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Nadia Boulanger's Fantaisie Variée Pour Piano Et Orchestre a Study of a Significant Unpublished Piece

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NADIA BOULANGER'S *FANTAISIE VARIÉE POUR PIANO ET ORCHESTRE*
A STUDY OF A SIGNIFICANT UNPUBLISHED PIECE

by

Sarah S. Elias

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Arts and Sciences
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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ABSTRACT

The research consists of a brief historical and biographical overview of Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979), a main focus of a thematic and motivic analysis of her work *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*, along with touching upon the influences of Fauré, Debussy, Widor, Reger, and Franck on its composition, and a mention of the process of obtaining the *Fantaisie* from the Centre international Nadia et Lili Boulanger. Boulanger produced works in a variety of genres, including: a fugue; more than thirty songs for voice and piano; two completed works for solo piano; three works for organ; several chamber works; three works for orchestra, including the *Fantaisie*; an opera and a song cycle in collaboration with Raoul Pugno (1852-1914); and a cantata. Her *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* remains unpublished to this day, despite its performances by Pugno and Boulanger across Europe in the early-twentieth century and several performances in recent years.

Well-known for her work as organist, pedagogue, conductor, and pianist, Nadia Boulanger left a formidable impression upon the music world. However, Boulanger has not received the same acknowledgement as composer. The premise of this research is to show the significance of the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*, to bring attention to its worthiness of recognition and publication, and to provide an analysis for those wishing to study it further.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Moak for her expert advice and extraordinary support throughout this process; without her assistance, this dissertation would not exist. I would also like to thank my graduate committee members: Dr. Ellen Elder, Dr. Michael Bunchman, Dr. Joseph Brumeloe, and Dr. Christopher Goertzen.

Special thanks to the Centre international Nadia et Lili Boulanger for sending copies of a full score and two-piano reduction of the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* for my use in this research and allowing excerpts from the scores to appear in the document, and to Radio France for sending orchestral parts for use in performance.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family.

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CHAPTER I–NADIA, THE COMPOSER

A Brief Biography

Well-known for her work as organist, pedagogue, conductor, and pianist, Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) left a formidable impression upon the music world, both in Europe and the United States. Her life and work influenced students Roy Harris, Aaron Copland, Dinu Lipatti, David Diamond, Virgil Thomson, Elliot Carter, Jean Françaix, and countless others who studied with her.¹ Even Joe Raposi, musical creator for the Muppets, studied with Boulanger.² However, this world-renowned teacher and performer never rose to the same level of recognition with her compositions, reasons for which will be discussed later. Her works nonetheless represent a variety of genres, including: a fugue; more than thirty songs for voice and piano, such as *Extase* (1901), and *Désespérance* (1902); two completed works for solo piano; three works for organ; several chamber works; three works for orchestra, including *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*; an opera and a song cycle in collaboration with Raoul Pugno (1852-1914); and a cantata *La Sirène*. Over the years some of her works, including those for piano, voice, and chamber ensemble, gained publication.

The *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* (1912), composed for her mentor and collaborator, virtuoso pianist Raoul Pugno, received multiple performances in Europe

1. Teresa Walters, “Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences,” vol. 1 (DMA diss., Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 1981), 54, 63, 67, and 71, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

2. Don G. Campbell, *Master Teacher: Nadia Boulanger* (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 44, 51.

with Boulanger as conductor from 1912-1914,³ yet never earned publication and still today remains mostly unknown. Reasons for the work's lack of publication will be mentioned later. Pugno always performed as soloist for the work. However, several times Boulanger did not conduct her own work, due to her gender, for example in Paris and Belgium.⁴ On a tour together in Russia, Pugno died suddenly on the day of the *Fantaisie*'s scheduled performance in Moscow, and the concert did not take place. No documentation exists that reveals another performance during Boulanger's lifetime.⁵ Only recently the piece resurfaced, first coming to the author's attention with pianist David Greilsammer's 2010 recording with the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra.⁶ More recently, pianist Florian Uhlig recorded it in 2017 with the German Radio Saarbrücken-Kaiserslautern Philharmonic Orchestra.⁷

Boulanger grew up in Paris with a French father and Russian mother. Her father, Ernest Boulanger (1815-1900), began as a student at the Conservatoire de musique et de déclamation [acting] de Paris (now known as the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris, but will be referred to in the remainder of this document as

3. Walters, vol. 1, 37.

4. Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music* (New York, NY: Norton & Company, Inc., 1982), 105.

5. Walters, vol. 1, 44.

6. Nadia Boulanger, *Tansman, Boulanger, Gershwin*, with David Greilsammer (piano) and the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Steven Sloane, recorded 2010, Naive V5224, CD.

7. Nadia Boulanger, *Klavierkonzerte Vol. II.*, with Florian Uhlig (piano) and the German Radio Saarbrücken-Kaiserslautern Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Pablo González, recorded 2017, SWR Classic 19027, CD.

the Conservatoire de Paris). Beginning his lessons in 1830 at the age of sixteen, Ernest studied piano and composition, and won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1835. Later, he secured a position at the Conservatoire de Paris teaching voice and directing choral groups. He also composed choral works and operas, though his operas did not generate much success.⁸

According to Nadia Boulanger's mother Raïssa (1856-1935), née Rosalie Myshchetskaya, Raïssa first met Ernest when he traveled to Russia to perform in 1874, although no performance programs or other evidence document his trip.⁹ Raïssa journeyed to Paris in 1876, became one of his students, and they wed in 1877.¹⁰ Though Raïssa lacked formal musical training, she pushed Nadia extremely hard in her studies throughout her childhood.¹¹ American musicologist Léonie Rosenstiel, chosen by Boulanger to write her biography (published in 1982), drew upon interviews with Boulanger herself, Boulanger's close friends, and accessible correspondence records. Rosenstiel relates: "Mme. Boulanger required Nadia to study almost constantly.... Raïssa was eternally present, cajoling Nadia to do more, refusing to accept fatigue or boredom or any other excuse."¹² This environment molded Nadia Boulanger into the hardworking, exacting perfectionist that defined her throughout her life.

8. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 10-13.

9. "Raïssa Boulanger," Tchaikovsky Research, last modified November 19, 2019, http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Ra%C3%AFssa_Boulanger.

10. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 13-15.

11. Ibid., 24.

12. Ibid.

Nadia Boulanger officially entered the Conservatoire de Paris at age nine with solfège studies, though she had begun auditing classes unofficially at age seven and commenced organ studies with Louis Vierne at age eight.¹³ Other teachers and influences upon her musical environment, both at home and at the Conservatoire de Paris, included Paul Vidal, Alexandre Guilmant, Charles-Marie Widor, Camille Saint-Saëns, Claude Debussy, Charles Gounod, and Gabriel Fauré.¹⁴ Fauré stands out as one of the greatest influences on Boulanger's compositions, along with Debussy, Reger, and Franck.

One of the most significant persons in Nadia Boulanger's life, in regard to both her musical career and her personal life, was Raoul Pugno. Pugno acted not only as Boulanger's mentor and collaborator, as previously mentioned, he also knew her father as a colleague. Pugno taught harmony and later piano at the Conservatoire de Paris. Pugno's impact upon Nadia's life and career brought both positive and negative consequences: promoting her as a concert pianist and organist, but also creating scandal in the public eye by their close relationship.¹⁵ Boulanger and Pugno toured Europe, performing solo, duo, and orchestral works from 1908 to 1914, until Pugno's aforementioned death in Moscow during a tour.

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918), Nadia's younger sister by six years and her only surviving sibling,¹⁶ also significantly impacted Nadia's life. Nadia took on the role of

13. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 4.

14. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 43 and 37.

15. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 7.

16. Ernest and Raïssa's first daughter Ernestine Mina Juliette Boulanger, born January 16, 1885, died at 19 months of age. A year following Mina Juliette's death in 1887, Nadia was born. Lili was born six years later, and a fourth daughter, Léa Marie-Louise Boulanger, was born

Lili's first piano teacher, and the sisters always shared a close bond. In addition to piano studies, Lili studied violin, voice, harp, and composition at the Conservatoire. In 1913, Lili won the prestigious Prix de Rome, an achievement that eluded Nadia.¹⁷ However, Lili's health presented challenges throughout her life and she unfortunately died at the age of 24.

