews she received on the occasion of her first solo recital in New York's Aeolian Hall in 1918.

Clarke had three compositions of her own on the program, but decided to enter the piece she considered weakest pseudonymously as the work of "Anthony Trent," a name she invented for the occasion. As she puts it: "Well, the next day I discovered that the critics were very much interested in Mr. Trent, but had almost ignored the pieces by Rebecca Clarke. So a few years later, when my music was beginning to be published, I killed Anthony Trent—officially and with no regrets—and I've never been bothered with him since!"\(^7\) But today, writing about Clarke eighty-nine years after this episode, one cannot help but be bothered by the critical reception of her works: in almost every review

---

5 Rebecca Clarke (Friskin) "The Woman Composer, Then and Now," manuscript facsimile published as Appendix II of *Morpheus* for viola and piano (London: Oxford University Press, 2002).

6 Ibid.

7 Anthony Trent was in fact so successful that he is mentioned in *Vogue* of 15 April 1918, as one of the new British composers who American audiences must hear more of in the next season! Clarke kept a clipping of the article in her papers. It is reproduced on the back cover of *Morpheus.*
of her music or her performances, her gender is a factor, qualifying both the praise and criticisms she receives.

Jones notes that to Clarke’s reviewers, “there is a clear-cut assumption that a woman composer’s music is—or should be—different to that of her male counterparts.”

In the end, Clarke’s own displeasure at the concept of there being “one kind of musical art for women and another for men” is ignored both by the early twentieth-century critics who first assessed her major works, and by modern scholars who choose to analyze her works employing a dialectic created after her time. Though Clarke firmly believed that “a great cause is served in putting the work of women executants on an equal footing with that of man,” it is less likely that, as a practical musician, she would have known what to make of a more recent study of her Viola Sonata, where the author states:

Rebecca Clarke’s sonata for viola and piano creates and transforms feminine spaces of negotiation of both the power and illusion of solo expression. These relational spaces shape a discourse of musical relationships and reverberate in subjective self-listening, acknowledging and drawing on conceptions of the self and self-knowledge.

While it can always be interesting to consider a composer’s work from a wide range of perspectives, it seems counter-productive to take their work so far out of context that they

---

10 Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, “On Rebecca Clarke’s Sonata for Viola and Piano: Feminine Spaces and Metaphors of Reading.” In *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, edited by Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley (Zurich: Carcchiofoli Press, 1998), 71–114. This study explores the sonata using semiotic metaphors of feminine identity, sexuality, and gender construction. It compares the sonata with literary works of Plath and Blake, and seeks to connect Clarke’s sonata with Blake’s idea of “female space” as well as with demonic and creational allegories. Kielian-Gilbert’s approach displaces Clarke from the context of her life between 1918 and 1920, and does not consider Clarke’s actual compositional process, which she herself never described in such terms.
themselves would not recognize how it is interpreted. For this reason, violists wanting to consider Clarke’s work from a feminist viewpoint are better served by Liane Curtis’ study, “Rebecca Clarke and Sonata Form: Questions of Gender and Genre,” in which the author is careful to consider the idea of gendered sonata form “in the specific context of Clarke’s work, examining what her thoughts on sonata form might have been, based on her situation and training.”

The range of issues surrounding Clarke’s identity as a composer and as a woman exceeds the boundaries of this study, but will no doubt be given every consideration in Curtis’ forthcoming book-length biography of Clarke. What makes Curtis’ work so important is her ability to provide unprecedented levels of detail about Clarke’s life, while presenting the composer firmly rooted in her historical context. The next section of this study aims to present Clarke in that light, focusing on events that contributed to the formation of her compositional and personal identity.

Biographical Profile

Family Life and Student Years

Rebecca Clarke was born in Harrow, near London, England, on 27 August 1886. She was the daughter of Joseph Thacher Clarke, a Bostonian who first trained as an archaeologist in Germany and later became Eastman Kodak’s European representative in England. Her mother, Agnes Maria Paulina Helferich, was the daughter of Hans von Helferich, a

---

11 Liane Curtis, “Questions of Gender and Genre,” 393.
Professor of Political Economy at the University of Munich, and the great-niece of German historian Leopold von Ranke. Agnes and Joseph, who first met in Germany, settled permanently into a comfortable upper-middle class life in Harrow. Rebecca was soon joined by three siblings—Hans, Eric, and Dora—who, like Rebecca, eventually achieved considerable success in their respective professions. Rebecca enrolled as a pupil at the South Hampstead School for Girls, and in 1894, aged eight, began her formal musical training taking violin lessons from a neighbor, Mr. Cave. Rebecca’s brothers were also forced to learn the violin, which they disliked, and together the siblings were made to play string quartets with their father, whose abilities as a cellist she described as "somewhat less than mediocre." Clarke’s mother was an enthusiastic amateur singer and a capable pianist, and learned the viola so she could take part in the family music making.

---

12 Hans Clarke was an important biochemist; Eric Clarke a published non-fiction author, and Dora Clarke a well-respected sculptor. See Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 4.
13 Clarke’s brothers left the violin behind once their father was no longer able to dictate their choices. Hans became a well-respected amateur clarinetist in New York City. (Clarke dedicated her 1941 work Prélude, Allegro, and Pastorale to him.) Eric took up the French horn. See Clarke’s memoir I Had a Father Too, or ‘The Mustard Spoon’ as edited by Liane Curtis, chapter 2, 21, and reprinted by Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 5.
14 Clarke told Ellen Lerner on 14 September 1978: “My father was an awful cellist. When we were brought up, we were made to play string quartets when we were children, my brothers and I. And my mother was quite a good pianist; she’d studied in Munich, not professional, but quite a good pianist. But my father prevailed on her to take up the viola so she could play all the string quartets. It must have been too ghastly, the sound. He was very domineering. But, all the same, it did get me interested in music.” See A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 216. Liane Curtis further explores Clarke’s relationship with her father in “Rebecca Clarke and Virginia Woolf—Moments of Being” in Essays on a Life in Music, [CD-ROM] accompanying A Rebecca Clarke Reader.
Rebecca enrolled at the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1903 (aged seventeen), where she studied the violin with Hans Wessely.\textsuperscript{15} She writes in her memoir that she “found the RAM thrilling, even if Hans Wessely was a stern and sometimes unkind teacher.”\textsuperscript{16} Clarke’s studies at the RAM were abruptly terminated by her father in Midsummer term, 1905, when Percy Hilder Miles, her instructor in harmony and counterpoint, made her a proposal of marriage. (She was still a minor, and he was a friend of her father’s.\textsuperscript{17}) Following the debacle with Miles, Clarke’s studies were interrupted for two years. Though her father allowed her to travel to the US to visit members of his family, he would not allow her to continue at the RAM.

Even without the benefit of formal training during that time, Clarke remained engaged with her musical pursuits and wrote her first compositions, settings of German poetry that she began in 1903. That year she set Goethe’s \textit{Wanderers Nachtlied}, continuing with poems by Dehmel between 1904 and 1907, and Goethe’s \textit{Wiegenlied} in 1905. Clarke’s interest in German poetry came from her mother, who knew this repertoire well and shared it with her children. Other songs from this period show that

\textsuperscript{15} Hans Wessely (1862–1926), an Austrian violinist, began teaching at the RAM in 1889. He was Lionel Tertis’ first violin teacher at the RAM as well. Tertis thought “he was a very good violinist but kept all his secrets to himself and did not tell us all the tricks of the trade.” See John White, \textit{Lionel Tertis} (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2006). 4.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{I had a father too}, Chapter 7, 2, as reprinted by Jones, \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 5.

\textsuperscript{17} It remains unclear to me whether their relationship ever transgressed that of student and teacher. Most sources indicate that Miles’ proposal stemmed from his own platonic feelings; in her own writings Clarke has not indicated being in love with him. They ceased to be in regular contact, so Clarke was quite surprised to find that Miles bequeathed her a Stradivarius violin at the time of his death. She played the instrument on several occasions, and later used proceeds from its sale to establish an annual prize at the RAM in honor of her close friend, the cellist May Mukle. Miles holds another distinction unrelated to this affair: he was in the same class at the RAM as Lionel Tertis, and it was he who persuaded Tertis to first try the viola, so they could play in a quartet together. (At the time, viola was not offered as a first study at the RAM. Tertis changed this, so that by the time Clarke enrolled at the RAM he was her professor.) See White, \textit{Lionel Tertis}, 5.
Clarke’s poetic interests were varied, and that she was aware of the time’s most significant authors. She set Maeterlinck’s *Chanson* in 1904, Kipling’s *Shiv and the Grasshopper* the same year, and Omar Khayyám’s *The Moving Finger Writes* the following year. In these songs we see a first flowering of interest in things French and exotic (though her first song to a Chinese text would not appear until 1910). This was perhaps a result of her trip to the Paris World’s Fair in 1900, which she attended with her father, and which surely exposed her to a number of new musical and cultural influences.\footnote{Unfortunately, Clarke’s memoir describes her father’s disturbing behavior during this trip in greater detail than any of the concerts she might have attended. See Liane Curtis, *Moments of Being*, 12. (The significance of the World’s Fairs as a source of inspiration to composers is explored in chapter one of this study.)}

A number of Rebecca’s early songs caught her father’s inquisitive eye. Seeking a critical opinion, he decided to send them to his acquaintance, Charles Villiers Stanford, who was the most important composition teacher in England at the time. Stanford’s estimation of the songs was high enough to sway Clarke’s father. He allowed her to enroll at the Royal College of Music as Stanford’s composition student, beginning in September 1908.\footnote{Several sources, such as articles and CD liner notes, disagree on the dates of Clarke’s studies at the RCM. Thankfully, Jones’ thesis has now given us a definite answer gleaned directly from the RCM archives.} Stanford’s influence on Clarke cannot be underestimated. Aside from leading her composition studies, he was a positive male influence in her life at a time when her relationship with her father first deteriorated and then dissolved.\footnote{She must have had the highest regard for him; she kept a picture postcard of Stanford in her writing desk until the end of her life.} Of perhaps greatest importance, it was Stanford who recommended she take up the viola as a first
instrument and study with Lionel Tertis, its greatest exponent at the time.\textsuperscript{21} Stanford felt Clarke would learn more about harmony and orchestration by playing the viola, "because then you are right in the middle of the sound, and can tell how it's all done."\textsuperscript{22}

Clarke's own memories of her lessons are positive, and contrast greatly with those of his most famous students. Vaughan Williams, who studied with him between 1895 and 1897, reported that Stanford "was quite cruel in his judgments and the more sensitive among his pupils wilted under his methods and found comfort under a more soft-hearted teacher."\textsuperscript{23} It was not uncommon for him to dismiss students from lessons with such expressions of disinterest as "All rot, me boy!" (about Vaughan Williams' first attempt at a quartet), and "this is d___d ugly, me boy" (at Edgar Bainton's every lesson!). So it comes as a surprise that Clarke remembers him entirely differently, though he most likely leveled his criticisms at her as well:

I shall always remember with gratitude and affection the lessons he gave me, feeling myself fortunate to have been his pupil. From the very beginning he was entirely charming to me. I remember so well how I waited outside the glass door of his room before my first lesson, too nervous to go in; and how an older student, chancing to pass by, advised me to speak up for myself and not give him the impression of being frightened. Sir Charles' amused quizzical glance of course took the situation in an instant, and we were friends from that moment. I can see now the hovering of his familiar gold pencil, and hear the picturesque exaggerations of his praise or blame.\textsuperscript{24}

Paul Rodmell has suggested in his study that Stanford shielded three students from his worst blows: Clarke, Herbert Howells, and Edgar Bainton. Rodmell implies that they

\textsuperscript{21} It is (still) customary in the British music-college system to enter with two instruments, one as "first"-, and the other as "second-study." Up to this point the violin was her principal instrument.
\textsuperscript{22} R. Clarke, \textit{I had a father too}, Chapter 7, 38, as reprinted by Jones, \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 7.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 352.
were treated kindly because he admired their talents in particular, but Margaret Nosek, who studied with Stanford between 1916 and 1918, suggests in her own recollections that Clarke was treated delicately because she was a woman, and he "did not feel enough at ease in their presence to take his coat off or shout at them."25 Although this is entirely possible, Clarke never reported being treated differently from any of her male peers. I would suggest that as her father regularly treated her in such a harsh and abusive way, interaction with Stanford, no matter how gruff, would have been limited by professional boundaries and the innate propriety of the conservatory environment. In this way his influence was beneficial: he may have been critical, but he validated her role as a creative artist and encouraged her to pursue her career regardless of gender or convention.

Clarke's career at the RCM was quite successful. Stanford professed to like her early work, and the college's Council awarded her exhibitions for two pieces: a Danse

---

25 Ibid, 352. I will take Nosek's remarks as an opportunity to clarify a continuously propagated myth about Clarke: that of her being Stanford's first female student. Rodmell and Jones' research does much to dispel this notion once and for all: Stanford taught other female pupils, at Cambridge, long before he accepted Clarke at the RCM. These were Katherine Ramsay (studied 1892–5) and Marion Scott (studied 1896–1904). Clarke was then the only female student in her class at the RCM between 1907–1910, but as we have seen, Stanford taught Margaret Nosek (1916–1918), at the RCM a few years later. Clarke knew Marion Scott professionally through the Society of Women Musicians (founded 1911) and would have been fully aware that she had also studied with Stanford. (Incidentally, women were allowed to study composition at the RCM from the school's inception, in 1823. It was, however, up to each professor to decide which pupils to accept of which gender.) See Rodmell, 350–1, and Jones, chapter 1. Clarke's nephew, Christopher Johnson, continues to state in his writings about Clarke as recently as 2003 that she was his only female student, perhaps basing his information on interviews she gave Robert Sherman (for WQXR, New York), at the age of ninety. See, for example, notes to Rebecca Clarke, Chamber Music, Dutton CDLX 7132, 2003. Clarke also states this, erroneously, in her memoir, I had a father too. Curtis will no doubt continue to clarify the sources of the misunderstanding.
Bizarre for two violins and piano, and Theme and Variations for solo piano. Callum MacDonald's study of her works indicates that at this time she also wrote a first Lullaby for viola, and that from 1907 to 1909 she composed a complete violin sonata, meant as a graduation piece for the RCM. Of her lessons on this work she wrote in her diary:

My second year at the Royal College was even more rewarding than my first. Stanford told me to try my hand at a violin sonata, and my mind was full of it. One day when I took him the beginning of the slow movement a surprising thing happened. He suddenly disappeared without a word, leaving me sitting alone and rather puzzled in the classroom. Later I heard this was a habit of his: when a student brought a piece of work that interested him he would go off and show it to one of the other professors; in this case it was to Fernandez Arbos, the chief violin teacher. I was told to be very flattered; and I was. It was the only time it ever happened to me.

From Clarke's writings we can gather that her time at the RCM may not have been easy, but it was artistically and socially fulfilling to an enormous degree. At the RCM she not only wrote her first longer works, but also had them performed and received public and private praise for them, which must have been a great boost to her, given the harsh

---

26 “Exhibitions” are monetary prizes, awarded on the basis of merit, to distinguished students. Rebecca received them for two consecutive years, and they provided a substantial scholarship, covering more than half the cost of tuition for the year. The Danse Bizarre and Theme and Variations for piano were considered lost for many years, and this is in fact how Callum MacDonald categorizes them in his 1987 article. See “Rebecca Clarke’s Chamber Music” Tempo 160, (1987): 15–26. Liane Curtis states in A Rebecca Clarke Reader that she rediscovered the works in the Clarke estate in 2000. They received their London premiere in London in 2003. See A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 161, footnote 4. Contrary to Curtis’ statement Christopher Johnson writes in notes to Dutton CDLX 7132 that they were found by Clarke’s grand-nephew, Daniel Braden, in a box of letters, papers, and medical records in her former apartment in New York.

27 This work is the Violin Sonata in D major. It remains unpublished, though a photocopy of the manuscript is available for study from the BBC Library in London. Callum MacDonald gives a succinct description of the work in “Rebecca Clarke’s Chamber Music,” 16, and Briony Jones gives a systematic analysis of the work in The Music of Rebecca Clarke, chapter 2, 19, and 27–35. The Violin Sonata in D major can be heard on Dutton Records, CDLX7132.

28 Clarke, I had a father too, chapter 7, 50, as reprinted by Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 32.
environment she contended with at home. Furthermore, Clarke was recognized as a leading chamber music performer at the school, and the social network of players she developed with fellow students later became her professional network. She valued several of her colleagues highly and remained attached to them in much later stages of her life.

