CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Teacher's Guide to set works

Cambridge International AS & A Level Music 9483

Use this syllabus for exams in 2027 and 2028.
Exams are available in the June and November series.

Version I

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Cambridge Pathway

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Scores

There are many scores of the works available, including those free to download. It is suggested that learners use an Urtext edition of each.

The Urtext edition of the Telemann includes an alternative ('first') version of the second movement as an appendix. References given below are to the version printed as part of the rest of the concerto.

The set works in this section help to prepare learners for questions 1, 2 and 3 in the Listening Paper. It is suggested that learners begin by exploring the two set works, noting the significant features and comparing performances. Once they have knowledge of typical Baroque features and performance practice and a good understanding of harmony and tonality, including keys, chords, inversions and cadences, they will be able to apply this to unfamiliar music, as found in questions 2 and 3.

Section A: Compositional Techniques and Performance Practice

George Frideric Handel: Organ Concerto in F major, HWV 295, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*

Georg Philipp Telemann: Ouverture Suite in G minor, TWV 55:g4

Baroque Instrumental Music

It was in this period that instrumental music first came to equal vocal music in importance. The replacement of viols by the violin family and the standardisation of the major-minor key system led to a huge number of works being composed and an expansion in the size, range and complexity of the music. Learners will study two works in detail – a concerto and a suite (Ouverture), but should also look at instrumental pieces for fewer forces, such as the trio sonata, which was an important influence in the development of the concerto.

In Baroque music in general and in concertos in particular, the principle of contrast is crucial. This can be found in many elements of the music – dynamics, tempo, metre, instrumentation, texture and so on, both within and between movements. Learners should be able to identify where such contrasts exist in pieces of music and to be able to describe them in words.

Underpinning practically every Baroque genre was the (basso) continuo – a small group of instrumentalists playing the bass line with chords realised over the top. Learners should be aware of the range of instruments involved in playing the continuo part and where differences may be found. They are not required to have a detailed understanding of figured bass.

The string section came to be the foundation of the Baroque orchestra, with other instruments such as flutes or recorders, oboes, bassoons, trumpets, horns and timpani sometimes being added to the string core. However, although a composer might specify instruments in a particular work, the performing forces may vary according to personal preferences or simply the players available.

In this period the music of the Italians and music in the 'Italian style' came to be pre-eminent – the music of Corelli and his pupil Vivaldi was published all over Europe and composers from other countries followed their models, arranging works by these composers and emulating them in their own compositions.

As in all Baroque music, decoration of melodic and harmonic lines was expected practice. Notated musical material would be decorated with trills, mordents, turns, runs and other flourishes and there would sometimes be arpeggiation of chords in the continuo. This was particularly the case when musical material was repeated, with a varied presentation on the repeat. Learners could use different performances of their set works to compare approaches to ornamentation, before moving onto works with which they are not familiar. Other issues of performance practice include the pitch at which the music is being performed (those using Baroque instruments or copies of such are more likely to be performed at 'Baroque pitch', approximately a semitone lower with A at roughly 415 Hz), the tempo chosen (and how this is varied in a movement) and the style of articulation. Performances taking a more historically informed approach will often detach notes, whereas other performances may play more legato. Learners should compare performances of a piece of music with different articulation styles, spotting where there are legato and more staccato passages, including the addition of slurs.

Sonatas

Baroque sonatas were often composed for two melody instruments with accompaniment and were known as trio sonatas. Despite the name, this was music for four performers, since the bass line was played by two people (a bass instrument and another instrument such as the harpsichord doubling the bass line and realising chords above, often from a figured bass). A popular combination was two violins and continuo. Similarly, solo

sonatas were performed by three players: a soloist with continuo accompaniment. In the early part of the Baroque period sonatas were divided into two types – da camera (for performance in a room of a home) and da chiesa (for performance in a church). Both types of sonata had several movements, in the same key but contrasting in tempo. A sonata da chiesa was usually more serious, sometimes with a movement using fugal principles.

Concertos

In the Baroque period there were two kinds of concerto: a solo concerto (with one soloist accompanied by an orchestra) and a concerto grosso (with a group of soloists, known as the concertino, accompanied by an orchestra, known as the ripieno). The Baroque concerto was the ultimate demonstration of contrast – the soloist(s) contrasted with the orchestra in both sonority and virtuosity of playing, a wide range of textures could be employed and terraced dynamics could add further contrast. A solo concerto was usually structured in three movements (fast-slow-fast) while the number of movements in a concerto grosso was more variable. In a concerto grosso movements were often in binary or ternary form and there was usually a fugal texture in one of the movements. Fast movements in both solo concertos and concerti grossi were often structured in ritornello form, where a tutti statement of a ritornello theme is presented in various keys (sometimes reduced in length too), separated by episodes featuring the soloist(s) playing new material.

Handel Organ Concerto in F major, HWV 295, *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*

Born in what is now Germany, Handel spent time in Italy before permanently settling in England. He found fame by writing Italian operas for English audiences, but when these fell out of favour, defined the new genre of English oratorio. These were based on biblical texts, sung in English with soloists, a chorus and an orchestra (as with operas), but were not staged. Handel's organ concertos arose as pieces combined with the performance of an oratorio, with Handel himself as the soloist. This meant that much of the organ part did not have to be notated; Handel simply wrote 'ad libitum'.

Handel produced three sets of organ concertos, many of which reused material from earlier works. HWV 295 is the first of the second set, published in 1740 without an opus number. It was written in 1739 and premièred two days later at a performance of the oratorio Israel in Egypt, with Handel playing the organ.

The orchestral forces for this work are often two oboes, strings and continuo (cello, double bass, bassoon and harpsichord). However, in common with many Baroque works, the instrumentalists used would have depended on those available at the time of a performance. The kind of organ used for this work is a small chamber organ, with a relatively restricted range, one manual and no pedals. The use of harpsichord in the continuo provides a contrasting sonority. Handel often preferred a four-movement format for his organ concertos, slow-fast-slow-fast, similar to that found in church sonatas.

First movement – Larghetto

Based partly on music from an earlier trio sonata (Op. 5 no. 6, 1st movement), this movement provides a wide variety of textures for learners to investigate, from solo organ alone to a full tutti. If present (not all recordings use them), the oboes double the first violin part, but don't always play, sometimes leaving the first violins to carry the line. Melodic ideas are repeated and varied throughout the relatively short movement, leading to a significant amount of dialogue between the soloist and the ensemble. There are few examples of exact sequences. The opening theme played by the first violins and oboes consists of a one-bar melodic idea which is repeated a third lower, followed by a cadential figure. Most of the movement then derives from one of these short motifs. Melodic ideas are mostly heard in the treble register, but the bass line does have a melodic role in bars 11–12. For the rest of the movement the bass frequently has a steady bass line, in regular crotchets.

Trills are printed in the score, but as would be expected, performances vary as to their use of ornamentation, with some playing trills and others mordents. Learners should also explore the rhythmic changes some performances make in this movement. The Urtext score suggests that pairs of semiquavers should be performed as a dotted semiquaver and demisemiquaver throughout. Some performances feature an organ fill in the final two bars of the movement, as it is likely that Handel would have improvised this.

Bars 25–26 are something of coda or afterthought, following on from the perfect cadence in bars 24–25 to end the movement on an imperfect cadence. Harmony throughout the movement is functional and diatonic, with modulation to closely related keys and examples of perfect, imperfect and interrupted cadences. The music takes an unexpected turn at bars 15–16, with the fleeting appearance of E-flats. These create diminished chords and a transitory modulation to G minor. There are many examples of suspensions, mostly easy to spot with tied notes.

There are differences in the use of terraced dynamics and in the articulation used by the players in performances.

Second movement – Allegro

It is this movement which gave the work its title. Learners may find it interesting to listen to Johann Kaspar Kerll's Capriccio Cucu, which clearly inspired Handel's solo episodes. Apparently, he also borrowed ideas from Giovanni Porta's opera Numitore. Handel also reused material from this movement in a later concerto grosso (Op. 6, no. 9). The movement is in ritornello form, though the sections are not always clearly delineated. Even in the opening ritornello there is a great deal of interaction between the tutti and soloist. 'Ritornello' comes from the Italian word meaning to return. In ritornello form, varied restatements of a ritornello theme, in different keys and scored for the full orchestra, alternate with episodes, in which the soloists often predominate playing new ideas.

The opening material, in F major, is played in a homophonic texture by the ensemble. It features internal repetition (bars 2–3 and bars 4–7, where the repeat is reharmonised in a higher register by just the upper strings), syncopation, and a diminished seventh (without the third in bars 41–2 and 61–2). The organ then enters with the same musical material, but this is quickly reclaimed by the orchestra over the organ's tonic pedal. The end of this statement modulates to the dominant (C major).

The new idea introduced by the strings and oboes from bar 174 is repeated by the organ as an ascending sequence, ending in G major. When the organ and upper strings play together from bar 234 the organ left hand doubles the violas while the right hand creates antiphony with the oboes and violins.

The first birdsong motif is introduced at the start of the first episode, with the upbeat to bar 28, in a monophonic texture. This is the call of the cuckoo: a falling minor third. Two bars later and a fifth lower, the left hand imitates. Rhythmically this is taken from the end of the preceding ritornello.

Repetition and sequences lead to a perfect cadence in B flat major (the subdominant, bar 39) and a much shortened tutti restatement of the ritornello theme, interrupted by the bird motif. This ends in G minor.

Episode 2 is from bar 494 and represents the nightingale with rocking intervals and running semiquavers, to suggest the 'warbling' sound of the bird. The cuckoo also appears, with the falling minor third inverted to a rising perfect fourth. The long passage of semiquavers includes movement in sixths and compound thirds, leading to a perfect cadence in D minor (bar 69). However, the orchestra then continues with a statement of the ritornello theme in B flat major. In this ritornello there are also antiphonal references to the bird motif.

The final episode (from bar 864) consists of continuous semiquavers and after a rising tonic major scale in compound thirds there is the final ritornello (bar 944) to end the movement.

Organ Solo

Between the second and third movements Handel asks for an organ improvisation ('Organo ad libitum'). It is said that Handel produced some very virtuosic improvisations when he was the soloist.

Third movement – Larghetto

A siciliano influence can be heard here, with the lilting compound time signature, minor key and dotted rhythms. The Baroque siciliano had a pastoral connotation. As would be expected of a third movement, it is slower and more lyrical. It is in the relative minor (D minor). This movement features syncopation and frequent emphasis on the offbeat.

For most of the movement the tutti (the movement is sometimes performed without oboes, even if they are used in the other movements) and continuo alternate with the solo organ. Contrary motion is frequently seen in the organ part (e.g. bars 27, 39, 41–42). The organ often enters with a repetition of the preceding tutti material, but then goes on to make changes, such as at bar 12, where there is a perfect cadence in A minor (the dominant) rather than the tutti cadence in the tonic in bar 6. At bar 28 the music passes through F major, with a first inversion chord, but quickly returns to D minor by bar 32. In this movement and the following one the violins all play together (except for bar 34).

This movement makes use of notated decoration (in addition to ornaments that performers might choose to add). The first violin part in bars 17–18 embellishes the underlying simpler melodic line and this is taken up by other instruments throughout the rest of the movement (e.g. organ in bars 20–21).

As in the first movement, after a perfect cadence in the tonic in bar 42 there is a short coda-like section of three bars, ending with an imperfect cadence. Because the movement is in a minor key and it is an imperfect cadence approached from a semitone above in the lowest part (here the viola), this is known as a Phrygian cadence. It uses the chords IVb-V and often appears in Baroque music to link two consecutive movements.

Fourth movement – Allegro

Like the first movement, this is also based on material from Handel's slightly earlier Trio Sonata Op. 5 no. 6 (here the fourth movement). The opening 36 bars form the first tutti and are nearly identical to the version found in the trio sonata. There then follows an organ episode and this pattern continues (with shorter tutti sections) until the end of the movement and the concerto.

There are fugal elements, most notably in the close imitation (e.g. the soloist imitates the violins and oboes one bar later from bar 14). As in the preceding movement, there is much repetition of material, with changes to take it in a different direction the second time. For example, the organ repeat of the opening music from bar 7 modulates to the dominant, rather than remaining in the tonic. Handel also repeats musical material as ascending and descending sequences, allowing the music to pass through a range of related keys. This is evident from bar 624 onwards: A minor, G minor, F major.

There are important Baroque harmonic devices heard in this movement, including many examples of suspensions and a circle of fifths from bars 42-47. This begins with just one chord per bar, but then the harmonic rhythm increases to two chords per bar, together with the use of seventh chords.

Suites

The Baroque suite was a collection of pieces, often including an overture followed by various dance-inspired movements such as allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue, gavotte, bourrée and minuet, sometimes with short movements more concerned with character and expression of feeling. Movements were purely instrumental, not intended for dancing. In a suite the movements (except for the Overture) are usually in binary form and in the same key. Certain movements would have typical features as follows:

Overture – a 'French' overture would begin at a slow tempo, often with dotted rhythms and a stately feel. This would then be followed by a faster, often imitative section of music. Sometimes there would also be a return to the slow section.

Allemande – this originated in Germany in the Renaissance period. It is in 4/4 time at a moderate tempo, often with a short anacrusis and a musical texture with intertwining melodic figures passed between parts.

Courante – a French dance, moderately fast in 3/2 or 6/4 time (the Italian Corrente was usually faster and in 3/4 or 3/8). The change between a 3/2 and 6/4 feel resulted in a kind of hemiola.

Sarabande – in slow triple time, sometimes with emphasis on the second beat of the bar

Gigue – lively and usually in compound time. This was often the last movement of a suite.

Gavotte – in 4/4 time starting on the 3rd beat of the bar, usually at a moderate tempo.

Bourrée – this is similar to a gavotte, but is usually in 2/2 time, starting with a crotchet upbeat

Minuet – this is very commonly heard in the Baroque period. Sometimes there are two contrasting minuets, with the first played again after the second (but without the repeats). Minuets are at a moderate tempo and have three beats in a bar.

Telemann: Ouverture-Suite in G minor, TWV 55:g4

Telemann spent his life living in and around Germany and a few months in Paris, giving him a European view of music. He studied works by composers from France, Italy and other countries and was good friends with both Bach and Handel. His huge output of compositions (sadly much of which is now lost) combined these influences; he was thought of as one of the greatest composers in his time and his works were admired in Germany and beyond. After a period of being seen as inferior to Bach (due to the latter's more complex counterpoint), his reputation has been restored. Telemann made links between folk, popular and art music and paved the way for the new galant style (as seen in early Classical music), through his emphasis on simpler textures and melody.

Telemann is thought to have written some 600 orchestral suites, though at least half are now lost. In the choice and order of movements he preferred great variety.

It is recommended that learners use the Urtext edition to study this work, which is not available online. Bar numbers used below refer to the Urtext edition (which begins again at bar 1 for each movement, rather than numbering continuously throughout the whole suite).

To avoid confusion with the first movement, the work will be referred to as a suite.

This work is sometimes known as a 'Darmstadt Overture' since it is now housed in the library there. Darmstadt was a relatively short distance from Telemann's Frankfurt employment (1712–21) and Telemann was permitted to compose for the orchestra there, which had some high-quality musicians. It is not known exactly when this work was composed. Though it is sometimes known as an Overture (or Ouverture), it is a suite of movements, some of which are dance-like but are also concerned with feelings or character.

The suite is scored for three oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo, giving Telemann the opportunity for a wide variety of sonorities, as will be highlighted below. Occasionally the first and second oboes play with the bassoon as a trio of more virtuosic soloists, suggestive of the concertino texture playing in contrast to the 'tutti' in a concerto grosso.

First movement – Ouverture

This opening movement is in the style of a French Overture. In his position as Kapellmeister at the court of Count Erdmann II Telemann was required to compose French Overtures in the style of Lully. This French overture has the expected slow and stately opening section, with many dotted notes. Performances usually follow Baroque performance practice in 'double dotting' the dotted crotchets. This emphasises the majestic and dignified feel and means that the semiquaver after the double dotted crotchet then aligns with semiquavers in other parts (usually as part of a dotted quaver – semiquaver). No tempo marking was given by Telemann, since he would have expected performers to have been aware of conventions. A suggestion of Grave is given by the editor in the Urtext.

There is a great deal of imitation between parts (e.g. first violins bar 1 and cello/continuo bar 3). The tutti texture of the opening and the pedal in the bassoon, violas and continuo add to the feeling of grandeur. The texture is reduced from bar 12, where the oboes play in three separate parts (there have been brief examples of this in bars 5 and 7) and the bassoon stays with the strings. This coincides with a perfect cadence in the relative major (B flat major, bars 11–12). There is an ascending sequence in oboe 1 from bar 12, where bars 12–13 are heard a third higher in bars 14–15. A perfect cadence in D major (the dominant major) into the first time bar leads to the repeat.

As would be expected, the next section (beginning halfway through the second time bar) is faster, with a fugal-style opening. Again no tempo marking is provided by Telemann, but the Urtext editor suggests Allegro moderato. Telemann does add some markings to the score; there are trio and solo indications for the oboes and bassoon respectively, indicating where they have a role similar to soloists in a concerto grosso (with the corresponding tutti marking at the end of these sections). There are also occasional dynamic markings for the strings. Though the section is faster, with a new time signature and mostly quavers and semiquavers, Telemann provides a link to the opening section with dotted notes at cadences (e.g. bar 32).

The opening theme in the first and second oboes and first violins (which begins halfway through the second time bar) is treated as a fugue subject, but after the distinctive opening repeated quavers and leap of a perfect fifth it is accompanied by the third oboe, second violins and violas playing in unison (bar 23). This is the countersubject and it is introduced immediately, rather than with the answer. When the answer does appear (bar 25) it is in the bassoon and continuo, with the countersubject in the first and second oboes and first violin, together with free material in the other parts.

There are only two appearances of the subject in this opening section (the second appearance begins in bar 30). From bar 272 onwards the music continues with a descending sequence and part of a circle of fifths. Learners should take the time to investigate all the appearances of the fugal theme, including identification of the key in which it is heard each time (e.g. bar 473 in B flat major, the relative major).

The contrasting 'trio' section from bar 322 onwards provides continuity with the previous music by also beginning with three repeated quavers. This descending sequence provides an opportunity for the oboes to play more virtuosically, again as in a concerto grosso. When the descending sequence is repeated from bar 37 there are some significant differences: it begins at the start of the bar (rather than halfway through), the third oboe begins with some imitation and the original third oboe part is taken by the violins. With the entry of the bassoon but not the cellos in bar 40 there is a bar of four-part woodwind (some performances have continuo accompaniment and others do not). Bar 41 includes the introduction of triplet quavers for the first time.

Bars 47 to 48 use stretto, where entries of the subject are heard in quick succession. Here there is just one beat between the first violin entry and the bassoon and continuo. The oboes then imitate the end of the string phrase in bars 49–50. The trio section from bar 54 more obviously begins with a reference to the subject (now in F major) before continuing into a long passage of semiquavers. Underneath this there is antiphony between the first violins and the other instruments.

The solo first oboe entry with the subject in the tonic (bar 62) begins the final part of this section of the movement, even though the subject is then heard just two bars later in the relative major. The final entry of the subject is in the bass from bar 67. However, Telemann demonstrates his mastery of thematic integration by having part of the subject in the last two bars of this section (bars 76–77).

This movement ends with a slow passage similar in style to the opening, with a slower tempo, common time metre and many dotted notes. As before there are sequences and imitation.

Second movement – Rondeau

This movement is marked 'Gayement', meaning cheerfully and is therefore played at a reasonably fast tempo. The rondeau (or rondo) structure is very clear: the opening twenty bars are the A section, which divides into two nearly identical halves, the first ending with an imperfect cadence (bars 9–10) and the second with a perfect cadence. Each half begins with imitation: the first and second oboes and first violins are imitated by the bass instruments (continuo and bassoon) two bars later, thereafter the texture is tutti.

The contrasting sections (B and C) are more varied, both in terms of keys and textures. As in the first movement the three oboes are now displayed alone (and towards the end of the C section with the bassoon, bars 80–84), with the rest of the ensemble usually imitating the end of the phrase. In the C section (which starts at bar 60) the order of entries is reversed, with the strings entering first, followed by the oboes. Section B ends with a perfect cadence in B flat major (the relative major, bars 39–40), but returns immediately to the tonic with the return of the A section. Section C moves to the dominant, mostly D minor (there is a perfect cadence in bars 71–72), but ends with a D major chord. Telemann's da capo marking means that the opening A section is repeated, ending with the chord with the fermata (bar 20).

In addition to occasional dynamic and trill markings, Telemann also writes 'doucement' meaning gently.

Third movement – Les Irresoluts

The title of this movement translates as 'the unresolved (or indecisive)' while the marking 'à discrétion' means 'with freedom'. Telemann's frequent placing of a quaver rest on the first beat of the bar in the treble instruments delays when we might expect to hear the start of the melody each time, reflecting the title.

The movement is in binary form, with both sections repeated. At the start of the second section the roles of the instruments are reversed, with the oboes playing the melodic idea, while the upper strings have long notes. The continuo have the melodic motif at the end of each section.