Nadia decided to forgo composing shortly after Lili's passing, only six years after the completion of the *Fantaisie variée*. Nadia regarded her sister as the composer, not herself. In fact, Boulanger told her former teacher Fauré: "If there's one thing I'm sure of, it is just that. I wrote useless music."¹⁸ Deeply affected by her sister's early passing, Nadia thereafter spent a great deal of time completing Lili's unfinished works and advancing Lili's compositions.¹⁹ In her last years, Nadia Boulanger remained greatly affected by her younger sister's death. Former Boulanger student Alan Kendall writes in his book, *The Tender Tyrant*:

It was the experience of teaching Lili that made Nadia Boulanger decide to leave composing to others. She made up her mind to devote herself to encouraging, guiding and developing her sister's talent, because she felt that her own gifts as a composer were inferior by far to those of her sister. She has of course written pieces, some of which are published, and is reported to have said that if she were to relive her time she would not give up composing so soon—not because she

March 24, 1898. Léa was the last child born to Ernest and Raissa. Tragically, she died at four months of age. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 17, 29, and 38.

17. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 6 and 13.

18. Bruno Monsaingeon, *Mademoiselle: Conversations with Nadia Boulanger* (Manchester, Great Britain: Carcanet Press Limited, 1985), 24. Also cited in Don G. Campbell (1984), *Master Teacher: Nadia Boulanger* (Washington: Pastoral Press), 31.

19. Walters, vol. 1, 20 and 37.

feels she would have produced any great work, but because she feels it is good for a musician to practice composition.²⁰

Review of Literature

A number of sources exist on Nadia Boulanger, especially those that relate to her life and to her work as a pedagogue and conductor. Many authors penned books, articles, and dissertations that discuss her methods and perspectives as teacher. Kendra Preston Leonard's *The Conservatoire Américain: A History* also discusses Boulanger as director of the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau.²¹ Boulanger's influence on the generations of musicians that studied with her has also been reviewed, especially her impact upon American performers and composers. However, very little information about Boulanger's compositions themselves exist. Mentions of her work occur in various books and articles, including Caroline Potter's article in *Grove Music Online*; Caroline Potter's book, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*; Léonie Rosenstiel's book, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*; and Alan Kendall's book *The Tender Tyrant, Nadia Boulanger: A Life Devoted to Music*.²²

Other than in Caroline Potter's book on the Boulanger sisters, the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* only appears in lists of works or in a biographical context.

20. Alan Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant: Nadia Boulanger: A Life Devoted to Music* (Wilton, CT: Lyceum Books, Inc., 1976), 9. Alan Kendall was born in 1939. Author of some twenty books, he was a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, prior to his studies with Boulanger. Kendall biographical information from: <https://thamesandhudson.com/authors/alan-kendall-69908>, accessed Feb. 16, 2020.

21. Kendra Preston Leonard, *The Conservatoire Américain: A History* (Landham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007).

22. See *References* section for further citation information on listed sources.

Potter's book devotes several pages to the *Fantaisie* and gives some background information, details on where the piece was housed in 2006, along with a short overview of the work itself. Potter states that the manuscript survives in a "fragmentary state" (thus "unperformable") and shows "extensive revision."²³ She writes, "It is a great pity that Boulanger's *Rhapsodie variée* for piano and orchestra [another name for the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*] now only exists in a fragmentary state, as it is one of her few large-scale works."²⁴

However, sometime since the publication of Potter's book, a complete score, available from the Documentation Musicale de Radio France with the authorization of the Centre international Nadia et Lili Boulanger, was created from the original two-piano reduction manuscript, the full-score manuscript, and orchestra material used for the 1913 premiere and other concerts of that time period.²⁵ Pianist David Greilsammer, who first recorded the work in 2010, informed me via his Lomonaco Artists representative Sarah Bruce that "...the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France produced a score and orchestral parts especially for that recording project. They own this material and they were responsible for it, under the supervision of the Boulanger Foundation in Paris."²⁶ An editorial note prefacing that score states: "This edition was made following the

23. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 66.

24. *Ibid.*, 73.

25. Nadia Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*, full score, Documentation musicale de Radio France, Paris, France. Source information from the "Note éditoriale."

26. David Greilsammer, response to author's e-mail inquiry (May 30, 2015), as quoted in Sarah Bruce, e-mail message to author, June 1, 2015.

manuscript sources conserved in the music department of France's Bibliothèque nationale, at the Museum of Music in Paris, at the Nadia Boulanger Media Resources Centre of the Conservatoire national supérieur musique et danse in Lyon, and in the archives of the Fondation internationale Nadia et Lili Boulanger.”²⁷ Recent recordings and performances by pianists David Greilsammer, Florian Uhlig, Alexandra Dariescu, and myself all feature the same realization. The editorial note of this score also mentions that it observes cuts that were noted by Nadia Boulanger.²⁸ Without manuscript copies to study however, detailed study by this author of the modifications and cuts were unfortunately not possible.

As for the above-mentioned short overview by Potter of the *Fantaisie*, she briefly references possible influences and breaks the piece into sections,²⁹ but does not delve into an extensive analysis of motives and themes. Potter speaks only briefly of the possible influence of two solo piano pieces (*Theme and Variations in C-sharp minor* by Fauré and *Thème et variations* by Lili Boulanger)³⁰ upon the *Fantaisie*. This research, however, focuses mainly on the possible influence of works for piano and orchestra, as well as the possible influence of some works for two pianos, upon the *Fantaisie*. The main goal of this research is thus to provide further information, especially that of additional influences, and a more in-depth analysis of the work.

27. Boulanger, full score, “Note éditoriale.” Translated from French.

28. Ibid.

29. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 73-77.

30. Ibid., 76.

CHAPTER II—THE UNPUBLISHED PIECE

Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre

A number of possible reasons exist for why Nadia Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* (1912) remains unpublished. It appears that an intent toward publication transpired, since the 1914 orchestral manuscript in a copyist's hand bears a Heugel stamp identifying it as a possible pre-publication copy.³¹ However, the publication never occurred, possibly due to Pugno's sudden passing in 1914.

A second possible reason relates to other circumstances of her life. At the time Boulanger composed the piece, she was still in her early twenties. Given the passing of her father in 1900, Boulanger already functioned as provider for her mother and her sister Lili. Boulanger thus lived an extremely busy schedule that included performing, teaching, composing, and caring for her family—both financially and physically. In her “spare time,” she worked as a music critic.³² No extra time for pursuing the publication of her own work existed. Boulanger also likely had little desire to follow through with publication given the passing of her beloved mentor.

Third, Boulanger lacked a positive image for many years in the public eye, possibly deterring the interest of publishers at the time. Her career decisions, her personal life, and her compositions encountered unfavorable comments and critique. Independent and strong, Boulanger lived in a time when expectations for women included a submissive, feminine attitude. Known to speak her mind and do what she thought best,

31. Caroline Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 74.

32. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 55.

not necessarily what society expected, success often eluded Boulanger as composer and performer, mainly due to dislike.³³ Although her ties with Pugno opened doors for public performances and tours, their close companionship cast a negative light on her character. Critics often gave her poor reviews, their compliments veiled, and many times hinted towards impropriety in her personal life or her less-than-feminine look and attitude. Positive feedback always came coupled with disdain. For example, after a premiere of Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* in 1913, one critic wrote, "One could assuredly not say that the *Fantaisie pour piano et orchestre* of Mlle. Nadia Boulanger is not of concert caliber; Mr. Raoul Pugno even brought to its interpretation the best resources of his talent as virtuoso-poet. But it does not seem that this *Fantaisie* justifies the instrumental deployment which accompanies it."³⁴

Fourth, Boulanger abandoned composing before she found the necessary time to advance her compositions. After her sister Lili died, Nadia Boulanger spent all her extra composing energies in finishing and publishing her sister's works as stated previously. Scorning her own work as unworthy and of no use, Boulanger saw Lili as the composition talent.³⁵ She said of herself, "... I am incapable of writing anything valuable. I realized at twenty that I wasn't a composer."³⁶ Teresa Walters sought to study several of Boulanger's works for her own dissertation at Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins

33. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 62-63, 74, 79.