Adulthood and Professional Life

It was this circle of friends and teachers that she turned to in July 1910, when her life came to a crossroads. A serious quarrel at home left her unable to finish her studies and bereft of a home; suddenly she was forced to make an abrupt transition from student life to independent adulthood.29 Stanford came to her aid, recommending her to the Nora Clench Quartet as violist.30 This gave Clarke her first serious professional opportunity as a violist, but most importantly it introduced her to May Mukle. Mukle, the quartet’s cellist, became her life-long friend, and was for decades one of her closest performing associates. Maria Foltz Baylock gives us the following portrait of this remarkable woman:

29 Rebecca confronted her father about his repeated infidelities by leaving a pyramid-shaped stack of love-letters from one of his mistresses on the dining room table for him to find. In the fight that resulted, she was sent away with a mere £12 and forbidden to return. She never had any contact with her father again, though her diary entry of 28 May 1920 shows they attended the same concert in Wigmore Hall. Joseph Clarke died ten years later, on 23 September 1920. Only then was Rebecca allowed to contact her family members freely, returning home at one point to live with her mother and sister. See Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 8.
30 The Nora Clench Quartet was the first all female professional quartet in London. Its founding members were Nora Clench and Lucy Stone, violins, Cecilia Gates, viola, and May Mukle, cello. Clarke replaced Gates, who played from 1907–10. See Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 8, footnote 32.
Mukle was one of the first female cellists to have a performing career in Great Britain. She premiered solo works by Vaughan Williams, Sullivan, Holst, Ravel and Kodály, and she was known as a cellist who “constantly set herself to enlarge the repertory of her instrument by the introduction of new works of serious aim to her audiences.” Mukle was also known for lacking the stereotypical Victorian woman’s sense of modesty and self-consciousness. Poet Anna Wickham described Mukle as a “rabid feminist, [with] no opinion of marriage.” She had had the devil of a time establishing herself against male prejudice, while making her way with an instrument considered unfeminine. Fearlessly traveling to cities and villages alike, Mukle was outgoing, determined, and an outstanding musician. She had many friends and contacts all over the world, and she defied the influences of war, economic depression, and great distances to do what she loved most: play the cello. Mukle’s confident personality complemented Clarke’s more reserved and introspective nature, and during the next three decades, the two friends would tour throughout the British Empire as well as North America and Hawaii.  

Mukle was, in temperament and personality, much the opposite of Clarke. One imagines that Mukle’s energy and determination were extremely beneficial to Clarke, spurring her to strive despite the loss of her family life and the uncertainty of her financial circumstances. It was not easy for Clarke to establish herself at first, but she was determined to succeed. At the age of 92, she recalled this time in her life as follows:

Anyhow, when I was twenty-four I went up to live in London on my own. I supported myself from that moment. I got two weekly jobs at five shillings each. I don’t know if you know how little five shillings was in those days. I got a room for five shillings a week; it was six pence extra if they brought me up a can of hot water every morning. I was there for about a year. I wasn’t a bad player, and I began to get a few little jobs and then a few better jobs and so on. I supported myself from that moment. I never took a penny from my father after that, and I was very proud of it.

Though that first year must have been excruciating and dispiriting, by 1912 Clarke was playing in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra and in quartets with Mukle and a host of other important artists, such as Guilhermina Suggia, Jelly D’Aranyi, and Adila

---


Fachiri.\textsuperscript{33} Between 1916 and 1923 she performed recitals around the world. She then went on to be a founding member of, among others, the Music Society String Quartet, the Aeolian Players, and later the English Ensemble, all of which contributed significantly to British concert life in the first third of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{34}

Meeting Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge

In 1916 she took her second major trip to the United States, where by then both of her brothers had settled with their families.\textsuperscript{35} This trip proved to be one of the most important of her life, because the following summer she met the notable American patron of the

\textsuperscript{33} Guilhermina Suggia was a Portuguese concert cellist who had close ties to Casals. She and Mukle were the leading female cello soloists of their generation. Clarke played in quartets with Suggia for three years. Jelly D’Aranyi and Adila Fachiri (her married name) were Hungarian sisters who were prominent violinists in their time. Fachiri premiered Ravel’s \textit{Tzigane} and is the dedicatee of Clarke’s \textit{Midsummer Moon}, a very successful miniature for violin and piano.

\textsuperscript{34} The English Ensemble, founded in 1928, consisted of Marjorie Hayward, violin, Clarke, viola, May Mukle, cello, and Kathleen Long, piano. They gave the British premiere of Bloch’s Piano Quintet. The Aeolian Players formed to play new music which featured the flute. The members were Clarke, Gordan Bryon, piano, Joseph Slater, flute, Antonio Brosa, violin (until 1926), Constance Izzard, violin (after Brosa). The Music Society String Quartet, also known as the International Quartet, was formed to play “music not normally performed by other ensembles,” and when Clarke was a member the others were May Mukle, cello, and André Mangeot and Dorothy Christison, violins. All these groups broadcast frequently on the BBC through the 1920s and 1930s. I choose to list the members to emphasize that as a chamber player, Clarke played both in all-female and in mixed groups, both at the highest professional standard. Perhaps chamber music was a more gender-neutral area of the professional music scene. See Jones, \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 285.

\textsuperscript{35} An earlier trip had taken place in 1905, to visit her father’s relatives. The trip in 1916 was significant because it was her first trip across the Atlantic as a professional. In addition to touring with Mukle, she performed for the first time in New York, and it was there that she met the composer Ernest Bloch. I will discuss this in the “Compositional Influences” section of this chapter. The significance of Clarke’s 1916 trip in relation to World War I is discussed in chapter one of this study.
arts, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Clarke’s friendship with Coolidge was one of the most important of her musical career and would last for thirty years, until Mrs. Coolidge’s death. It was Coolidge who first encouraged Clarke to enter the competition she would hold in 1919, and which proved to be Clarke’s most surprising and greatest triumph in the musical world. Clarke entered the competition not once, but twice, receiving second prize both years (1919 for the Viola Sonata and 1921 for her Piano Trio). Coolidge was also responsible for commissioning Clarke’s third and last large-scale work, the Cello Rhapsody written in 1923. Notably, this is the only time Coolidge commissioned a work from a woman, though other female composers, such as Ruth Crawford and Mary Howe, entered her competition as contestants.36 Rebecca was present at the first Berkshire (then Pittsfield) Music festival in 1918, and again in 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1923.

Travel and Composition

In 1920 she kept busy teaching in New York, but by 1922 was engaged to play chamber music concerts with Mukle throughout the British Commonwealth. In 1919 alone she traveled between Detroit, New York, Massachusetts, California, and Hawaii. She composed while she travelled, reporting her progress on the Viola Sonata in diary entries dating from April–July 1919. She finished the composition in Detroit between 3 and 8 July:

3 July 1919: “My last day of working at the [Detroit] Institute [of Music]. Shall be so sorry to stop. The sonata is finished now, and I have only a few small

---

36 For a comprehensive list of composers who entered the Coolidge Competition, see Cyrilla Barr, Figures, accompanying the essay “My one little Whiff of Success.” In Essays on a Life in Music, [CD-ROM] accompanying A Rebecca Clarke Reader.
corrections to do, and the marking and copying before sending it off. Feel very proud to have actually gotten it done.”

8 July 1919: “Got the piano part marked done, though not marked as yet. Had a performance of the whole thing in the evening. Expected to hate it after all that work, but really am rather pleased with it.”

Clearly this period of Clarke’s life was one of enthusiasm for her work, and a time of positive experiences and valuable opportunities. She not only composed the Viola Sonata, her best known work, but also had the opportunity to collaborate with some of the greatest musicians of her time, including Arthur Schnabel, Frank Bridge, Eugene Goosens, Percy Grainger, Pablo Casals, Myra Hess, Artur Rubinstein, and Georg Szell.

“The glorious Rebecca Clarke,” as Rubinstein had christened her, could boast performances in England, the United States, Canada, Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, India, China, Japan, and Hawaii by the end of the 1922–23 season—proving she had completely overcome the obstacles in her life twelve years earlier. In 1924 she returned to England and settled again in Harrow, from where she reestablished herself in the London concert scene. During these years she composed less, but continued to perform frequently, both as a recitalist and with the English Ensemble.

---

37 Rebecca Clarke, unpublished diary entries from 3 and 8 July 1919, as reprinted by Jones in The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 306. Thirteen additional entries concerning the Viola Sonata are reprinted there.

38 Baylock details Clarke and Mukle’s travels in “Clarke and the English Ensemble,” 14.

39 Clarke explained late in her life that a love affair with baritone John Goss, who was then married, sapped her energy and kept her from composing as she might have liked. Their relationship was unhappy, and lasted from 1927 until circa 1933. Her best compositions of this period are songs dedicated to him, which explore a darker, more expressionistic style than she had shown before, for example, Tiger, Tiger, and The Seal Man.
Return to the United States; Marriage

When Rebecca's mother died in 1935, she continued to work in London but decided to spend the summer of 1939 with her brothers in the United States. Unexpectedly, her three-month stay was prolonged when a return visa to the United Kingdom was denied—war had broken out, and London was being evacuated. Her inability to return home was quite problematic because after a certain point it became clear she could no longer remain in the homes of her brothers, who had families of their own to support. The following year she took a job in Connecticut to earn her living. However, it was wartime, and musical work was not easily obtainable. In a surreal twist of fate, Clarke found herself working as a nanny at the age of fifty-six. It was the first time she had worked outside the musical profession. Clarke was not happy during this time—childcare was not her calling, and isolation from a musical setting was extremely troubling to her. One musical event that year helped to keep Clarke in better spirits—her Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale (1941) was selected for performance at the International Society of Contemporary Music's meeting in Berkeley, California, receiving its premiere on 6 August 1942. This period was her most productive as a composer since the 1920s, yielding one of her most beautiful short viola works, Passacaglia on an Old English Theme, as well as the Dumka for violin, viola, and piano, and two choral works, Combined Carols and Lethe.40

Not long after, she renewed her friendship with the pianist James Friskin, who had gone to school with her at the RCM, and whom she had kept in touch with

40 Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 139.
intermittently in the 1920s. Although originally Clarke had probably hoped to return to Britain after World War II, her plans changed: she married Friskin in 1944 and settled in Manhattan. She did not compose much after 1942. In fact she wrote only three new pieces, including a Scottish viola melody which she dedicated to Friskin, and two songs: *Binnorie: A Ballad*, ca. 1945, and “God Made a Tree,” in 1954. Some have speculated that she was hindered from work by her marriage, but it is documented that Friskin encouraged her to show her Scottish piece to publishers, and that he thought it might be worth expanding it into a larger revised version. We are able to explore Clarke’s diminished desire to compose through her own words about writing, and about her marriage:

> When you marry, I think you will find—I did—I became more interested in what my husband was doing. He was a very fine pianist; he was on the faculty at Juilliard. He was a very shy, retiring Scotsman and he never could behave like an “artist,” never could push himself [be self-promoting] in any way. And I got much more interested in what he was doing—he was a wonderful musician—and I really didn’t do any composing at all after I got married. I’m sure that’s shocking to you. It wasn’t because I got married that I didn’t; I had been writing much less during the years before I was married.

> …When I didn’t have my mind full any more of wanting to write music in that way, where the music was the chief thing in my life, then I wrote less and less. But I’m awfully sorry now I didn’t [write anything more], because I’ve

---

41 Friskin, who was the same age as Clarke, had also performed at the Berkshire Festivals under the auspices of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. They also performed together in London, and were at the RCM together. Friskin had been one of Stanford’s most important pupils, but like Clarke was a quiet personality and eschewed the self-promotion required to make his works well-known. An illustrious pianist and teacher, he taught at the Juilliard school for fifty-two years.

42 “After looking again at the last twelve bars for your little viola piece, which I find very moving, it seems to me that you ought to start off again on something larger—I’d almost be willing to bet it’s there if you’d only let it come out. What about another viola sonata? Please try.” (Letter of James Friskin to Rebecca Clarke on 24 July 1944.)

43 Interview with Ellen D. Lerner, *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, 211. She states incorrectly that she wrote nothing after her marriage. But it is true that she did not write any large works.
always felt I had it in me to write something really good, perhaps, if only I’d gone on with it.\textsuperscript{44}

Curtis has explored the reasons for the decline in Clarke’s output in the essay “Rescuing Rebecca Clarke: a case of identity,” and her current research suggests Clarke suffered from dysthymia, a chronic form of depression, which sapped her self-confidence and made it difficult for her to compose.\textsuperscript{45} It is quite unfortunate that circumstances of every nature prevented Clarke from composing for a longer period of time, and in larger genres. Listening both to her earliest compositions, so full of lyric expression and colorful invention, and to her later Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale—showing its mature, twentieth-century idiom, one wonders if she would not have been one of the most important British composers in modern history, had she received longer training and unbiased encouragement. Any speculation in this regard, though, is just that, and it is not useful to wish for an impossible outcome.\textsuperscript{46} Clarke may not have composed in the last

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{46} Clarke’s choice to compose mainly viola miniatures, chamber works for small ensembles, vocal music, and just a few choral pieces is not surprising. In these genres she had the safety of being appropriate—women had always written for these configurations. But it is unfortunate that a composer with as much talent and imagination as she did not write any orchestral works, whereas her male contemporaries became the leading British symphonists of their time. There is another possible reason for Clarke’s choice to confine her works to smaller genres, and this was the constraint of time. This would be plausible especially if we take into consideration the demands placed on Clarke by her busy performing schedule (in the 1920s), or the necessity of procuring non-musical employment (1942). It was probably easier to complete small works in the intervals between teaching and concertizing, and therefore more satisfying than laboring indefinitely on larger works. That said, Clarke’s three best-known pieces, the two written for the Coolidge Competition and the Cello Rhapsody, are also her most ambitious in scope. Clarke’s reluctance to write for orchestra made itself felt early in her career. Sir Henry Wood, who conducted her in the Queen’s Hall Orchestra (in which she played from 1912–14), once invited her to write a piece for the Proms. Her diary entry
three decades of her life, but she was active as a teacher and lecturer, and revised many of her existing works.47 In this period she also took the time to write her memoirs, which show poignantly the troubles she experienced and give her unique perspective on many musical personalities and events.

Clarke outlived her husband by twelve years, living to the impressive age of ninety-three. On the occasion of her ninetieth birthday, there was a flourish of interest in her compositions, which she was fortunate to be able to enjoy. Her birthday was celebrated with an interview on WQXR in New York and a performance of the Viola Sonata in Carnegie Hall. She delighted in what she called the “little renaissance” of her work, finding it gratifying that her efforts were receiving recognition. Widespread interest in Clarke’s work dates from this time, when many violists and musicologists re-discovered both her and her work. As this study continues, we will see that musical contemporaries from the height of her career were well aware of her talents and contributed to make her career as fascinating as it was.

---

47 Concerning his request reads simply: “Rather nice having some time... to do some work! Had a letter from Henry Wood asking me to write something for the Proms, but refused, as I don’t want to be hurried. Took a walk with May after lunch and after supper we went to rehearse again with Ann Thursfield for Oxford.” Diary entry, 24 May 1926. Reprinted in Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 319. Sadly, she elaborates not at all on the subject of his request. But the very fact that he asked is in itself a sign that he had a very high estimation of her abilities, not only as an orchestral violist, but also as a composer.

47 Clarke taught viola and chamber music privately, and lectured in summers at the Chautauqua Institute, a music festival in New York State.
Compositional Development and Stylistic Influences

Though earlier in this study I briefly discussed some of Clarke's works while considering the role of composition at different periods in her life, I have not yet addressed in detail how her training, her contact with composers and performers, and her travels allowed her to reach artistic maturity. Charles Stanford was the strongest early influence on her music, providing a thorough grounding in the nineteenth-century Germanic style, and instilling in his students a keen sense for melody and a rich, tonal harmonic language. It is also he who encouraged Clarke to pursue instrumental composition, turning her temporarily away from songwriting, which had been her first outlet.

In her first works, such as the Violin Sonata in D major and the Sonata Movement in G major, there are intimations of the fluid writing and personal style of the later viola works. But in them Clarke is still clearly under the influence of her teacher, exploring the legacies of Brahms and Bruckner, and not yet the French style, which is later so strong in her works. Jones notes, significantly, that at this stage neither English folk music nor octatonic techniques are present in Clarke's writing, though they are characteristic of her mature works.\(^{48}\) Clarke's individuality emerges more strongly in *Three Movements for Violin and Piano*, especially in the scherzo-like *Danse Bizarre*, where Clarke makes use of devices strongly associated with her later pieces. Among them is the vivacity of rhythmic patterns, in which she takes the juxtaposition of duple and triple figures further than in previous works, as well as the use of frequent changes of time signature. From this study's perspective, however, the most important feature of this piece is Clarke's use

---

\(^{48}\) Jones, *The Music of Rebecca Clarke*, 34.
of a strongly pentatonic theme—an overtly orientalizing gesture that has strong implications for her later style.\textsuperscript{49} This is Clarke’s most pronounced use of a musical element associated with musical Exoticism, though research into her early works suggests her interest in Oriental subjects extends back to her earliest years as a composer.

Two songs with texts by Kipling and Khayyám are her earliest compositions on Oriental subjects, but the first instance of an Eastern text in Clarke’s work post-dating her student years is a group of Chinese songs written in 1910. They are listed in Jones’ catalogue of her works, but are unpublished; the manuscripts are held in an American private collection. For this reason I am unable to discuss their musical style, or infer whether any orientalizing musical features might be present. Michael Ponder says Clarke may have written the songs for a private contest between herself, Eugene Goossens, and May Mukle, to see who could best set the Chinese texts by Ssu K’ung T’u (ninth century CE). They are entitled \textit{The Colour of Life}, \textit{Return of Spring}, and \textit{Tears}.\textsuperscript{50}

Oriental ideas would continue to feature in her music, though Clarke would wait until 1923 to write another piece entirely of Chinese inspiration, this time the miniature \textit{Chinese Puzzle}. It was written after the Viola Sonata, but should be mentioned here because its chief characteristics already appear in the sonata, and in other works, such as \textit{Danse Bizarre}. It is a facile, cheerful work, of the sort that was often performed as a concert encore at the time of its writing. Given its accessible and kitschy appeal, Clarke was able to publish it almost immediately—meeting with much less resistance from her publishers than some of her more complex works. In \textit{Chinese Puzzle}, Clarke uses a

\textsuperscript{49} Jones gives a succinct analysis of this piece in \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 101–2. I am indebted to her research as I have not had access to a score of this piece, only a recording.