The movement has functional harmony (where chords have predictable relationships with each other, leading to standard chord progressions), with slightly faster harmonic rhythm at cadences (more chords per bar). From the G minor tonic there is a brief modulation to B flat major in the second section (bars 19–20).

Telemann's instruction that the movement can be played with freedom results in wide variations in different performances, particularly regarding dynamics (some recordings include dynamic swells), tempo changes and performer decisions regarding articulation and ornamentation. Comparing these across performances will be excellent preparation for the unfamiliar listening.

Fourth movement – Les Capricieuses

This title means 'the capricious', referring to those who have frequent changes of mood. With its 2/2 time signature and beginning halfway through the bar, this movement is a gavotte. The relatively fast tempo of a gavotte also contributes to the overall mood.

There are various ways in which the movement could be seen to reflect the title. There are passing modulations to various keys, particularly in the second section and following the ascending B flat major scale in bar 22, the oboes are sometimes in unison with the violins and sometimes hold longer notes whilst the violins have a large descending leap and crotchet and quaver movement. This outlines part of a circle of fifths.

In the first section there are striking changes of texture, where the oboes drop out for a few bars, leaving the bassoon, strings and continuo playing in unison (at a relatively low pitch). Syncopation is a significant rhythmic feature in the second section, creating a sense of momentum, together with leaps contrasting with conjunct movement in the melody.

Fifth movement – Loure

This quiet and dignified movement provides a contrast with those before and after. As the name suggests, it is a dance of French origin, named after the musical instrument (a type of bagpipe). It could be seen as a kind of slow gigue, in this case in triple metre. Other characteristic features are the anacrusis, giving emphasis to the first beat of the bar and the dotted rhythm of the melody.

Telemann sets up a pattern which he then follows throughout each section of this binary structure. In the first two bars of tutti there are four part chords – the first and second oboes double the first violins, the third oboe doubles the second violins and the bassoon plays with the continuo, while the violas have a separate part. This alternates with two bars of oboe trio, where all three have independent lines. In the second section Telemann does not stick so rigidly to the two-bar alternation and each time the third oboe plays the upbeat, beginning before the other two oboes. As would be expected, the music modulates through various related keys and learners would benefit from identifying these.

Sixth movement – Gasconnade

Gascony is a region in South West France and traditionally people from this area were reputed to be very boastful and fond of bragging. The German title given in some scores (Prahlerei) means boasting. Again in binary form, the movement is played quickly. Telemann makes great use of the opening motif heard in the bass parts, underneath repeated notes in the upper parts. It is heard again in bar 2 in the wind and in bars 3 and 4 as a descending sequence in the first violins. In this movement the oboes are separated from the first violins, having an independent part.

Rhythmically there is much use of off beat playing (e.g. bars 3 and 4) and melodically Telemann builds excitement in bars 5 and 6 by gradually increasing the size of the leap from a seventh to a compound fifth. These large leaps are balanced in the following bar by stepwise descending movement in all the parts, outlining a descending G melodic minor scale, leading to the imperfect cadence in G minor in the first time bar.

The second section uses very much the same musical material as the first section, but in the 'opposite' way, such as beginning with the wind followed by the strings and the first oboe having the melodic interest from bar 11. The ideas are now presented in the relative major (B flat major).

Bar 13 takes the rhythm of the opening motif, but now presents it as stepwise ascending semiquavers, which are passed from the first oboe to the first violins before being heard in octaves from the entire ensemble (bar 14). After the perfect cadence in C minor (the subdominant) in bar 16, there is an ascending sequence before a return to the opening material. However, in bar 21 this is heard split between the strings and wind, before the tutti texture brings the movement to a close.

Seventh movement – Minuets I and II

Here the word 'alternativement' means 'alternately', meaning that the first minuet is played (with repeats), then the second (with repeats) followed by the first again (without repeats). These are in triple time (as expected for Minuets) and each section comprises two four-bar phrases. Ensembles also know that the tempo should be moderate(ly fast), but there are a variety of interpretations of this.

Some performances vary the instrumentation on the repeats in the first minuet, reducing to just strings each time. This may be because the second minuet is scored for oboes and upper strings (without bassoon or continuo). Here the violins and violas also play in unison. Learners may also notice that some performances take advantage of the repetition of bars 3 and 4 in bars 5 and 6 (with a change to the final note) to introduce terraced dynamics. They may play bars 3 and 4 relatively loudly and suddenly drop in volume for bars 5 and 6, before returning to the original volume for the cadence.

Cleverly Telemann swaps the bass and melody line between the two minuets, meaning that the bass line in the first minuet becomes the melody in the second and vice versa. This is not the only way he makes the most of a relatively small palette of musical ideas – at the start of the second section of the first minuet the bass imitates the melody after two bars (and two octaves lower). Both minuets end the first section with a perfect cadence in B flat (the relative major). However, on neither occasion is chord V in root position – in Minuet I it is in second inversion and in Minuet II in first inversion.

Learners should be introduced to other features of Baroque music not found in the set works, including hemiola and a longer fugal example.

Section B: The Natural World

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 '*Pastoral*'

Maurice Ravel: Histoires naturelles, M. 50

1. *Le Paon* (The Peacock)
2. *Le Grillon* (The Cricket)
3. *Le Cygne* (The Swan)
4. *Le Martin-Pêcheur* (The Kingfisher)

Tōru Takemitsu: Tori wa hoshigata no niwa ni oriru (*A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*)

The focus of Section B is on how compositional techniques are employed to create an effect. Learners should be asking how composers produce intended effects. Evidence should be drawn from significant and relevant musical examples, which may be focused on features such as instrumentation, form, tonality, texture, tempo, rhythm, melody, harmony and dynamics.

Although scores may be used in preparation (these are not allowed to be brought into the examination room), the focus should be on developing aural awareness and understanding. Repeated, careful listening is essential in developing the right tools to successfully answer the examination questions.

The Natural World

The set works all relate in some way to the natural world. Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 is programmatic in many ways, with each movement's descriptive title suggesting a particular scene or emotion. Ravel's *Histoires naturelles* are humorous depictions of various creatures; the words here make the intent even more obvious, and Ravel's mastery of word-painting is a joy. Takemitsu's *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden* is perhaps less immediately comprehensible, but it provides a contemplative view of nature.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68 *Pastoral*

Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony, composed in 1808, is a highly effective example of programmatic music before this approach to composition became more widespread in the Romantic era.

The symphony comprises five movements. The movements have descriptive titles, which suggest the scenes and emotions Beethoven was aiming to represent musically.

Movement #	Tempo (Italian)	Subtitle (German)	Subtitle (English)
I	Allegro ma non troppo	Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande	Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside
II	Andante molto mosso	Szene am Bach	Scene by the brook

Movement #	Tempo (Italian)	Subtitle (German)	Subtitle (English)
III	Allegro	Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute	Merry gathering of country folk
IV	Allegro	Gewitter, Sturm	Thunder, Storm
V	Allegretto	Hirtengesang: Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm	Shepherd's song: Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm

Movements three and four are each approximately half the length of the other movements.

The overall key of the symphony is F major.

Movement #	Key	Relationship
I	F major	Tonic
II	B flat major	Sub-dominant
III	F major	Tonic
IV	F minor	Tonic minor
V	F major	Tonic

The symphony is scored as follows:

Instrument	Movement				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Piccolo	no	no	no	yes	no
Flute	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Oboe	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Clarinet in B-flat	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bassoon	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Horn in B-flat	no	yes	no	no	no
Horn in F	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Trumpet in E-flat	no	no	no	yes	no
Trumpet in C	no	no	yes	no	yes
Trombones	no	no	no	yes	yes
Timpani in C & F	no	no	no	yes	no
Violins I and II	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Viola	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Instrument	Movement				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Cello	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Double Bass	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Essentially, the orchestration remains stable in terms of woodwind (except for the addition of piccolo in the fourth movement) and strings, with brass and percussion added when Beethoven wanted a particular timbre to help depict the scene (e.g. the timpanis for thunder in the 4th movement).

Learners would benefit from mapping the evolution of selected themes, taking note of dynamics, instrumentation, changes in keys and harmonies, discovering how Beethoven is endlessly inventive with a small amount of musical material.

I Allegro ma non troppo (*Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande – Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside*)

Overview

This movement is in **Sonata Form** and follows the general expectations of this form, namely that there are two subjects, which are respectively in tonic and dominant keys for the Exposition, a Development that explores various tonalities, and a Recapitulation that repeats both subjects in the tonic.

Section	Bar numbers	Key(s)
Exposition		
1 First subject	1–52	F major (tonic)
2 Transition	53–66	
3 Second subject	67–114	C major (dominant)
4 Codetta	115–138	
Development	139–278	F major → B-flat major → D major → G major → E major → A major → G major → G minor → C major → F major
Recapitulation		
5 First subject	279–326	F major (tonic)
6 Transition	327–345	
7 Second subject	346–413	F major (tonic)
Coda	414–512	F major → B-flat major → F major

The opening of the first movement is quiet, ending on a fermata and a dominant chord (bar 4). This heightens the anticipation for what follows.

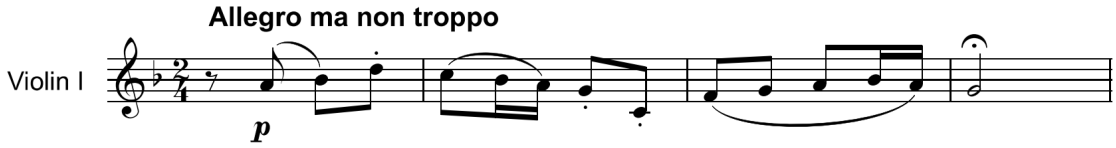
The Exposition sets the countryside scene from the very outset, using pedals/drone (perhaps imitating bagpipes or musette). Woodwind take the important thematic themes; oboe and bassoon are traditional 'pastoral' depictions. The textures reveal a growing complexity of the countryside as the movement progresses.

Adding to the countryside atmosphere, imitating folk traditions, there are several pedal points throughout this movement. For example, in the Exposition, there is a dominant pedal on C in bars 16–25. There are many more that learners could be encouraged to locate.

These long pedals, especially the dominant pedals, are used to increase tension, highlighting the eventual release when they are resolved.

First subject group

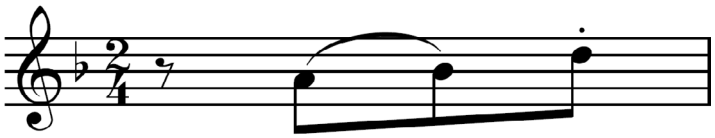
Theme 1a



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, bar 1, Violin I

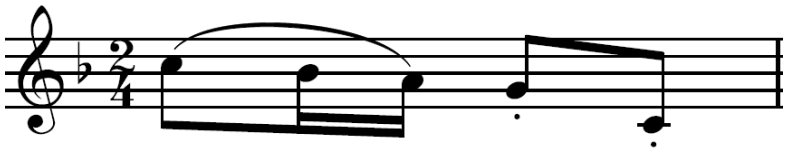
The first subject can be broken up into three motifs, which are developed independently throughout the movement (note the overlap between the end of Motif y and the start of Motif z).

Motif x



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, 1st subject, Motif x

Motif y



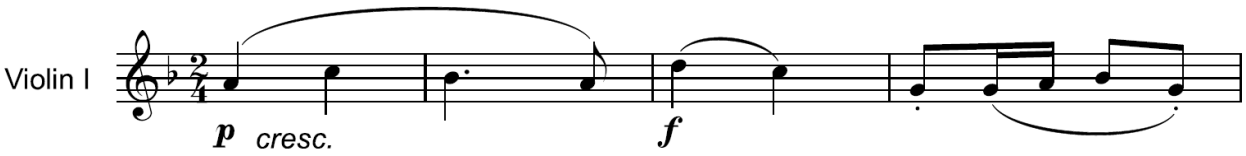
Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, 1st subject, Motif y

Motif z

Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, 1st subject, Motif z

In bar 9, we hear a second part to this initial theme:

Theme 1b



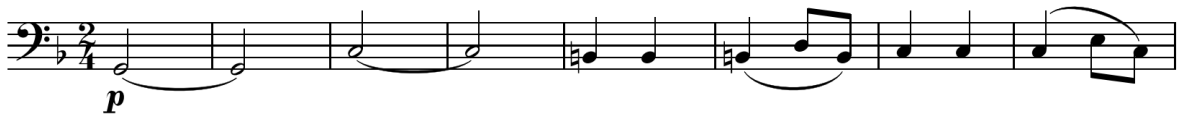
Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, bars 9–12, Violin I

The music builds up gradually, repeating short ideas (using the rhythm of Motif y, which is also the end of Theme 1b) in different ways. Note, for example, the rhythmic figure in bar 16, Violin I, which is played twelve times through a crescendo (adding bassoon when it reaches forte in bar 20) and decrescendo and, at the end, is passed up through the clarinet and oboe.

Shortly before the second subject, which is introduced in the bass, rather than a more traditionally melodic instrument, the textural changes are of interest. Note the monophonic Violin I in bar 54, building on Motif x from the first subject (something similar also occurs in bars 135–137), and the imitation in the strings in bars 64–66, leading into the first statement of the second subject.

Short rhythmic phrases with distinctive articulation are suitable to depict the happiness of being outdoors. The monophonic texture adds a simplicity consistent with an initial experience of the natural world.

Second subject



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, bars 67–74, Cello & Double Bass

From bar 79, the second subject is treated to canonic imitation, with the flute entering in bar 79 before the violin I part has finished its statement, followed by the horn entry in bar 88.

The interplay between triplets and duplets is also noteworthy, initially introduced by the clarinets and bassoons in bar 53. The first instance of three against two occurs in bar 102, with the horns playing triplets and the strings playing a 'long-short-short' (quaver, two semiquavers) figure. Beethoven uses this rhythmic

ambiguity to build tension and push forward the pace as ideas intertwine in the codetta – note the change in accompaniment, for example, between bars 104–110 (two quavers per beat) and bars 111–114 (three quaver triplets per beat). The quaver triplets are carried on from bar 115, acting as an answer to the upper strings' Motif y-derived figuration.

The Development takes Motif y and demonstrates a great deal of invention with it. It is played at different dynamic levels in different instruments and combinations, and in different keys, sometimes modulating without preparation. Note, for example, the shift between B-flat major in bars 151–162 (with the triplet quavers in lower strings recalling the rhythmic ambiguity suggested in the Exposition), and D major (a tertiary modulation – this will not be the last time!) from bar 163–196. Motif y *still* persists, from bar 197 in G major shifting suddenly to E major in bar 209, another tertiary modulation (although, this time, in the opposite direction).

From bar 243, Theme 1b is further developed, passing between instruments – it starts in the flutes and bassoons, then moves to viola and cello (bar 247), then Violin I (bar 256), with bassoons and Violin II joining at bar 259, culminating in flute, clarinet, Basson and all strings except Violin I from bar 263. This heralds the end of the Development, as the Recapitulation begins at bar 279.

Here, instead of a pause, as we heard in bar 4 of the Exposition, Violin I plays a staccato, triadic figure (another example of monophony), and the section then continues much as expected in terms of key relationships. Bar 346 sees the return of the second subject (this time in the tonic, F major), but with more canonic imitation than before. It begins in the bass, followed by Violin I, interrupted in bar 358 by the horns, in turn interrupted by the cellos and Basses at bar 362.

The beginning of the Coda (bar 414) is similar to the end of the Exposition, with variations on Motif x. There is also a new idea, which develops the rhythmic idea of triplet quavers.

Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 1st movement, bars 429–432, Clarinet

This begins in the clarinets and bassoons, moving to the upper strings from bar 440. The movement ends in a series of tonic and dominant chords, passing Motif z from Violin I to flute. The surprise comes in the last two bars, which are suddenly piano, following six bars of loud, orchestral chords.

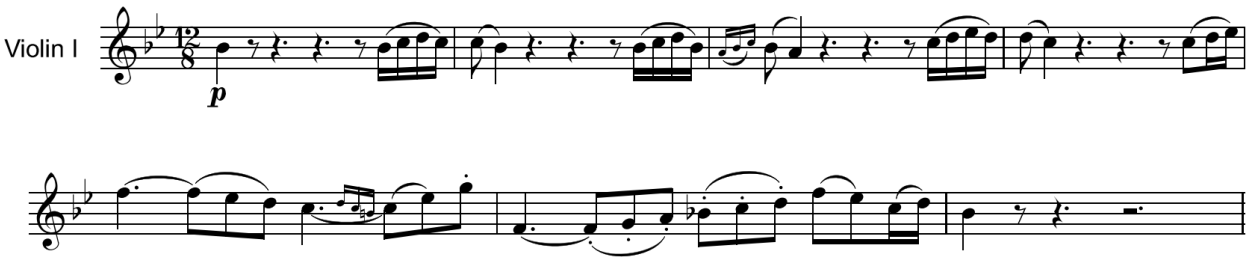
II Andante molto mosso (*Szene am Bach – Scene by the brook*)

This movement is also in **Sonata Form**. There is disagreement about the precise demarcation of subjects and themes in this movement, and it may therefore be helpful not to become too preoccupied with precise identification of themes; it is more important to understand how Beethoven develops musical ideas and to hear how the ideas represent the descriptive intent of the programme – a scene by the brook.

The Exposition introduces several important themes.

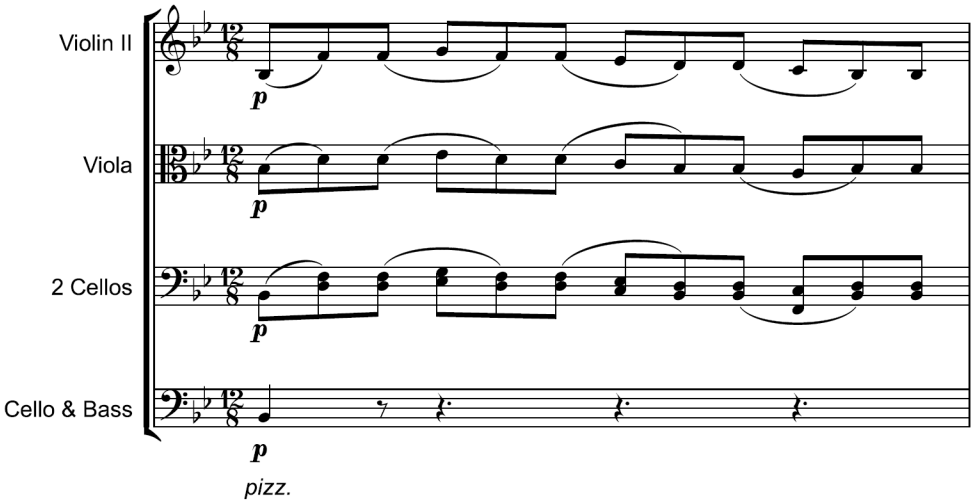
First subject group

Theme 1a



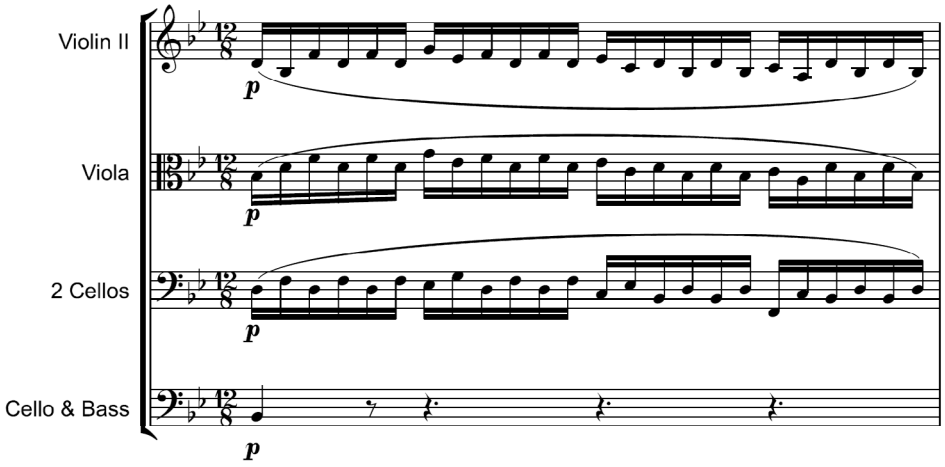
Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bars 1–7, Violin I

This occurs above gentle quavers, representing the water of the brook.



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bar 1, Strings

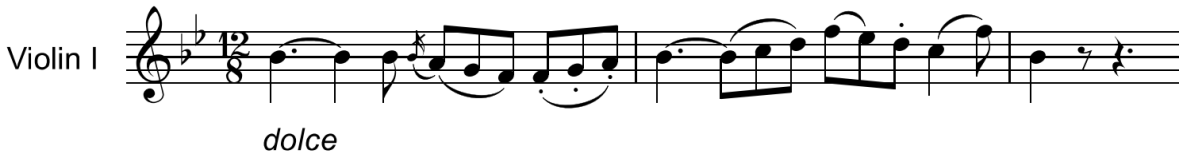
Very soon, semiquaver oscillations are added to create a greater sense of movement in the water. This occurs against gently syncopated horns, supporting a sense of a more natural flow in the water, and violin I trills, suggesting bird calls.