34. Walters, vol. 1, 44.

35. Ibid.

36. Monsaingeon, *Mademoiselle: Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*, 62.

University while Boulanger was still alive and corresponded with her. Walters relates the result of their 1978 correspondence:

When unable to obtain a copy of Boulanger's *Rhapsodie for Piano and Orchestra* [another name for the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*] elsewhere, the present writer addressed an inquiry directly to Nadia Boulanger. The writer further requested permission to study Boulanger's manuscripts of works submitted for the Prix de Rome. Her response symbolizes Boulanger's attitude toward her works and her self-evaluation as composer: "Not one of these works ever deserves analysis or comments. The most that can be done is to quote them, but--Sorry to disappoint you but fortunately I do not place me (sic) where unfortunately I am not."³⁷

Boulanger also stated in an interview with Bruno Monsaingeon,

Boulanger: ... the music I have written is useless, not even badly done, useless!

It is very offensive. One does not wish to write useless music.

Monsaingeon: It's you who have decided that.

Boulanger: Oh, everyone knows!

Monsaingeon: Has it been played?

Boulanger: Never! Not since I was twenty.... There is nothing to it. There's no personality.³⁸

If Nadia Boulanger found her compositions worthy of publication and sought more actively to find publishers for her own pieces throughout her life, she undoubtedly would have found some success. She remained unworthy of acclaim as a composer in her own mind and this belief prohibited her from seeking publication. However, as Alan Kendall described, she put aside her efforts toward composition, and "she came to know that she could teach, and do it supremely well. This is why she is world famous."³⁹

37. Walters, vol. 1, 46.

38. Monsaingeon, *Mademoiselle: Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*, 32.

39. Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant*, 46.

CHAPTER III–INFLUENCES

The Musical Environment

The *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* reveals many of the most profound musical influences upon Boulanger's life in a single work. Her attachment to Raoul Pugno is evident. Also, in the *Fantaisie*, elements of Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, Charles-Marie Widor, Max Reger, and César Franck merit attention.

Boulanger dedicated the *Fantaisie* to her mentor, Pugno, as previously mentioned. However, Pugno's influence goes beyond soloist and dedication. Caroline Potter writes:

Pugno was the first soloist and the probable inspiration behind the work, not least because he had composed a *Concertstück* for piano and orchestra which he premiered in Paris in 1900. This connection is all the more plausible because Boulanger conducted the Pugno work (with the composer [Pugno] again at the piano) for her debut on the podium on 17 April 1912 in La-Roche-sur-Yon.⁴⁰

Potter however does not specify any additional information regarding a connection between Boulanger's work and Pugno's. Also, the *Concertstück* does not carry the number of similarities to the *Fantaisie* as does Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, Op. 46, the latter seen further below in this chapter. The *Concertstück*, structured as a theme and variations in its form, similar to the *Fantaisie*, weaves the first three notes of the piece throughout all three movements. These three notes act as the start of an opening theme and a main motive, similar to the opening theme and smaller motives found repeatedly throughout Boulanger's work. The other possible connection drawn between the two works is the continuous nature. Though Pugno's *Concertstück* divides into three

40. Potter, *Nadia and Lili Boulanger*, 73. The information on the inspiration and connection of the work is Potter's. The circumstances of the *Concertstück* performance referenced by Potter are drawn from Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 97.

movements, the markings demand that it be played without pause. Other than these general similarities, the two pieces have little in common. However, desiring another original piece for collaborative performance may have inspired Boulanger to write the *Fantaisie*. Her composition would complement their earlier performance of Pugno's work, also with Pugno as soloist and Boulanger as conductor. As an aspiring conductor, the opportunity to conduct these original works held great value for Boulanger.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) oversaw the Conservatoire de Paris from 1905-1920 as director. He taught Boulanger composition and emerged as one of the most significant influences on Boulanger's music and life. She admired him greatly, and they remained friends until his death. Boulanger wrote a poetic eulogy for him following his passing in 1924.⁴¹ Anticipating Impressionism, Fauré used modes in his compositions as early as 1877 and often set the same basic material side by side in different modes,⁴² a technique picked up by Debussy and seen in Boulanger's work. For example, in Fauré's work *Sicilienne*, he uses Dorian and then Phrygian mode in the melodic line (Ex. 1: Fauré, *Sicilienne*, mm. 1-9): Dorian seen in the cello part in measures 1-5, and Phrygian found in measures 6-9.⁴³ Modal writing, especially in linear passages, permeates the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre*. Further reference of Boulanger's use of modes will follow in the upcoming discussion of Debussy's influence.

41. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 175-176.

42. Jean-Michel Nectoux, "Fauré, Gabriel." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.09366>.

43. Darryl Lee White, "Tonal Layers in the Music of Gabriel Fauré," (DMA diss., The University of Arizona, 2018), 112-113, <http://hdl.handle.net/10150/630220>.

Ex. 1: Fauré, *Sicilienne*, mm. 1-9.

Another important influence on her music was Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Pianist Raoul Pugno and Boulanger performed Debussy's *Petite Suite* for piano four hands (published 1889) on their European tours in the early 1900s.⁴⁴ Interestingly, Debussy composed a *Fantaisie* for Piano and Orchestra in 1890. However, it remains unknown whether Boulanger was familiar with it before writing her own *Fantaisie* in 1912. A postponed premiere for the Debussy *Fantaisie* prevented its public performance until 1919, after his death.⁴⁵

44. Walters, vol. 1, 29-30.

45. François Lesure and Roy Howat, "Debussy, (Achille-)Claude." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07353>.

Regardless of whether or not Boulanger heard Debussy's *Fantaisie*, the influence of Debussy's style permeates her compositions, through an extensive use of modality, whole-tone scales, and parallel chords. Of Debussy, pianist and scholar of French music Roy Howat writes, "Debussy's inventions bear equally on harmony, rhythm, texture and form.... His harmony inseparably binds modality and tonality."⁴⁶ And Caroline Potter, a specialist researcher in French music, writes of Nadia Boulanger, "Her musical language is often highly chromatic (though always tonally based), and Debussy's influence is apparent in her fondness for modally-inflected melodic lines and parallel chordal progressions."⁴⁷ Debussy also combined and contrasted different modal scales within a work. For example, in his piano work *L'Isle joyeuse* (published in 1904), he begins in Lydian mode, adds a G-natural to start shifting to Mixolydian and finally ends in a whole-tone scale (Ex. 2: Debussy, *L'Isle joyeuse*, mm. 10-11, 22-23).



Ex. 2: Debussy, *L'Isle joyeuse*, mm. 10-11, 22-23.

46. François Lesure and Roy Howat, "Debussy, (Achille-)Claude." *Grove Music Online*.

47. Caroline Potter, "Boulanger, (Juliette) Nadia," *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.03705>.

In Boulanger's *Fantaisie*, she often juxtaposes different modal scales, for example: a mixolydian scale (Ex. 3: mm. 529) followed by a whole-tone scale (Ex. 3: mm. 530).



Ex. 3: Boulanger, *Fantaisie*, mm. 527-530.

Max Reger (1873-1916) also deserves recognition as another influence on Boulanger. Reger composed two large sets of variations for solo piano (his Op. 81 on a theme of Bach in 1904 and his Op. 134 on a theme of Telemann in 1914) and two sets for two pianos (also in 1904 and 1914, based on themes from Beethoven and Mozart respectively).⁴⁸ Boulanger and Pugno performed Reger's two-piano *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven*, Op. 86, on their European tours between 1908 and 1914.⁴⁹ John Williamson, an authority on Austro-German music between 1850 and 1950, describes Reger's treatment of variation form:

Variation form (on themes by Beethoven [Op. 86], Hiller [Op. 100] and Mozart [Op. 132a]) is one of the strongest threads running through the various genres in which Reger worked. Although the Hiller set [for orchestra (1907)] is probably

48. John Williamson, "Reger, (Johann Baptist Joseph) Max(imilian)." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23064>.

49. Walters, vol. 1, 29.

the best known, the [Op. 81] Bach variations for solo piano give a better indication of the freedom with which Reger handled the form. Themes are transformed from *cantus firmi* into complex motivic material.... If his phrases are often short-winded, if contrapuntal elaboration is favoured over symphonic development, if progressive chromatic elaboration is preferred to long-range tonal planning, these characteristics contribute to works which, in spite of their Baroque elements, belong to the world of the 19th-century character piece.⁵⁰

The following excerpts from Reger's *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven*, Op. 86, reveal how he takes the opening theme (Ex. 4: mm. 1-4) and draws it out, spinning the simple idea into an elaborate, chromatic, complex variation (Ex. 5: mm. 102-104).

Max Reger, Op. 86.
Rev. von Theodor Prusse.

Andante. (♩ = 66)

Klavier I.

innocentemente e cantabile

p

p

Klavier II.