\textsuperscript{50} Jones, \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 258, footnote 1.
traditional melody that had been sung to her by Yin Lee, a friend of her brother Hans. The piece is entirely pentatonic, and makes use of parallel fourth and fifth chords in the piano part. (See Example 3.1.) Though it is Clarke's shortest chamber work, at only thirty-two bars, Jones notes it “retains an air of simplicity whilst creating a clever canon.”

Example 3.1: Clarke, *Chinese Puzzle*, mm. 1–4

Of greatest interest to me is Clarke’s assertion that while in Peking (now Beijing) years later, she decided to check with a Chinese acquaintance whether the melody was accurate.\(^5\) This shows that although authenticity was not necessarily her prime concern when composing the piece, she at least gave it some consideration. Clarke is unique among the composers in this study in that she was able to travel widely to a number of Eastern destinations. Though her *Chinese Puzzle* is quite stereotypical in its employment of orientalizing gestures, one imagines Clarke would have wanted her music to transcend

---

\(^5\) Clarke tells the following story: “On a less exalted level was a little tune he [Yen Li] once hummed for me: I wrote it down and subsequently adapted it as a short violin solo, published as *Chinese Puzzle*. Years later when I was in Peking I checked for accuracy with a Chinese I knew who told me that it had words so improper that he could not disclose them. I wonder if Yin Lee had known this in the old days.” *I Had a Father Too*, Chapter 7, 40, reprinted in Jones, *The Music of Rebecca Clarke*, 136.
artifice and reflect her experience of hearing actual Asian music. Clarke, however, never seeks a realistic portrayal of Eastern people or places in her large-scale works, which are not programmatic. Though effective in *Chinese Puzzle*, her use of orientalizing gestures such as pentatonicism and parallelism is ultimately at its most successful when it is distilled imaginatively into her larger-scale works.

Orientalism features in several of Clarke’s pieces and was certainly more than a passing fascination. However, at present there are no articles dedicated to this facet of her compositions or its sources in her music. While MacDonald and Jones allude briefly to its importance in discussions of specific works, they do not suggest how this influence filtered into her music. Furthermore, while Clarke’s music was often reviewed in her lifetime, her contemporaries gave little notice to Orientalism in her music, preferring to concentrate mostly on her performing abilities and on her situation as a woman composer. Thus, the task of examining Oriental influence in her music is markedly different from that of discussing it in Bloch’s œuvre, given that both he and his critics were highly aware of its importance in his style. In Bloch’s case we are also helped by the fact that he mentions the Orient as an inspiration, and gives both musical and literary sources on which he draws.

Clarke never wrote at great length about her pieces, and her longer instrumental works tend toward the absolute, so that programmatic associations are harder to deduce.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{52} Bloch liked to provide programmatic titles and concert notes, though he occasionally rescinded them, as was the case in both his Suite for Viola and Piano, and his Symphony in C-sharp minor. Several of his orientally themed works betray their influence in their title. In Clarke’s instrumental output, shorter pieces are often given evocative titles, for example, *Morpheus*, *Midsummer Moon* and *Chinese Puzzle*. But the titles of Clarke’s three large-scale chamber works give away no immediate clues as to their character. In the Viola Sonata Clarke quotes de Musset’s poem *Nuit de Mai* on the cover page, but she
She also did not mention whether contact with Stanford encouraged the exotic vein in her work, though it certainly begins to present itself in the works written during her last year of study with him. Her attendance at the 1900 Paris World’s Fair would have been a likely initial source of inspiration, given the variety of Asian cultures represented there. But I would like to suggest that Bloch himself also inspired Clarke to explore Exoticism in music. They first met in New York, sometime before competing side-by-side in the Coolidge Competition, and it is clear that he made a strong impression on her. They met again several times both in New York and in Pittsfield, MA. Clarke arranged (and performed in) the premieres of his First Quartet and Piano Quintet in England, and later wrote the article about him for Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, in 1929. Although Clarke told Sherman in 1976 that she had not yet studied Bloch’s compositions in depth by 1919, MacDonald states:

She frequently cited him as an influence, and must surely have been studying his music before her Sonata tied with his Suite: but the influence seems a less specifically technical one, more an attraction for certain of the oriental elements in his style, and more especially the passionate, voluble, improvisatory manner of such pieces as Schelomo (1916), which helped her release a similar expressive element in her own music. With that release—manifest immediately in the Sonata’s bold, declamatory opening gesture—she had attained a mature and integrated personality.

never wrote about the text’s relationship to the music. This connection and its programmatic implications have been explored by Jones, Kielian-Gilbert, Curtis, and MacDonald, who give it varying degrees of weight.

Bloch mentions hearing Clarke play Brahms’ Sextets with Casals, Mannes, and others on 16 February and 2 March 1918 in New York. See Lewinski and Dijon, Ernest Bloch, Sa vie et sa pensée, (Geneva: Slatkine: 2001), 141 and 207. I believe they could have met each other as early as 1916, when Bloch arrived in New York and Clarke was on tour in the US with May Mukle. They had several musical acquaintances in common, and would have had an overlapping social circle in the city. Clarke’s article for Cobbett’s Cyclopedic Survey is reprinted in A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 140–151.

MacDonald, “Rebecca Clarke’s Chamber Music,” 19.
It is important to understand that Clarke's statement to Sherman was made when she was ninety. Even though she did not publish any writings on Bloch's music until ten years after their entries tied in the Coolidge Competition, she was familiar enough with both Bloch's First String Quartet and with Schelomo by 1919 to make MacDonald's point valid. May Mukle gave the British premiere of Schelomo on 4 July 1919, and Clarke heard her in preparation for the debut. Given their close ties during this period—notably the fact that they rehearsed together frequently for their various performances—it is certain she knew Bloch's piece quite well before composing her own sonata. That said, it must be understood that Clarke's sonata is entirely her own creative effort even if it benefited from the energy and character of Bloch's music.55 It is not derivative of his music (i.e. specific themes or harmonic procedures) in an overt way.56

Clarke admired Bloch's style, which she described as "characterized by a declared and conscious Hebraic quality—the natural language of his race, and very different from the assumed Orientalism so often found in modern music—allied to a rugged and almost

55 Clarke herself decided to clarify any misunderstanding about this in 1977, when she wrote program notes for the Carnegie Hall recital given in her honor by Toby Appel: "...certain reports reached me averring that I had not written my own work, or that it had been helped by other composers, among whom, ironically, Bloch himself was named. I even once received a press clipping stating that Rebecca Clarke was a pseudonym for someone else—in other words that I did not exist. So I take this opportunity to emphasize that I do indeed exist;...and finally, that my Viola Sonata is my own unaided work!" Rebecca Clarke, 1977 Program note to the Viola Sonata, in A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 226.

56 Derivation, or borrowing, happens in another work. According to Christopher Johnson, Clarke uses a theme derived from a motif in Bloch's Schelomo in her 1921 Adagio for String Quartet. He finds she thus "honors another powerful icon in [her] aesthetic and compositional life." CD notes to Rebecca Clarke, Chamber Music, Dutton Records, CDLX 7132, 2003.
brutal directness and a passion at times bitter, at times idealistic." Her language, like that of the contemporary writings excerpted in Bloch’s own chapter of this study, indicates how much has changed in the way we address race, religion, and ethnic influence in music. But the passage tells us two important things: first, that Clarke was aware of different expressions (or degrees) of Orientalism in music, and second, that Bloch’s influence on her, though strong, was not overpowering—she herself never crossed the line into writing music of “brutal directness.”

Several other composers were agents in Clarke’s development as a composer, providing inspiration through personal interaction and through their works. Some, like Goossens and Bridge, were trusted colleagues with whom she discussed her work and performed frequently. In addition to their camaraderie as performing composers, they had in common the support of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, in whose festivals they all participated. With these composers, and others like Ireland, Friskin, Jane Joseph, and members of the Society for Women Musicians, Clarke had a circle of colleagues who encouraged one another and promoted each other’s pursuits.

At a slightly different level, we must consider two more of her compatriots, Vaughan Williams and Holst, both of whom she held in the highest regard, but unfortunately found quite intimidating. Holst and Vaughan Williams were the most important British composers of their time, occupying positions of enviable respect in the London musical scene. Though Clarke did not formally study with either one, she sought their advice on her music, with contrasting results. Late in life, she told Ellen Lerner about her interactions with both composers. Though she remembers Holst as “a very nice

---

man, tremendously sincere and downright,” she recalls that his criticism of her music was very severe, which she found “unnerving.”\textsuperscript{58} Her interaction with Vaughan Williams seems to have been more encouraging in the long term. She credits him (along with Debussy) as a strong influence on her Viola Sonata, explaining that he was a friend “whose music [she] admired very much,” that she “knew him well and he gave [her] good advice sometimes. He was an awfully nice man.”\textsuperscript{59} Her favorable description of both men may also be due in part to their membership in the Palestrina Singers, a choral group conducted by Vaughan Williams, in which they sang works of early music, and essayed their own choral compositions. From their music Clarke learned the new use of English modality as an extension to traditional major and minor harmonies, and studied settings of folk songs (of which Vaughan Williams is said to have collected at least 800).

One might also consider that Vaughan Williams, having studied with Ravel in France in 1908, could have been instrumental in showing Clarke some of the French techniques which she so readily incorporates into her sonata, and which she would have also learned by studying scores, as we will see when considering models for the Viola Sonata later in this chapter. As we work our way through the sonata, we will consider what Clarke absorbed from the leading French composers of the early twentieth century: Debussy and Ravel.

\textsuperscript{58} Interview with Ellen D. Lerner, October 23, 1978. In A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 220. In this interview Clarke explains that Holst invited him to study with her, but that when she returned from America after the premiere of her Cello Rhapsody (in 1923), he had died, so she could not benefit from his tuition. Curtis finds this story interesting, because Holst lived until 1934, and thinks Clarke may have been so distressed by his comments that she decided not to study with him, giving a revised version of the facts in her old age. Ibid., 159.

\textsuperscript{59} Interview with Lerner, 14 September 1978, Ibid., 212.
The Sonata for Viola and Piano

The Viola Sonata is divided into three movements: *Impetuoso*, *Vivace*, and *Andante*. Let us consider each one in turn.

1. *Impetuoso*

The first movement of Clarke’s sonata is based on the principles of sonata form. It begins with a twelve-bar introduction, where the viola plays a fanfare-like melody over a sustained $E_4$ pedal-chord in the piano. The opening motive generates material for the first movement and reappears in the third movement as well. The sixteenth-note figure in m. 2 is also generative, appearing in various guises throughout the work. (See Example 3.2.) From this very opening motive we can see a few of Clarke’s signature techniques in action: the combination of duple and triple figures used melodically in m. 2, which are a constant in her work; the Debussyian contrast between a static and a moving voice, and the creation of a colorful atmosphere from the very moment the piano chord strikes.

---

60 This trait is also present in the first movement of Hindemith’s Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, discussed in chapter four.
Example 3.2: Clarke, Viola Sonata, First mvt., mm. 1–12

"Poète, prends ton luth; le vin de la jeunesse
Fermente cette nuit dans les veines de Dieu.
Alfred de Musset “La Noit de Moi”

REBECCA CLARKE.

I

Impetuoso.

VIOLA
(or Violoncello)

PIANO

ad libitum

accel.

allarg.
The first subject (or theme) beginning at m. 13, marked *Poco agitato*, introduces a new melody, and uses a technique of dynamic contrast which Jones finds indicative of Debussy's influence.\(^{61}\) (See Example 3.3.) This is the use of repeated crescendo/piano gestures, which create a sense of unrest, and eventually lead to the second subject at m. 35, but not before Clarke cleverly juxtaposes the introduction's opening motive with a fragmented first subject, reversing the role of the instruments.

Example 3.3: Ibid., mm. 13–27

Poco agitato

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

pochiss. rif. p a tempo
The second subject brings a change of character—a more languorous and quiet mood takes over, but the viola line remains connected to the first subject through its descending shape and rhythm. Jones suggests that a descending chromatic figure in the piano left hand evokes the opening of Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*.\(^{62}\) (See Example 3.4.) The two melodies do in fact share their chromatic contour, but it seems unlikely that Clarke is intentionally creating a programmatic association with Debussy’s piece; she is simply creating a new atmosphere for this section of her piece, drawing on a technique he also used.

**Example 3.4: Ibid., mm. 39–42**

![Musical notation](image)

Clarke’s development section explores combinations of material presented before, but in addition gives the viola some cadenza-like passages, which infuse the work with a virtuosic kind of energy. The trumpet-call motive from the introduction continues to be transformed and combined with other elements, appearing now also in the piano. Clarke gradually builds a climax, beginning in m. 75, in which the viola line uses a combination of open fifths and octaves, melodically as well as in a brief double-stopping section. (See Example 3.5.) This is, in my view, one of Clarke’s most distinct nods to an Oriental

---

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 42.
style. She does not belabor the motive though, instead transforming it into a sequence of insistently fast sixteenth-notes, which, combined with the fortissimo figures in the piano, reach their culmination at m. 89, only to be swung back into a re-transitional passage. By the time the first subject returns at m. 110, it has been preceded by a strong amalgamation of material from the introduction with its own melodic ideas.

---

63 Curtis suggests Clarke might be employing a Dvořák-like Native American theme here. See “Questions of Gender and Genre,” 395. In my opinion, the fact that Clarke uses Ravel’s piece, avowedly Oriental in its inspiration, as her model, makes Oriental associations in her piece more likely than “New World” ones, as Curtis suggests. A third possibility is that the rhythmic pattern of sixteenth-notes would be Blochian, since similar patterns abound in his music.
When it comes time for Clarke to restate the second subject, she decides to use the same material, but now in E major and marked *Forte appassionato*, a great contrast to the
original texture heard in mm. 39–74. This mood reaches a peak between mm. 147–150. Thereafter Clarke gradually dissipates the passionate eloquence of the passage by ending the movement with a slow dénouement in which the viola disappears into silvery ppp arpeggiated chords. The piano leads the second subject to a quiet end, replacing it with a fifteen-bar coda in which both instruments’ sounds gradually float away.

II. Vivace

The second movement of the Viola Sonata is, in a way, the most fascinating. The structure is ternary, though not strictly so, and Clarke uses deliberate breaks to delineate different sections. Measures 1–57 constitute the first section, mm. 58–129 the second, and mm. 130–80 the last. Within each section, subsections and themes are further articulated by cleverly placed fermatas and caesurae. These enhance the movement’s witty sense of humor and mystery by creating suspense, making the listener guess what trajectory the music might take. Clarke takes no time to announce that this will be a fast-paced ride: from the outset, the piano’s eighth notes are punctuated by pizzicato chords in the viola, and it is not long before Clarke adds sixteenth-note scalar motives and the excitement of harmonics to create a rather magical sound texture. (See Example 3.6.) Clarke also makes use of black-key glissandi in the piano, and adds to the exotic character of the movement by muting the viola strings and employing a largely pentatonic melody. This, combined with the frequent open-fifth chords and pizzicati, give the movement a strong Oriental feeling.
Example 3.6: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1-17

II
Example 3.6 continued, mm.18–38
The middle section presents an entirely different texture to that of the opening, but Clarke fuses both together seamlessly by having the piano figuration that ends one section (in mm. 56–7) continue as the underpinning for the new section’s lyrical and plangent viola melody. (See Example 3.7.)

Example 3.7: Ibid., mm. 54–65

The use of pedal and a pp dynamic contribute to the creation of a dreamy French character, which gradually dissipates when fragments of its melody appear, questioning, and raise tension in mm. 78–102. The dynamics rise from a shy, interrogative pp to an insistent ff accelerando with cascading, harp-like arpeggios appearing in the piano. This leads Clarke to reprise the opening theme, now presented ff in the piano alone, interspersed with chordal harmonic interjections in the viola. (See Example 3.8.) It is the most overtly Oriental passage in the entire work, because of the emphatic pentatonicism,
the open-fifth harmonics, and the way the combination of melody and harmony draws the listener away into an imaginary pagoda-like landscape. When this section concludes, at m. 126, Clarke resumes the theme first heard at m. 13, with similar dynamics. She then briefly reprises the second section’s main theme within the final A section, and ends with a flourishingsp ppp glissando, punctuated by a last tiny and incisive pizzicato.

Example 3.8: Ibid., mm. 102–13
Example 3.8 continued, mm. 114–29
Clarke's second movement charms with its magical and very individual sonorities, "full of powerful cross-rhythms and dazzling in its use of pizzicati, glissandi, and harmonics." These elements are also key to creating a similar atmosphere in the Scherzo of Ravel's Piano Trio, which MacDonald and Jones see as a clear model for Clarke's composition.