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bar 7, Strings

The second theme of the first subject group is introduced by Violin I at bar 13. From bar 19, we hear a transition, or bridge, moving from B-flat major (the tonic of this movement) to F major (via C major – see bar 27).

Theme 1b



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bars 13–152, Violin I

Note the imitative counterpoint created in bar 15, when the clarinet takes this theme, and the Violin I and the bassoons try to take it back after only two beats, followed similarly by the flutes in bar 162. As we arrive back in F major (the dominant), the second subject group is introduced in the flutes.

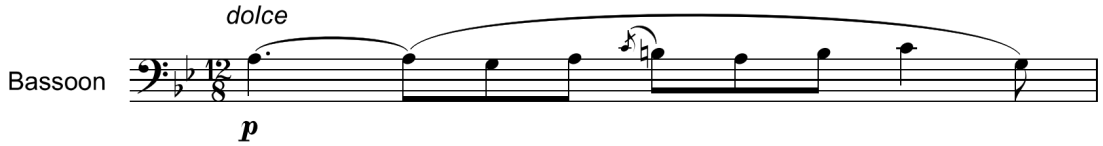
Second subject group

Theme 2a

Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bar 30, Flute

This is taken over by the bassoons in bar 32, leading directly into the second theme of the second subject group.

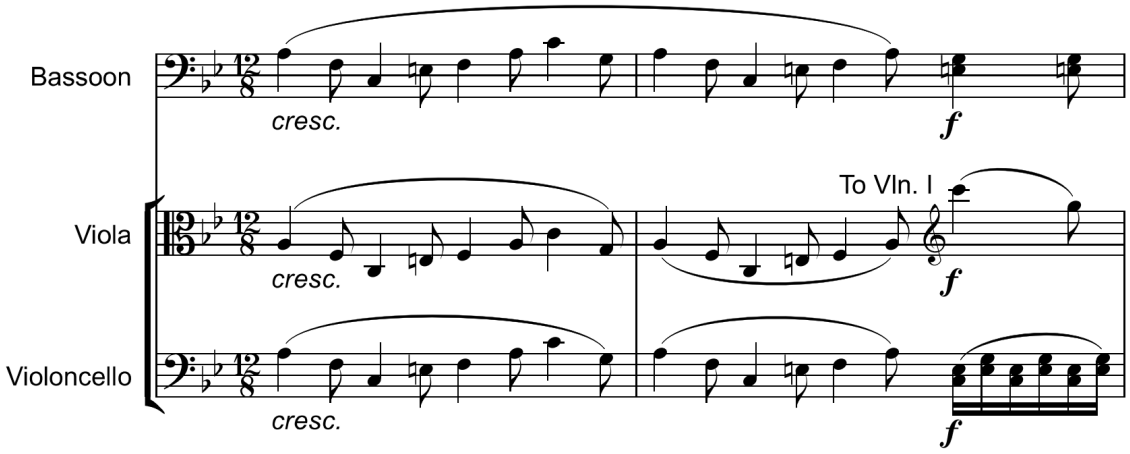
Theme 2b



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bar 33, Bassoon

The harmony for this theme is a partial circle of fifths, delaying the resolution to the tonic: A major, D major, G major, C major. The ending of this theme is then used to create a third theme in the second subject group, which is triadic in nature (triads being a recurring idea throughout this symphony).

Theme 2c



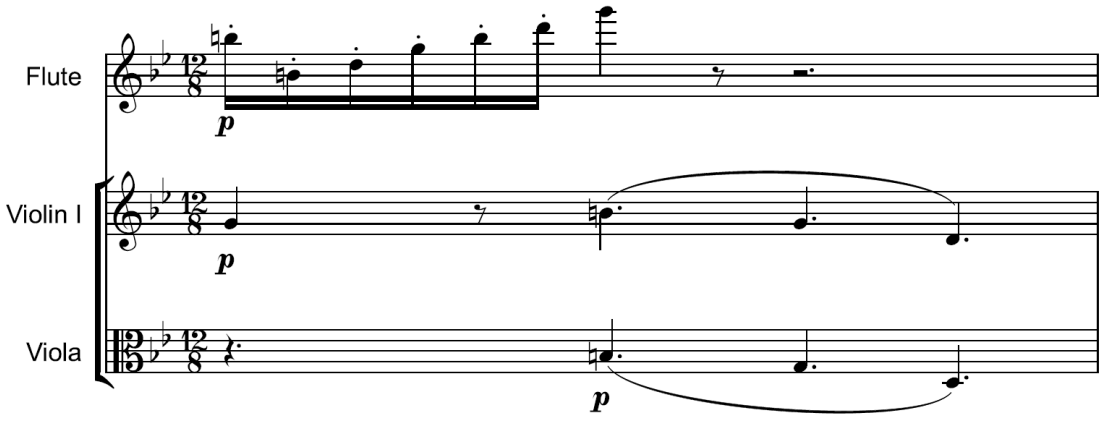
Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bars 36–37, Basson, Viola & Cello

This triadic movement is extended in the flutes and Violin I in bar 38, followed in bar 39 by an unexpected syncopation – the strings play triadic figures in duplet quavers, suggesting a metre of 6/4 (or perhaps 3/2). When a similar opportunity arises in bar 45, the arpeggios remain in 12/8, played staccato; this perhaps signifies an underlying unpredictability in the movement of water.

An increasing number of trills in Violin I suggest that the birdlife is becoming more active as we follow the flow of the brook. At bar 50, we come to a sort of Codetta; the original brook material returns, but this time, it has moved to the clarinets and bassoons, and the strings carry on with the semiquaver variation. This brings us to the Development at bar 54.

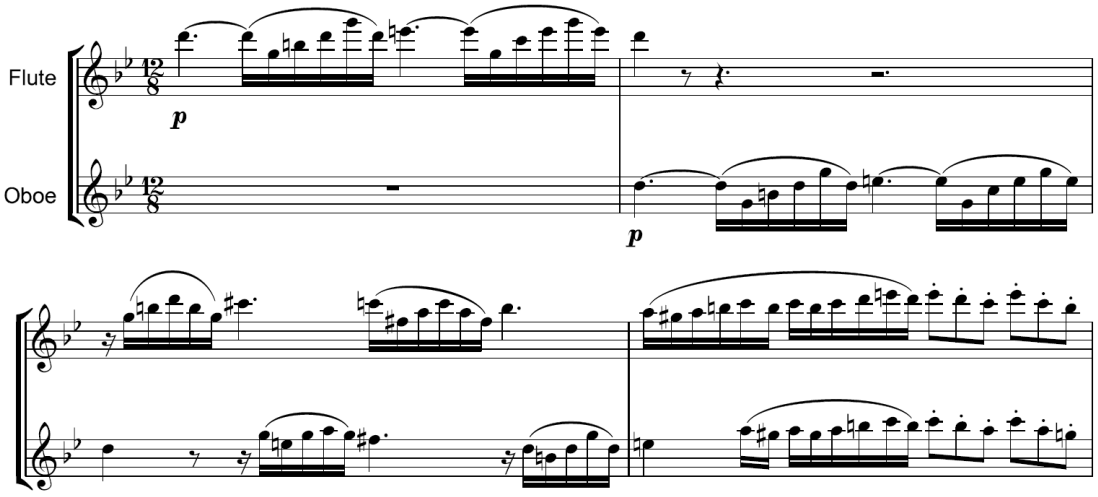
As expected, this section brings various modulations as Beethoven plays with the melodic and rhythmic material from the Exposition. By bar 58, the music is in G major (a tertiary modulation from the tonic). Here, ascending semiquaver arpeggios and descending dotted crotchet arpeggios have been added to the original music (now in the oboes).

Added material in Development



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bar 58, Flute, Violin I & Viola

Beethoven continues to develop the texture in this section, most notably in bars 62–65, where the flutes and oboes engage first in imitation, then come together in thirds.



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 2nd movement, bars 62–65, Flute & Oboe

In bar 69, the clarinets have taken the first theme from the first subject group (Theme 1a) and the music has shifted another third to E-flat major. The arpeggios have moved to different instruments, providing further contrasts in timbre – it is now darker in comparison to what has come before. For example, in bar 70, the clarinets are playing Theme 1a, the bassoons have the descending dotted crotchet arpeggios, and the violas have the ascending semiquaver arpeggios (all the while, the semiquaver version of the brook theme bubbles along in the second violins, and the horns continue their gentle syncopation).

In bar 79, the music has modulated to G-flat major, quite remote from the key signature's two flats, and yet another tertiary modulation. The brook motif is shared by the clarinets and bassoons, the first theme reverting to Violin I, and the descending dotted crotchet arpeggio taken by the flutes. The music then travels via B major (initially spelled as C-flat!) to a secondary dominant – C7 (bar 853), moving to a dominant pedal on F (bars 86–90) with clarinets and bassoons playing a descending sequence in thirds, resolving to the tonic, B-flat major, for the Recapitulation from bar 91.

Unusually, the Recapitulation carries forward ideas introduced in the Development – the arpeggio ideas are retained and further developed. Note, for example, in bar 91, where the bassoons begin the ascending semiquaver arpeggios, passing to the clarinets, then Violin I, while other clarinets and the horns hold the descending dotted crotchet arpeggios. The flutes now have Theme 1a and the strings have reclaimed the semiquaver brook material. As expected in Sonata Form, the music remains, more or less, in B-flat major, although there are some unexpected harmonic events. For example, at bar 113, Beethoven repeats the delayed resolution to the tonic (Chord F in bar 112 wants to go to B-flat) formed through a partial circle of fifths (this time, moving towards B-flat major): D major, G major, C major, F major (bar 113, repeated in bar 114). A dominant pedal on F leads us then to the Coda in B-flat major, starting from bar 122.

Woodwinds in thirds over the brook idea in semiquavers and hints of E-flat major (the sub-dominant) with gentle crescendos and decrescendos end in sudden silence (bar 129). Beethoven marks in the score the precise birds represented by woodwind solos: the Nightingale (flute), Quail (oboe) and Cuckoo (two clarinets). Trills, repeated notes, dotted rhythms and falling major thirds mimic the bird calls, which happen twice, interrupted by soft fragments of Theme 1b, the movement ending on pianissimo B-flat chords, with pizzicato strings.

Here is an outline of the structure of this movement, with various themes indicated.

Section	Bar numbers	Key(s)
Exposition		
8 First subject group	1–12 (1a); 13–18 (1b)	B-flat major
9 Bridge	19–29	B-flat major → F major
10 Second subject group	30–32 (2a); 33–35 (2b); 36–40 (2c)	F major
11 Combination of subject groups	41–49	F major
12 Codetta	50–53	F major
Development	54–90	F major → G major → E-flat major G-flat major → B major → C major F major → B-flat major
Recapitulation		
13 First subject group	91–101 (1a)	B-flat major → F major
14 Second subject group	102–104 (2a); 105–107 (2b); 108–112 (2c); 113–114 (2b); 115–118 (2c); 119–121 (1b)	B-flat major → F major → B-flat major → F major → B-flat major
Coda	122–139	B-flat major (with some tonicisation of E-flat major)

III Allegro (*Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute – Merry gathering of country folk*)

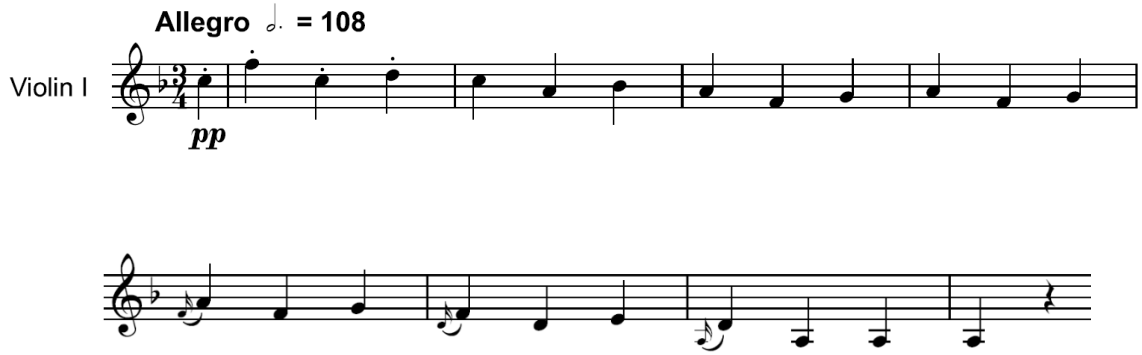
This movement is a **Scherzo and Trio**. It differs from the usual structure of a Scherzo and Trio (and before it, the Minuet and Trio) by repeating the Trio as well, rather than just the Scherzo. The fast-paced tempo, with a dance-like, one-in-a-bar feel, emphasis on major keys, and strong articulation all serve to evoke a country dance.

Section	Bar numbers	Key(s)
Scherzo		
15 1st, 2nd and 3rd themes	1–85	F major, alternating with D major → C major → F major
16 4th theme	86–164	F major → C major → F major
Trio	165–204	F major → C major
Scherzo and Trio repeated	*1–204*	*As above*
Coda – Scherzo (modified and shortened – no 4th theme)	205–264	F major, with a brief excursion to D major

The movement sets the scene with a quick, playful, staccato motif heard pianissimo in strings, beginning with Violins I and II and viola, then adding cellos and double basses.

Scherzo themes

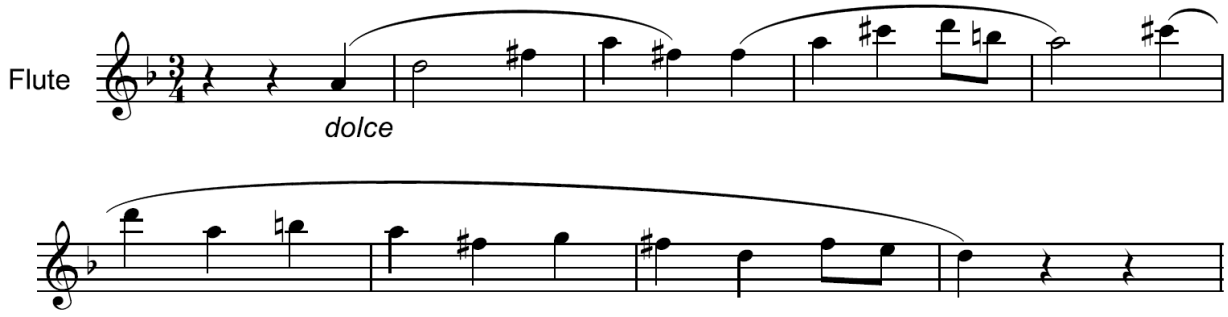
Theme 1



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 3rd movement, bars 1–8[2], Violin I

A sudden shift in key to D major (another tertiary modulation) brings a contrasting second theme, played dolce (sweetly), with legato articulation and more rhythmic activity.

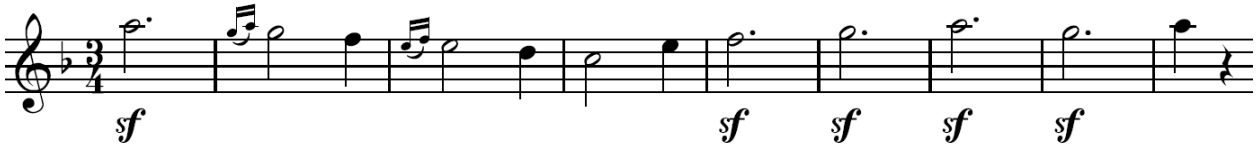
Theme 2



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 3rd movement, bar 83–16, Flute

This music repeats, after which Theme 1 is retained in D major (bar 32^3), leading to Theme 2 in C major, the oboes and upper strings taking the lead. An inverted tonic pedal (see flutes, oboes and clarinets in bars 49–52) and *sforzandi* on the first beats of bars 55–58 lead us to a third theme, played initially in octaves, before evolving into block chords.

Theme 3

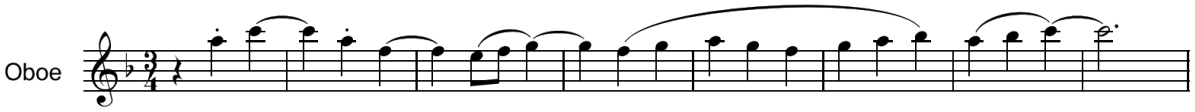


Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 3rd movement, bars 59–67^2

This is followed by ascending arpeggios, passed from violas to Violin II to Violin I (bars 75–77 and 79–81).

Beethoven then introduces an off-beat oboe melody (bar 101), perhaps mocking a bumpkin musician, who enters a beat too soon. This is punctuated by a descending tonic-dominant-tonic figure in the bassoons.

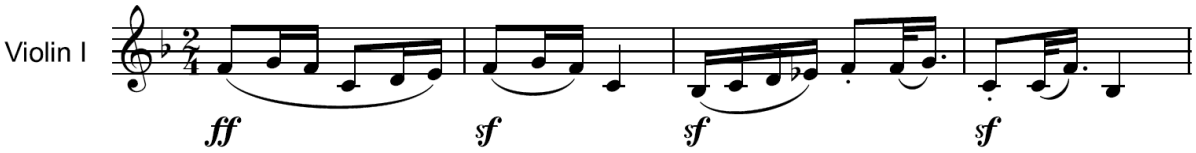
Theme 4



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 3rd movement, bars 91–98, Oboe

The clarinet takes over in bar 122, with the bassoons taking the strings' previous accompaniment figure, and the lower strings taking the bassoons' previous descending figure. After a descending arpeggio flourish from the clarinet (bars 131–132), the horns take Theme 4, with an echo from the oboes (bar 141) and clarinets (bar 143). A tonic pedal, or more appropriately in this country dance context, a drone, enters at bar 149, as the music crescendos. *Sempre più stretto* (tighter and tighter) in double bass and bassoon accelerates us towards the Trio section.

Trio theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 3rd movement, bars 165–168, Violin I

This section is in simple duple time and represents an Austrian folk dance. This can be heard in the persistent drones, Scotch snaps (or Lombard rhythms), primary chords, repeated melodic phrases and frequent accents. Note the interplay of beat division, with the main Trio theme in simple metre (two quavers per beat) and triplet quavers (see flute bars 173–179), and the churning repetition in the violas and cellos in bars 197–202); this music is now in C major. The trumpet, although present in the score before this point, makes itself particularly known in bars 203–204, a timbral surprise.

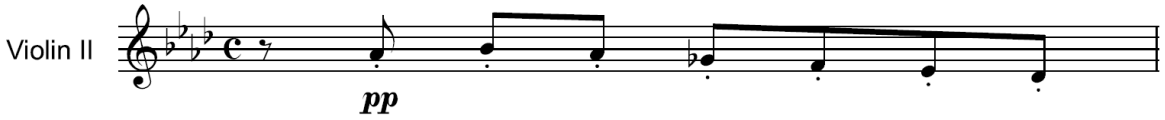
After the Scherzo and Trio repeat, the music continues to a Coda, although the material is entirely from the Scherzo. Again, we hear Theme 1 in F major followed by Theme 2 in D major. However, this is suddenly interrupted by an imperfect cadence in F (bars 219–220). The dance attempts to start up again with Theme 2, now in F major, with the off-beat rhythm pushing the music to *Presto* (bar 234) and Theme 3 (bar 241) suggesting a move towards Theme 4; this theme never eventuates, as the cellos and basses create an interrupted cadence between the C^7 chord in bar 264 and the first bar of the 4th movement, a tremolo D, menacingly played *pianissimo* in the cellos and basses.

IV Allegro (*Gewitter, Sturm – Thunder, Storm*)

This is one of the finest storms in the Western repertoire. It is through-composed, meaning that it follows no formal structure. However, Beethoven develops a number of ideas that can be tracked throughout the movement. Learners would benefit from finding different examples of these themes and exploring how Beethoven has varied them.

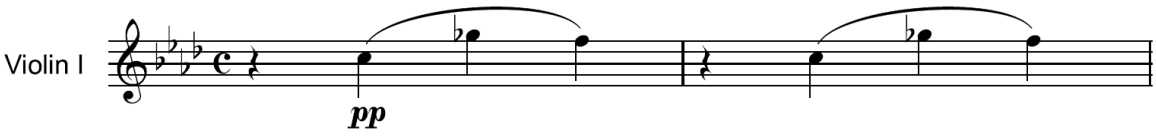
After the opening tremolo on cellos, Violin II introduces what we might consider to be the rain theme. In bar 5, an uneasy theme is heard in Violin I, consisting of an upward diminished 5th, resolving down by a minor 2nd. This might represent the anxiety associated with the impending storm.