Andante. (♩ = 66)

Ex. 4: Reger, *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven*, Op. 86, mm. 1-4.

50. Williamson, "Reger, (Johann Baptist Joseph) Max(imilian)." *Grove Music Online*.

16

Andante sostenuto. (♩ = 60-68)

sempre una corda e grazioso
pp

Andante sostenuto. (♩ = 60-68)

sempre una corda
pp

sempre poco marcato il-basso

sempre dolceiss.

sempre dolceiss.

Ex. 5: Reger, *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven*, Op. 86, mm. 102-104.

Boulanger's style of fantasia favors the description of Reger's writing in the following quote by F. E. Kirby: "... Reger had a broader concept of variations than did other composers: most often he transformed the traditional form into a fantasia based on motives taken from the theme, varying both its rhythm and characteristic melodic intervals."⁵¹ Kirby's description of Reger's variations also describes Boulanger's

51. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995), 252.

Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre perfectly, as will be seen in the following thematic analysis chapter.

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937), Boulanger's organ teacher, wrote his own fantasias: a *Grande Phantasia* for organ and orchestra in 1865; and also a *Fantaisie pour piano et orchestre*, Op. 62, in 1889.⁵² Boulanger possibly heard these works during her years of study with Widor at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1897 to 1904, since their composition took place before her work with him as a student. And, if she indeed heard them or became familiar with them, they may have sparked her interest in this particular genre and instrumentation.

César Franck's celebrated *Variations symphoniques* for orchestra and solo piano, Op. 46, composed in 1885 and published in 1893, also serves as a link to Boulanger's *Fantaisie*. Boulanger and her composition teacher, Gabriel Fauré, were both admirers of Franck (1822-1890), and Boulanger played Franck's works in performance settings.⁵³ In fact, following Boulanger's second place in the Prix de Rome competition in 1908 for her newly-composed cantata *La Sirène*, a review of the work stated: "... her musical writing is richly inventive and strong, the melodic line is clear and expressive, but owes a little too much (as the harmonies which support it) to César Franck and Gabriel Fauré."⁵⁴

Franck attended the Conservatoire de Paris as a student from 1837 to 1842 after moving to Paris in 1835 from Belgium. France remained his home country until his death

52. Félix Raugel and Andrew Thomson, "Widor, Charles-Marie(-Jean-Albert)." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.30261>.

53. Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 54.

54. Walters, vol. 1, 33.

in 1890. Franck studied with Zimmerman and Reicha at the Conservatoire de Paris, though he left the conservatory in 1842 to embark on a concert tour. The first performance of his *Variations symphoniques* took place in Paris in 1886.⁵⁵ Generally considered as one of the greatest of Franck's works, the *Variations symphoniques* enjoys great renown.⁵⁶

Upon observation, Franck's *Variations symphoniques* and Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* reveal striking similarities. John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet note Franck's phrase structure: "Often Franck developed complex phrase structures using a kind of mosaic of variants of one or two germinal motifs...."⁵⁷ For example, Franck takes a rhythm or short phrase and repeatedly constructs new themes or variations. In the analysis given by William Raymond James in his DMA dissertation on Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, James points out this technique early on, "The fourth variation begins in measure 171 (in D major) as the rhythmic germ of [Motive] I infiltrates [Motive] III."⁵⁸ Boulanger, as seen in the upcoming analysis chapter of this dissertation, also generated her phrases and variations for the entire work from several small motives, sometimes as simple as two or three notes or intervals.

55. John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10121>.

56. William Raymond James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra," (DMA diss., University of Miami, 1988), 66, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

57. Trevitt and Fauquet, "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)." *Grove Music Online*.

58. James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra," 81.

As far as overall form, the *Fantaisie variée* and the *Variations symphoniques* both utilize cyclic form. Researcher William Raymond James describes Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, "There are no breaks between variations, which leaves the continuity unbroken. Franck's use of variation technique is not far removed from his pioneering work with the cyclic procedure that formed the basis of several of his later compositions...."⁵⁹ Furthermore, elements of fantasia permeate Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, despite the omission of "fantasia" in its title. James addresses both the form and the fantasia nature: "The formal basis of Franck's *Variations symphoniques* does not stultify the work because the impression made, as Tovey once described, is that of 'a finely and freely organized fantasia.'"⁶⁰ A flexibility pervades both works since the variations remain blurred, not broken into clear sections. Both works function as extended single movements without breaks.

The form of Franck's work is likely an influence upon Boulanger. But also a close connection between Franck's opening melodic theme (Ex. 6: mm. 1-4) and Boulanger's theme appears (Ex. 7: mm. 1-4). The *Variations symphoniques* opens with a "tense, rhythmic theme [Ex. 6: mm. 1-4] containing a rising half-step as its characteristic interval.... [T]he piano answers [Ex. 8: mm. 5-9] with a drooping, plaintive response."⁶¹ These words also describe the *Fantaisie variée*. In fact, upon hearing the opening of Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, one might mistake it briefly for the *Fantaisie variée*.

59. James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra," 70.

60. Lawrence Davies, *César Franck and His Circle* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 223, quoted in William Raymond James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra," (DMA diss., University of Miami, 1988), 70, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

61. James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra," 70-71.

Boulanger also focuses on the half-step interval, utilizing it throughout the *Fantaisie*.

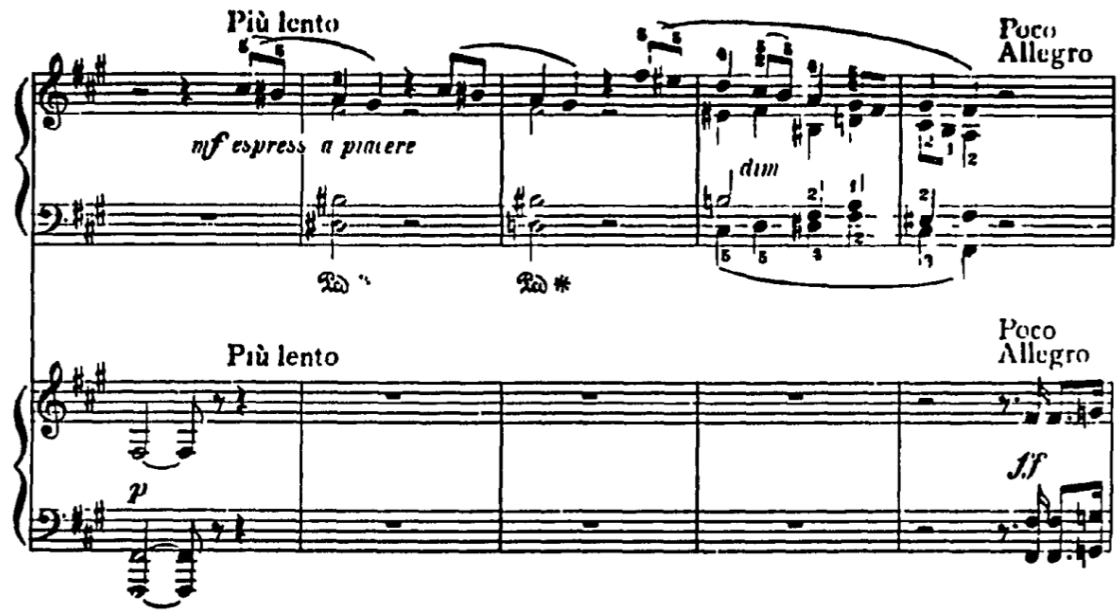
Similar to Franck's *Variations*, the orchestra opens Boulanger's *Fantaisie* with a rhythmic and tense half-step inspired melody (Ex. 7: mm. 1-4). Like Franck's work, the piano responds in Boulanger's piece with a plaintive echo (Ex. 9: mm. 11-14).

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 6: Franck, *Variations symphoniques*, mm. 1-4. The score is for Piano and Orchestra. The Piano part is marked "Poco Allegro" and shows four measures of whole rests. The Orchestra part is also marked "Poco Allegro" and shows a rhythmic melody in the strings, starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and ending with a *dim* (diminuendo) dynamic.

Ex. 6: Franck, *Variations symphoniques*, mm. 1-4.

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 7: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 1-4. The score is for Piano Solo. The Piano part is marked "Poco Allegro" and shows four measures of whole rests. The Orchestra part is also marked "Poco Allegro" and shows a rhythmic melody in the strings, starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and ending with a *dim* (diminuendo) dynamic.