Since Clarke, as an avid performer of new music, was highly aware of most currents in twentieth-century composition, I would argue that her choice to absorb certain influences over others in her style was a conscious one. Clarke's diary entries from 1918 to 1933 show she attended performances by every leading musician performing in London, and that she was thus familiar with the music of composers as diverse as Bartók, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Casella, Bloch, Skryabin, Szymanowski, and Hindemith, as well as with that of her British colleagues, including Grainger, Ireland, Bridge, Bax, Bliss, Goossens, and Walton. (Furthermore, as a violist, she did not just listen to, but also played several of their works, which would give her a distinct advantage in understanding how their effects were achieved.) Clarke tells Lerner she never took an interest in serial music, but she did become interested both in Stravinsky and in the neo-classical style, which shows in her works from the 1940s. According to MacDonald, Clarke's sonata shows signs of the influences she absorbed. He is careful enough, however, not to imply that she is overly derivative or unoriginal, something certain critics in her own time were unwilling to grant her:

---

64 MacDonald, "Rebecca Clarke's Chamber Music," 19.
65 See interview with Ellen D. Lerner, 14 September 1978, in A Rebecca Clarke Reader, 212: "No, I never was interested in the serial movement. Never. I never really quite understood why people did it."
The Sonata is an impressive achievement by any standards. In its subtly allusive structural elisions and to some extent in style, it testifies to an intelligent appreciation of the last works of Debussy, particularly his sonatas for cello and violin: Clarke was one of the first composers to take heed of them, rather than the more obviously "Impressionistic" works of the previous decade. Ravel is there too—but again it's a recent Ravel: the Pantom movement of his Piano Trio (1914) is a clear model for the scherzo of Clarke's Sonata.  

The pantoum is a Malayan verse form in which the second and fourth lines of each quatrain (strophe) become the first and third lines of the next. In literature, the form was popular among nineteenth-century French poets such as Hugo, Gautier, and Baudelaire, whose "Harmonie du Soir" Debussy set in 1890. Marie Rolf explains that in Debussy's piece, the "aural result is a quasi-incantatory experience, featuring continually new juxtapositions of images, sounds, and double entendres." In Ravel's Pantom (shown in Example 3.9) the poetic structure is also closely mirrored in the music. Roger Nichols notes additionally that "Ravel observes a further requirement of the form, that the poem (or movement) deal with two separate ideas pursued in parallel—in this case, the brittle opening theme on the piano and the subsequent smoother one on strings two octaves apart." If we take all these requirements into consideration when analyzing Clarke's movement, we will see that she too creates an enchanted atmosphere while pursuing two themes in parallel. The alternation of these themes does not strictly follow that of the pantoum's structure; rather, Clarke's imagination supersedes strict observance of the form. Notably, however, Clarke never referred to her own movement as a pantoum, so she had no obligation to adhere to a particular structure. Clarke's choice to

---

66 MacDonald, "Rebecca Clarke's Chamber Music," 19.
prominently feature musical elements employed by Ravel noticeably connects both works. The link between materials in these compositions is strengthened by how Clarke presents them. For example, the presence of harmonics in her piece is not in itself a tie, but the their use in glissando figures is. Her employment of sequences of eighth-notes to create energy is unremarkable, but the extent to which she does so (in 6/8 rather than Ravel’s 3/4) creates a clear connection between the pieces.

Even so, the importance of Ravel’s movement as a model to Clarke’s Scherzo goes beyond form and instrumental effect. In choosing to model her work on a piece based on an Eastern verse form, she shows she was making a conscious choice to employ exotic gestures and characters in her music. Moreover, one could argue that, as her model follows an authentic verse form, her interest is more than superficial, greater than the simple desire to employ orientalizing clichés.
Example 3.9: Ravel, *Pantoum* from Piano Trio (1914), mm. 1–23

II. *Pantoum*

```
violin

viola, cello

piano
```

```
6

13

19
```
III. *Adagio*

MacDonald and Jones discuss the possibility of Ravel's trio as a model only when analyzing the second movement of Clarke's sonata. I would like to take their work one step further, by suggesting that the opening of Ravel and Clarke's respective third movements show unmistakable similarities as well. Once again, I will emphasize that Clarke in no way copied Ravel, but I do think she was inspired by his work on many levels. Jurors at the Coolidge Competition in 1919 also recognized the striking affinity between the two works, wondering whether the work was by Ravel, before Clarke's identity as the sonata's composer was revealed.

The third movement of Clarke's sonata begins with a linear eight-bar melody played by the piano left hand, alone. (See Example 3.10.) It is only then that the viola enters, commenting upon the piano melody but extending its duration and contour. The dynamic is *pp*, the meter triple, and the melody quietly modal.
Example 3.10: Clarke, Viola Sonata, Third mvt., mm. 1–16

III
A comparison with the opening of the *Passacaille* movement in Ravel's trio (Example 3.11) yields striking similarities:

**Example 3.11: Ravel, *Passacaille* from Piano Trio, mm. 1–24**

*III. — Passacaille*
The meter and dynamic are the same in both pieces, as is the choice to feature the piano left hand, alone, for eight measures. Once the cello enters in Ravel’s work, Ravel balances the entry of each additional instrument, making slight changes to the melodic contour, while maintaining thematic unity and harmonic stability. Meanwhile, Clarke, who has only one instrument in addition to the piano in her sonata, chooses to elaborate upon its first theme more immediately. Showing a thorough mastery of both English and French techniques, she answers the piano’s opening Aeolian melody by adding octatonic inflections to the viola’s response.

One reason scholars may not have compared these passages previously is that in the third movement, Clarke’s strongest model (after the initial eight bars) is one of her own works: *Morpheus* for viola and piano, written and first performed in 1918. *Morpheus* is written as a single slow movement, a nocturne named after Ovid’s god of dreams, one of the thousand sons of sleep. Motives and themes from *Morpheus* appear in the Viola Sonata, both in the first and third movements, as Jones has shown. However, Clarke is able to transform their character further in the sonata, because she is not restricted by its precursor’s quiet nocturnal mood. Jones explains that although *Morpheus* is Clarke’s most sophisticated chamber work written before the sonata, it employs only two themes and is “largely diatonic, with chromatic inflections usually saved for passing accompanimental figures, or to color a melodic line.” Clarke does make use of whole-tone collections and of fugato entries, which add to the work’s complexity, but the work

---

69 See Christopher Johnson, preface to *Morpheus*. Johnson elaborates on the title’s significance in classical and medieval literature, as well as providing valuable information regarding the two existing versions of this work.
is still much simpler than its successor. It is indeed remarkable that only a year later Clarke wrote the Viola Sonata, because it is technically a far more complex work than any she wrote before. Throughout the sonata, Clarke's use of chromaticism, octatonic and whole-tone passages, and chromatic chords such as seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords shows that her abilities had developed tremendously since her student days. But it is not only French characteristics that show her advancement. In the third movement Clarke's deft use of Mixolydian, Dorian, and Aeolian modes show that the English pastoral style of Vaughan Williams had also made a significant impression. One could almost imagine that writing in the style of her compatriots provided her some solace while writing the work so far from England. Below are some examples of the overlapping material in Morpheus (Example 3.12) and the Viola Sonata (Example 3.13):

Example 3.12: Clarke, Morpheus, mm. 75–7

---

70 Jones, The Music of Rebecca Clarke, 116.
71 Jones notes that modes were important to Debussy and Ravel, but their primary choice was to use the Dorian. Ibid.
Example 3.13: Clarke, Viola Sonata, Third mvt., mm. 32–8

The third movement is formally the hardest to define, because of its many sections, subdivisions, and cyclic restatements of material from previous movements. By starting out quietly, with the piano alone, Clarke effectively encloses a slow movement within this final movement (mm. 1–94). An ingenious transition into an Agitato section happens as the viola creates tension on a single low open C-string tremolo (later tremolo octaves) for nineteen bars while the piano reprises the opening theme. Clarke then uses two slow sections as frames for another fast section. The first, marked Comodo, quasi pastorale, lasts from mm. 161–72, with a retransition beginning in m. 173 recalling the trumpet-call motive of the first movement. It leads on to a faster section lasting from mm. 181–205. At m. 206 the calmer tempo resumes with Poco meno mosso, followed by a coda from mm. 212–32.

The longer length of this movement is both a strength and a liability. Clarke’s reprise of previous materials allows her many opportunities for motivic transformations,
and the use of themes from different parts of the sonata, combined in this movement, make a strong conclusion, as though summing up the sonata’s journey. Her decision to repeat certain passages, however, means that at times the movement appears unsure of its direction. This led one critic to say she “must acquire the art of skillful and drastic curtailment.”

One might wonder whether Bloch was an unconscious influence in this instance, given his own frequent tendency to overwrite. Nevertheless, although it is true that the formal scheme could be tightened in some ways, the piece works beautifully in performance, and the repetition of material allows the listener to revel fully in every episode of Clarke’s imagination.

Taking stock of Clarke’s achievements as a composer and performer, and understanding the importance of the Viola Sonata in her œuvre is a complex task. Clarke once said the Sonata provided her “one little whiff of success,” and while it is true that the work brought her international recognition and secured a place in the canonic viola repertoire, it would be wrong not to consider the sum total of her accomplishments as a composer and as a performer. The Sonata spurred her on to further successes: she received enormous amounts of publicity, was profiled in 

_Vogue_ and 

_The New York Times_, and gave recitals at the most important New York and London concert venues in the years that followed.

---


73 Clarke uses this expression in a 1976 interview with Robert Sherman for WQXR, New York, NY, reprinted in _A Rebecca Clarke Reader_, 171.
From a compositional standpoint, the Viola Sonata showed a marked development in her abilities, which must have contributed to her desire to continue to write larger works, and given her the confidence to do so. Despite the fact that some of her critics preferred the “real feminine charm”\textsuperscript{74} of her miniatures, in the four-year period following her prize in the Coolidge Competition she seems to have pursued the composition of larger works, disregarding any critical assumptions as to what genres she might choose. The Sonata provided a fertile ground in which to explore new harmonic techniques and musical effects, pushing her to experiment further with stylistic boundaries in the Piano Trio (1921) and Cello Rhapsody (1923) that followed. The presence of exotic, orientalizing features in the Viola Sonata provided Clarke with a means of expanding her vocabulary past the nineteenth-century Germanic style in which she was trained, while still retaining strong links to traditional structure and tonality. This choice, to forge ahead while remaining connected to values of the past, is reflective of other areas of Clarke’s life and of her view of herself in the musical world.

It is truly unfortunate that Clarke’s confidence in her abilities diminished after such an auspicious phase in her career. This is in part due to the fact that the Piano Trio and Rhapsody were not as warmly received by critics, though I think another factor played a role: Clarke, as an instrumentalist, was surrounded by successful female colleagues, who considered her an equal and created a strong basis of support for her professional endeavors. Meanwhile, as a composer the situation was not the same. Although her male colleagues thought highly of her, she was not considered their equal: in this both gender and a dual career were a hindrance. In an interview with Ellen Lerner

\textsuperscript{74} Unsigned review, \textit{The Daily Telegraph}, 22 October 1925, reprinted in Jones, \textit{The Music of Rebecca Clarke}, 298.
in 1978, Clarke mentions with some regret that she never met Nadia Boulanger or Germaine Tailleferre, though she would have liked to. Other women composers were part of her circle, but they were too different from her to be specific role models. Dame Ethel Smyth was too eccentric and belonged to the previous generation, given her age and compositional aesthetic. Although Smyth was of great importance, Clarke could not emulate her without losing her own sense of identity. Other composers, such as Jane Josephs, did not attain a level of prominence similar to Clarke’s (Josephs’ principal occupation was serving as Holst’s amanuensis). Thus, they could not inspire her to a higher ambition. Even if entirely hypothetical, the idea that Clarke might have found true colleagues in women such as Boulanger or Tailleferre is worth considering because Clarke’s intelligence deserved the company of excellent minds. Her career might have turned out differently had she received support from a network of peers who gave her the assurance of not being alone in her pursuits.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{75} See Marcia J. Citron, \textit{Gender and the Musical Canon} (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 54–79.
PAUL HINDEMITH'S SONATA FOR VIOLA AND PIANO OP. 11, NO. 4

The Compositions in Op. 11

In this chapter, we will study Hindemith's Sonata for Viola and Piano Op. 11, No. 4, situating it in the context of the composer's early career and developing compositional aesthetic. Hindemith began composing the five published works in Op. 11 in 1918, completing them the following year.\(^1\) They are two sonatas for violin and piano (Nos. 1 and 2), a cello sonata (No. 3), the viola sonata discussed here (No. 4), and a sonata for solo viola (No. 5).\(^2\) The sonatas in this opus are unique in his output, in that they follow his late student works but precede the composition of three short one-act operas whose expressionistic shock value signals yet another shift in artistic outlook.\(^3\)

Regarded as the first of his maturity, the Op. 11 pieces show a composer who commands his craft with skill and precision. However, their widely contrasting styles

\(^1\) An unpublished violin sonata in G minor was composed in 1916, and was posthumously designated as Opus 11, No. 6 by the Hindemith Institute. Hindemith must have chosen not to group it with the other works in the Op. at the time of publication, perhaps because he wrote it before serving in World War I. See David Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, Composers of the Twentieth Century, ed. Allen Forte. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1986), 255.

\(^2\) Hindemith’s numbers do not indicate the chronology of the works. The Cello Sonata Op. 11, No. 3 was written after the Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, which he composed in February and March of 1919. The Sonatas Op. 11, Nos. 3 and 5 both show indications of the next stylistic phase in Hindemith's writing, and for this reason will not be treated here. See David Neumeyer, *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, 255–7.

\(^3\) Hindemith composed his works Opp. 1–9 between 1912 and 1917, while studying with Bernhard Sekles. Prior to entering the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt he had already composed dozens of other juvenilia. The three one-act operas are Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen (1919), Das Nusch-Nuschi (1920), and Sancta Susanna (1921).
show he had not reached a definitive aesthetic: the violin sonatas mirror the harmonies of Brahms and Strauss, the accompanied viola sonata is infused with French qualities, and the works for cello and for solo viola show a definitive departure from both of these influences. Though his earlier opus numbers were grounded in the Germanic nineteenth-century Romantic tradition, it is clear even from the Quartet in F Minor Op. 10 that Hindemith was searching for a new manner in which to express himself. His decision to pursue new styles and influences can be perceived not only as a sign of impending artistic maturity, but also as a response to the trauma and violence of the war. Although the Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 contains some thematic material dating from as far back as 1914–15, the piece itself is one of the first he composed after returning from the front, and shows how far he had progressed since his student years. In its unusual but concise and well-balanced form, its reflection of non-German musical elements, and its choice of instrumentation, it synthesizes traditional elements of the genre with an emerging individual and modern style.

Current Scholarly Research

Only a few years ago, very little literature regarding Hindemith's earlier works was available in the English language, and even in German sources musicologists and theorists have historically preferred to expend their efforts on the study of Hindemith's works after 1920. But as the Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 is performed frequently, it does receive passing treatment in older studies of Hindemith's life and works. Ian Kemp's *Hindemith*, for example, long regarded as a succinct but thorough source on his
compositions, treats the entire Op. 11 in a single paragraph.⁴ Although the quality of similar studies is quite high, the lack of detailed analysis they offer leaves a void for performers seeking more information. This situation has since improved, with the publication of works such as Neumeyer's *The Music of Paul Hindemith*, Walter Bruno Hilse's "Hindemith and Debussy," and Joel Haney's estimable 2006 study of Hindemith's works between 1919 and 1922.⁵ The efforts of the Hindemith Institute in Germany have furthered the research and publication of numerous significant titles, notably Briner, Rexroth, and Schubert's collaboration *Paul Hindemith: Leben und Werk in Bild und Text*, and the on-going publication of the *Hindemith Jahrbuch*, both of which have made available to the public a number of primary documents pertaining to the composer's entire life and career.⁶ Skelton's translation of the *Selected Letters of Paul Hindemith* now allows English-speaking readers better access to Hindemith's own words and experiences during the war. Even so, those able to consult the latest German sources will still find themselves at a considerable advantage, and those looking specifically to address Hindemith's Op. 11 compositions will yearn for further resources, irrespective of language.

---

Questions of Inclusion

The preface to this study states that each composer’s life and career would be considered from three overlapping perspectives: the impact of the First World War on their lives, their interaction with Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and the presence of exotic musical influences in the viola works they wrote in 1919. Taking this into consideration, Hindemith’s inclusion in this study poses some unique problems, which must be explored here. Put briefly, it has always made sense to violists to group the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 with the pieces by Clarke and Bloch because they share the same year of composition. One might, however, consider giving Hindemith a separate treatment for two reasons. First, his work was not entered into the 1919 Coolidge Competition, whereas the other two works were its protagonists. Second, Hindemith wrote his sonata in Germany, at an early stage in his career, before coming to the United States. At the time, he was in a world quite removed from that of Clarke and Bloch, who were in America, and would soon know each other quite well. A couple of additional considerations, however, militate against dismissing Hindemith from this study. First, he did eventually compose works for Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, corresponding with her extensively from 1921 until the end of her life. Second, insofar as the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 is an early work, it predates the

---

7 Hindemith entered the 1920 Coolidge Competition (for a string quartet). The winner that year was the Italian composer Gianfrancesco Malipiero. The other finalists were Krenek, Leunig, Hindemith, and Stanford (Clarke’s teacher). Entering again in 1922, with a string quartet, he lost to the Hungarian Leo Weiner, running against Charles Koechlin and Julius Röntgen. See Cyrilla Barr, “Figures,” for “Rebecca Clarke’s ‘One little whiff of success,’” [CD-ROM] accompanying A Rebecca Clarke Reader (Waltham, MA: Rebecca Clarke Society, 2005). Hindemith was commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation to write Hérodiade, a ballet with string orchestra, in 1944. He received a personal commission from Mrs. Coolidge for his Konzertmusik für Klavier, Blechbläser
development of his *Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetic and owes much of its color and expressivity to the French style associated with Debussy. In this way it finds itself more closely related to the works of Clarke and Bloch than the circumstances of its composition might otherwise suggest.