Rain theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bar 3, Violin II

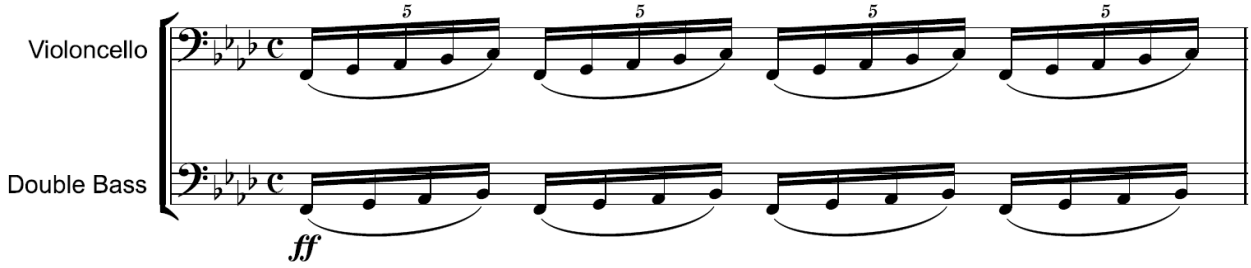
Anxiety theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 5–6, Violin I

Sustained chords in the woodwinds follow, and the cellos and basses shift up a semitone, as do the rain and anxiety themes that follow. Triplets in the bass crescendo to an explosive *fortissimo* as the storm breaks in bar 21. The rhythm of the cellos and double basses adds to the chaos of the storm, the former playing quintuplets and the latter semiquavers against *fortissimo*, sustained woodwind chords. This, along with the persistent tremolo and furious timpani rolls, makes a credible approximation of the rumble of thunder.

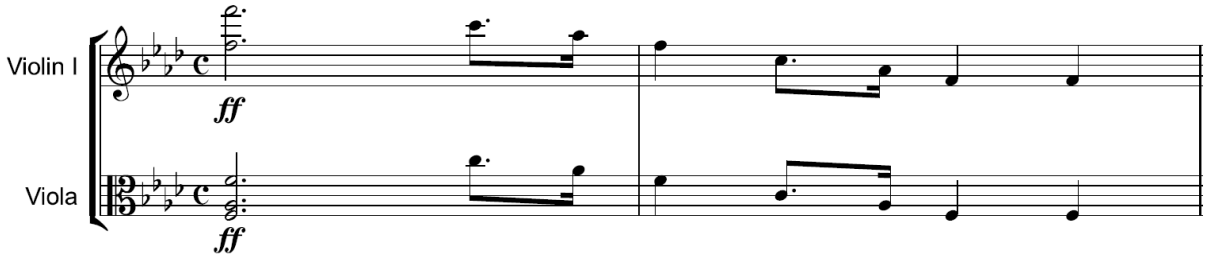
Thunder theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bar 21, Cellos and Double Bass

Upper strings introduce (the first and only time this movement) a descending arpeggio figure at bar 23, including two dotted-quaver-semiquaver figures (some analyses categorise this motif as another rain theme).

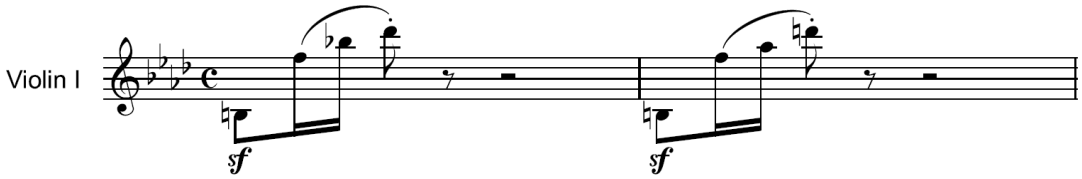
More rain?



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 23–24, Violin I and Viola

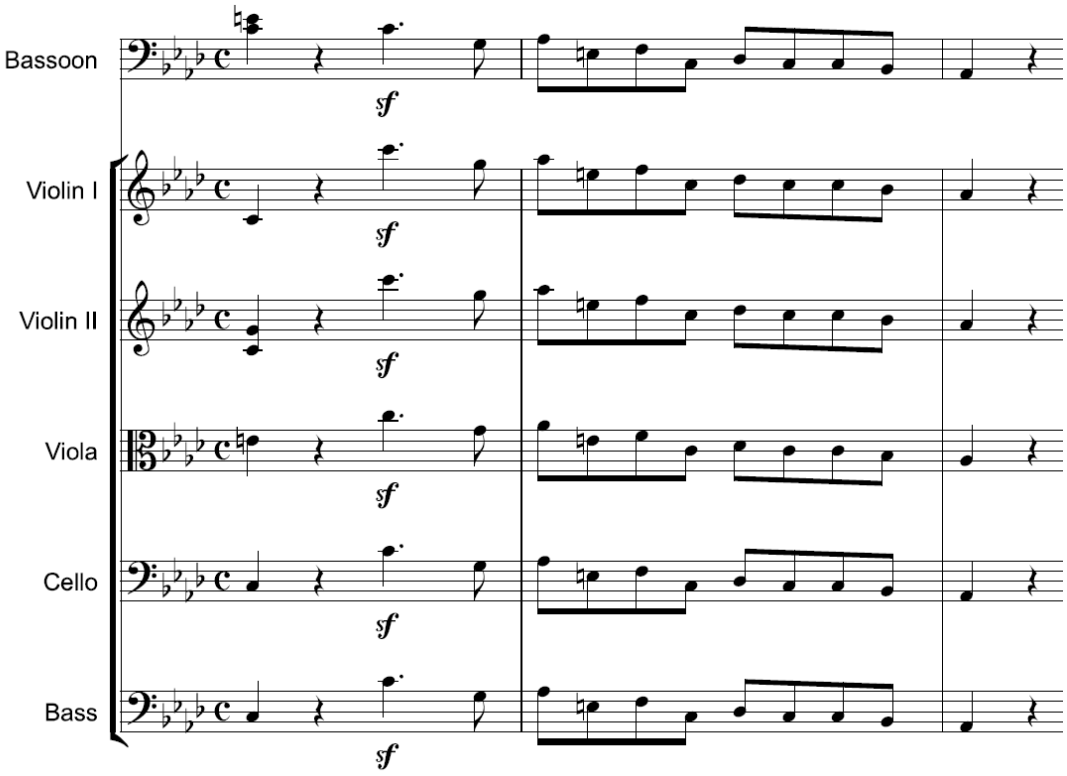
This motif stops in bar 32, after which, we hear some lightning.

Lightning theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 33–34, Violin I

This is followed by a rather dramatic statement in octaves, which, like much of the melodic material in this movement, proceeds in a sequence (this time, descending).



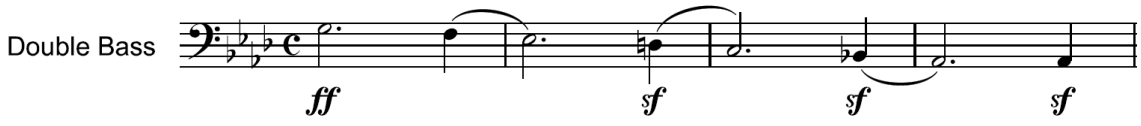
Pastoral Symphony, Op.68, 4th movement, bars 35–37[2], Bassoon and Strings

More growling thunder follows, interspersed with lightning, intensifying in frequency in bars 51–55. Punctuating the lightning started by Violin I, brass (including the trombones) and woodwind add *forte* and *fortissimo* chord stabs. We then hear the opening rain theme again, but softer than what has come immediately before, first rising, then falling in a long scale outlining, and against, a C-sharp diminished 7th chord (there are many more diminished 7th chords learners might locate), played tremolo in Violin II and viola and in sustained chords in the woodwind (bars 60–61).

A brief reprieve comes in the unexpected form of D major in bar 64; the dynamic markings are now *pianissimo*. Nonetheless, the patter of rain continues, as does a distant rumble of four against five semiquavers in the basses and cellos. Ascending motifs move up through the woodwind from bar 72 (from bassoon to clarinet to oboe) with a gradual crescendo, and the music once again explodes into *fortissimo* at bar 78.

At this point, alongside descending, semiquaver arpeggios and many *sforzandi*, we hear a descending scale in cellos and double bass. This proceeds in an ascending sequence through to bar 88. *Fortissimo* punches from the timpani heighten the drama in this section.

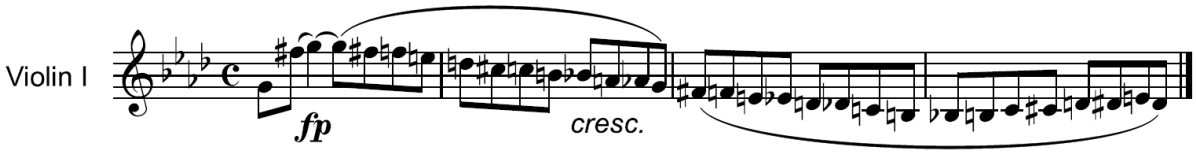
Descending scale treated as an ascending sequence



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 78–81, Double Bass

At bar 89, we hear again the dramatic theme in octaves from bar 35, this time without the bassoons – over the top, the piccolo becomes higher and shriller. Continuing this idea of wind blowing wildly, chromatic scales in Violin I (note the use of sudden and gradual dynamic changes in these passages) are reinforced in the cellos in bars 95–102.

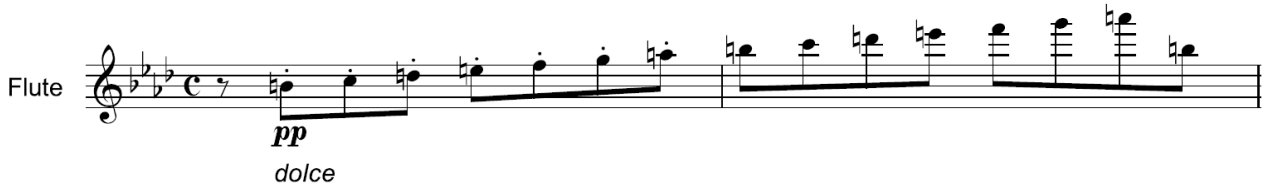
Wind theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 95–98, Violin I

The fury of the storm is almost exhausted, with one last *fortissimo* gasp from bar 1064. Sustained, dissonant chords crash, interspersed with the still rumbling thunder in the lower registers. From bar 119, the descending scale in ascending sequence (from bar 78) returns, but with diminishing strength – *sempre diminuendo*.

Sudden changes in dynamics suggest the storm is trying, but failing, to hang on (note the last hint of lightning in Violin I, bar 140), *pianissimo* rumbles underneath more consonant harmonies telling us the storm is moving away. In bars 154–155, as a transition to the 5th movement, an ascending C major scale in the flutes might suggest the sun, or a rainbow, coming out from behind the clouds – the storm is over.



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 4th movement, bars 154–155, Flute

Without pause, the 5th movement begins.

V Allegretto (*Hirtengesang: Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm – Shepherd's song: Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm*)

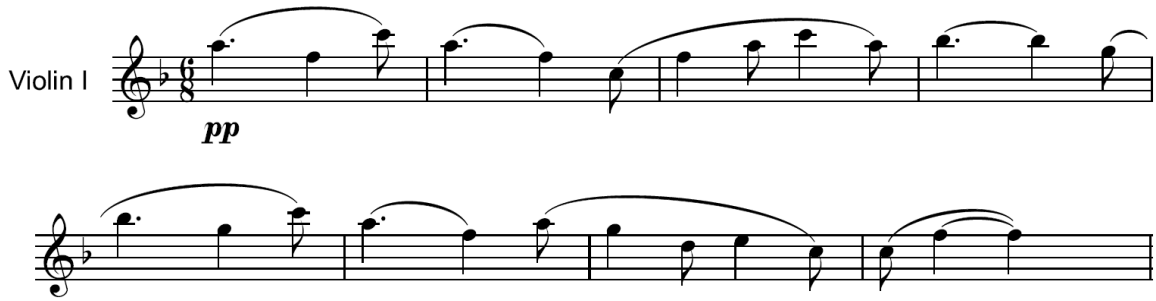
This movement is in **Sonata Rondo Form**. This combines the three-part Sonata Form structure (Exposition-Development-Recapitulation), including the usual tonic-dominant key relationships, with a Rondo Form, which is characterised by a recurring main theme (in this case, the first subject) – A-B-A-C-A-B-A/Coda.

Section	Bar numbers	Key(s)
Introduction	1–8	C major / F major
A (1st subject)	9–31	F major (tonic)
Transition	32–39	F major → C major

Section	Bar numbers	Key(s)
B (2nd subject)	40–63	C major (dominant)
A	64–79	F major → B-flat major (sub-dominant)
C (Development)	80–116	B-flat major and various others (including D-flat major, briefly), ending in C major
A (Recapitulation)	117–139	F major (tonic)
Transistion	140–145	
B	146–163	F major → C major → F major (tonic)
Coda (A)	164–264	F major → Cmajor → F major → B-flat major → F major

The opening is tonally ambiguous; the 4th movement ended with an outline of G^7 in the flute and indeed, this resolves to C major, spelled out by the triadic figure in the clarinets and the C–G drone in the violas. However, this is soon resolved by the cellos and basses (superimposing another drone, F–C), but the horns spell out more C major until the very last moment, when it shifts to F major (bar 82) on a sforzando. The Symphony's tonic key of F major wins, and from bar 9, Violin I introduces the main, eight-bar theme, played pianissimo, which can also be considered the first subject.

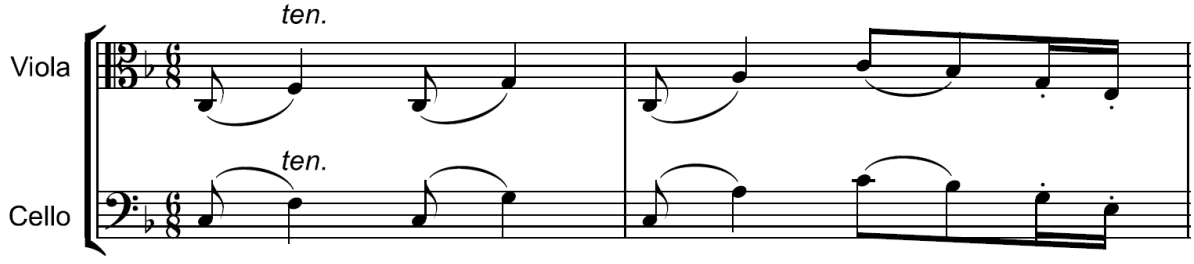
First subject



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 5th movement, bars 9–16, Violin I

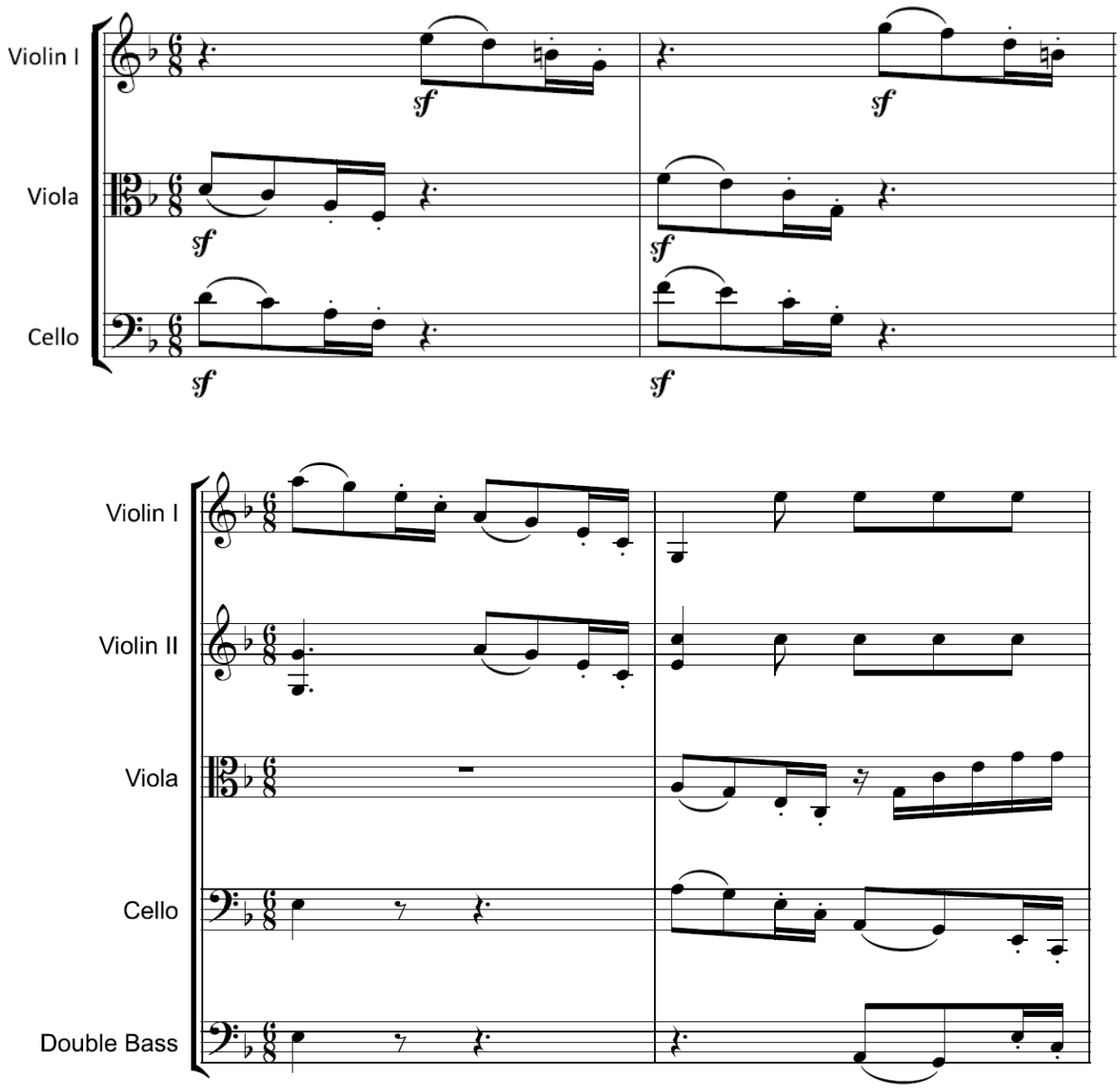
This theme is heard three times in slightly different contexts, passing from Violin I to Violin II (bar 17), then clarinet, horns and viola, *fortissimo* (bar 25). The end of this first subject is developed as a transitional theme to take us to the dominant key, C major.

Transition theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 5th movement, bars 32–33, Viola and Cello

This transition theme is heard four times, alternating between cellos (and violas) and Violin I (which the woodwind also accompanies). Trills are added from bar 36, building towards the second subject, with the music now in C major, the dominant.

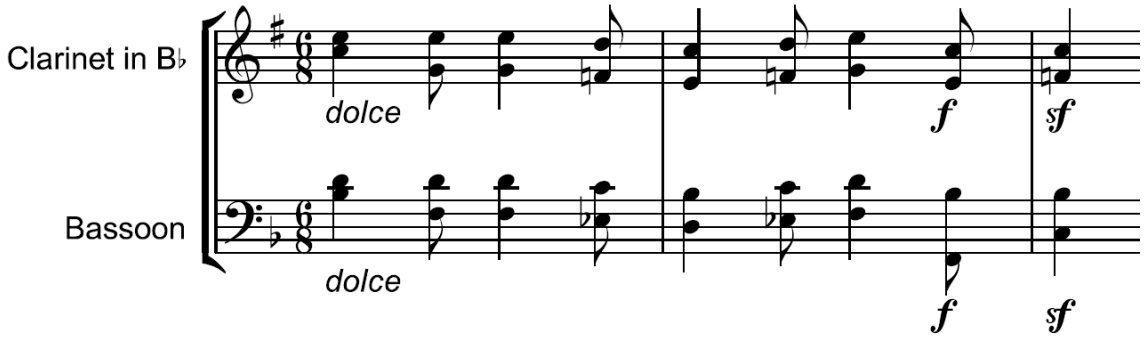


Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 5th movement, bars 40-43, Strings, partial score

Second Subject

A codetta of sorts (bar 50) leads us to the opening triadic figure in C major, passing between Violin I, flute, oboe, clarinet and, finally, horns. An ascending F major scale in Violin I (bar 63) recalls the rainbow at the end of the 4th movement, this time over the superimposed open 5ths of C–G and F–C (the same tonal ambiguity from the start of the movement), and the first subject returns in bar 64. However, the accompaniment has changed – a triadic semiquaver figuration in Violin II and *pizzicato* cellos are of particular note. The first subject is heard one and a half times, the second attempt diverting to F7, the dominant 7th of B-flat major, which announces itself at bar 80, beginning the Development.