Ex. 7: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 1-4.

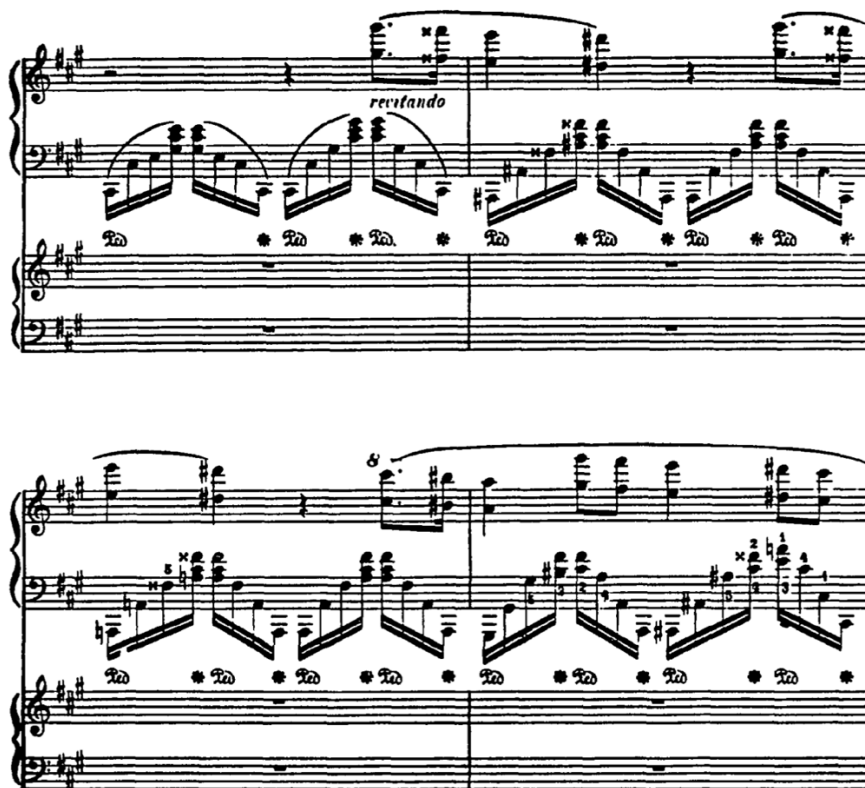


Ex. 8: Franck, *Variations symphoniques*, mm. 5-9.



Ex. 9: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 11-14.

Similar accompaniment patterns, especially in the piano's left hand, occur in both pieces; for example, a rolling and sonorous left-hand accompaniment pattern, seen in the following excerpts (the Franck in Ex. 10: mm. 49-52 and the Boulanger in Ex. 11: mm. 40-46).



Ex. 10: Franck, *Variations symphoniques*, mm. 49-52.

40 **Large**

pas très fort mais avec grandeur

44

Ex. 11: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 40-46.

In summary, though not a direct copy of Franck's work, the Boulanger *Fantaisie variée* possesses remarkable similarities throughout: the use of germinal motives; cyclic form; a continuous whole; elements of free fantasia; and similar opening themes as well as left-hand accompanimental patterns.

CHAPTER IV—ANALYSIS

Thematic and Motivic Analysis

True to its title, Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* is a fantasia in character through its use of: improvisational style writing, with many stops and starts; frequent changes in tempo; rubato; and embellishments. However, the *Fantaisie* also reveals strong elements of a theme and variations work, as the word “variée” in the title suggests. This chapter focuses on a thematic and motivic analysis of the *Fantaisie*.

Since orchestral performances of the work occurred during Nadia Boulanger's life, the piece was most likely orchestrated by Boulanger. Unfortunately, permission to see a copy of the full-score manuscript never transpired. Similarly, a two-piano autograph manuscript reduction also exists, though after two years of inquiries, a copy of the two-piano manuscript was never released for my use. Realizations from the original manuscripts were finally sent electronically by Radio France and the Centre international Nadia et Lili Boulanger in France. The Centre also gave me permission to perform the work and use examples for my dissertation. The process of obtaining this particular piece for performance was lengthy, from hearing a recording by David Greilsammer in March of 2015, to finally receiving a full score in September of 2015, a two-piano reduction only in August of 2018, and orchestral parts not until February 28, 2019. To the best of my knowledge, the first performance of the work in the United States occurred on March 6, 2019, at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, with myself as soloist. Other recent live performances took place in 2019, given by Romanian-born British

pianist Alexandra Dariescu on March 29, 2019, in Bucharest, and on April 6, 2019, in London.⁶²

The orchestration for the *Fantaisie* includes:

- 2 flutes, 1 piccolo
- 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 1 english horn, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon
- 4 french horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 tuba
- timpani, triangle, snare drum, trap drum, cymbals, bass drum
- harp, strings
- solo piano

The overall structure of the *Fantaisie*, shown below in Table 1, reveals both the variation and fantasia characters. Divided sectionally, the work can be broken into three main segments: an introduction, a loose set of variations, and a coda. The table reveals six themes drawn from the original theme and three motives. Numerous tempo and key changes demonstrate the fantasia character, as does the developmental material woven throughout the Variations and Coda sections.

62. www.alexandradariescu.com, accessed February 17, 2020.

General Form	Measure s of Formal Section	Themes (measure number of first appearance)	Motives (measure number of first appearance)	Section Indication (measure number of first appearance)	Key (at start of section)
Introduction	1-39	Theme 1 (m. 1)	Motive 1 (m. 3)	Lent/Grave (m. 1)	c minor
Variations	40-397	Theme 1 (m. 42) Theme 2 (m.159) Theme 3 (m. 290) Theme 4 (m. 331)	Motive 1 (m. 42) Motive 2 (m. 79) Motive 3 (m. 128)	Large (m. 40) Trés sonore (m. 89) Allegro (m. 147) Tempo più vivo (m. 159) Moderato (m. 237) Andante (m. 280) Quarter = 66 (m. 290) Sans lenteur (m. 331)	c minor b-flat minor D-flat major b minor A-flat major c minor
Coda	398-547	Theme 5 (m. 398) Theme 6 (m. 422)		Allegro (m. 398) Plus vite (m. 493)	c minor

Table 1 Boulanger *Fantaisie*, overall structure.

Note: All theme and motive labels here and throughout this paper are that of the author of this research.

A single-movement work, the *Fantaisie* opens with an introduction in c minor, the main key for the work, with the first theme (Theme 1) stated in the low voices of the orchestra: bassoon, harp, cello, and bass (Ex. 12: mm. 1-10). Marked “Lent. Grave,” the

theme begins with a solemn and somewhat dark character. A very slow 3/4 time, the quarter note equaling 60, adds to the darkness and heaviness of the opening.

Lent. Grave ♩ = 60

Piano Solo

Theme 1

①
7

ff sans vitesse

Ex. 12: Boulangier, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 1-10.

The solo piano responds with a partial restatement of Theme 1 up a fourth, beginning on ‘C’ instead of ‘G’ (Ex. 13: mm. 11-14). Though again marked “grave,” the piano displays a freer (“a piacere”) and more hopeful, brighter quality through the change of registers and harmonies rather than the initial darkness at the opening of the work. A ritard, “cédez,” in measures 13-14 prepares the return of the theme at the “a Tempo” in measure 15. The theme is stated in full by the piano in measures 15-24 (Ex. 14), again on ‘C,’ with the orchestra adding harmonic support starting in measure 19.



Ex. 13: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 11-14.

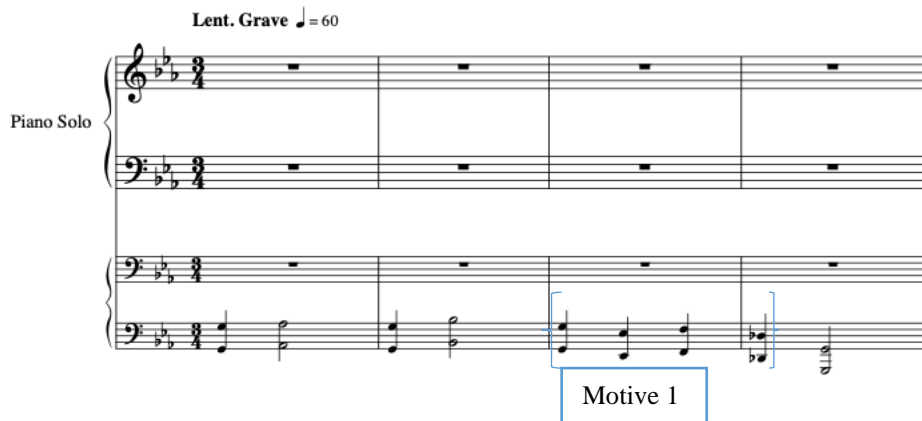
Ex. 14: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 15-24.