Ultimately I find it important to include him also because of the broader connections that can be established: written in 1919, Hindemith's sonata reflects the musical preoccupations of composers in the first year after the war. Musically, his inclusion enriches our ongoing discussion of Exoticism and Orientalism, because both his use of these influences and his sources differ from those employed by Bloch and Clarke. While Bloch explores the imaginary timbres of Indonesia and Clarke those of the Far East, Hindemith is inspired in part by Russian composers, whose music he had been studying since his youth. That Russia fascinated Debussy early in his career only strengthens the web of interconnecting musical traditions informing Hindemith's work during this period. Aside from musical reasons, there are personal and professional connections linking the three composers. Among the richest of these is the fact that Hindemith was a violist himself; thus, like Clarke, he embraced a dual career as both composer and performer. In his capacities as a violist and conductor, he, Clarke, and Bloch (who also conducted) worked with many of the same colleagues and played in the same venues. Furthermore, he and Bloch shared Switzerland and the United States as their longest places of residence, and Frankfurt as a city seminal to their training as

*und Harfen*, in 1930. Additionally, he presented her with *Four Part Songs to Old Texts* (undated), as a gift, and dedicated *Canon a Tre* to her on her birthday in 1949. It is at once a composition, a greeting card, and a small work of visual art. This can be seen reproduced in *LWBT*, 214.
composers. For all these reasons, Hindemith’s inclusion in this study can only enrich our perspective on the musical repertoire of 1919.

Biographical profile

Family Life

Paul Hindemith was the eldest son of Robert Rudolph Emil Hindemith (1870–1915) and Marie Sophie Warnecke (1868–1949). The Hindemith family, originally from Jauer, Silesia (now Jawor, Poland), was poor—Robert Rudolph’s only professional qualification was as a house painter, while Marie Sophie came from a family of small farmers in Lower Saxony. Paul (1895–1963) was born in Hanau, near Frankfurt, and grew up partly in the nearby towns of Niederrodenbach, Naumburg am Queis, Offenbach am Main, Mühlheim am Main, and Frankfurt (1905–1927), where he lived into adulthood. For at least three years of his childhood he lived with his grandparents, because his father’s inability to provide for the family forced them to move frequently.\(^8\) His sister Toni (Antonie) and brother Rudolph were also given a musical education, despite the family’s uncertain financial circumstances. Paul’s father had also had musical ambitions, but was too poor to receive formal training as a child. His desire to pursue music as a career led him to run away from home, but he was unsuccessful in furthering his musical education. Perhaps for this reason he passed on his ambitions to his children, forcing them to learn

\(^8\) Sources disagree on the amount of time Hindemith spent in each village. The most accurate source is Giselher Schubert, “Paul Hindemith,” *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Ludwig Finscher. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2003), Personenteil, vol. 9, 6.
instruments from an early age, and to perform in public as the Frankfurt Children’s Trio, which he accompanied on his zither. Rickards suggests that Robert Rudolph’s greatest achievement was to incite the universal dislike of his children, to whom he was cruel, demanding, and physically and mentally abusive. 9 Fortunately, Hindemith had better relationships with his mother and siblings: he looked after his mother’s well-being through her old age and frequently performed with his brother Rudolph in chamber music concerts. Rudolph was for a time the cellist in Hindemith’s quartet, and the two brothers supplemented their family’s income by performing in cinema, theater, operetta, cabaret, and spa orchestras together. 10

Instrumental Training and Early Career

Hindemith trained initially as a violinist, receiving his first lessons from Eugen Reinhardt, his schoolteacher in Mühlheim, in 1904. In 1907 he continued under the tutelage of Anna Hegner, but when she left Frankfurt to lead the Basle Quartet in Switzerland, she sent him to her own teacher, Adolf Rebner. 11 Rebner was a professor at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, concertmaster of the Frankfurt Opera, and one of the

10 Rudolph Hindemith was subsequently appointed as principal cellist of the Vienna State Opera under Richard Strauss from 1921–24; he later worked in Krakow and Munich. From 1951 he took the pseudonym “Hans Lofer”, which suggests he wanted to distance himself from his famous brother. Rudolph also has a number of compositions and arrangements to his credit. See Hans Gerd Brill, “Rudolph Hindemith,” Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Personenteil, vol. 9, 51.
11 A picture of the young Hindemith with Anna Hegner survives. She was an important figure in his early life, attested by the fact that he often visited her later in life when both were residing in Switzerland. See Heinrich Strobel, Zeugnis in Bildern (Mainz: Schott, 1961), 5.
most well-respected violin teachers in Germany at the time. He arranged for Hindemith to receive a free place at the conservatory, beginning in 1908.12 For three years Hindemith studied only violin, officially, but a number of compositions in fact predate his entry to the school.13 His excellent progress on the instrument led to his appointment as a violinist in the Frankfurt Opera. By 1915 he was made concertmaster, a post he retained until 1923. Rebner also made him second violinist of the Rebner Quartet (1915–21; after the war he became the quartet’s violist, touring Germany, Holland, and Spain). This combination of appointments provided Hindemith with a means of earning his living and made him one of the most prominent instrumentalists in Germany before reaching the age of twenty.14 Pecuniary matters aside, Hindemith’s employment in the opera orchestra brought him other benefits, namely his association with the conductor Ludwig Rottenburg, whose youngest daughter, Gertrude, married Hindemith in 1924.15 Rottenburg had been recommended to his post by none less than Johannes Brahms, who

---

12 Paul’s brother, Rudolph also a received a free place to study cello with Maurits Frank, from 1910. See Brill, “Rudolph Hindemith,” _MGG_, Personenteil, vol. 9, 51.
13 His compositions before entering conservatory include two piano trios, two sonatas for violin and piano, four piano fantasies, two cello sonatas, twenty songs, three solo cello sonatas, an E-minor string quartet and a G-major violin sonata. Ibid.
14 See Skelton, _Hindemith_, 40–1. Hindemith’s salary was very small, but improved to 1200 Marks per annum when he was promoted to concertmaster. His appointment to the orchestra came at a crucial time—only weeks after his father had enlisted in the army, leaving Paul and Rudolph to provide for the family. Hindemith continued to study at the conservatory until his conscription in 1917, though once employed at the opera, he was no longer on scholarship.
15 Gertrude Hindemith was born in Frankfurt in 1900. She studied acting, singing and cello, but did not pursue a professional career of her own. She was married to Hindemith for thirty-nine years, during which time she devoted all her energies to furthering his career. She was his constant travel companion and was responsible for the preparation of several of his scores. The Hindemith Institute was founded at her request, after her death from cancer in 1967. See _LWBT_, 82, and Skelton, _Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music_ (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1975), 295.
pronounced him "a nice, fine man, very musical and gifted at conducting." Rottenburg was responsible for the German premieres of Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Mussorgsky’s *Boris Godunov*, almost all of Schrecker’s operas, and works by Dukas, Bartók, and Strauss. Hindemith and Rottenburg’s shared affinity for contemporary music was enriching on personal and professional levels. That Rottenburg was willing to program many new works was beneficial not only to the institution he served, but also to Hindemith as a young artist: the effect of the aforementioned composers’ music on Hindemith’s own cannot be overestimated.

### Compositional Training

Hindemith’s first composition teachers were Arnold Mendelssohn, beginning in 1912, and later Bernard Sekles, until 1917. Mendelssohn, a second cousin of Felix

---

16 "Der junge Rottenburg ist ein netter, feiner Mensch, sehr gut musikalisch und sehr begabter dirigent." Johannes Brahms as quoted in *LWBT*, 82. After World War I, Rottenburg premiered Sekles’ *Scheherazade*, Schrecker’s *Die Gezeichneten* and Delius’ *Fennimore and Gerda*, among others. Hindemith played in all of these. See Rickards, *Hindemith, Hartmann, Henze*, 42; and Schubert, “Paul Hindemith,” in *MGG*, Personenteil vol. 9, 11. Hindemith’s high personal opinion of Rottenburg (despite some criticism of his conducting abilities) speaks volumes, considering his open dislike of much more famous conductors, such as Willem Mengelberg, with whom he played regularly at the Frankfurt Museum concerts.

17 Hindemith would have been too young to play in the premiere of *Pelléas* in 1907, but he no doubt heard it. Schrecker, though not often performed today, was considered the most important writer of early twentieth-century German opera other than Richard Strauss. He was an important influence on the early Hindemith, because he was the German composer most strikingly affected by Debussy’s style, bringing it into German opera for the first time. See Nicholas Chadwick, “Franz Schrecker,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1980), vol. 16, 740–1. Schrecker, a Jewish composer, was highly respected, becoming director of the Berlin Conservatory. But after the Nazi government took power, he was ousted from his posts, and his career was essentially destroyed. Schrecker appointed Hindemith as professor of composition in Berlin in 1927; the Nazis disrupted Hindemith’s career there as well.
Mendelssohn, introduced him to all the traditional forms, but allowed him to compose in a rather free style. It is likely that he also introduced Hindemith to the organ, to early church music, and to the larger works of Bach.\textsuperscript{18} Hindemith remained in touch with him after he left the conservatory. In short, he was a positive influence and a fatherly figure for the young composer.

From 1913 to 1917 he studied with Bernhard Sekles, whose more rigorous approach to teaching composition Hindemith later emulated with his own students. Sekles encouraged the study of strict counterpoint, and required his students to write compositions modeled on those of earlier masters.\textsuperscript{19} Though Sekles' approach may have emphasized tradition, his own music reflected an interest in modern tendencies. It is through him that Hindemith first came into contact with Orientalism (a favorite flavor in Sekles' own music), and with jazz, which Sekles introduced to his conservatory class.\textsuperscript{20} Hindemith's relationship with Sekles was positive, though more practical than that with Mendelssohn or Rebner, who were role models to a young man in need of nurturing mentors.

\textsuperscript{18} See Edward F. Kravitt, "Arnold Mendelssohn," \textit{The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians}, vol. 12, 133–4. He is known primarily for having greatly revived German Protestant church music at the turn of the century. Hindemith considered his one year of training with this teacher especially important, thanking him in 1930 in one of the most sincere letters of all his correspondence. See Peter Cahn, "Hindemith's Lehrjahre in Frankfurt," \textit{Hindemith Jahrbuch} 2 (1972): 30.

\textsuperscript{19} Incidentally, Charles Stanford, Rebecca Clarke's teacher, also used this technique.

\textsuperscript{20} See Geoffrey Skelton, \textit{Hindemith}, 34–5. Additionally, see George Loomis, "Bernhard Sekles," \textit{The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians}, vol. 17, 117: "An added dimension to [Sekles'] teaching and his compositional style was provided by his interest in music outside the European mainstream. In 1928 he collaborated with Seiber in offering what was probably the first seminar in Europe on jazz, with specific emphasis on investigating the adaptability of its rhythms. In addition to jazz, Slavic and oriental elements found their way into his music to produce a style which, though essentially conservative, is nonetheless one of great variety and individuality in its approach to form, rhythm, and harmony."
Compositional Style in the Early Opuses

Hindemith’s earliest works were thoroughly rooted in the German High Romantic tradition, and the influence of Brahms and Strauss was particularly strong. Late in life he told a student that for a time in his youth, he considered Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben* the greatest work of music ever written, hence the Straussian gestures in his early violin sonatas.\(^{21}\) Hindemith tells us that he first departed from the style taught by his teachers in the Piano Quintet of 1917, which is now lost.\(^{22}\) Ultimately it was this work, along with the Quartet Op. 10, the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, and one of the Op. 11 violin sonatas (unspecified in the concert program), which were the first to be recognized as mature works showing an independent and artistically developed compositional voice.\(^{23}\) As a result of their performance on 2 June 1919, in Hindemith’s first recital featuring only his own works, he attracted the attention of Schott, who signed him to an exclusive publishing contract that lasted for his whole career.\(^{24}\) It is all the more stunning to think that he accomplished the composition of such sophisticated and inventive music while

\(^{22}\) Letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt, May 1917. “Jugendbriefe von Paul Hindemith aus den Jahren 1916–1919,” *Hindemith Jahrbuch*, 2 (1972): 184. The Quintet’s score was most likely destroyed when Hindemith’s family house in Frankfurt, the *Kuhhirnturm*, was destroyed by bombing during World War II.
\(^{23}\) Some musicologists prefer to wait until 1923, classifying all his work before *Das Marienleben* as immature, but this choice discounts the effect of the Opus 11 works and the three one-act operas on his career: they brought him widespread recognition quite some time before the song cycle, ensuring not only a publishing contract, but also numerous solo and chamber appearances, as well as a seat on the board of the Donaueschingen Festival, which gave him an undisputed position of leadership among German composers of his generation.
\(^{24}\) The program for his 2 June 1919 concert is reproduced in *LWBT*, 43.
dividing his time between the conservatory and the army, working full time at the opera, and teaching privately. Table 2 below shows Hindemith’s compositions Opp. 1–15, all composed by 1919; where possible, publication information is supplied:

**Table 2: Hindemith’s Compositions 1914–1919**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andante and Scherzo for clarinet, horn, and piano, Op. 1, 1914</td>
<td>lost, unpublished</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental music for five puppet plays by F.G. von Pocci and F. Huch, 1915–16</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sieben Walzer</em> for piano four hands, Op. 6, 1916</td>
<td>lost, unpublished</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Pieces for cello and piano, Op. 8, 1917 (first published work, Breitkopf und Härtel)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zwei Lieder</em> for alto and piano: <em>Ich bin so allein</em> (Lasker-Schüler); <em>Schlaflied</em> (G. Gezelle), 1917</td>
<td>Schott</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Drei Gesänge</em> for soprano and orchestra, Op. 9, 1917</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wie es wär</em>, <em>wenn's anders wär</em> for soprano and eight instruments, 1918</td>
<td>published</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Quartet No. 1 in F major, Op. 10, 1919 (Schott)</td>
<td>Schott</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Op. 11 itself (Schott, apart from No. 6) comprises:

- an unpublished violin sonata in G minor (1916) (which the Hindemith Institute calls Op. 11, No. 6, but other sources do not always acknowledge)
- Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat major, Op. 11, No. 1 (May 1918)
- Sonata for Violin and Piano in D major, Op. 11, No. 2 (Sept.–Nov. 1918)
- Sonata for Cello and Piano Op. 11, No. 3 (July–Aug. 1919)
- Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4 (27 Feb.–March 9 1919)
- Sonata for Viola, Op. 11, No. 5 (completed 21 July 1919)

Three other works, aside from the six pieces in Opus 11 also date from 1917–1919:
- *Melancholie*, Op. 13 (four songs for voice and string quartet on poems of Christian Morgenstern; Neumeyer calls this collection *Traumwald*), unpublished
- *In einer Nacht* for solo piano, Op. 15, unpublished

Hindemith’s compositions prior to Opus 11 show command of a variety of styles and instruments. Several of these works betray an additional compositional influence not yet mentioned—that of Expressionism. Works such as *Melancholie* and *Wie es Wär* show how much Hindemith had learned from the early works of Schoenberg. Though the
texture and instrumentation in Hindemith’s works is much sparser, their harmonic language has much in common with compositions such as Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht*.

**The Role of Expressionism in Hindemith’s Early Works**

Peter Cahn identifies 1917 as the year Hindemith first became interested in Expressionist art, beginning what Cahn terms his “partially expressionistic phase.” In a letter to Emmy Ronnefeldt on 10 April, Hindemith describes having discovered a magazine (*Das Kunstblatt*, or “The Art Pages”) profiling the work of modern painters. The October issue that year, devoted to Oskar Kokoschka, was particularly inspiring to Hindemith, who went on to set Kokoschka’s play, *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*, completed in August 1919. It is difficult to ascertain Hindemith’s first point of contact with Expressionism: he was familiar with every style of music being played in Frankfurt from the time he entered the conservatory in 1908, and would have known several of Schoenberg’s works by 1917. Although Hindemith’s own experiments with harmony had already begun by this time, it is quite possible that his exposure to Expressionist visual art and literature was the clinching factor, convincing him that their style was worthy of emulation through music. The November issue of *Kunstblatt* that year featured the poetry of Else Lasker-Schüler, which Hindemith set to music: his choice to write music with text in the Expressionist style strengthens the idea that he wanted to explore the idiom as a way of combining artistic disciplines. The puppet plays written in 1915–16 (several of which are parodies of Wagner) also employ Expressionistic techniques, and once again combine music with

---

words and staging. His friends Dr. Fried Lübbecke, an art historian, and Emma Lübbecke-Job, a pianist, can be credited with furthering his interest in Expressionist painters such as Petraschke, Ewald, and Betzler. Moreover, Lübbecke-Job would most certainly have discussed Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern’s music with Hindemith, as she programmed their works alongside his in her recitals. Altogether, Expressionism was very important to the young Hindemith, but Cahn’s cogent suggestion that this was only a “partial expressionistic period” cannot be ignored. Hindemith’s interests were very eclectic at the time, and though he may have been interested in the combination of artistic disciplines and their outcome, his ultimate concern was with the development of a personal idiom.26 He was not seeking assimilation with existing styles; rather he incorporated them temporarily while developing a unique aesthetic of his own.