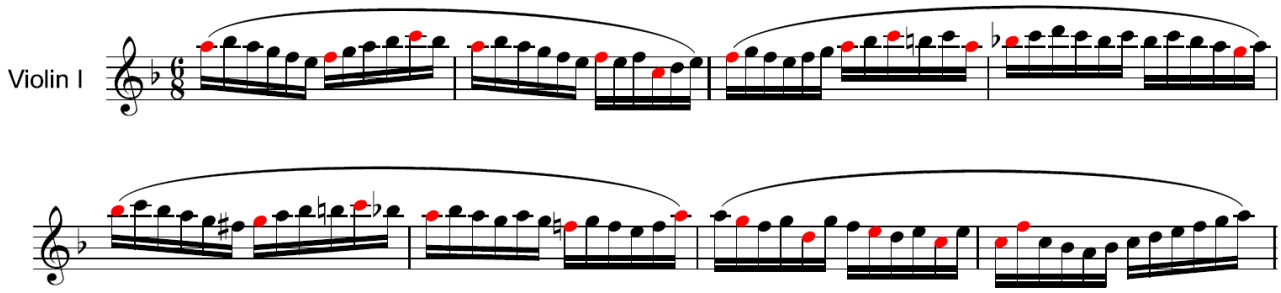
Development theme



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 5th movement, bars 80–82[1], Clarinet and Bassoon

The music moves through various keys, as would be expected in a Development section. In bar 92–93, an interrupted cadence moves from F (the dominant of B-flat) to G-flat (i.e. the flattened 6th degree of B-flat), effecting a tertiary modulation. This seems to be moving towards D-flat major (Violin I spells out the D-flat major tonic triad in bar 95), but the bass rises chromatically again to A-natural, then B-flat and B-natural, then finally a perfect cadence in C major. From bar 99, we hear a dominant pedal on C, once more superimposed with F major, three bars before the return of the first subject – the Recapitulation.

Here, the main theme has been couched in semiquaver runs (the red notes below pick out the pitches of the original – note the delays in the 7th bar, which add further decoration), with *pizzicato* cellos and triadic quaver interjections from Violin II.



Pastoral Symphony, Op. 68, 5th movement, bars 117–124, Violin I

When the cellos and violas take over in bar 132, note the triplet semiquavers played fortissimo, which build excitement. This is broken by the return of the transition theme at bar 140. This time, the destination is F major, the tonic, but the music still travels via C major (compare this with the passage from bar 40).

At bar 164, the triadic theme from the start is heard again, suggesting we are returning to the first subject. However, this is not another return to the first subject, strictly speaking, but the beginning of a long Coda.

Note the return to first subject material at bar 178 in bassoons and cellos, and the imitative counterpoint that characterises this passage. At bar 190, a distinct change is heard. Triplet semiquavers and a leaping bass line take us through a new chord progression in F major – I (bars 190–191), vi (192–193), V7/V (a secondary dominant – 194–199), V7 (200–205), I (206), or F, Dm, G7, C7, F (a partial circle of fifths – see 2nd movement, bar 33). Another passage of imitative counterpoint follows, this time with semiquaver runs, before the same

chord progression from bar 190 returns from bar 219, this time with the V7/V and V the same length (two bars) as the other chords. From bar 227, there is effectively a tonic pedal with some suspensions (note the E-flat in the flutes, which resolves to D over a B-flat major chord in second inversion in bar 229). The activity dies down by bar 237, with the brass and woodwind dropping out and the strings playing sotto voce (under the voice) fragments of the first subject. Some back-and-forth then occurs between these soft strings and louder chords involving the woodwind and horns. A final triadic horn call heralds the end of the movement from bar 260, and the movement ends with two fortissimo chords in F major.

Ravel Histoires Naturelles

Ravel's Histoires naturelles (1906) is a cycle of five songs, all based on observations of the natural world. The music is set to words by Jules Renard (1896) from his novel Les histoires naturelles, in which he anthropomorphises various animals and describes the animalistic behaviours of certain people through 45 vignettes. Ravel selected five of these as the basis for his settings. Learners should study the first four songs in detail.

1 *Le Paon* (*The Peacock*)
2 *Le Grillon* (*The Cricket*)
3 *Le Cygne* (*The Swan*)
4 *Le Martin-Pêcheur* (*The Kingfisher*)

References to and examples from the score are drawn from the original 1907 publication by A. Durand et Fils (D. & F. 6867).

Performance

At various points, the score directs the singer to omit the 'schwa' ([ə] in the International Phonetic Alphabet), ignoring traditional conventions of singing (and poetic speaking) in French and making the text, at times, closer to spoken French – this approach split audience opinion (many walked out of the January 1907 première). However, it is the contrast between the declamatory singing and the almost spoken phrases that is so striking in these settings.

Pierre Bernac, the famous French vocalist (most often associated with Francis Poulenc), who worked on these *mélodies* with Ravel, offers pertinent advice in his text *The Interpretation of French Song* (p. 250) – here, Bernac suggests very close adherence to all the expressive markings in the score to achieve an almost improvisatory feel at times. The text should be allowed to come to the fore and not be exaggerated – the words and music very much speak for themselves. Bernac is considered the preeminent authority on French *melodies*, and it would be well worth listening to his recordings of these songs. However, the songs may be sung by either male or female voices, and candidates are likely to come across both.

Harmony and Tonality

Ravel's harmonic language and treatment of tonality is of its time – essentially post-tonal in its undermining of harmonic function, but not atonal. Each of the songs contain a number of key or tonal centres, with remote modulations and colourful chromaticism used to highlight the text.

Word-Painting

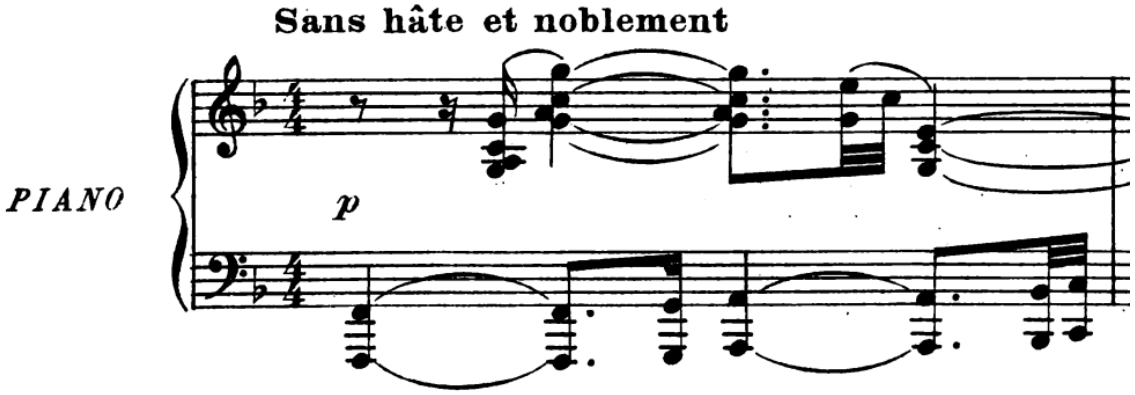
The songs are full of examples of word-painting. Indeed, Ravel's aim was to quite literally interpret the text through music. Obviously, not every word has been painstakingly represented, but it would be beneficial for learners to understand the meaning of each phrase, and sometimes, word.

Two translations available online are suitable for reference. Where appropriate, reference will be made in these Notes for Guidance to specific translations of words or phrases to save learners the trouble of looking up the translations.

1 **https://oxfordsong.org/song/histoires-naturelles**
2 **https://www.lieder.net/lieder/assemble_texts.html?SongCycleId=252**

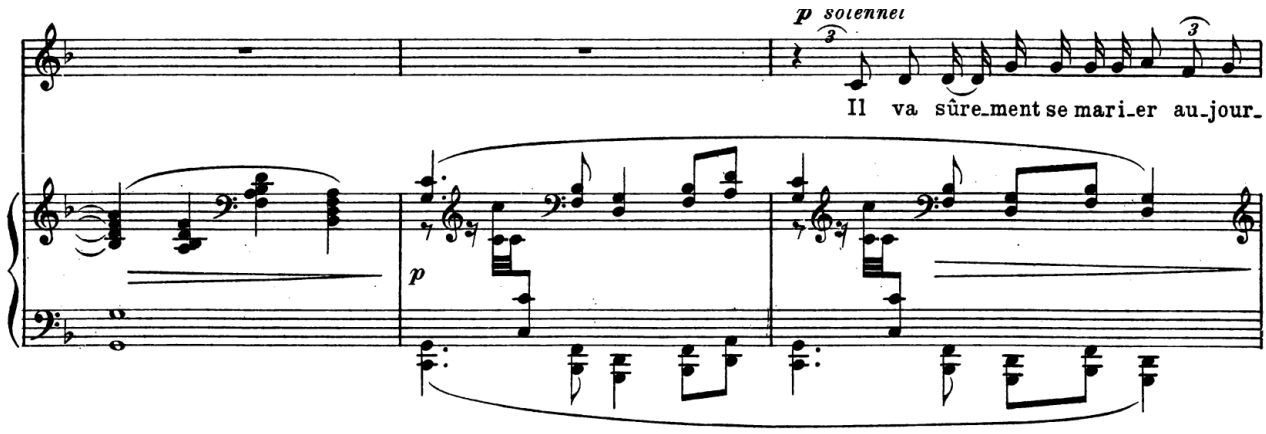
Le Paon (The Peacock)

Marked *sans hâte et noblement* (without haste and nobly), Ravel's setting captures the ridiculous pomposity of the peacock. It begins with a long piano introduction (bars 1–7), making use of dotted rhythms (reminiscent of a French Overture, suggesting majesty).



Le Paon, bar 1

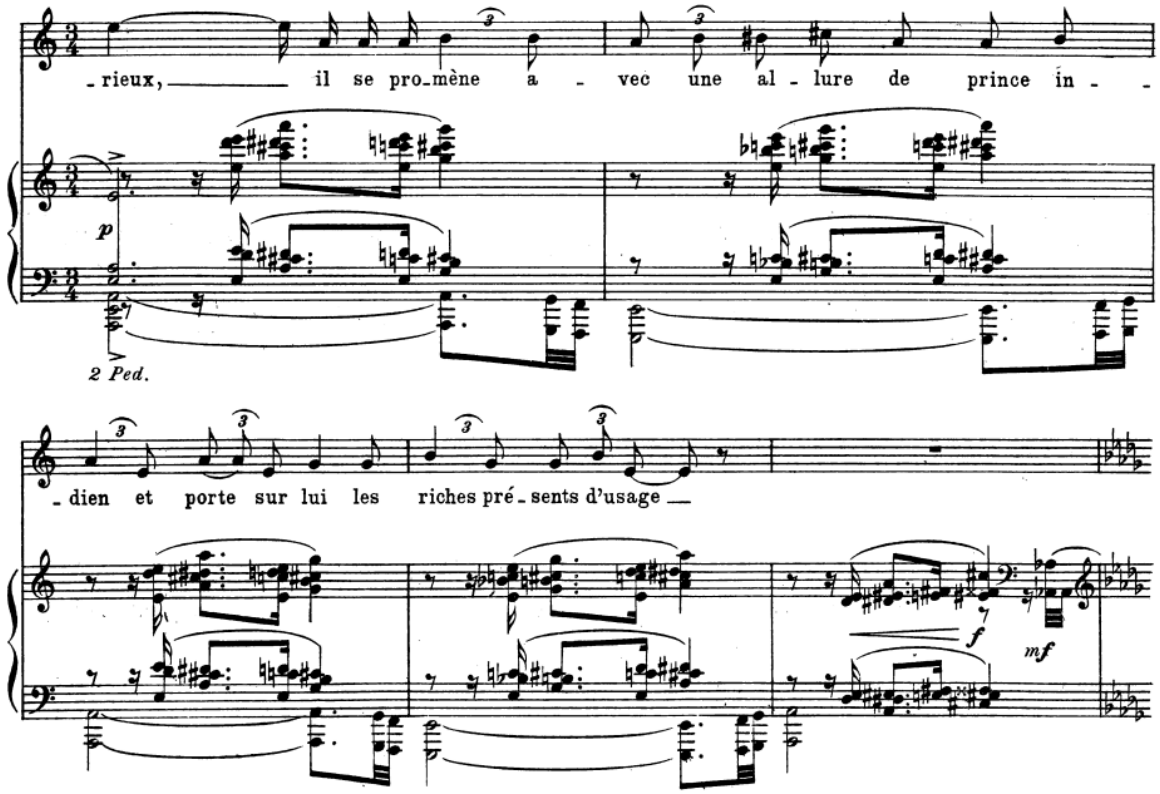
This ends with an example of parallelism (bars 7 and 8), the parallel 5ths, 4ths and octaves in addition to a trembling figure on C in octaves with demisemiquavers (perhaps suggesting a little shake from the peacock) lending the air of a royal fanfare.



Le Paon, bars 6–8

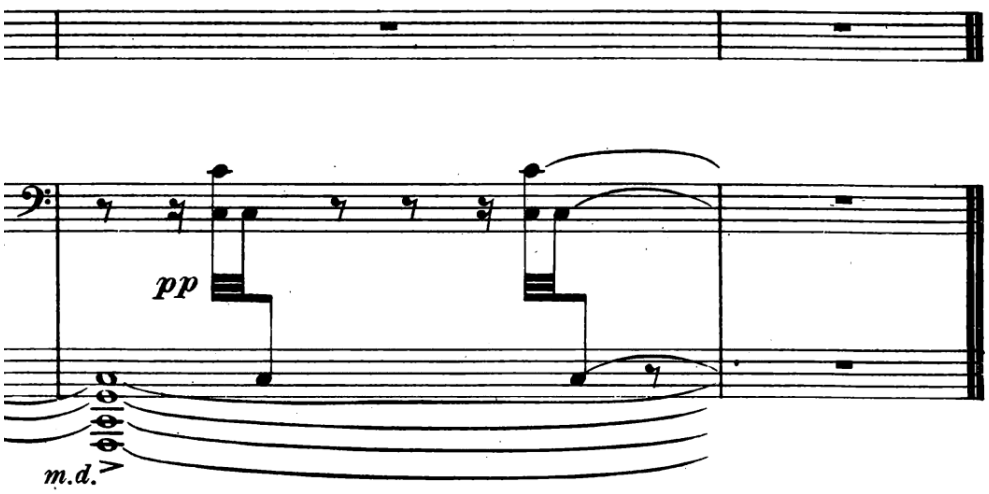
The singer and piano accompaniment are quite independent of each other. As mentioned above, the text switches between declamations and more speech-like passages. This can be seen in the short note values and triplets throughout, juxtaposed with the rigid and stately accompaniment, creating gentle syncopation.

This suggests a disconnect between the peacock's self-perception (the piano) and the observer (the singer). Another disconnect can be seen in bars 16–20, where the dissonant accompaniment clashes with a more straightforward melodic line, as the peacock walks about with the haughty air of an 'Indian Prince'.



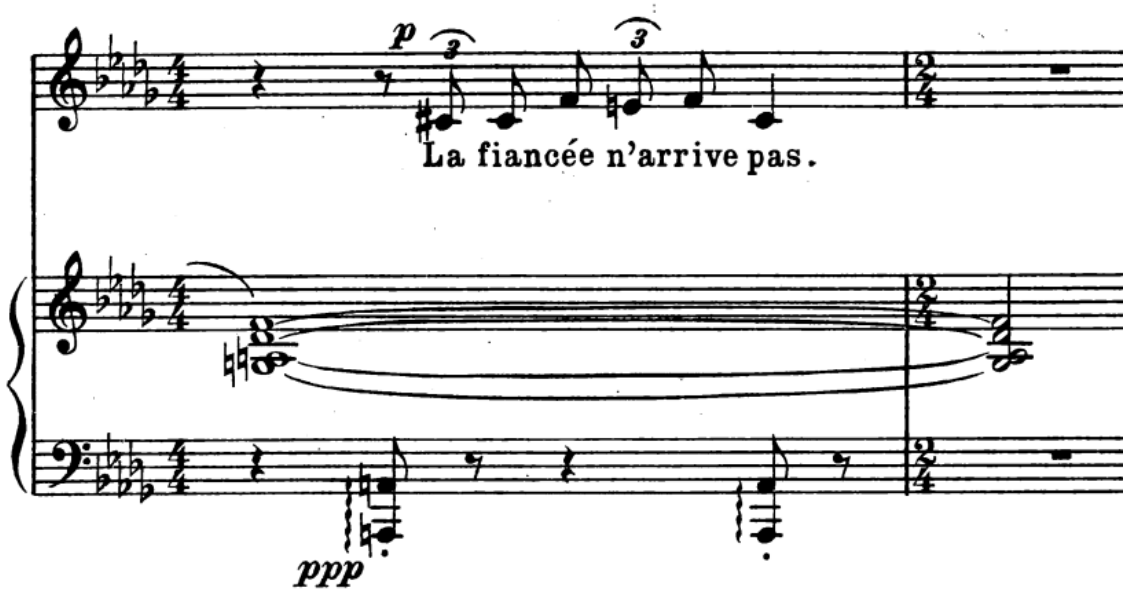
Le Paon, bars 16–20

In terms of tonality, the song begins firmly in F major and ends in essentially the same key (the F played by the right hand crossing over underpins an open 5th on C, and is allowed to ring on, avoiding a clear resolution as the peacock prepares to repeat his ceremony).



Le Paon, bars 57–58

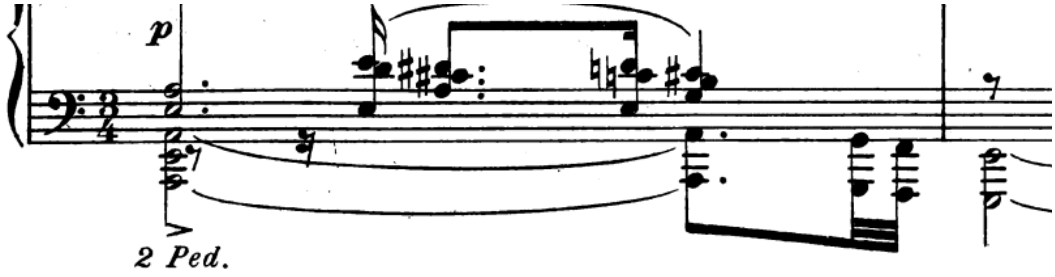
From bar 16, A becomes the tonal centre, although the chromaticism in the right hand of the piano part undermines this. A sudden shift to D-flat major occurs in bar 21, ending in an augmented chord, signifying the disappointment and shock when 'the fiancée does not come'.



Le Paon, bar 26–27

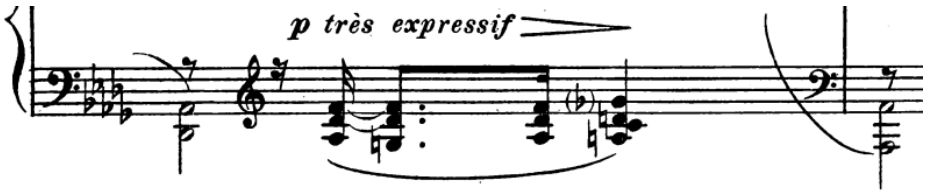
E-flat major follows in bar 28, beginning an extended (dominant?) pedal point on B-flat, which could be said to continue through to bar 34 on the enharmonic A-sharp. The peacock's 'walking' motif is resumed in the inner voices. From bar 44, the music shifts down a semitone from the final open 5th on A-flat, to G major, the supertonic. A final excursion to D-flat major occurs at bar 50, before the original tonal centre of F returns from bar 55 to the end as the peacock gets on with his day.

In spite of these post-tonal gestures, there is some tonal stability in this song, especially in two passages – bars 16–20, where the bass cycles between A and E (a perfect 4th, sounding like the tonic and dominant in A minor),



Le Paon, bar 16, Piano m.g.

and bars 21–25, similarly moving between D-flat and A-flat (perfect 4th),



Le Paon, bar 21, Piano m.g.

and the extended 'dominant' pedal from bar 28. Related to the idea of dominants, there is also the quintal harmony (stacked 5ths of F–C–G) in the final chord. This relatively stable tonality suggests the arrogant denial of the peacock.

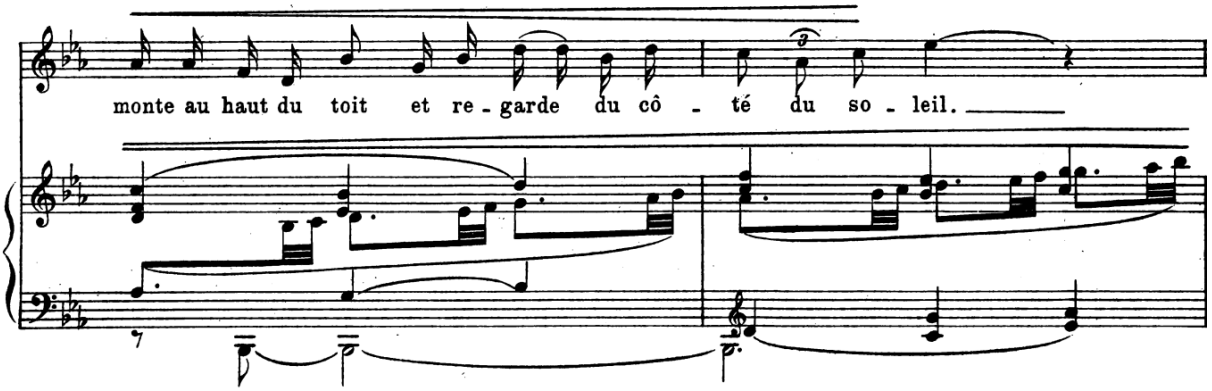
Specific instances of word-painting that may be easily located by learners include:

3 Bar 16 on 'Glorieux' (glorious) – vocal octave leap (E to E).

4 Bar 23 on 'son aigrette tremble comme une lyre' (His plume quivers like a lyre) – the demisemiquaver octave figure in the piano through to bar 25.