Another partial restatement follows (Ex. 15: mm. 25-28), but in b-flat minor, up a seventh from the original statement, that leads to a brief transition using a motive (Motive 1) from the third and fourth measures of the opening theme (Ex. 16, see the quarter notes in mm. 3-4). Motive 1 consists of: a descending major third, an ascending whole step, and another descending major third. From the very beginning of the work, small motives

within the themes, such as Motive 1, occur throughout the variations. Transformed throughout the piece, these motives often become themes in and of themselves.



Ex. 15: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 25-28.



Ex. 16: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 1-4.

A transition beginning at measure 29 brings the piece back to c minor, ends the introduction section, and begins the first variation of the theme, starting at measure 40 (Ex. 17: mm. 40-49). Still at a slow tempo, marked “Large” at measure 40, the piano opens up in this variation into a grand and dramatic restatement of the theme, minus the first two bars (thus emphasizing Motive 1), with a rolling left-hand arpeggiated

accompaniment pattern while the right hand sings the melodic line above. Boulanger indicates “pas très fort mais avec grandeur.”

40 **Large**

pas très fort mais avec grandeur

44

47

Ex. 17: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 40-49.

After Theme 1’s reappearance in measure 42, the theme is inverted (with slight alteration) in measures 49-52 (Ex. 18: mm. 47-52), filling out the variation. This inverted version of the theme does not reappear in full, though alterations and fragments of the material appear in later measures.

47

Inverted Theme

50

⑥

p

Ex. 18: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 47-52.

At measure 61, marked “Plus intense,” a development of the opening-theme motive occurs, with the orchestra repeating Motive 1, while the piano sings a lyrical new counter melody (see mm. 61-64 of Ex. 19).

59

⑦ Plus intense

Motive 1

62

cresc. poco a poco

Ex. 19: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 59-64.

Then, a new variation (see Ex. 20) begins in measure 69, a boisterous broken-chord accompaniment in the piano with right-hand octaves (marked “*énergique*”) featuring Theme 1; and the orchestra moving harmonically in quarter-note rhythm in the lower range (from measure 70) along with a rising eighth-note pattern in the orchestra’s treble register building the intensity. This variation, once again in c minor, begins another developmental section, building excitement through repetition of a two-note sigh motive, Motive 2 (mm. 82-83 in Ex. 21), that rises higher and higher with every restatement.

⑧

69 *énergique* *ff*

72 *sans diminuer*

Ex. 20: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 69-74.

78

81

Motive 2

Ex. 21: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 78-83.

Finally, in measure 87, the drama peaks with a crash of the cymbals and a flourish in the piano for two bars (see Ex. 22). Then, a fortissimo return marked “Trés sonore” of the first theme in b-flat minor in both piano and orchestra immediately follows (see Ex. 22: mm. 89-92).

The musical score for Ex. 22, Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée*, measures 87-92, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 87-90) is marked 'brilliant' and features a piano accompaniment with a 'brilliant' section. The second system (measures 91-92) is marked 'Très sonore' and features a piano accompaniment with a 'Très sonore' section. The score is written for piano and harp.

Ex. 22: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 87-92.

A partial restatement of a slightly altered Theme 1 in the piano ensues in measures 99-104 (see Ex. 23), similar to measures 11-14 (Ex. 13) at the beginning of the piece. A *ritardando* in measures 103-104 (see Ex. 23) leads to a double bar at measure 105 which marks a slower tempo, “un peu plus lent,” and a key change to D-flat major. Then the orchestra gives another partial statement (mm. 105-111) of Theme 1 in the cornet and viola while the violins provide a lyrical falling eighth-note accompaniment based on the two-note sigh of Motive 2 (Ex. 23).

97 *sans hâte* *p* *espressivo* Theme 1

100 *molto espress.*

103 *rit...* 13 *un peu plus lent*

Motive 2

Theme 1

107 *rit...* *en dehors*

Ex. 23: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 97-111.

In measure 112, at the “a Tempo” (Ex. 24), the solo piano has a short solo section using both Motive 1 and Motive 2: Motive 1 seen first in the octaves of the right hand (Ex. 24), and Motive 2 beginning in measure 118, also in the right hand (Ex. 25: mm. 118-120).

Motive 1

Ex. 24: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 112-117.

Motive 2

Ex. 25: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 118-120.

A parallel-chord passage begins in the piano in measure 126 (Ex. 27), reminiscent of Debussy (Ex. 26: Debussy, “Le vent dans la plaine” from *Préludes (Livre 1)*, mm. 9-

12). The orchestra joins in at measure 126 (not shown in two-piano reduction) with Motive 1 singing softly in the flute and muted strings. The cornet, supported by the second violins, joins in at measure 128 with Motive 2 transformed to create a falling chromatic line (see mm. 128-129 of Ex. 27).



Ex. 26: Debussy, “Le vent dans la plaine” from *Préludes (Livre 1)*, mm. 9-12.

Ex. 27: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 124-131.

Note: In second piano part of two-piano reduction, accidentals were added by this author to match the full score in measures 128-129.

The strings and flute start a half-step repetition in measure 128 (see Ex. 27). This rising half step becomes the basis for a new motive (Motive 3). It is perhaps an inversion of the sigh motive (Motive 2). The rising half step (Motive 3) also harkens back to measure 1 (Ex. 7). The piano takes Motive 3 in measure 130 in right-hand octaves (see Ex. 27).

In measure 132, marked “*Moins lent*” (Ex. 28), the piano and orchestra transition, using Motive 3 at the start in the orchestra (mm. 132-133) and then developing it into a rising stepwise line. The ascending stepwise motion begins in the bassoons (measure 134), moves to the strings (measure 137) with a few rising thirds mixed in as well, and then finally is traded to the piano as a scale in measures 142-143. A long pedal point on D-flat in the orchestra, emphasizing the key of this section, begins two bars before the “*Moins lent*” at the “*a Tempo*” (Ex. 27, m. 130) and continues to the double bar and tempo change at measure 147 (Ex. 29), before becoming a C-sharp in that same measure.

Moins lent $\text{♩} = 84$

131 *8va*

Motive 3

134 *(8va)*

137 *(8va)*

141 *8va* *rit.* *16*

Ex. 28: Boulanger, Fantaisie variée, mm. 131-144.

A dramatic timpani roll in measure 146 (see Ex. 29) announces a new section (“Allegro”) emphasized by a double bar and a key change to b minor, though b minor as tonic is not solidified until measure 159 (Ex. 31). This “Allegro” section at measure 147 (Ex. 29) begins with Motive 3, a rising half-step motion, found in the cornets and strings. The piano adds dramatic ornamentation through fast-moving scale flourishes beginning in measure 148. In measure 151 (see Ex. 30), a restatement of the opening theme occurs, now slightly transformed. Instead of down a major third, up a whole step, down a major third, we find down a major third, up an augmented second, and down a major third (in the trombones and tuba). Wind instruments and piano have trills and embellishments. The excitement builds until measure 159, where the “Tempo più vivo” begins (see Ex. 31). The key is now clearly b minor, and the strings take the opening theme and transform it into a new theme, Theme 2 (see Ex. 31: mm. 159-166). Marked “molto marcato” at this tempo change (m. 159), the piano part bears numerous tenuto markings and a rising “martelé” eighth-note line in measures 168-169. After its introduction and repetition, Theme 2 will be broken into smaller motives and repeated to create intensity.

145

8va

Allegro

Motive 3

pp

trem.

148

ff

8va

ff

8va

Ex. 29: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 145-150.

17

151

s

s

s

Ex. 30: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 151-155.

Ex. 31: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 159-169.