Haney observes that scholars Hinton and Steiner had in earlier studies noted several characteristics in Hindemith’s postwar work that do not conform to the aesthetic norms of Expressionism. These include “its textural and formal simplicity, its rhetorical continuity, its muting of overt expressiveness, and its embrace of sharply non-German stylistic influences,” some of which “openly contradict the precepts of Schoenbergian progressivism.”27 Haney suggests that to best understand Hindemith’s development in the postwar period, we should employ broader categories, even though they are less orderly than conventional ones:

26 Hindemith’s only reference correlating art to his music is a note to Emmy Ronnefeldt about the Sonata Op. 11, No. 2, which he describes as sounding “very al fresco—quite thick, and with fully-bowed brushstrokes” (my translation). This may serve as further testimony to his interest in the techniques of visual artists at the time. One mustn’t forget, moreover, that Hindemith, like Schoenberg, was an accomplished visual artist himself. See Cahn, ibid., 46.
Existing categories naturally bring with them the promise of a certain methodological tidiness and the comfort of historical proximity to the aesthetic object. But when dealing with a period as turbulent as the immediate postwar era in Hindemith’s Germany, foregrounding such categories at the expense of complex cultural, social, political, and psychological realities risks depleting the artworks they are intended to describe of their aesthetic power.\footnote{Ibid., 12.}

Although Haney, Hinton, and Steiner caution us against assuming that Hindemith’s works can all be given discrete stylistic labels, scholars such as Streller and von Fischer nevertheless attempted to do so. But as Hindemith’s music exhibited too many individual characteristics, they found themselves stranded and in need of creating unusual subcategories, such as the unwieldy expressionistische Neobarock.\footnote{Ibid., 4.} Rather than take this categorizing approach, which falsely characterizes the composer’s creative process, I think it is more useful to dwell on the reasons Hindemith was seeking to include a variety of tendencies in his music in 1919. In this study, this is particularly relevant: while several works composed before and after the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 show signs of Expressionism, that is not the predominant tendency in the Sonata itself—so we must acknowledge its contribution, and then seek other ways of describing its music. If we pause for a moment to consider Hindemith’s actual experiences during the war, we will see how his disillusionment with his country reshaped his perspective and his expectation of his role as a German musician. This, in turn, led him to seek foreign influences with which to transform his music. His change in outlook will take us back to further exploration of the currents informing his postwar compositions, after the following section.
Composing During the War

Most readers would agree that Hindemith’s capacity to compose while serving in the army attests to his unusual powers of concentration—and perhaps to the use of music as a means of escaping the horrors surrounding him. But by all accounts Hindemith’s tenure in the German army was nowhere near as bad as it could have been. This can be seen simply by comparing his father’s time in the army with his own: sent to Alsace in 1914, his father then went on to Flanders, where he was shot dead in the trenches, remaining unidentified for several months. Hindemith, meanwhile, spent a large portion of his time on duty coordinating musical performances for soldiers and for his superiors; he returned home unwounded despite a last stint as a sentry, during which he was in more direct danger. Even though some researchers choose to write dismissively of his experience, implying he had it easy, Hindemith nevertheless witnessed a great number of tragedies and lost several friends and superiors.

A number of letters written to friends and family tell of his activities and of the general conditions in which he lived. It must have been helpful to have other musicians with whom to pass his days: his original assignment was as bass drummer in a regimental band, and he later performed daily in a string quartet for his regiment’s captain. Even so, the absurdity of the political situation of his country, and the daily discomfort and uncertainty of life took their toll on the composer. One might view Hindemith’s experience of the war in multiple phases. In 1914, when it began, he was optimistic, patriotic, and infused with nationalist sentiment, as were all the students around him. This was naïve to say the least, and his enthusiasm was extremely short-lived. By 1915, when
his father had enlisted, he became responsible for his family and was newly employed at the opera, which he did not wish to leave. The administration there sought several deferments for him, delaying his call to duty several times, so that he did not join until 1917. For a time, his chief employment was to play quartets, daily, to his colonel, the Count von Heilmannsegg. When the count died in action, his successor was similarly genial and was able to keep Hindemith musically occupied away from the trenches. Rickards suggests, however, that several factors eventually altered his ability to cope with the war: the death of his father at the front in Alsace, confirmed in 1916; the deteriorating conditions for the people in Germany (there was widespread famine in 1916–17); the death, in action, of Count von Heilmannsegg (in 1918); and the “Black Day” of the German Army, 8 August 1918, when the Germans lost 74,000 soldiers during the Battle of Amiens.30 By 28 September 1918 (not long before the Armistice on 11 November), a letter from Hindemith to Emmy Ronnefeldt paints a bleak picture:

...It’s not easy to write in a dugout, it’s far too cramped and too wet, and all day long one’s ears are ringing with the sound of eternal gunfire. Outside, shells are flying around our heads. Mornings and evenings we go to Douai to play for whichever of our regiment’s companies are taking a rest. We have to march at the double, since the street is under constant fire. Everything gets shot at here, nowhere can one live for two or three days in the blissful knowledge of not hearing this beastly noise. In fact we’re no better off than the conscripts in the trenches. You can’t imagine how sick and tired I am of this life. How long does this wretched existence have to go on? Will this stupid breed of idiots never put an end to this devilish war? A pity I’m not religious, or I should have long ago declared war on God. These damned people who keep the war going should be sent here for a few weeks’ summer holiday, then they would soon learn. But enough of this grumbling... it won’t do any good... Recently I have got back again to composing, after having absolutely no ideas since June.31

---

31 Letter from Paul Hindemith to Emmy Ronnefeldt, 28 September 1918. Skelton, SLPH, 21. (She was a friend from the Frankfurt Conservatory with whose family he corresponded extensively.)
Hindemith’s references to composition continue in a number of other letters, notably one to Dr. Fried Lübbecke and his wife, the pianist Emma Lübbecke-Job, who premiered several of Hindemith’s keyboard works, and who was a strong advocate of his music. The pieces in question were Hindemith’s Quartet Op. 10, intended as a silver wedding-anniversary gift to Emmy Ronnefeldt’s parents, and the Violin Sonatas Op. 11, Nos. 1 and 2. It is quite astonishing that he should have found the concentration to write any music at all given the above description of his environment or a later letter in which he describes thirty men sleeping on the floor of a small destroyed schoolhouse “like the creeping creatures in the Creation recitative.”\footnote{22} At this point, more than anything he wished to return to his life and visit his friends in person, rather than sending them his music: “But maybe the stretta of this war will now come to a swift end, and then I myself shall be able to call on you, but of course deloused, washed, and combed.”\footnote{23}

Hindemith was discharged from the army early in 1918, returning immediately to his duties at the opera and soon resuming rehearsals with the Rebner Quartet. Rickards suggests, however, that the war altered Hindemith’s equilibrium. He had a difficult time re-adjusting to civilian life, finding it unreal that one could just return home, be clean and well-fed, and turn once more to writing music, as if nothing had happened and no lives had been lost. His psychological difficulty is illustrated by his choice to go directly from the barracks (when he was discharged) to his first opera rehearsal, without stopping by

\footnote{22} Letter of 5 November 1918. Skelton, \textit{SLPH}, 23. Hindemith’s principal defense mechanism against the traumatic life-style of the war was a stalwart sense of humor, which he employed whenever possible; hence the allusion to Haydn’s oratorio.\footnote{23} Ibid., 24.
for an evening to see his mother and siblings. It is as though Hindemith could not acknowledge his family, otherwise he would have to acknowledge the deaths of his father and of so many other friends and family members. The only way for him to manage—to imagine that all was as it should be—was to remain utterly absorbed in his musical activities.

A last wartime reminiscence shows the importance of performance and composing in his ability to maintain composure during a time of incredible stress, and tells us how he made important musical discoveries in the most unlikely settings. The anecdote Hindemith recounts makes clear his certainty that music would have to change, if it were to succeed in reflecting the experience of artists and audiences following the war. Although some sources incorrectly state that it was Hindemith’s first encounter with Debussy’s music, the story is nevertheless significant, serving as a catalyst for the composition of the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, where he employs musical influences not heard in his music until then. In his own words:

As a soldier in the First World War I was a member of a string quartet, which represented for the colonel of our regiment a means of forgetting the hated military service. He was a great friend of music and a connoisseur and admirer of French culture. Small wonder, then, that his most burning desire was to hear Debussy’s string quartet. We practiced the piece and played it for him with great emotion at a private concert. Just as we had finished the slow movement the radio officer entered the room, visibly shaken, and reported that the news of Debussy’s death had just come over the radio. We didn’t finish the performance. It was as if the breath of life had been taken from our playing. But we realized for the first time that music is more than style, technique and the expression of personal feeling. Here, music transcended political boundaries, national hatred and the horrors of war. At no other time have I ever comprehended so completely in what direction music must develop.

34 Rickards, H., H., 40.
35 Strobel, Zeugnis, 8. (Translation into English by Everett Helm throughout that publication.) The German reads: “Wir spielten nicht zu Ende. Es war, als wäre unserem Spielen der Lebenshauch genommen worden. Wir fühlten aber hier zum ersten Male,
Connecting Debussy, the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, and the Exotic

Hindemith’s story may sound somewhat sentimental to modern readers, who may not be aware of the intensely unusual circumstances behind this episode. The performance of French music was banned in Germany during the war, and the idea that an army colonel should have chosen to hear it would have come across not only as deeply unpatriotic but also, in fact, as subversive. Within this context, Hindemith’s observation concerning the direction music must take in the postwar period signifies the impossibility of adhering any longer to Germanic musical values above all others: this would imply a perpetuation of the heinous environment that allowed the war in the first place. Returning to our discussion of musical influences in Hindemith’s music of 1919, we can see that his choice to profile French and exotic influences in his Op. 11, No. 4 sonata is a choice to separate himself from the tradition he was brought up in, and which he now associates too strongly with a bygone past and a tragic, chaotic present. As Haney puts it: “The alliance with Debussy’s music may be interpreted in terms of a postwar internationalist outlook through which Hindemith sought identification with a broader human community as well as distance from a cultural legacy tainted by wartime chauvinism.”

In consciously choosing to explore Debussy’s style, Hindemith starts on his path to create an acceptable postwar aesthetic of his own. Debussy’s music assures him distance from his own overpowering heritage and connects him to a seemingly unending


spool of new musical threads from which to fashion new compositions. The alignment with Debussy allows Hindemith access not only to the shimmering harmonic vocabulary of French Impressionism, but also to what has been termed Debussy’s “sonic exoticism”—his connections to musical traditions outside the Western mainstream.\(^{37}\) Nichols notes that Debussy’s legacy to Hindemith’s generation was to expand the gamut of techniques “permissible in the empire of sound.”\(^{38}\) In doing so, Debussy bequeathed Hindemith (and a host of others, including Bloch and Clarke) the use of whole-tone collections, altered modes, and the sonorities of Russian music he heard first during his travels with Tchaikovsky’s patroness Nadezhda von Meck. Nichols notes that Debussy’s incorporation of Russian elements in his music would recur throughout his career, and later feature in the music of Maurice Ravel.

While most violists are quite aware of Debussy’s influence on Hindemith’s Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, the idea that the work contains Russian influences is not often discussed. In my experience, one of the comments most frequently addressed to students performing the sonata’s second movement in master classes is to “think of the simplicity of a German folk-song,” as a means of adding character to their interpretation. The notion that as early as 1925 Franz Willms commented on the “Slavic” style of the sonata may thus come as a destabilizing surprise.\(^{39}\) Haney’s recent research on the work in connection with Mussorgsky’s opera *Boris Godunov* establishes strong parallels between

\(^{37}\) I borrow the term “sonic exoticism” from Haney, ibid., 3.
the folksong melody opening Op. 11, No. 4’s second movement and the opening chorus in Mussorgsky’s work, “Na kovó ty nás pokidáyesh, otéts násh!” Haney’s work is especially helpful in outlining all that is exotic (in this case, non-German) about Hindemith’s folksong, such as “its fluid modal pivoting between the related centers of G-flat major and E-flat minor, its frequent note repetition, shifts between duple and triple meter, and five bar phrasing.” Considering excerpts of both these works side-by-side gives us a new window through which to interpret Hindemith’s melody, even if a definitive connection between the two themes cannot be established. But Russian music influenced Hindemith not only directly, but also through Debussy as an intermediary, notably in the second movement of the quartet which Hindemith recalled playing on 25 March 1918. We need look no further than Nichols’ observation that “Debussy allowed himself freedom from cyclic tyranny in the slow movement, where a certain Russian melancholy comes to the fore.” Lest it be thought, however, that this Russian influence came only through Debussy, a look at the volumes of chamber music Hindemith held in his collection by this time sheds some light on the extent of his knowledge of Russian composers. Briner’s research shows us that by 1919 Hindemith had in his possession scores of chamber works by Borodin, Glazunov, Glère, Sokolov, Taneyev, and Akimenko. Having considered all these influences, let us now turn to an examination of the music in the sonata itself.

40 Haney, Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,” 236.
41 Haney, Ibid., 236.
The Sonata Op. 11, No. 4

The Sonata for Viola and Piano Op. 11, No. 4 makes a stronger musical statement than Hindemith’s other pieces up to this time. The work is highly organic, combining fantasy and lightness with incisive rhythmic vitality, bringing together a richer spectrum of contrasting musical elements than in preceding works. One of its great qualities is the fact that it carefully straddles the boundary between communication and sentimentality, a factor paramount to Hindemith’s aesthetic as a composer. His need for objectivity at times superseded the emotional content of his pieces, but in this work he shows plenty of expression without giving in to weighty Romanticism. In the discussion that follows, each movement is considered in turn. Variation VI in the last movement receives extended treatment, aimed at further illustration of Hindemith’s connections to non-German musical elements.

First Movement

The first movement of the sonata is a Fantasie, divided into two principal sections. The first, comprising mm. 1–16, marked Ruhig, begins with a flowing viola melody and static piano chords. This is soon reversed, in mm. 5–7, when the viola imitates the piano, temporarily taking on the more static role, while the piano has the opening melody. In m. 10 the viola restates the opening melody in a higher register, while the piano’s left hand remains regular. But the piano right-hand writing becomes very active, preparing the way for increased activity in the viola line, which leads to a cadenza. Hindemith shows his
mastery of modified whole-tone chords in the piano writing, which even as it becomes active remains “luxuriant” and “transparent.”

In the movement’s second section, marked *Im Zeitmaß*, the opening thematic material is extended. The motive that first appeared in the piano right hand in m. 6 (which is derived from the viola line in m. 2) now appears in the piano in mm. 17–20, but is given greater plasticity and dynamic prominence. The movement is monothematic in that the opening melody and the figures derived from it generate material for the entire movement. This reliance on motivic development and transformation is one of the most Germanic traits in the work. However, Hindemith’s tendency to rock back and forth between similar figures, as he does in mm. 17–18 of this movement, is again a trait taken from Debussy. Example 4.1 illustrates the discussion above.

Hindemith’s structure accentuates a pattern of stasis-tension-stasis: the developmental energy of *Im Zeitmaß* gives way to *Breit* at m. 32. The piano figures suffer a deceleration leading into this measure, returning to the dotted quarter-note figures of the piano in the opening line of the movement. These figures slow down further, becoming sustained chords by the movement’s end. They create a frame of calm surrounding the middle section. Hindemith ties an enharmonic A-sharp/B-flat in the viola to the opening of the next movement, creating a seamless transition from one to the next, with no interruption to the sound. Hilse notes that such enharmonic respellings allow Hindemith to connect diatonic and whole-tone passages to each other: another contribution of

---

43 Hilse, “Hindemith and Debussy,” 68. Stephanie Steiner’s research into the *Nachtstück* in Hindemith’s compositions is also relevant here. See Haney, *Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,”* 119.
Debussy’s idiom, which designated certain pitches as pivots between whole-tone and tonally-centered passages. See Example 4.1, continued.

Example 4.1: Hindemith, Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, First mvt., mm. 1–11

I

Fantasie

Example 4.1: Ibid., continued, mm. 12–22
Example 4.1: Ibid., continued, mm. 23–40
Example 4.2: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1–33

II

Thema mit Variationen

Ruhig und einfach, wie ein Volkslied
Second Movement

The second movement begins with a folk-song melody lasting from mm. 1–33, shown in Example 4.2 above. The main theme occurs in mm. 1–12, and is then extended from mm. 12–22, while underneath the piano restates material from the opening bars in mm. 20–24. A second elaboration of this material carries onward from mm. 24–29, followed by a restatement of the opening melody an octave lower from mm. 29–33, enclosing the section.