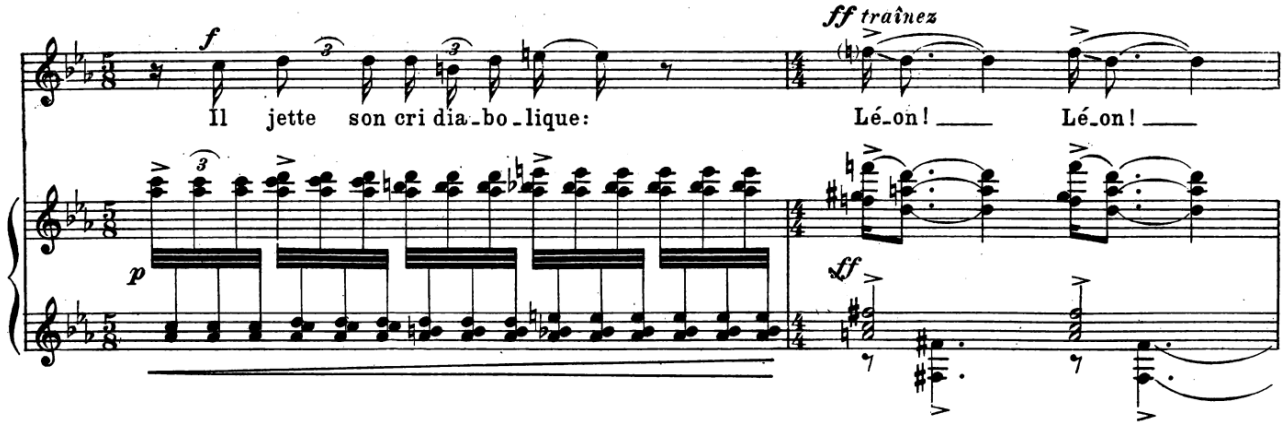
5 Bar 26 on 'La fiancée n'arrive pas (The fiancée does not come) – short staccato octaves in bass under a long, held (into bar 27) augmented chord, suggesting waiting.

6 Bar 29 on 'Il monte au haut du toit et regarde du côté du soleil' (He climbs to the top of the roof, and from its edge looks at the sun) – rising movement in both voice and piano parts, with a crescendo.



Le Paon, bars 29–30

7 Bar 31 on 'Il jette son cri diabolique' (He projects his diabolical cry) – complex time signature with dissonant clusters alternating between octaves rapidly (demisemiquavers).

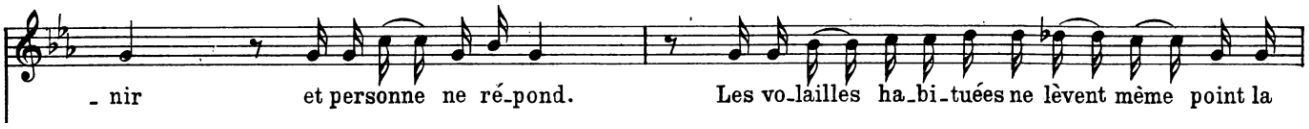


Le Paon, bars 31–32

8 Bar 32 on 'Léon' – mimics a peacock's cry (accented then glissando down a minor 3rd) with dissonant chords in the piano.

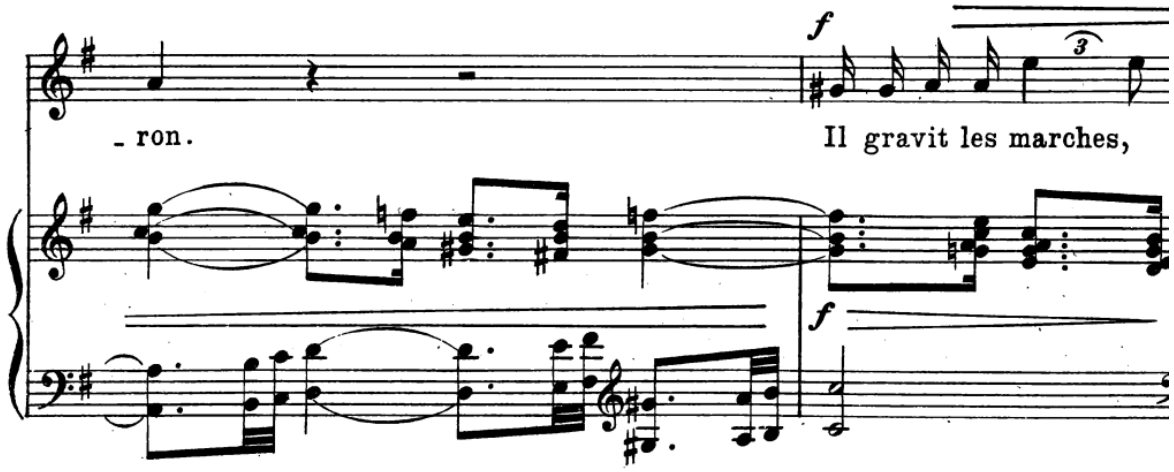
9 Bar 34 on 'Il ne voit rien venir' (He sees nobody come) – sparse accompaniment mirrors the lack of response.

10 Bar 36 on 'Les volailles habituées ne lèvent même point la tête' (the hens, used to this, do not even raise their heads) – descending chromaticism in the middle of the vocal line implies the birds' indifference to the vain peacock.



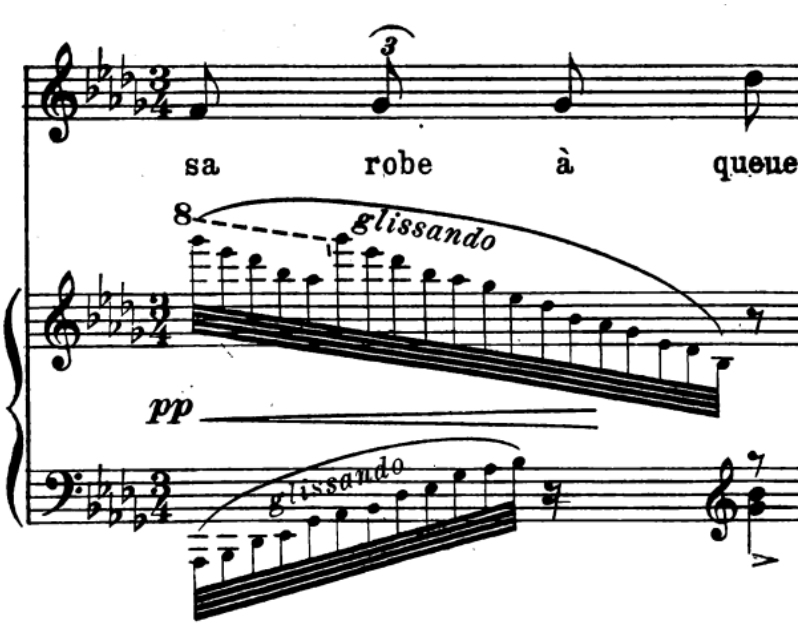
Le Paon, bars 35–36, Voice

11 Bar 47 on 'Il gravit les marches…' (he climbs the steps) – ascending perfect 5th.



Le Paon, bars 46–47

12 Bars 50–51 on 'Il relève sa robe à queue…' (He lifts up his tail) – contrary motion, pentatonic (G-flat) glissando in the piano part, suggesting the peacock's tail fanning out.



Le Paon, bar 51

These are some of the more obvious examples. Learners should also investigate other examples of how Ravel employs the piano part and contrast between this and the melodic line to suggest the caricature of the peacock.

Structurally, the piece does not follow any particular form; however, learners may observe the repetition of certain ideas.

13 The 'French Overture' dotted rhythms in bars 1–5 are heard also in bars 9–13, bars 28–30 and bars 44–48 (although the dotted rhythm is present in other passages), which suggest the pomposity of the peacock.

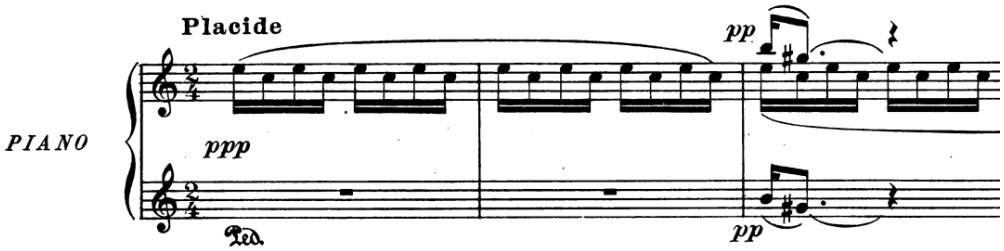
14 The parallel chords (similar to organum) with the octave 'tremor' in bars 7–8, echoed in bars 42–43 and bars 55–57, suggesting the aristocratic peacock and his trembling tail feathers.

15 Melodic gestures similar to 'La fiancée n'arrive pas', such as bar 33 ('C'est ainsi qu'il appelle sa fiancée' – Thus he calls his fiancée). This pattern is characterised by the interval of a 4th (of varying qualities), sometimes interspersed with a 2nd or a 3rd to decorate the higher pitch. Learners may find it interesting to locate other examples of intervals of a 4th in the vocal line.

Le Grillon (The Cricket)

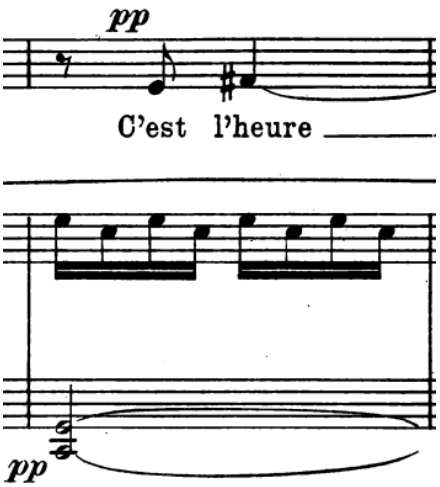
The range of dynamics in this song sits between *pppp* and *p*, suggesting that the singer is working very hard not to frighten the small cricket, as well as reflecting the relative smallness of the creature. The expressive marking at the start is *Placide* (placid or peaceful). In spite of this, there is an atmosphere of anxiety as the cricket obsessively tidies his home, checks that his door is locked, and then retreats deep into the earth for safety. This is heightened by the relatively high pitch in the piano part with both hands written in treble clef for most of the song, only relaxing to the bass clef at the very end, when the singer observes the tall poplars in the quiet countryside.

An oscillating major 3rd underpins the beginning of the song, with the minor 3rd of B–G-sharp completing an augmented major 7th chord built on C.



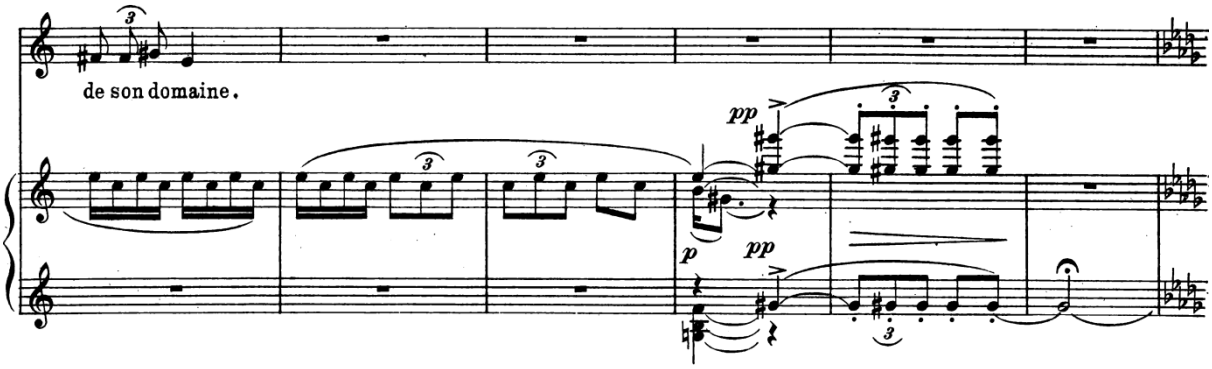
Le Grillon, bars 1–3

As the singer starts, the chord shifts to A minor, then an augmented major 11th chord on C.



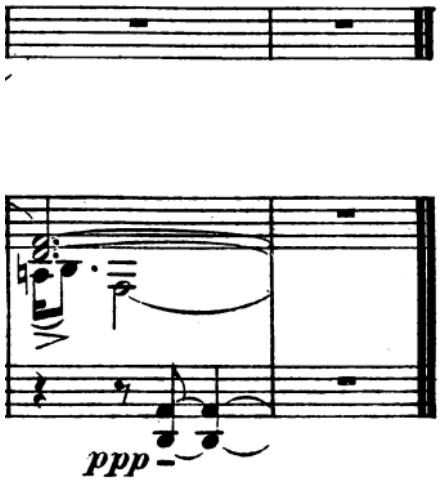
Le Grillon, bar 7

The rhythm of the oscillating major 3rd augments as if slowing down (bars 14–15 – moving from semiquavers to triplet quavers to quavers), and finally, if we ignore the E as an echo of what has come before, a G dominant 7th chord, quickly clashing with a G-sharp.



Le Grillon, bars 13–18

An easier way of thinking about this passage is to consider the G-sharp (and, from bar 19, the enharmonic, A-flat) as the central tone of the song, with everything shifting around it. This pitch is not broken until bar 39, over halfway through the song, and it returns from bar 43. The song finishes on a D-flat major chord, which of course contains an A-flat as its dominant, bringing resolution to this central pedal tone.

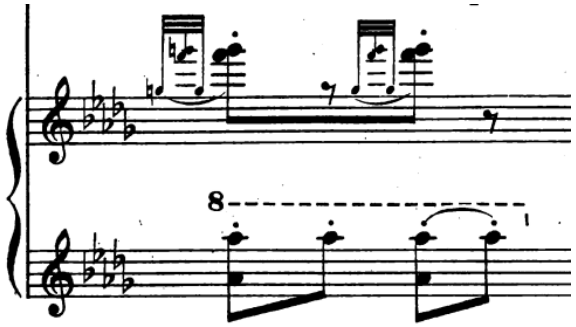


Le Grillon, bars 67–68

Again, this song defies structural analysis in a traditional sense, but could broadly be broken into:

16 Bars 1–18: Introduction
17 Bars 19–38: Verse
18 Bars 39–53: Interlude
19 Bars 54–62: Verse (short)
20 Bars 63–68: Codetta

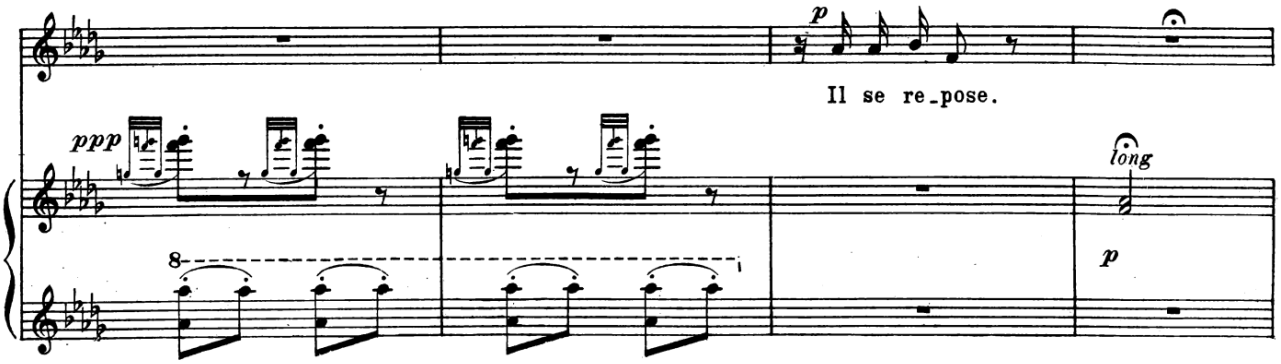
The singer's phrases, which are largely speech-like in rhythm, are frequently interrupted (and sometimes accompanied, e.g. bar 23) by pauses to listen to the chirping of the cricket, represented by a very high A-flat octave in the piano's left hand, clashing with G-natural and F-natural in the right hand. The pitch 'clustering' produces an authentic insect sound. This figure is first heard in bar 22. Its final appearance in bars 57–61 gradually decrescendo to *pppp*, depicting the cricket's descent into deep earth.



Le Grillon, bar 23, Piano

Specific instances of word-painting, in addition to those described above, include:

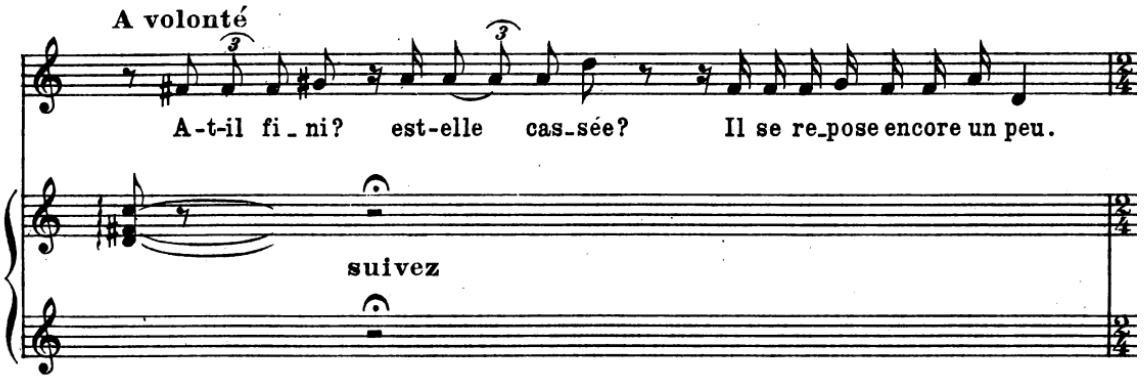
21 Bar 33 on 'Il se repose' (He rests) – no piano accompaniment, followed by a long pause on a minor 3rd with no singer, implying sudden silence.



Le Grillon, bars 31–34

22 Bar 35 on 'Puis il remonte' (Then he mounts again) – ascending vocal line.

23 Bar 39 on 'A-t-il fini?' (Has he finished?) – free vocal line (no time signature) over a short, ringing D7 chord, as the singer listens intently for the cricket.

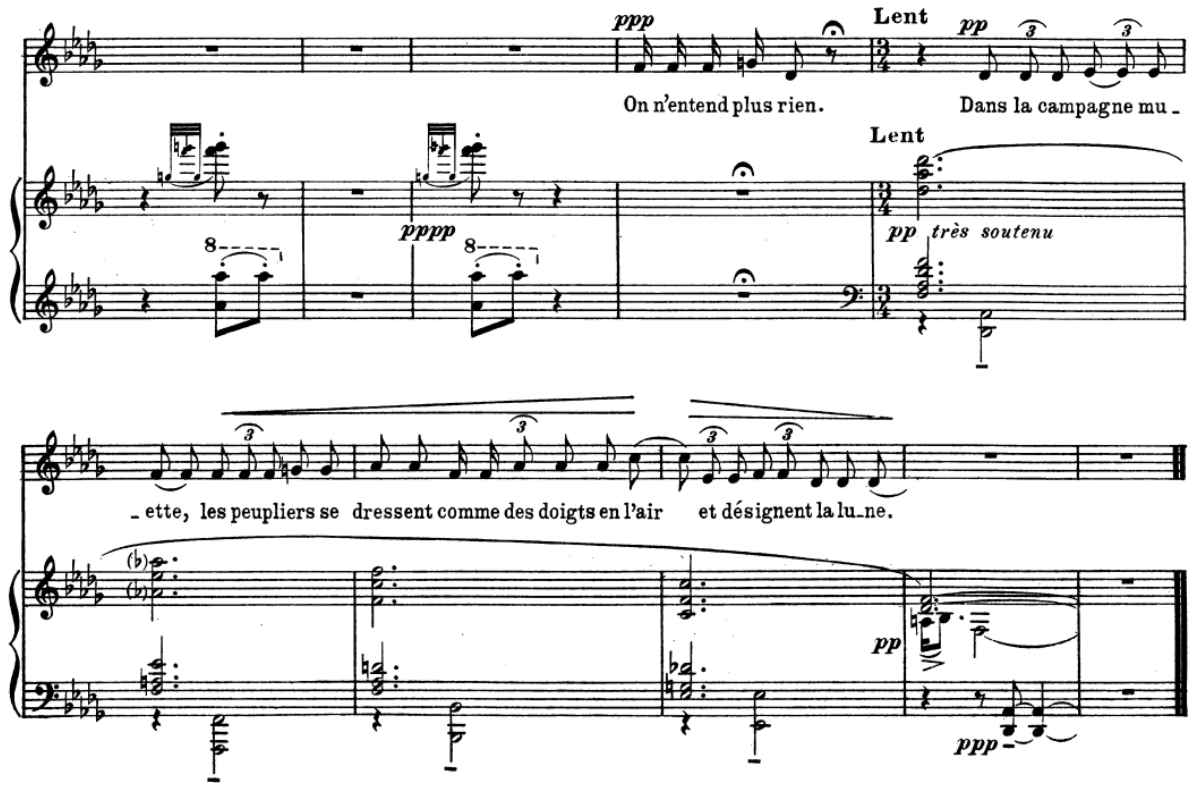


Le Grillon, bar 39

24 Bar 47–48 on 'Et il écoute' (And he listens) – long held chord in the piano as the cricket is still and listens for danger.