A strong, percussive transition begins in measure 179, led by the strings (see Ex. 32, mm. 180-185, m. 179 not shown). Immediately following, starting in measure 189, a theme based on a falling fourth (mm. 189-193 of Ex. 32) is developed briefly in the orchestra. Throughout this transition, the piano serves as accompaniment. In measure 202 (seen in Ex. 33), the drama builds as the orchestra and piano repeat a variation of Motive 1 (for the original Motive 1, see Ex. 16, quarter-notes, mm. 3-4), minus the last note, which can also be seen as drawn from Theme 2 (Ex. 31: mm. 159-166). Originally, Motive 1 consists of a descending major third, rising step, and another descending major third. In measures 202-204 (Ex. 33), the varied Motive 1 features a descending major

third, rising minor third, another descending major third, with an extension by a rhythmically-altered restatement (D-sharp, B, D-natural, and two A-sharps) creating a longer line. The varied Motive 1 is itself repeated in measures 206-208. This material continues until finally a long trill/tremolo in the piano part (Ex. 34: mm. 213-214), followed by a long-tremolo in the orchestra with scale flourishes in the piano, brings a return of Theme 2 in measure 219.

The musical score for Ex. 32: Boulanger, Fantaisie variée, mm. 180-197, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 180-185) shows the piano part with a long trill/tremolo in measures 213-214. The second system (measures 186-191) shows the piano part with a long-tremolo in the orchestra with scale flourishes in the piano, bringing a return of Theme 2 in measure 219. The third system (measures 192-197) shows the piano part with a long-tremolo in the orchestra with scale flourishes in the piano, bringing a return of Theme 2 in measure 219. A blue box labeled "Falling Fourth" is placed under the piano part in measure 192.

Ex. 32: Boulanger, Fantaisie variée, mm. 180-197.

198

203

207

Motive 1 varied

Ex. 33: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 198-207.

213

217

220

Theme 2

Ex. 34: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 213-220.

In measure 237 (Ex. 35), another double bar announces a developmental section with a tempo change to “Moderato,” a meter change to 4/4 time, and a key change. The orchestra sounds a single note, ‘D’ (Ex. 35, m. 239), and the piano responds (mm. 240-241) with a fortissimo statement in low bass of an altered Motive 1, the first interval now a descending minor third (rather than a major third), the second interval a rising minor second (rather than a major second), and the third interval a descending minor third (rather than major third). This new alteration of Motive 1 becomes an ostinato in the piano left hand at measure 246 (see Ex. 36) marked “Pas vite.” Shortly after, the piano has an “accelerando molto” leading to the orchestra’s reply in measure 252 (Ex. 36), utilizing Motive 1 in slight variation. At measure 252, the orchestra slows the tempo back down, marked “a Tempo,” and now exhibits a recitative character (“quasi recitativo, non vivo”).

Again, the piano takes the motive back to a left-hand ostinato in measure 260 (Ex. 37), now all set a half step higher than measure 246. A long “accelerando” in the solo piano in measures 266-268 leads to another “Recitativo” in the orchestra in measure 269 (Ex. 37).

233

Moderato

30

238

Motive 1

Ex. 35: Boulangier, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 233-243

244

(31) *Pas vite* *accelerando molto*

crescendo

ff

Motive 1

249

accelerando molto *suivez* *a Tempo* ♩ = 96 *quasi recitativo, non vivo*

Motive 1

Ex. 36: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 244-253.

33 Plus vite que la 1^{re} fois

non accelerando

260

Motive 1

très marqué

263

a piacere

ff

accel.

34 Recitativo

266

Recitativo

Ex. 37: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 260-269.

Suddenly, at the double bar announcing measure 276 (Ex. 38), the key and time signature are altered and a brief “Più vivo” begins, lasting only four bars. The fantasia character is especially revealed in these sudden changes of tempo and mood. During the

fourth bar of this wild excitement, a dramatic ritardando, marked “cédez beaucoup” in the score, again shifts the mood.

Following the outburst of the “Più vivo,” ten measures of transitional material ensue (measures 280-289), utilizing excerpts of the opening theme (Theme 1) and Motive 1 (Ex. 38). The meter changes back and forth between 3/4 and 4/4, from the 3/4 “Più vivo” in measure 276 until the upcoming common time in measure 290.

35 Più vivo $\text{♩} = 138$

276 *f rubato un peu saccadé* *crescendo* *rit. - - - -* *cédez beaucoup* *soutenir la force*

280 *Andante* *p doloroso*

285 *Grave*

Theme 1 excerpt

Motive 1 rhythm

Ex. 38: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 276-289.

Finally, in measure 290 (Ex. 39), the tension relaxes into a melodic A-flat major section, marked by the introduction of a new theme (Theme 3), based on the minor third of the opening theme (Ex. 12, mm. 2 and 5). The second violins also join the piano in measure 290 singing this lyrical falling minor-third melody.

Ex. 39: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 290-293.

Wistfully romantic in quality, marked “Avec une grande émotion” (Ex. 39, m. 290), and characterized by a two-against-three pattern between the left and right hands of the piano part, the section slowly builds to a restatement of A-flat major (see Ex. 40) and a clarinet solo (beginning with a quarter-note upbeat to measure 315). The violin joins the clarinet in measure 318. The oboe takes the solo motive in measure 325 and then trades to cornet and flute in measure 327 (not shown).

The melody of these instrumental solos (clarinet beginning in m. 314, followed by violin, oboe, cornet, and flute) comes from a motive derived from Theme 3 of this section, outlining the minor third, now filled in with quarter-note triplets in stepwise motion (see Ex. 40). The piano takes an accompaniment role to these instrumental melodies, sometimes with a countermelody, but mostly displaying running eighth notes in broken chords (see Ex. 40).

315

p calme, sans lenteur

Clarinet Solo

318

8^{va}-----

Violin joins

Ex. 40: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 315-320.

A double bar, tempo change, key change, and meter change announce the start of a new section “Sans lenteur, avec une certaine nonchalance” in measure 331 (Ex. 41).

Returning to 3/4 time and c minor, the piano has solo material here (Ex. 41), presenting

the opening of the second theme. However, the second theme now transforms rhythmically to a dotted quarter - eighth note - quarter (a new variation) rather than the three quarter notes found at measure 159 (Ex. 31), and this material only begins like the second theme. The alteration of the theme is furthered in measures 335-336, creating together in fact new thematic material, Theme 4 (Ex. 41).

Sans lenteur, avec une certaine nonchalance
sans presser

Theme 4

Ex. 41: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 331-338.

Theme 4's repetition occurs up a tritone beginning in measure 344 (Ex. 42), adding orchestra parts for harmonic support and a countermelody, and then it moves back to c minor (measure 355, not shown). After some brief transitional material, the orchestra takes Theme 4 and repeats it in the low voices of the strings (viola, cello, and bass), this time up a major third (see Ex. 43).

④① Tempo

344

Fl. Hb. Cl.

p

Ex. 42: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 344-347

④③ Tempo

365

p

Theme 4

369

Ex. 43: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 365-372.

A restatement of Theme 4 (see Ex. 44), in c minor follows. The piano again plays an accompaniment role, playing running passages of thirds and modal scales.

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 44: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, measures 386-393. The score is in 2/4 time, key of c minor. It features a piano part with triplets and a vocal line. A blue box highlights 'Theme 4' in the piano part at measure 386. The score includes markings for '8va', 'trill', and 'tranquille'.

Ex. 44: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 386-393.

In measure 398 (Ex. 45), a double bar announces an exciting coda/finale. Now in 2/4 time, with a tempo marking of “Allegro,” the coda begins in the home key of c minor. The theme is varied and transformed again, using just four notes to create a new thematic idea, Theme 5 (Ex. 46). Development and repetition of Theme 5 continues throughout the coda section, traded amongst different voices within the orchestra, and between orchestra and solo piano part.

Allegro

398

p

Ex. 45: Boulangier, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 398-401

49

406

simile

Theme 5

Ex. 46: Boulangier, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 406-413.

The orchestra continues reiterating Theme 5 in measure 422 (see Ex. 47), while the piano plays a bright and exciting countermelody marked “joyeux” [joyous], a dotted

eighth-sixteenth pattern in half steps, whole steps, and thirds, which then becomes a theme of its own, Theme 6 (Ex. 47, piano part, mm. 422-423).

Theme 6

50

422

ff joyeux

51

426

Ex. 47: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 422-430.

The orchestra develops Theme 6 beginning in measure 443 (Ex. 48), raising the pitch of each repetition to create excitement until finally the piano enters “éclatant” [bursting] with Theme 6 in measure 451 (Ex. 49: Theme 6, mm. 451-452).

Ex. 48: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 442-447

Theme 6

Ex. 49: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 451-458.