Variation I shares similarities with the first movement’s Fantasie, namely in the left-hand piano part (rhythm) and in its delicate texture. The idea of chromatic descending lines is important both in small-scale figurations (melodically) and teleologically as it directs the harmonic rhythm of the piano chords. See Example 4.3.
Example 4.3: Ibid., Var. I, mm. 34–52

Variation II presents the principal folk-song theme with a new acrobatic twist to the character. Dissonant leaps in the piano left hand are used to accompany the viola. The viola then imitates the leaps in m. 71, with its own confident jump from E-flat to D, shown in Example 4.4. The effect is one of balletic capriciousness—the initial lightness of the texture conceals the increasing presence of whole-tone colorings. Hindemith reprises the folk-song theme at m. 98 after some episodic wanderings. This time the viola’s ballet climaxes with descending whole-tone octaves, the dynamics reach \textit{ff}, and
after insistent repetition of chromatic sixteenth-note figures the piece flies onward into Variation III. See Example 4.5.

Example 4.4: Ibid., Var. II, mm. 66–76

45 Neumeyer has described this variation as a “Debussyian Pierrotesque,” while Haney links this character to Stravinsky. The latter’s attribution is more accurate, given later associations in Variation VI. See Neumeyer, Music of Paul Hindemith, 115; and Haney, Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,” 245. For his part, Hilse, writing in “Hindemith and Debussy,” 80–1, finds the playful character quite French, but sees the more dissonant chords as intruders with a “Bergian tinge.”
Example 4.5: Ibid., Var. II, mm. 98–107

Variation III has some of the most lyrical viola writing in the sonata. Here Hindemith elaborates on the material first heard in mm. 12–33 of the movement. The viola line is strictly melodic, soaring above increasingly complex arpeggiation in the piano. The first motive of the variation is stated twice, which leads to repeated emphasis of a particular fragment in mm. 124–9. Hindemith increases the textural and dynamic intensity of the passage without losing clarity by emphasizing linearity in the viola part, against harmonic vertical action in the piano. The repetition of the variation’s first motive again at m. 135 is a catapult into the subsequent variation, because the strategic and insistent repetition of both the piano and viola figures builds tension that must spring forward without stopping. See Example 4.6.
Example 4.6: Ibid., Var. III, mm. 132–8
Variation IV, marked noch lebhafter (“still faster”), is in fact a continuation of Variation III. Here, Hindemith abandons the French harp-like arpeggiation in the piano accompaniment in favor of hard-edged doubled whole-tone octaves in the piano part. Their relentless descending motion brings the movement crashing into the Finale, but this takes some time, as though Hindemith were attempting to stop a very fast and large train determined to forge directly into the next movement.

In the viola part, Hindemith again repeats the folk-song theme, but creates variety by employing strong syncopations and varying the dynamics and register of the instrument. His carefully prescribed use of swelling crescendi and decrescendi in the piece signal another element acquired through the study of Debussy’s chamber music. (This trait is also present in the Clarke Sonata.) See Example 4.7.
Example 4.7: Ibid., Var. IV, mm. 139–47
Example 4.8: Ibid., Third mvt., mm. 1–17

III
Finale (mit Variationen)

Sehr lebhaft (Alla breve) In wechselnder Taktart

Breit (14)
Third Movement

The third movement interpolates new thematic material into further variations on the folk-song theme from the second movement. A new theme (shown in Example 4.8 above) lasting from mm. 1–25, is followed by a more lyrical second theme. At m. 41 the opening theme returns, and at m. 54 (Leicht fließend) we hear material related again to the second theme. Hindemith follows this with Variation V, marked Ruhig fließend, drawing on the second theme material. In the context of modified sonata-form, this variation, lasting from mm. 81–127 (followed by an eight-bar bridge), is a transition passage, which sets up Variation VI as a development section.

Variation VI is probably the most discussed in published literature about the sonata, not least because of its unusual concert direction: Fugato, mit bizar rer Plumpheit vorzutragen (Fugato, to be played with bizarre clumsiness). Hindemith once again begins the variation with a form of the folk-song theme, but we know from m. 138 that he is going somewhere new: rather than directing the melody toward C-sharp, which would conform to the original folk-song’s contour, he uses C-natural, which causes a strong descending tritone leap in the viola line. Hindemith’s goal in this variation is maximum awkwardness—the rhythmic displacement of the piano chords and the looping repetitions of the viola line add to the dizzy, lumbering feeling of the variation. But this is not all Hindemith does. Harmonically his primary goal is to emphasize distortion of the original folk-song. Thus, he restates materials previously heard diatonically in new whole-tone formations from two contrasting collections: C whole-tone and D-flat whole-tone. The
collections alternate every few measures throughout the variation, with the C whole-tone collection beginning and ending the fugato section.\textsuperscript{46} See Example 4.9.

\textsuperscript{46} I am strongly indebted to Haney’s work on the harmonic vocabulary of this variation. He describes the alternation as follows: mm. 136–8, Collection I (C whole-tone); mm. 139–45, Collection II (D-flat whole-tone); mm. 146–9, Collection I; mm. 150–4, Collection II; mm. 155–62, Collection I; mm. 163–76, Collection II. Mm. 177–87 present both collections overlapping, with D-flat whole-tone in the viola, and C whole-tone in the piano. In m. 188 the D-flat collection occurs but gives way in m. 189 to Collection I, which cadences in m. 200 and leads to different material. See Haney, \textit{Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,”} 242–4. Hilse also notes the alternation of whole-tone collections in his study, “Hindemith and Debussy,” 80.
Example 4.9: Ibid., Var. VI, mm. 131–171

VAR. VI  Fugato, mit bizarrer
Plumpheit vorzutragen
Gemächliches Zeitmaß

Example 4.9: Ibid., Var. VI, mm. 131–171

poco a poco cresc.
Example 4.9 continued, mm. 172–203
Writing to Schott Verlag, his publishers, in 1920, Hindemith explains that the fugato’s “alarming” features are not unique to this piece: similar writing can be found in his Quartet Op. 10, written in 1918. The fugato in the first movement of that quartet shares several features with the viola sonata’s Plumpheit variation, not least its accented repetition of motives, distortion of melodies by use of increasing dissonances, and strong angularity, shown in Example 4.10.

Example 4.10: Hindemith, String Quartet No. 2, Op. 10, mm. 72–87
In the second movement of the quartet Hindemith again makes use of a folksong theme with variations, a clear tie to the viola sonata. See Example 4.11.

Example 4.11: Ibid., Second mvt., mm. 1–19

Thema mit Variationen
Additionally, he links the 6/8 stretto in the third movement of the quartet (Example 4.12) to the sixth variation in the viola sonata: once more he writes a fugato, and employs an even stronger sense of articulated rhythmic repetition, further exploring an off-kilter folksong idiom.⁴⁷

Example 4.12: Ibid., Third mvt., mm. 661–82

⁴⁷ Letter to Schott in SLPH, 27.
Haney suggests that both Stravinsky and Bartók may have played a role in Hindemith’s exploration of the raw, coarser idiom employed in this variation, whose character leaves far behind the sounds of Debussy that permeated the first movement. The particular work of Stravinsky that fascinated Hindemith and would occupy his thoughts in the subsequent two years is Petrushka, the Russian puppet ballet written in 1911, which portrayed Russian peasantry in a strongly neo-nationalist way. Its combination of folk and modern idioms expanded Hindemith’s horizons. Downes notes that “in the Petrushka of 1911 the colors are harsh and often strident, and what tenderness there is, is masked. Grotesque action is paralleled by grotesque sounds.” Haney suggests that the displaced accents in Hindemith’s piano writing in mm. 139–200 may have benefited from the music in Stravinsky’s Fourth Tableau, Rehearsal 100, in which the peasant (muzhik) plays a horn for the bear to dance. This is shown in Example 4.13. As in the viola sonata, the melodic writing is extremely chromatic, and the lower instruments in the orchestra play strongly accented quarter-notes in 6/4 time, later increasing the complexity of their figuration. Haney’s suggestion of ties between the two works is strengthened by the fact that Hindemith’s 1922 puppet opera, Das Nusch-Nuschi, was clearly inspired by Stravinsky’s work.

---

Example 4.13: Stravinsky, *Petrushka*, Fourth Tableau, Rehearsal 100

Haney also suggests the influence of Bela Bartók on Hindemith’s music at this time, specifically drawing a parallel between the viola sonata’s sixth variation, and the third movement of Bartók’s String Quartet No. 1, Op. 7. In this movement, Bartók employs a lilting Hungarian folk-song melody, which is presented in juxtaposition with
strong, fast ostinato patterns introduced by the first violin and later passing between all instruments. Bartók’s fugal handling of the folk-song melody is a veritable tour de force, employing not only enormous skill in chromatic and rhythmic interactions between the instruments, but also achieving a level of visceral intensity that was quite new to chamber music at this time. In Example 4.14 we can see how the viola writing, in ornamented fugato style, resembles certain figurations in the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4.

Example 4.14 continued, mm. 137–61
Example 4.14 continued, mm. 162–75
Example 4.14 continued, mm. 176–88

The quartet, written in 1908–1909 and first performed in Budapest on 19 March 1910, received its German premiere by Hindemith's Rebner Quartet, in February 1919. That he would be so closely acquainted with this score only a month before writing the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 strengthens the connections between the two works, even though they
differ significantly in scale. Bartók’s quartet was also an influence on Hindemith’s quartet writing—perhaps not yet in the aforementioned Op. 10 quartet, though this would be stylistically possible, but indubitably in the Op. 16 quartet written early in 1920.

**Variation VII (Coda)** brings together a number of previously heard gestures in new guises. The folk-song melody that opened the second movement, concluded its fourth variation, and reappears transformed at the openings of Variations V and VI, is also the driving force of Variation VII. The melody begins nervously, *piano*, punctuated by piano chords that once again recall the static rhythmic uniformity of the piano writing in the first movement’s opening bars. Here, however, they function as rhythmic interjections for a viola line that gains in tension as the dynamics rise. Hindemith’s decision to repeat the head of the folksong subject in mm. 331–8 emphasizes the relentlessness of the movement, which soon builds to a *Wild fff* syncopated diminution based on the folksong’s melodic contour. A further rhythmic and melodic alteration occurs at m. 367. While the viola continues its frantic run, the piano emphatically states the folksong subject at mm. 370–3, in augmentation. See Example 4.15.

---

49 I mean to say that Hindemith shows the influence of Bartók’s style within a restricted section of the viola sonata (Variation VI) rather than in a larger-scale exploration.

50 Bartók’s works were issued by Hungarian publishers until 1917. In 1918 he secured a contract with Universal Verlag in Vienna, which greatly facilitated the distribution of his music in Western Europe. For this reason, it is difficult to establish when Hindemith first obtained a score to the work. See Haney, *Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,”* 257–8. Bartók’s String Quartet No. 1, *Fourteen Bagatelles* for piano, *Romanian Dances*, and Suite, Op. 14 all appeared at Schoenberg’s Society for Private Musical Performance in 1919–20. What is fascinating though, is that Hindemith’s Frankfurt performance of Bartók’s Quartet Op. 7 predates the Vienna performance, showing that in this and other instances, Hindemith was extremely quick to promote new composers—faster than Schoenberg’s highly respected and historically revered society. See Haney, ibid.
Example 4.15: Hindemith, Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, Third mvt., Coda, mm. 303–38

Var. VII Coda
Sehr lebhaft und erregt

[Musical notation image]

312

320

327

333

Stets zunehmen u. vorangehen
Example 4.15 continued, mm. 339–66
Example 4.15 continued, mm. 367–93

367  Noch mehr treiben

372

377

382  Breiter

387  mit aller Kraft

ritten.

accel.
Hindemith uses the tension of opposites to create the driving energy of his conclusion. While the piano returns to punctuating the viola line in mm. 374–9, the viola builds on fragmented, repeated ascending motives rising gradually to a registral and dynamic $fff$ apex at m. 389. Hindemith then subverts our expectation of a climax by suddenly reversing both the dynamics (to a sudden $p$) and the melodic direction from ascending to static alternation between middle and low registers, before breaking free again into a $ffff$ ascent. (Hilse notes that the ascent arriving on the third scale degree—here G-natural—is also a very French characteristic of the work.) From this point the folk-song subject head dominates—a descending line broadens the tempo, only to accelerate again at m. 387 mit aller Kraft (“with all energy”). It is restated three times in quick succession before appearing again in quarter-note augmentation, ritardando, to make an unequivocally strong closing statement.

Hindemith’s greatest achievement in the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 is his ability to combine seemingly contradictory influences into a coherent musical whole whose structure does not suffer from the variety of its musical gestures. In the end, Hindemith’s balance of tradition and innovation succeeds in two ways: the foreign influences permeating the piece set this work apart from those he wrote before the war, while the preservation of certain traits continues to identify him as a German composer, albeit one who seeks to redefine that very term. While in our discussion of the sonata we observed certain similarities between the styles of Hindemith and Debussy, certain fundamental contrasts
remain, which lead Mauser to identify in the work "a strong residue of Germanic musical thinking." Hindemith's goal in the piece might best be described as a distancing from his former aesthetic, but not its full abandonment. He employs such Debussyian gestures as a delicate approach to dynamics, coloristic rather than functional use of dissonance, parallelism to add non-functional harmonic color, textural stratification, regislist extremes, low register pedals featuring open fifths, non-functional rocking between pairs of chords, pentatonic melodies, and occasionally static piano writing. Even so, other qualities in his writing, such as the greater formal and melodic regularity he favors, his tendency toward insistent repetition of motives and themes, and their fragmentation, remind us that a Teutonically trained mind is behind this work.51

Hindemith's choices of musical influences and gestures have repercussions extending beyond this composition. They remind us that a variety of paths were open to German composers of his generation after the war, and that he could have chosen to align himself with several possible currents. Among these we might include Pfitzner's espousal of neo-nationalistic Wagnerism, which sought to restore Germany to its past glories, purging it of its present decadence; Schoenberg's quest for dodecaphony, which broke radically with the history of tonality; Eisler's choice to leave Schoenberg behind and embrace a communist philosophy of music for the masses; or Kurt Weill's choice to discard his training in the style of Brahms and Mahler to create an incisively new popular style. Hindemith was not necessarily forced to follow in their footsteps, but he could by no means be apathetic in the face of a changing European cultural landscape.

51 This discussion is strongly indebted to Haney, Hindemith's "Hard-Edged Simplicity," 119 and 124.
I would like to argue that while Ernest Bloch and Rebecca Clarke made personal choices to introduce new influences into their compositions in 1919, Hindemith’s choice in Germany was rife with political implications. Haney argues that Hindemith embraced the characteristics of Debussy’s music that most aroused suspicion in the German musical establishment, and this was by no means accidental.\textsuperscript{52} In doing so, he placed himself in the avant-garde, leading the way for composers who wished to combine the responsibility of finding new approaches to music with the retention of an individual artistic identity. By 1922 his music had undergone several further developmental changes, recognized in \textit{Berlin Illustrierte} as those of “a full-blooded musician”—one who subscribes to no specific trend and to no ‘...isms,’ who considers himself neither a daring rebel against diatonicism nor even less, a musical reactionary.\textsuperscript{53}

Hindemith was certainly not a reactionary in 1919, though whether this claim remains true in later years is debatable. Recognized for his fearlessness and leadership, Hindemith’s career was quick to take off in light of his Op. 11 compositions and the operas that followed. The premiere of the Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 along with the other works performed on 2 June 1919 led to a publishing contract, and to the widespread recognition of his instrumental and compositional talents. Leading figures in the German musical world rewarded his dynamism with important positions, such as a chair on the board of the Donaueschingen and later Baden-Baden festivals, and from 1927 a professorship in composition at the Berlin Musikhochschule, by then arguably the most important teaching post in the country. Hindemith combined his teaching and composing activities with his solo and chamber performances. Between 1922 and 1929 he played in

\textsuperscript{52} Haney, \textit{Hindemith’s “Hard-Edged Simplicity,”} 107.
\textsuperscript{53} Unsigned review in \textit{Berliner Illustrierte} (September 1922). Strobel, \textit{Zeugnis}, 16.
the Amar Quartet, touring Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, England, and Holland.\textsuperscript{54} His leadership at Donaueschingen made his work known across Europe and allowed him to work with Otto Klemperer, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton von Webern, Hermann Scherchen, Ernst Krenek, Philipp Jarnach, Alois Haba, Joseph Haas, and Heinrich Burkard. Later associations include those with Stravinsky in Berlin, Arthur Honnegger in Venice, Darius Milhaud and Pierre Monteux in Amsterdam, and perhaps most unexpectedly with Bartók in Egypt, when both composers were present at the Congress for Arabic Music in Cairo in 1932.