25 Bar 56 on 'fond de la terre' (depths of the earth) – descending vocal line.

26 Bar 63 on 'Dans la campagne muette, les peupliers se dressent comme des doigts en l'air' (In the quiet countryside, the poplars stand tall like fingers in the air) – ascending vocal line with hints of the Lydian mode (see G-natural in bar 64, vocal part), suggesting ancient trees.



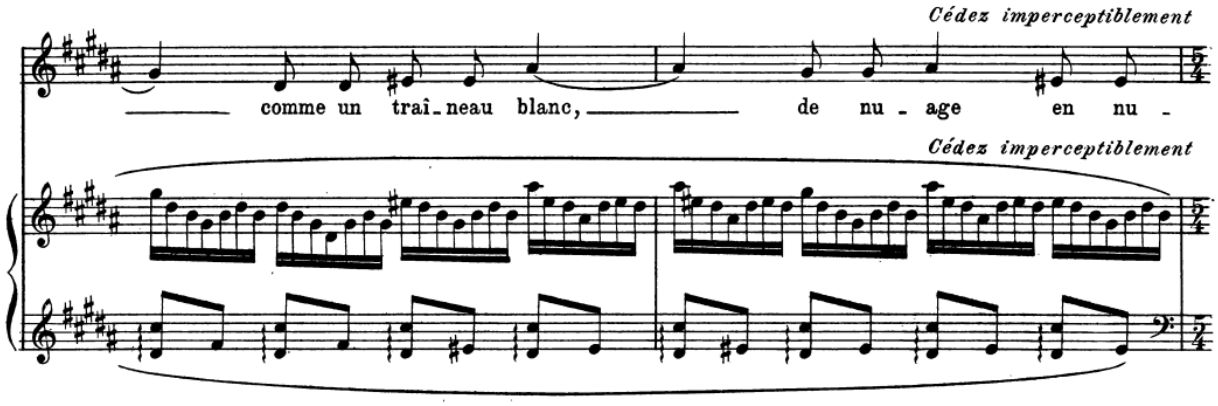
Le Grillon, bars 59–68

Learners may find it helpful to map out the different musical material relative to the lyrics, identifying where music is repeated and varied, and to what effect.

Le Cygne (The Swan)

The focus shifts back to watching an animal, rather than listening to one, this time imagining that the swan is trying to catch the reflections of clouds in the water. Befitting the swan's graceful reputation, this melody is sung very legato, with the undulating piano accompaniment representing its busier, yet unseen, legs, or perhaps the flow of water. Metre is adapted to the needs of the text, comprising a mixture of simple and complex time signatures.

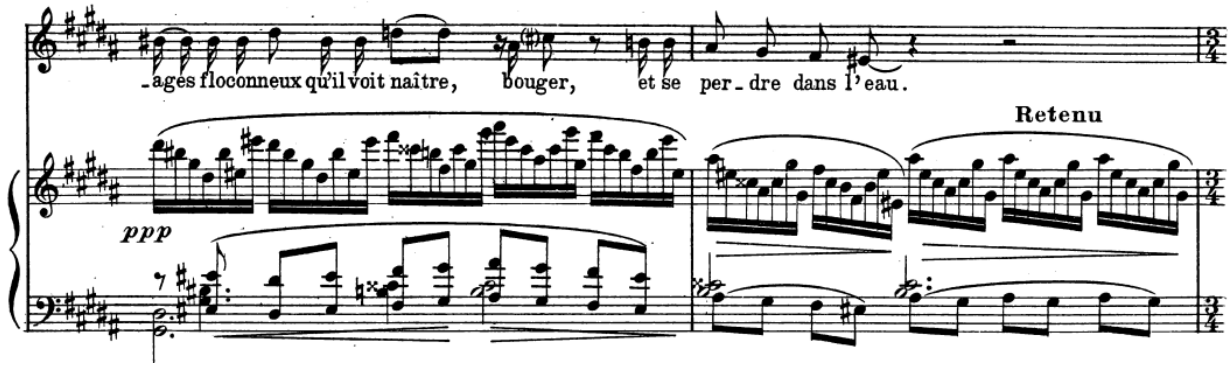
The expressive marking – *très doux et enveloppé de pédales* (very soft and enveloped in pedals) – directs the pianist to create a muddy impression with the accompaniment, with the vocal line (doux et calme – soft and calm) floating over the top. The irregular grouping of seven semiquavers in the time of eight in the right hand of the piano adds to the sense of looseness and grace. The highest pitches in this figure sometimes follow the vocal melody (e.g. bar 7), and other times bring out another (e.g. bars 8–10). Adding to the mystical feeling, the melody is sometimes in the B Lydian mode (see bars 3–4 and 27–28).



Le Cygne, bars 3–4

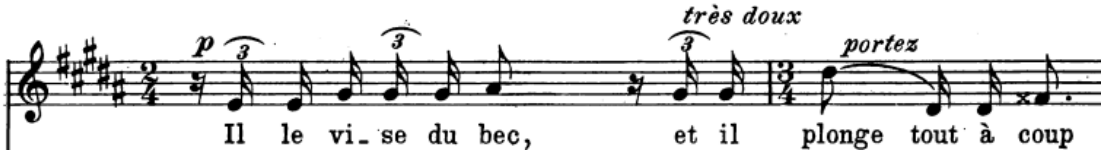
The vocal line contains some strong examples of word-painting, such as:

27 Bar 7 on 'et se perdre dans l'eau' (and become lost in the water) – descending vocal line.



Le Cygne, bars 6–7

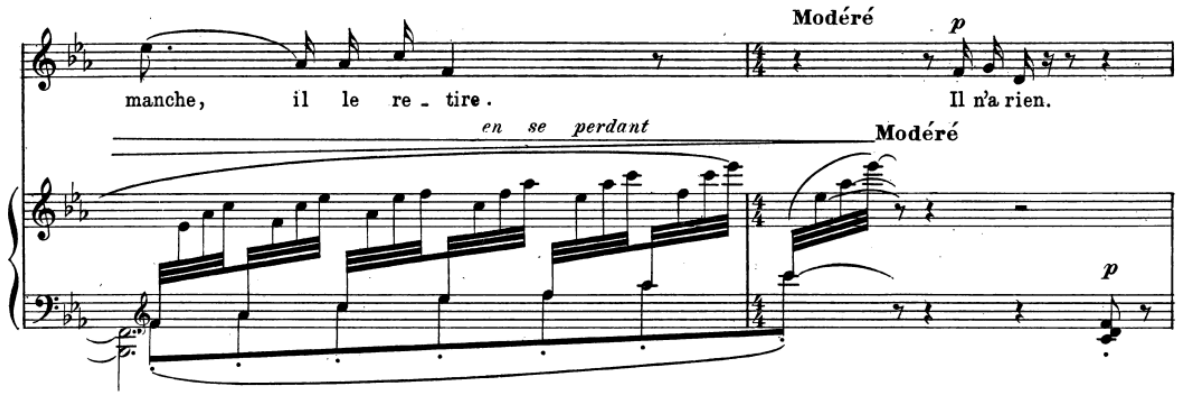
28 Bar 11 on 'et il plonge' (and he dives) – downwards octave leap with a portamento. (instruction to vocally 'slide' between notes)



Le Cygne, bars 10–11, Voice

29 Bars 13–14 on 'Puis, tel un bras de femme sort d'une manche' (Then, like a lady's arm emerging from a glove) – ascending minor 6th on 'manche', followed by a descending perfect 5th sung *portamento* (*portez*), over ascending, arpeggiated demisemiquavers in the piano part (marked *en se perdant* – getting lost).

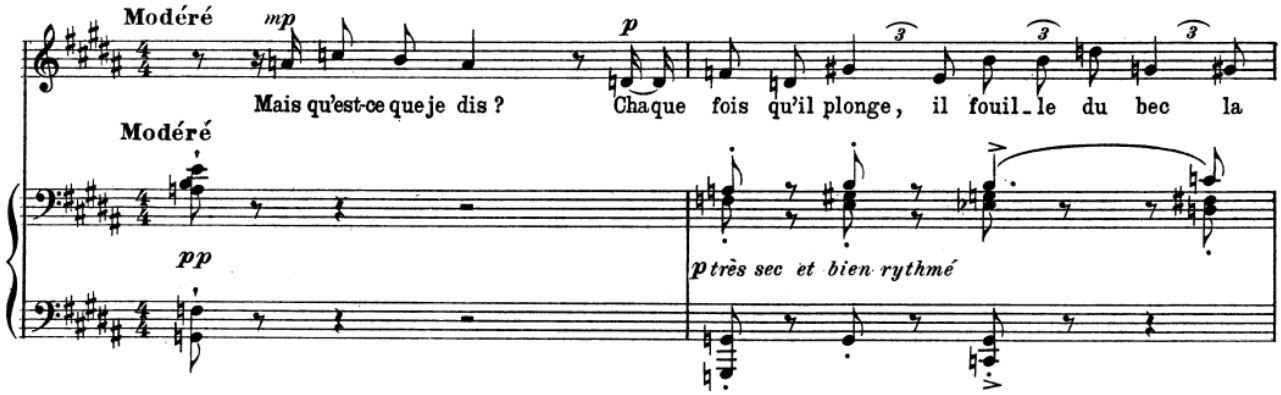
30 Bar 15 on 'Il n'a rien' (he has nothing) – unaccompanied at first, with staccato chords punctuating the speech-like phrases in bars 16–17.



Le Cygne, bars 14–15

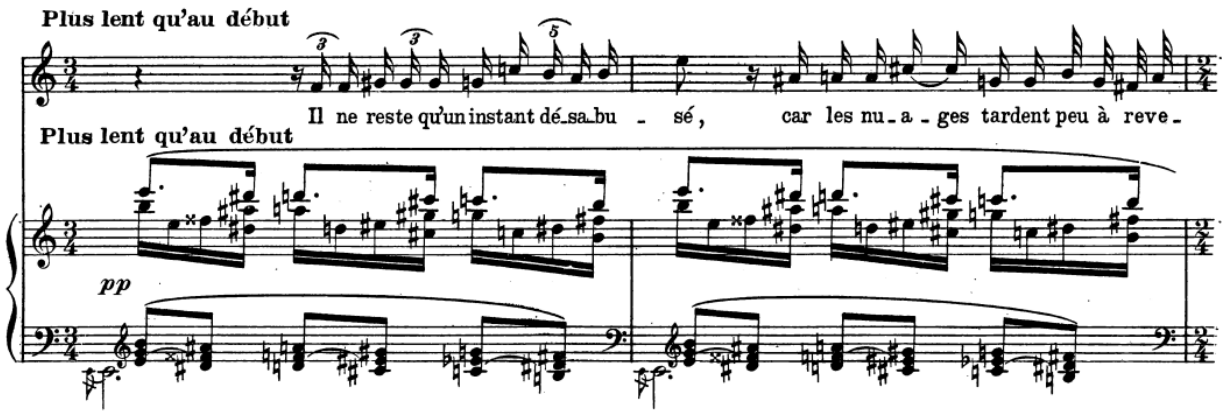
31 Bar 26 on 'Doucement' (softly) – *pianissimo* dynamic marking.

32 Bar 35 on 'Mais qu'est-ce que je dis?' (But what am I saying?) – suddenly unaccompanied, as if the narrator is awaking from a dream.



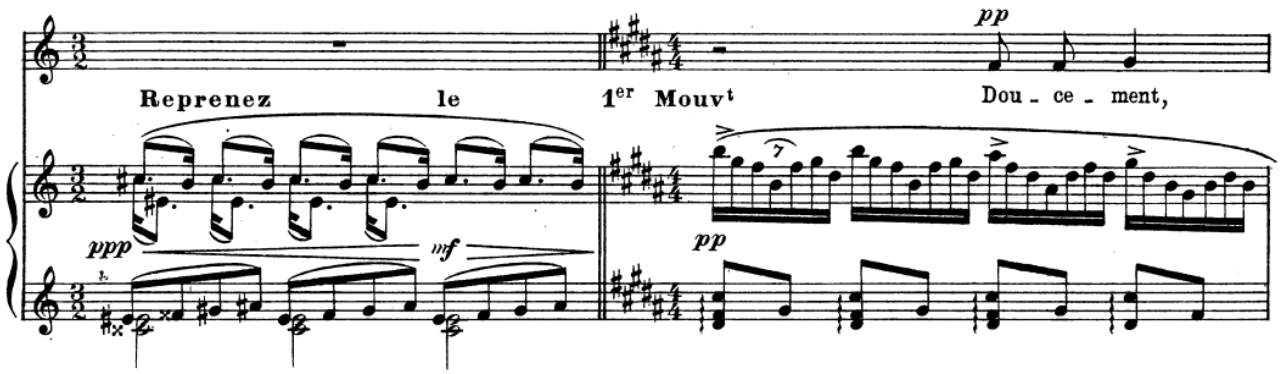
Le Cygne, bars 35–36

The rippling accompaniment continues until the beginning of bar 15, interrupted as the swan is seemingly confused by not being able to catch the cloud. At bar 19, a slower and heavily chromatic section (note the chromatically descending triads in the left hand of the piano, as well as the awkward intervals in the vocal line (e.g. augmented 4th in bars 20 and 22).



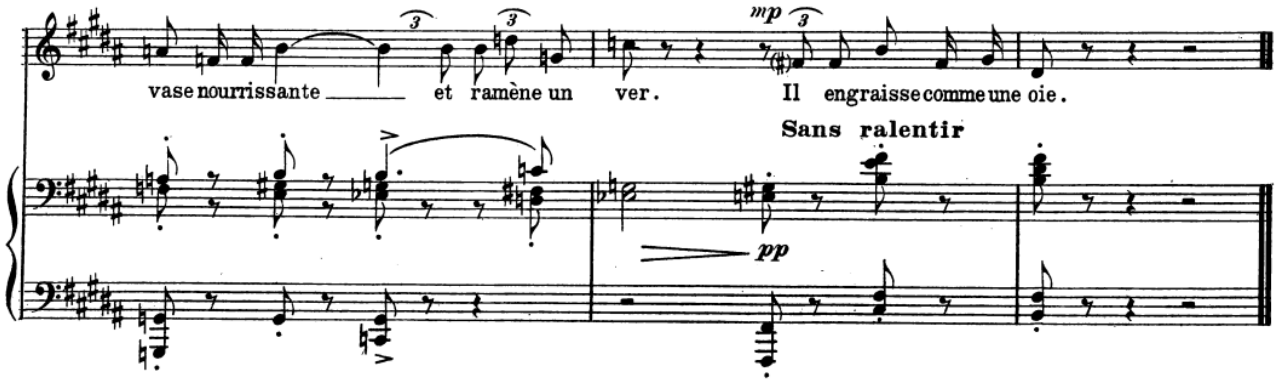
Le Cygne, bars 19–20

The undulations slowly restart in bar 25, leading to a reprise of the opening figure (in B Lydian) at bar 26.



Le Cygne, bars 25–26

The swan's activity slows again in bar 33, with the piano part descending to land softly on a G-sharp, flat 9 chord. This shifts suddenly downwards by a semitone (except the upper note, D-sharp, which moves up a semitone to an E) with a very dry, staccato accompaniment, as the singer realises that this over-romanticised view of the swan is ridiculous – the swan is not chasing clouds, it is eating worms and getting fat like a goose! The song ends on a simple B major chord, the preceding E-naturals removing the rose-tinted Lydian filter as reality asserts itself.

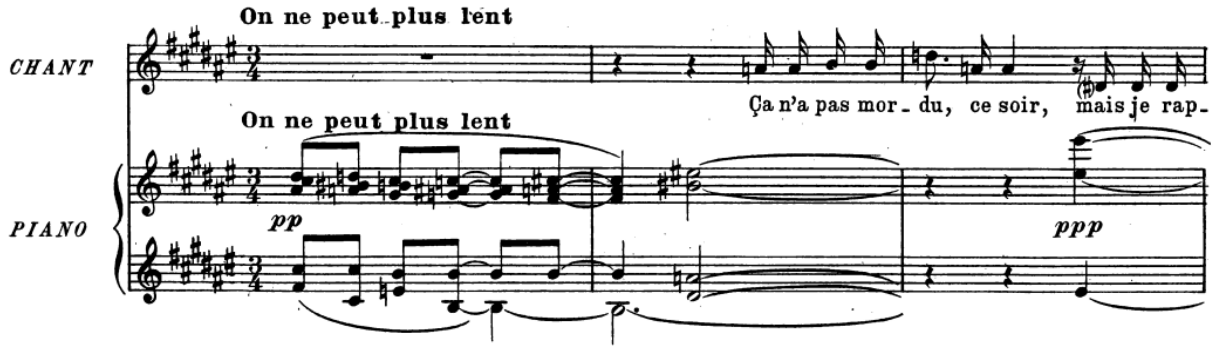


Le Cygne, bars 37–39

Le Martin-Pêcheur (The Kingfisher)

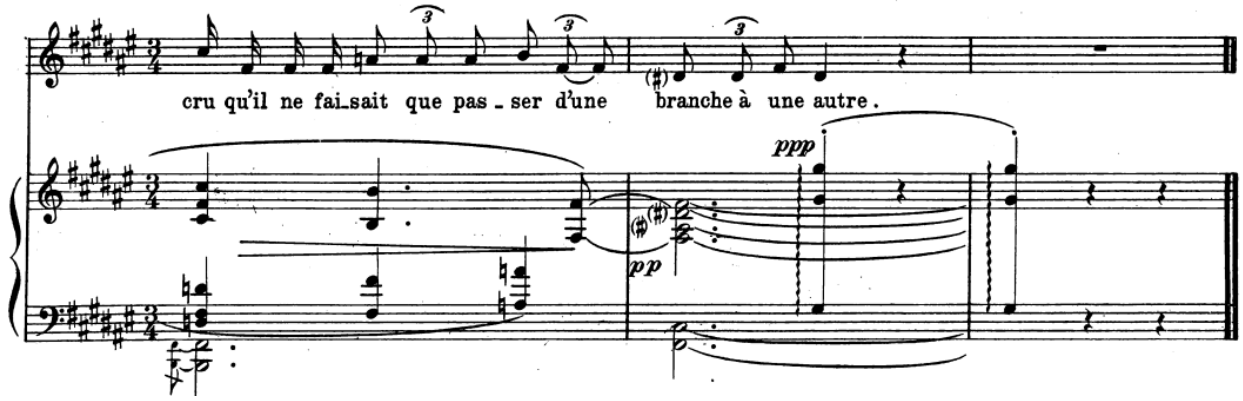
This is the shortest song in Ravel's cycle in terms of number of bars, but the tempo – *On ne peut pas plus lent* (One cannot go slower) – makes it more or less equal in length to the other songs.

The poem is told from the perspective of a fisherman observing a kingfisher that lands on his pole, being careful not to scare the bird away. The setting is mostly very still and intimate to reflect a sense of wonder. The piano accompaniment is eerily dissonant at times (note the descending, parallel, chromatic chords in bars 1, 9, 15 and 16) and returns semiregularly to the pitch E in octaves (see bars 3^3–5, 11–13 and 18^2 –20), perhaps representing the fishing rod.



Le Martin-Pêcheur, bars 1–3

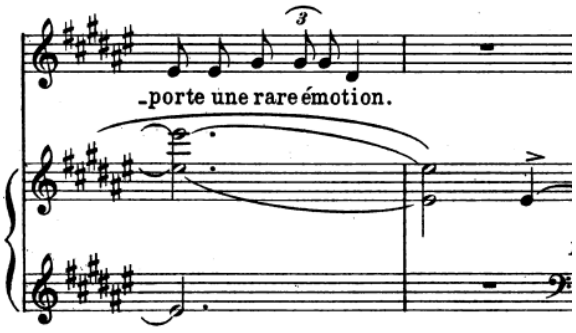
The song ends with an F-sharp (the supposed tonic, according to the key signature) in the bass, but the chord resembles more closely a D-sharp[7] in first inversion, with octave G-sharps (a 9th above the bass) contributing to a sense of being suspended, wanting to cling to the wonderful feeling of having seen the kingfisher up close.