The “éclatant” Theme 6, echoed by the orchestra in measures 454-455, starts a conversation between orchestra and piano that builds to a big glissando in the piano, measure 461 (see Ex. 50). The glissando brings a return of Theme 5 in c minor in the orchestra combined with a new variation of it in the piano utilizing repeated sixteenth-notes (see Ex. 50, mm. 462-465).

The musical score for Bou langer, *Fantaisie variée*, measures 459-465, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 459-461) features a piano part with a glissando in measure 461, marked 'Glissando'. The second system (measures 462-465) features Theme 5 in the piano, marked 'simile', with repeated sixteenth notes. The orchestra part is indicated by 'suivez' and a dashed line.

Ex. 50: Bou langer, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 459-465.

Measure 478 (Ex. 51) brings a return of Theme 6 in variation in the orchestra, now in sixteenths rather than the dotted eighth-sixteenth pattern. The original rhythmic pattern starts again in measure 485 (Ex. 52).

Ex. 51: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 474-483.

Ex. 52: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 484-488

“Plus vite” (Ex. 53) marks a change of tempo as well as character, lighter and dancing, at measure 493. Also, Theme 5 returns in measure 493, first played in a dance-like style by the orchestra, with piano accompaniment of sixteenth-note arpeggios and modal scales (Ex. 53: mm. 493-500).

57 Plus vite 8^{va}

493

brilliant

pp

Theme 5

497

Ex. 53: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 493-500.

In measure 501, the piano brings back Theme 5, marked “Lourd” [heavy], in c minor (Ex. 54: mm. 501-508). Then in measure 509 “Scherzando” (not shown), the piano quickly shifts back to the dancing style. Changing suddenly back to the “Lourd” character at measure 515, the piano restates Theme 5 up a whole step from its measure 501 appearance.

58

Theme 5

501

Lourd

505

Ex. 54: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 501-508.

Measure 531 begins the final sweep of piano and orchestra to the last fanfare and the final c minor chords. Octaves in the piano and orchestra emphasize the drama in a driving exclamation of Theme 5 (Ex. 55: Theme 5, Finale, mm. 531-542). The entire work ends with resounding c minor chords.

63

531 Theme 5

537

Ex. 55: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 531-542.

An exciting and dramatic work, Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* combines theme and variations form with fantasia-style writing, resulting in a highly-embellished one-movement work, full of rubato and changes in character, similar to variation works by Reger and Franck.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, Boulanger incorporates various meters, beginning the piece in 3/4 time, but changing to 4/4 (common time) for the lengthy yet melodious section at measure 290 (Ex. 39), and to 2/4 for the entire coda, beginning in measure 398 (Ex. 45) and continuing to the end of the piece. Tempo markings also shift suddenly and often: an opening marking of “Lent. Grave” (Ex. 12, m. 1); “Large” beginning in measure 40 (Ex.17); “Allegro” in measure 147 (Ex. 29); “Più vivo” in

measure 276 (Ex. 38); “Andante” in measure 280 (Ex. 38); and finally, an exciting and fast-paced “Allegro” for the finale, beginning in measure 398 (Ex. 45). These sudden and frequent shifts of meter and tempo demonstrate the fantasia element of the piece.

Also keeping with the fantasia style, key changes occur frequently, with a number of double bars throughout the piece, as well as temporary key changes within a given key signature. Important key changes shown by double bar are found at: “un peu plus lent” (Ex. 23, m. 105); “Allegro” (Ex. 29, m. 147); “Moderato,” (Ex. 35, m. 237); “Più vivo” (Ex. 38, m. 276); “Andante” (Ex. 38, m. 280); and finally “Sans lenteur, avec une certaine nonchalance” (Ex. 41, m. 331).

Motivic transformation, shown in depth throughout this chapter, reveals how the opening theme exists in smaller motives, sometimes a motive as simple as two notes, such as the two-note sigh motive. These motives become the framework for the themes generated throughout the rest of the piece.

Drawing inspiration from Debussy and Fauré, Boulanger utilizes modes and parallel chords to create colorful harmonies and melodic lines. Boulanger favors the use of the whole-tone scale, seen several places in the movement, especially in accompaniment patterns and scale embellishments. Most notably, Boulanger demonstrates use of the whole-tone scale in:

- measure 143 in the solo piano (Ex. 28);
- measure 326 in the solo piano right hand (seen below in Ex. 56);
- measure 448, where the piano begins with a whole-tone scale and then moves to a D-flat major scale (seen below in Ex. 57); and
- measures 373-377 (seen below in Ex. 58), where it appears multiple times throughout a running passage in the solo piano.

40 Tempo

325

8^{ma}

pp

Ex. 56: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 325-327.

448

16

16

9

3

7

9

8^{ma}

loco

Ex. 57: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 448-450.

44

373

pp

377

più forte

Ex. 58: Boulanger, *Fantaisie variée*, mm. 373-380.

The variations take on many moods:

- sonorous (Ex. 22, m. 89, marked “Trés sonore”);
- wistfully romantic (Ex. 39, m. 290, marked “Avec une grande émotion”);
- dance-like (Ex. 53, m. 493, marked “Plus vite” and “brillant”; also measure 509 marked “Scherzando”);
- heavy (Ex. 54, m. 501, marked “Lourd”); and
- joyous (Ex. 47, m. 422, marked “joyeux”).

When Bruno Monsaingeon interviewed Boulanger for his film *Mademoiselle*, a biography of Boulanger’s life, the two discussed the subject of masterpieces.

Monsaingeon posed the question to Boulanger of how to recognize or define a masterpiece:

Boulanger: I can distinguish music that is well made and music that isn't. Yet, what distinguishes well-made music and a masterpiece, that I cannot tell.

Monsaingeon: What you're saying is, you know how to appreciate good or bad construction in a work. Yet, faced with a masterpiece, you feel quite certain?

Boulanger: Absolutely!

Boulanger: There are conditions without which masterpieces cannot be achieved, but what defines a masterpiece cannot be pinned down.⁶³

Though she would likely disagree given her self-critical perfectionist nature, her *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* stands out as well-made music, and arguably deserves the title of masterpiece. Skillfully weaving a tapestry of variation from a simple opening theme, Boulanger uses smaller motives within the subject to create new ideas. She transforms the motives through changes in rhythm, interval, or accompaniment patterns, and continuously spins out an ever-changing mosaic, all derived from her first thought.

63. *Nadia Boulanger: Mademoiselle*, directed by Bruno Monsaingeon (NTSC, 1977), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2GX69XxyE>.

CHAPTER V–CONCLUSION

Nadia Boulanger impacted the music world in many ways. Her significance as conductor, organist, pianist, administrator, and especially pedagogue has been well documented. Her ear as a musician, her skill as a teacher, and her depth of musical knowledge astounded all who studied with her and were a friend to her. Igor Stravinsky, whom she admired greatly and with whom Boulanger enjoyed a close friendship, once said, “She hears everything.”⁶⁴ She remains known as the greatest pedagogue of her time and a groundbreaking female in a world dominated by male musicians.

Hundreds of musicians flocked to study with her, and many acquired fame. She coached virtuoso pianists, such as Dinu Lipatti, Idil Biret, and Daniel Barenboim; she taught renowned composers Krzysztof Penderecki, Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, Elliot Carter, and Igor Markevitch.⁶⁵ Hopefully, her work as composer will soon also gain recognition across the globe.

Despite her reservations regarding her own compositions, her *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* warrants publication and recognition. As shown by this research, Boulanger’s *Fantaisie* did not receive the attention it deserved during her lifetime, despite the work’s public performances and support of virtuoso pianist, Raoul Pugno. The main reason Boulanger’s *Fantaisie variée* remained unpublished and undistributed was in fact due to Boulanger herself. Her self-critical attitude toward her compositions and the life-altering blow of her younger sister Lili’s death stopped her from pursuing a career as a composer. She allowed her works to all but disappear from the musical world.

64. *Nadia Boulanger: Mademoiselle*, directed by Bruno Monsaingeon (NTSC, 1977).

65. Ibid.

However, growing recognition for this particular work has begun in the United States and Europe, thanks to the work of pianists David Greilsammer, Florian Uhlig, Alexandra Dariescu, and this author's contributions through performance and research. Now, additional efforts to elevate and unveil the *Fantaisie variée pour piano et orchestre* further to the world must commence. This research as well as recent performances and recordings of the *Fantaisie* in Europe and the United States reveal only the beginning of the work's journey to publication and renown.

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