In the 1930s Hindemith’s career was greatly disrupted by the rising National Socialists. The ramifications of their interference in his life and career are too extensive to treat here, but are well documented elsewhere.\textsuperscript{55} Forced to take a leave of absence from his post in Berlin at the same time Schrecker was deposed as director, he worked in Turkey between 1935 and 1937, establishing the first schools for the training of western classical musicians in the country. From 1938–1940 he resided in Switzerland, with yearly trips to perform in America between 1937–1939. He emigrated to America the following year, where he was Battell Professor of Music Theory at Yale University until 1953, after which he returned to live in Switzerland and began to take prestigious

\textsuperscript{54} Specializing in the modern repertoire, the Amar Quartet could boast performances (in some cases premieres) of the following composers, both to German and other European audiences: Schoenberg Op. 7 and Op. 10; Bartók Op. 7 and Op. 17; Webern; Ludwig Weber; Kodály; Sekles; Hindemith Op. 16 and Op. 22; Egon Wellesz; Arthur Honnegger; Alfredo Casella; Igor Stravinsky; Maurice Ravel; Philipp Jarnach; Francesco Malipiero; Fidelio Finke; Darius Milhaud; Max Reger; Alois Haba (two quarter-tone quartets); Frederick Delius; Arthur Lourié; Vitezslav Novák; K.B. Jiráč; and Claude Debussy. See \textit{LWBT}, 62.

\textsuperscript{55} Strobel, \textit{Zeugnis}, 54, for example, gives detailed accounts of Hindemith’s interaction with Furtwängler, and Goebbels’ official criticisms of his music during this time. More information is also available on the Hindemith Foundation website, \textlangle www.hindemith.org\textrangle.
engagements around the world as a conductor. Hindemith was the 1952 Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University, and was later made an honorary professor at the University of Zürich. As a violist, he premiered some of the most important compositions for that instrument in the twentieth-century, among them the Walton Concerto (1929) and his own Der Schwanendreher (1935). As an author he wrote a three-volume treatise on music theory, The Craft of Musical Composition, as well as publishing his Norton Lectures in book format as A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations.\textsuperscript{56} Hindemith never fully retired: at the time of his death in 1963, he was busy planning conducting tours for the following two years, though he had eliminated teaching activities from his ever full timetable.

Although it is important to acknowledge the manifold achievements of a man who was one of the most significant musical figures of the twentieth century, this study has aimed particularly at shedding light on a period of his life that is often ignored or passed over too quickly. Many violists think of the Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 primarily as one of Hindemith's most accessible and beautiful works for the instrument, and are unaware of the unique collection of musical tendencies it brings together. The study presented here will, I hope, help players appreciate the rich history that lies behind it.

CONCLUSIONS

A constellation of conclusions presents itself as this study comes to a close, and I take time to evaluate the connections between Ernest Bloch, Rebecca Clarke, Paul Hindemith and their viola works of 1919. First among them is the uniqueness of each composer’s experience, when viewed through the three-way prism of perspectives offered here: that of the First World War, of the association with Mrs. Coolidge, and musically speaking, of exotic and Oriental influences. Having written about each of these items as it relates to the composers, I believe it is no surprise that a fourth current strongly informs these discussions, namely, the impossibility of considering their experiences without taking into account the formation of compositional and personal identity in each composer. This idea took on great importance as each chapter evolved, and the issues of Bloch’s religion, Clarke’s gender, and Hindemith’s nationality all demanded examination. In the end, it is impossible to discuss the composers’ music without considering the impact of these elements on their professional paths and aesthetic outlooks. As a result, I now believe that each composer’s career was strongly governed by these distinct external elements, which shaped his or her experience of the three aforementioned circumstances (the war, Mrs. Coolidge, and their choice to explore musical exoticism). In this concluding section, it is my goal to consider each composer in turn, focusing briefly on these elements.

Additionally, I would like to reflect on the creative effects of Exoticism in their music, and the exceptional results achieved in each piece through its use. What emerges in particular is that the common use of a set of stereotypical musical gestures and
techniques yielded such entirely different compositions, each evoking its own unique atmospheres, characters, and landscapes.

Having established connections between the composers' early careers, their professional relationships, and their shared use of exotic principles, I offer one last connection for consideration: the idea that each of these composers may have been in a position of exile from the compositional mainstream by the end of their respective careers. Just as the elements determining their external identities as composers are unique to them, so their resulting placement in peripheral situations late in life is deeply individual. The idea is not to shift our discussion to the later phase of their careers, but to associate choices they made as early as 1919 with career outcomes later in their lives. Ultimately, while it is impossible in the scope of this study to examine thoroughly all the issues presented here, generating this discussion is fruitful in itself, as it will undoubtedly lead to continued exploration.

_Bloch_

Ernest Bloch's own perception of his music was not initially tied to religion. Before taking a strong interest in his Jewish heritage in the early 1910s, he even declared to his friend Edmond Fleg that for most of his life up to that point he had felt himself an "outsider" to all that was Jewish. In chapter two we saw that he made a choice to embrace Hebraic history and portray it in the works of the Jewish Cycle (1912–1916). But we also saw that the Viola Suite was a conscious departure from this style, and a piece that allowed him freedom to explore a different kind of exotic subject matter, unrelated to
religion. Ultimately we see that the musical devices of Orientalism are strongly present in both his Jewish and non-Jewish works, and that their employment does not always distinguish one kind of music from the other. Although in his own writings Bloch identifies the idiom of the Viola Suite as different from that of his earlier Hebraic works, critics were slower to recognize that the pieces belonged in separate categories, leading the composer to feel somewhat captive to his heritage. Critics in Bloch’s own time were quick to label him, and their choice to do so made religion a dominant marker of his external identity as a composer and as a person. Although this led him to compose religious works of great expressive power, it also prevented him from being acknowledged without prejudice in certain circles. Furthermore, it meant that critics approached his music with a certain bias, at a time when objective judgment of musical matters clearly seems to have been out of fashion.

Bloch benefited greatly from his victory in the Coolidge Competition in 1919. Aside from winning first prize, he was given tremendous publicity and public recognition, which led to his appointment as Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music. His high standing among Coolidge’s circle also meant that he was invited to judge her competition the following year. Although at that stage she was a key figure in the advancement of his career, it seems that later on the connections between them waned to a certain degree. This is perhaps due to Bloch’s move to the West Coast, where he met Rosa and Jacob Stern, who succeeded Coolidge as his principal benefactors. Bloch’s decision to travel between Switzerland and Berkeley in later years of his life is not dissimilar to Hindemith’s decision to alternate years between Switzerland and Yale. Bloch, however, made a conscious choice late in life to settle in Agathe Beach, Oregon,
truly removing himself from centers of musical activity. He continued to receive accolades and performances during this time, but he often considered himself to be forgotten.

Clarke

Rebecca Clarke stands out in this study as the only woman, and occupies a position of distinction in her generation as one of the few female violists who received true critical recognition for her work as a recitalist and chamber musician. Clarke’s identity as a composer was not as self-assured as her perception of herself as a strong performer. But this is only one factor out of many that influenced her overall career, and which may have contributed to her smaller output when compared to Bloch and Hindemith’s. Critics invariably used gender as a marker with which to identify her as a composer, and as a qualifier by which to evaluate her works. Gender thus defined Clarke in the press and in the opinion of leading male composers of the time, in the same way that Judaism defined Bloch: these markers were employed as a means of setting both composers slightly apart from the Caucasian, male-dominated European musical mainstream of their time.

Winning the second prize in the 1919 Coolidge Competition was perhaps the most important event in Clarke’s career. Her sonata revealed to the world that she was a musician of keen intelligence and creativity, capable of works of a larger scope than her previous miniatures had indicated. Unfortunately the same critics who wondered whether her anonymously submitted piece was by Ravel later criticized it, once they could use gender as an excuse to belittle it. In the end, the musical world’s reaction to her situation
in 1919 is perhaps best expressed in a letter of Frederick Stock to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge after the competition took place:

...Well, Ernest Bloch got away with the prize. We, you and I, at least, may reflect upon the outcome of the contest with one weeping eye and one laughing eye; the fact remains that Bloch has written a big work, one which I think will last. Personally, I feel sorry for Miss Clarke. Her sonata has much charm; the first movement is very fine, but the scherzo is so freakish and has no thematic substance of any consequence; the last movement is too rhapsodic. But just the same, she has a very fine talent. What the wise-aces would have said, had a “woman-composer” and one of your personal friends in Pittsfield won the prize, I do not dare to contemplate, but I am sure that suspicions of a “frame-up” between you and the judges would have been endless, and that we might have had a great deal of other trouble besides. All things considered, we were most fortunate in our choice.¹

Cyrilla Barr, in her detailed portrayal of this event, reminds us that Stock chooses to ignore in his letter the fact that Bloch was also Coolidge’s personal friend. And he makes it clear that at the time, in his opinion, it would have been incompatible with the competition’s standing to award the first prize to an unknown woman. His bias is particularly unfortunate when we consider that several relatively unknown male composers, such as Iarecki and Weiner, won the competition in other years, to nobody’s detriment but that of the more famous composers (such as Hindemith) that they beat.²

¹ Letter of Frederick Stock to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, 27 August 1919, as reprinted by Cyrilla Barr in “Rebecca Clarke’s ‘One Little Whiff of Success’,” in Essays on a Life in Music [CD-ROM], accompanying A Rebecca Clarke Reader. The Rebecca Clarke Society, Inc., 2005.
² Ibid., Figures. See also Cyrilla Barr, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge: American Patron of the Arts, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 142. Herbert F. Peyser’s review of the Clarke Sonata in “The Berkshire Festival,” Musical America 30 (4 October 1919): 26, gives Clarke even less of a chance than Frederick Stock, calling the work “superficial,” “ingratiating,” and “vehemently sentimental.” Although some of his comments are positive, he makes it clear that he considers neither her nor her work to be of Bloch’s caliber. This review is reprinted by David Sills in The Viola Suite of Ernest Bloch (D.M.A diss., Manhattan School of Music, 1983), 10. Sills adds insult to injury by stating that “modern opinion has not significantly altered the appraisal of [Clarke’s] Sonata
Clarke’s diaries reveal her frustrations regarding the difficulty of getting her work published—a problem that neither Bloch nor Hindemith encountered, as both had exclusive publishing contracts (with Schirmer and Schott, respectively) throughout their careers. These contracts assured the dissemination of their works, while their prestigious full-time academic positions further cemented their reputations and bolstered their confidence in their abilities. Barr and Curtis discuss Coolidge’s role in Clarke’s career as a substitute for the institutional support she lacked, noting that her three large-scale instrumental works were written with Coolidge’s encouragement and support. After 1923 Clarke wrote some significant pieces, but none of them have as central a place in the repertoire as her Viola Sonata and Piano Trio. Aside from writing works on a different scale (and shifting her focus to choral music), a stylistic change is noticeable in Clarke’s later works. While the sonata draws strongly on French and exotic idioms, her works written after 1923 no longer explore this influence, exchanging it for a more neoclassical outlook in instrumental works such as the Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale of 1941 and a return to the English choral style in her vocal works. Clarke’s fascination with the Orient was long-lasting, appearing in works spanning thirteen years of her career. It is natural, however, as she evolved and her life changed, that she would have chosen to explore other more contemporary idioms. It is also possible to ascribe an intensification of the appearance of Oriental gestures in Clarke’s music between 1918–23 to her extensive travels around the world at that time.

Clarke’s full-time professional career as a violist and composer lasted from the time she was twenty-four until she married at fifty-eight. During those years she worked

given in Peyser’s review, and that “the work’s weakness [ ] lies in its lack of originality or invention, qualities important in securing a place for piece or composer.”
extremely hard to support herself, and to rise to the highest professional ranks to which she could aspire as a performer. In my view, it is not surprising that she chose to scale down her activities after the 1940s—she had lived and worked through two world wars and was offered a warm and secure family life for the first time in many years. Her choice to embrace a new phase of her life and to prioritize the personal over the professional after so many years of hard work can be viewed more positively when considered in this way. Unfortunately, we must also acknowledge that other insecurities and the uneven presence of nurturing figures throughout her life also contributed to her decision to remove herself from the limelight. In the end, I remain unsure whether it is appropriate to consider her retirement an act of exile, or simply a decision to privilege a part of her life that had not received its due attention in preceding years.

**Hindemith**

Paul Hindemith's recital on 2 June 1919 brought his Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 into the world, showing his audience it was before a gifted performer who had written an extraordinary and unusual piece. As a result of his performance that evening, Hindemith not only garnered critical accolades for his playing and for his compositions, but soon secured an exclusive publishing contract with Schott that would last his lifetime. Moreover, he assured his place as leader of the youngest generation of post-war composers in Germany. In this position, he became very influential at a young age, eventually directing the contemporary chamber music festivals at Donaueschingen, Baden-Baden, and Berlin, where he was also appointed professor of composition. But his
prominence came with a heavy burden—that of inventing an aesthetic that would be acceptable to audiences and musicians seeking renewal in wake of the war. Hindemith’s choice to explore a broad spectrum of musical influences including those of the French school and of Exoticism can be connected entirely to the necessity of finding musical idioms untainted by neo-nationalist Wagnerism, by revisionists seeking to remain attached to nineteenth-century mores, and by the complete abandonment of tonality fostered by Schoenberg’s circle. Hindemith was aware of every emerging aesthetic, and supported Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern’s atonal experiments by including their works in his festival programs. It was clear from early on, however, that he had in mind a different path for himself.

Hindemith was willing to place himself at the forefront of the musical establishment after the First World War, but refused to engage with the disastrous circumstances of the Second. Third Reich officials greatly disrupted Hindemith’s career, forcing him to take a phony “leave of absence” from his teaching in Berlin, and forbidding his “degenerate” music to be played. Consequently, Hindemith became the only non-Jewish composer to emigrate as a result of Nazi policies, and from then on refused to make Germany or its institutions his personal or musical home. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge was instrumental in bringing Hindemith to the United States, arranging concert engagements for him and making sure he was recognized by leading musical figures of the American establishment.

His choice to transform music in Germany after World War I had political as well as artistic implications. Clearly, his decision to remove himself from a position of leadership and to exile himself from his native country in the aftermath of the subsequent
war was similarly motivated. Hindemith died before he was truly retired—he had conducting engagements planned for two seasons after his death. However, by the end of his career, his youthful idealism had given way to an individual aesthetic others did not fully embrace. Hindemith's strong conviction in his style and his theories may have sidelined him from the musical developments of the 1960s, but his contributions are remarkable for their uniqueness and their authenticity. In exile, he remained true to himself.

As this study reaches its end, I hope to have left readers with an engaging picture of these three composers' lives and compositions. Having reached some conclusions about the importance of their viola works of 1919, and having examined the final outcomes of their careers, we must finally consider what Exoticism brings to their compositions, and how it enriched their music. As I reflect on this, three closing thoughts present themselves, suggesting that this stylistic influence had far-reaching consequences to their development at that time. Put broadly, their choice to feature exotic and orientalizing techniques in these works allowed them to expand their arsenal of compositional techniques, materials, and devices. But there are specific reasons why Exoticism fulfilled this role. First, it allowed all three of the composers to assimilate gestures outside the romantic Germanic style that was at the core of their early training. In this way, Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith were able to "import foreign elements into the context of [their]
European compositions."³ According to Dahlhaus, it was of relatively little importance whether the Exoticism they imported was genuine: what mattered was that it allowed them to make a legitimate departure from the aesthetic and compositional norms of European music, while still remaining recognizable, and attractive, to their audiences.⁴ Secondly, there was the need, especially for Hindemith, to explore musical influences untainted by the tragedy of the First World War. This need was greater for him than for Bloch or Clarke, who removed themselves from the war ambience by coming to the United States in 1916. Clarke’s particular brand of Orientalism seems too lighthearted to reflect a profound need for a renewed aesthetic. But Bloch certainly wrote his Violin Sonata of 1920 as part of his coming to terms with the war, and it is in a vein similar to that of the Viola Suite. While Exoticism was not in itself necessarily political, each of these three composers found in it a way of expanding their expressive possibilities. Lastly, we can see this very choice as a way of adding something new to their music without embracing actual atonality or serialism, which they were all familiar with but chose not to employ. Hindemith, with his cerebral logic, might have been a likely serialist. However, his knowledge of audiences as a performer convinced him that the movement would ultimately alienate listeners, who would be unable to grasp the radical notions behind it. Bloch and Clarke similarly eschewed any use of serial techniques in their music, and neither had particularly warm feelings toward the music of its proponents. Historians in the twentieth century have often chosen to privilege Schoenberg’s movement, considering it the most important development in music to take

⁴ Ibid., 302.
place in that time period. As a result, composers such as Bloch, Clarke, Hindemith, and a host of others are now sometimes relegated to a category of composers who were not sufficiently innovative to retain their relevance in critical circles. Other compositions by Bloch, Clarke, and Hindemith have certainly fallen out of favor and are currently less performed. Still, I hope this study has succeeded in highlighting the vital place their viola works of 1919 occupy in violists’ repertoires, and the incredibly rich perspectives they offer on the musical lives of their composers.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles


______. “Rebecca Clarke and Sonata Form: Questions of Gender and Genre.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 81, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 393–429.


<http://www.wikipedia.com>


______. “Bloch Manuscripts at the University of California” *Notes* 42, no. 1 (September 1985): 7–21.


Sound Recordings


________. Werke für Bratsche und Klavier. Ernst Wallfisch, viola; Lory Wallfisch, piano. EBS 6044, n.d.


Clarke, Rebecca. *Chamber Music*. Ian Jones, piano; Lorraine McAslan and David Juritz, violins; Michael Ponder, viola; Flesch String Quartet. Notes by Christopher Johnson. Dutton CDLX 7132, 2003.


**Musical Scores**