Le Martin-Pêcheur, bars 21–23

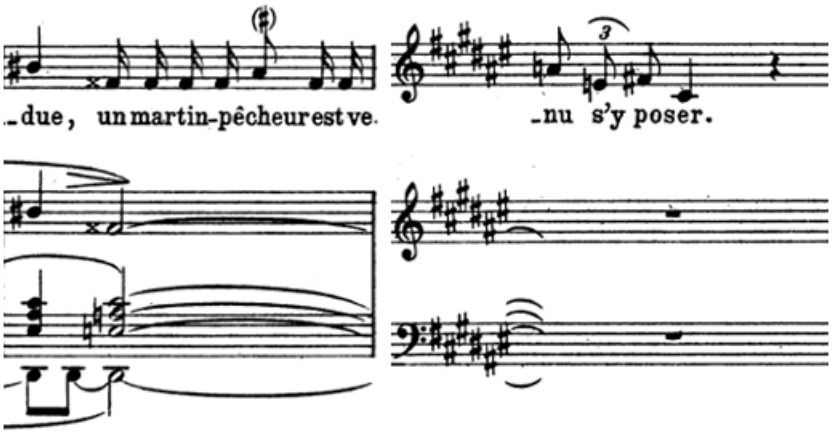
Examples of word-painting are fewer in this song, Ravel relying more on the general stillness and quietness of the setting (similar to *Le Grillon*, he uses a quiet and limited range of dynamics from *ppp* to *p*, except for one instance of mf in the piano in bar 14, but this is followed immediately by *ppp* subitement or suddenly very, very quiet); however, a few moments are worthy of note:

33 Bars 3–4 on 'mais je rapporte une rare émotion' (but I felt a rare emotion) – sparse accompaniment of just E in octaves.



Le Martin-Pêcheur, bars 4–5

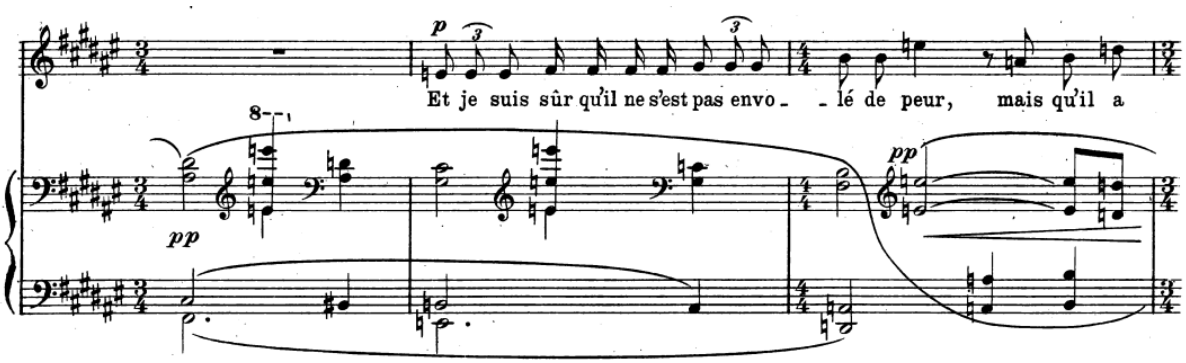
34 Bars 7–8 on 'un martin pêcheur est venu s'y poser' (a kingfisher came to rest there) – an augmented 6th chord (German, or Gr^6 in the dominant key of C-sharp) over a D-sharp pedal rings on, suggesting absolute stillness.



Le Martin-Pêcheur, bars 7–8

35 Bar 10 on 'Nous n'avons pas d'oiseau plus éclatant' (we have no bird more striking) – climax on 'oiseau' followed by a descending diminished 7th leap – the chord rings on.

36 Bar 20 on 'peur' (fear) – climax of the phrase, emphasising the repeated E in octaves.



Le Martin-Pêcheur, bars 18–20

The rhythm of the vocal line is entirely speech-like in this setting, with metres subordinate to the needs of the text. Here, we have a mixture of simple, compound and complex metres; at such a slow tempo, there is little sense of definite pulse, although the performer must adhere closely to the rhythmic notation.

There is much to unpack in each of these four songs; learners will benefit from repeated listening and investigation, which will, over time, reveal the small details of Ravel's settings that make them so ingenious.

Takemitsu *Tori wa hoshigata no niwa ni oriru* (*A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*)

Tōru Takemitsu is arguably the most famous Japanese composer, certainly of the 20th century. His early life in the context of World War II meant that he was initially anti-Japanese music, but over time, his approach evolved to combine Japanese concepts with Western musical frameworks. Significant influences on his compositional style include Debussy, Messaien, Cage, and the Japanese musical tradition of *Gagaku*.

A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden was commissioned for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, receiving its debut on 30th November 1977.

In *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*, we see exactly this marriage of Japanese philosophical and musical concepts with a Western classical orchestra. Takemitsu's focus is less on pitch and rhythm (although these elements remain relevant) and more on timbre.

On first listening, it may not be immediately apparent how Takemitsu is depicting a flock or a pentagonal garden; however, there is a relatively simple explanation. The garden is conceived more as a 'harmonious space', making use of pentatony in various keys and based in the strings and brass, with 'objects', perhaps imagined as trees or rocks, arising within that space. The flock itself, which almost literally 'descends' across the pentatonic 'garden', is represented by the opening oboe 1 figure (and the woodwind section in full), and the leader of that flock by the pitch F-sharp.

Showing the influence of John Cage, Takemitsu also makes use of aleatoric devices (sometimes called 'chance music') at Letter J (p. 20); this reflects the fluidity and chaos of nature. Each of the cues requires some choice on the part of performers, in terms of number of repeats, order of motifs within repeats etc.), with the length of cue dictated not by any external beat, but by approximate timings.

Precise details are given in the Performance Note at the start of the score.

Philosophy

Takemitsu's approach to blending Japanese and Western traditions in this piece can be gleaned from some of his quotes:

'*I love gardens. They do not reject people. There, one can walk freely, pause to view the entire garden, or gaze at a single tree, plant, rock and sand snow: changes, constant changes*.'

'*…from gardens, I've learnt the Japanese sense of timing and colour*.'

These quotes may be useful for learners to consider when listening to the piece, as they reflect Takemitsu's love of the natural world.

The Flock and Pitch

Learners can identify the flock (of white birds) by the opening figure in oboe 1 – this representation was confirmed outright by Takemitsu himself. Fragments of this theme are repeated throughout the piece, first by clarinet 1 in bar 4 then including bar 8 (flute 1, imitated by contrabass and bassoons immediately after), bar 10 (clarinets and lower woodwind), bar 25–28 (cor anglais), bar 39 (flute 1 to piccolo), bar 55 (oboe 1), bar 58 (flute 3, oboes 1 and 2, and bassoons), bar 59 (clarinet 1), bar 80 (clarinet 3 and bassoons), bar 82 (flute 1 imitated by clarinet 1) and bar 94 (oboe 1).

The leader of the flock (a black bird) is characterised by the pitch of F-sharp (Takemitsu's favourite pitch); this acts as a pedal point in various octaves throughout the piece and is the basis of the pentatonic materials used.

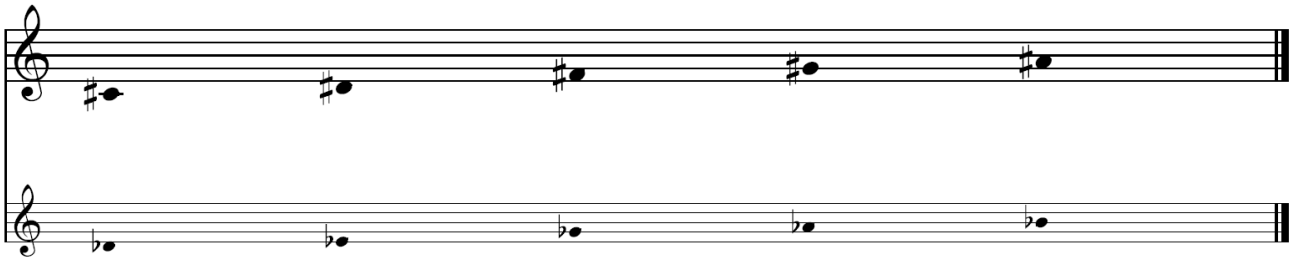
Learners may find it rewarding to compare the appearances of these motifs, noting the changing harmonic contexts, or metaphorical 'spaces', for example, the contrast between the music at bar 3 and at bar 58, looking particularly at the harps, percussion and strings.

The Pentagonal Garden and Harmony

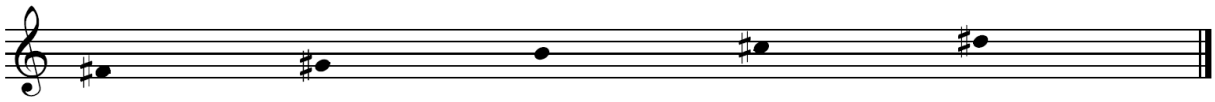
The 'harmonious space' of the pentagonal garden is mostly based in the strings. It provides different contexts for appearances of the flock and its leader. Learners might find it interesting to compare appearances of the themes mentioned above in different contexts.

Apart from the emphasis on the F-sharp representing the leader of the flock, drones are prominent throughout the piece, notable in the Contrabass in bars 5–7, 11–13 and 60–61 (D), 20–28 (D-flat), and 56–58 (G-sharp). There are other examples, such as at Letter J, in which the lower strings, the brass and the woodwind mostly provide long, held notes, changing slowly, against the layered activity in the upper strings.

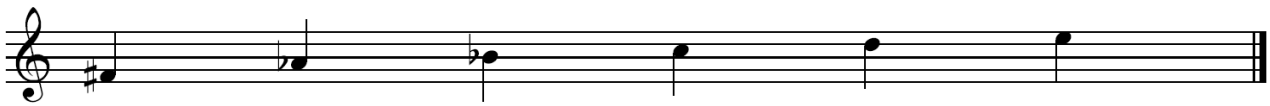
The Japanese scale *yo* (equivalent in sound to the pentatonic scale, starting on the fifth or sixth degree, depending on the source) can be seen throughout in any pitch that would correspond to the black notes on a piano (i.e. C-sharp, D-sharp, F-sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp and their enharmonic equivalents).



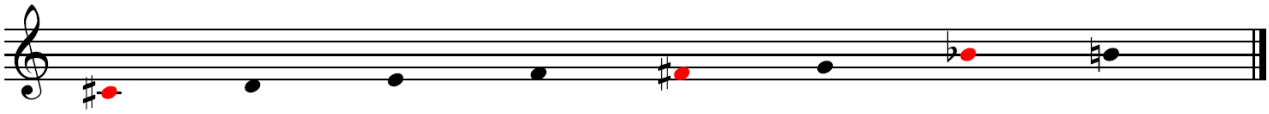
Takemitsu prepared thoroughly for the organisation of his compositions and, although the details are quite convoluted, at Letter M, he sets out six chords derived from a magic square, evoking the sound of a *shō*, a traditional Japanese mouth organ, a specific link to *Gagaku*, which is counted as one of Takemitsu's influences. This includes the final chord (bar 96), which is comprised of a *yo* scale (i.e. a panpentatonic chord) built on F-sharp, the central pitch of the piece representing the flock's leader (F-sharp, G-sharp, B, C-sharp, D-sharp).



At Letter J, bar 3 (bar 69), the woodwind enter with a panhexatonic chord (in various arrangements and octaves, F-sharp, A-flat, B-flat, C, D and E), which is sustained until Letter K.



Although there are many instances of dissonance, the most striking is in bar 38 (just before Letter F), when the brass enter *fortissimo* against the prevailing C-sharps in octaves from the rest of the ensemble with a chord that defies analysis (E, G, B-flat, B, D-flat [enharmonic to C-sharp], D, F and F-sharp) – one explanation is that Takemitsu has added complementary chromatic pitches around the central 'black notes' of the *yo* scale to create an effect that gives greater chromatic density.



An even stronger example of panchromaticism is seen shortly after in bar 41 (Letter F, bar 3), over a double pedal of C-natural/C-sharp, enhancing the vertical dissonance where all 12 tones are represented in the chord.

Rhythm, Metre and Tempo

Although the focus of the work is primarily on timbral changes, rhythm, metre and tempo remain relevant.

The metre changes throughout the piece, comprising a mixture of compound, simple and complex metres. These include:

Simple: 4/8, 3/4, 4/4

Compound: 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 6/4

Complex: 5/16, 3½/8, 5/8, 7/8, 8/8, [7/8 + 1/4], 10/8, 11/8, 15/8, [3/4 + 3/8], 5/4, 7/4

These mixed metres are seemingly used for convenience to divide up musical gestures and make clear the temporal relationships between different motifs in different instruments, rather than contributing to any clearly defined sense of pulse. This effect is enhanced by frequent, gradual changes in tempo and rubato (e.g. at bar 43, Letter G). Letter J is entirely without tempo, marked *senza tempo*, and each cue is given a range of time for which it could last. The lack of tempo contributes to the spontaneous, natural flow of the garden environment.

A sense of timelessness is generated by rhythmic devices such as irregular subdivisions of beats, seen in bar 9: 10 semiquavers in the space of 12 in flute 3 (played on G alto flute), and dotted rhythms with ties to displace any sense of beat, such as the strings from bar 16.

Learners may be able to identify rhythmic cells related to the number 5 in various combinations (i.e. 1+4 / 4+1; 2+3 / 3+2). This was intentional on Takemitsu's part but contributes less significantly to the impact of the piece than pitch and timbre.

Timbral changes

Takemitsu puts great importance on changes of timbre. The piece is scored for a symphony orchestra as follows:

Instrument	Including changes to...	Number of players
Flute 1	Piccolo	1
Flute 2	Piccolo	1
Flute 3	Piccolo, G Alto Flute	1
Oboe 1		1
Oboe 2		1
Oboe 3	Cor anglais	1
B-flat Clarinet 1	E-flat Piccolo	1
B-flat Clarinet 2		1
B-flat Clarinet 3	Bass Clarinet	1
Bassoon 1		1

Instrument	Including changes to...	Number of players
Bassoon 2		1
Contrabassoon		1
C Trumpet 1	with mutes: straight, cup and Harmon	1
C Trumpet 2	With mutes: straight, cup and Harmon	1
F Horn 1		1
F Horn 2		1
F Horn 3		1
F Horn 4		1
Trombone 1	with mutes: straight, cup	1
Trombone 2	with mutes: straight, cup	1
Trombone 3	with mutes: straight, cup	1
Harp 1		1
Harp 2		1
Celesta		1
Percussion	• Vibraphone • Marimba • Tubular bells • 2 tam-tams (medium, large) • 2 gongs (small, medium) • 3 suspended cymbals (small, medium, large) • 2 frog-mouthed bells (medium and very low)	3
Violin 1		12
Violin 2		10
Viola		8
Violoncello		6
Contrabass		6
	TOTAL	**69** players

Extended instrumental playing techniques can be found throughout the piece. Symbols and abbreviations are given at the start of the score. This is evidence of Takemitsu's desire to use a sophisticated range of timbral possibilities to depict the vibrant natural world of the garden and the birds.

Symbol (all instruments)	Meaning
Vib.	with vibrato
N.V.	without vibrato
L.V.	let vibrate
C.S.	with mute (*con sordino*)
S.S	without mute (*senza sordino*)
For the oboe	
°	flageolet tone (harmonic)
N	ordinary (normal) playing
For the harps	
T	*près de la table* (playing close to the sound board
/	scratch quickly the bottom end of the string with fingernail or coin, etc.
For the strings	
S.P	close to the bridge (*sul ponticello*)
P.O.	ordinary play and/or position

In addition, brass instruments are directed to play *bouché* (stopped) and *cuivré* (brassy) at, for example, bar 7. *Glissandi* occur in the Trombones (e.g. bar 52).

The woodwind are also, at times, directed to flutter tongue, for example, flute 1 in bar 4, perhaps suggesting the movement of wings. The oboes switch between 'normal' and flageolet tones a couple of times, with the opening leader's theme being the most prominent example (see oboe 1, bar 1).

Harmonics are also applied to the strings, such as violin 2 in bar 4, often coinciding with *glissandi* (see violin 2, viola and cello in bar 27, shortly after the start of Letter E) – these eerie harmonics are particularly prevalent in bar 71 (cue 5 onwards in the aleatoric Letter J). Other string techniques include *tremolo* (e.g. bar 72), *bariolage* (e.g. cello, bar 57), *pizzicato* (e.g. bar 81, Contrabasse) and *sul ponticello* or playing close to the bridge, only at the very beginning of the piece. Strings also play with (C.S. – *con sordino*) and without (S.S. – *senza sordino*) mutes. The harps use harmonics as well.

Extremes of registers provide further timbral contrast, be it in the use of piccolo or the very low contrabassoon and harp 1 in bar 81, as does the contrast between *vibrato* (predominant) and non-vibrato playing (e.g. at Letter M in the wind instruments).

One significant moment in terms of timbre can be found at rehearsal Letter J, where the tuned percussion instruments (vibraphone, tubular bells and marimba), in combination with a celesta (and harps), create a metallic sound, perhaps portraying another 'object' within the garden.

Indeterminacy

At Letter J, six cues direct players to make various personal choices. In practice, this means that no two performances will ever be the same in terms of exactly what is played. Takemitsu builds up layers of music in this section, culminating in a section listeners might liken to bird calls, even though these are in the strings (with *glissandi* and harmonics), strictly speaking a part of the 'garden'.

This section begins with a unique timbre (mentioned above), as Takemitsu uses the vibraphone, tubular bells, marimba, celeste and harps to create a mystical and metallic atmosphere over drones in the strings. Brass and woodwind are slowly added before the upper strings play their figures in any order, changing this order when repeating. These figures gradually fade out, leaving long, held chords in woodwinds and lower strings. Players may choose their own 'personal' tempo.

Other opportunities for different interpretations include the length of silences, either as directed in the score at the G.P.s (General Pause) or with flexible beginnings and ends of musical gestures.

Ma

The Japanese concept of '*ma*', meaning profound silence or emptiness, can be seen both in the general contemplative nature of the music and more prominently in various moments of silence that punctuate the piece (this, plus the repetition of more recognisable 'flock' motifs, provides some sense of structure to Western ears). These are successful mainly in juxtaposition with the rapid changes of extremes of dynamics. Although they are not climaxes in the Western sense, the loudest moments of the piece can be found at bars 7, 38, 41 and 84 (this last one with the most extreme range of pitch); bar 91 is the last climactic moment before the piece fades gently and slowly on shimmering chords.

Although the flexible starts and ends of sections are *almost* silent, specific moments of silence occur at bar 53 (just before Letter H), 62 (before I), 76 (before K), and 86 (before M), all of which vary in length.

Structure – a summary overview of the main features

The piece is conceived as 13 sections or 'gestures', which might be thought of as making up the parts of a painting. Some are very short. They are not variations in the Western sense, although musical material is developed across the piece.

Rehearsal Mark	Bars	Brief description
Introduction	1–4	Presentation of main musical material, mainly in woodwind.
A	5–7	Builds in intensity, leading to a rapid figuration in the brass and a rapidly descending scale in the Contrabasse before it fades.
B	8–13	Both flock and garden become more active. Motifs are passed around, descending.
C	14–19	Arpeggios give way to the strings playing a gently syncopated passage.
D	20–25	Flutter-tonguing in the flutes and a heavier vertical arrangement of sound.
E	26–38	Cor anglais takes the melody with flock-like figures. Eerie harmonics and *glissandi* intermittently on strings. Builds gradually, with clarinet flutter-tonguing and rising figures in bar 35, before a *fortississimo* and dissonant end.

Rehearsal Mark	Bars	Brief description
F	39–42	Initially more focused on the woodwind but builds quickly to a panchromatic chord in bar 41
G	43–53	A sparser texture with some passing of melodies above the string chords. Some doubling of parts (see bar 48). *Glissandi* near end at bar 52. Final bar G.P. for 3–4 seconds.
H	54–62	Strings at their busiest, with harmonics, *glissandi*, bariolage and tremolo. Flock theme prominent in oboe 1 and other woodwind. Learners might compare this statement with the introduction. Ends on another G.P. for 2–3 seconds.
I	63–66	More obvious chromaticism at times, emerging from long, held chords.
J	67–76	Beginning with a metallic timbre and gradually building layers. Aleatory music section with varying bar lengths (e.g. bar 1 is 6–8 seconds, but bar 2 is 20–25 seconds). Ends with 1–2 seconds of rest.
K	77–81	Strings double the woodwind. Some fragments of flock theme and extremes of register.
L	82–86	Some imitation. Bar 84 *fortississimo* and *fortississimo*, but less dissonant than previous instances. Ends with a G.P. of 2–3 seconds.
M	87–96	Begins with no vibrato, mimicking a *shō* (Japanese bamboo mouth organ). Sets out six chords Takemitsu derived from a Magic Square, ending with a panpentatonic (*yo*) chord based on F-sharp.

Repeated listening, especially to different interpretations, is to be encouraged – the more that learners can identify any of the features outlined above, the clearer the musical and philosophical concepts will become. From an initial, aurally challenging hearing, they will come to appreciate the genius of the beauty and stillness that Takemitsu has created.

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

Cambridge International Education, The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 (0)1223 553554 email: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org