

CHAPTER 2

NEOCLASSICISM IN EUROPE

Beginnings of Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism is defined as:

A movement of style in the works of certain twentieth-century composers, who, particularly during the period between the two world wars, revived the balanced and clearly perceptible thematic processes of earlier styles to replace what were, to them, the increasingly exaggerated gestures and formlessness of late Romanticism.¹

Although this definition suffices to describe the movement, the term “neoclassicism” goes back further than the period between the two world wars, and its meaning was not always a positive one. In order to fully understand the implications and transformations of the term, this chapter will trace the beginnings of neoclassicism to late nineteenth-century France, where it first appeared as a pejorative term to describe the exhausted Teutonic music of Richard Wagner, Johannes Brahms, and Gustav Mahler. Also, this chapter will examine how neoclassicism has been modified from a pejorative to a glorified term in order to describe the new music the French were composing at the turn of the century. The chapter also addresses the neoclassic phase of Igor Stravinsky, a champion of the neoclassic phase in Paris. A study of German neoclassicism during the period after World War I warrants further explanation in order to show that the neoclassic phenomenon was not only found in France. This chapter will establish that French neoclassicism of the early part of the twentieth century was influential in the works of composers from other parts of Europe, particularly Spain.

European music could not escape the stronghold of German Romanticism. Richard Wagner’s music was highly influential in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, composers such as Giuseppe Verdi, Franz Liszt, Gustav Mahler,

¹ Arnold Whittall, “Neo-classicism,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians II*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), xvii, 753.

Richard Strauss, and Arnold Schoenberg, were following current musical trends by implementing *Leitmotive* and extended harmonies in their respective works. Some French composers, however, did not favor German Romanticism and, consequently, set out to change that dominant trend.

During the 1890s, the French began a revolt of sorts against German Romanticism. The French believed that their history was one that should not be ignored, but rather studied and praised. This acclaim was first extolled by the poet Jean Moréas in a manifesto written in 1891:

The French *École romane* reclaims the fundamentally Greco-Latin principle in literature, which flourished during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries with our *trouvères*, in the sixteenth century with Ronsard and his school, in the seventeenth century with Racine and La Fontaine It was romanticism which perverted the principle in conception as well as in style, thus frustrating the French Muses of their legitimate heritage The *Ecole romane* renews the Gallic bond, broken by romanticism and its Parnassian, naturalistic, and symbolist descendants. . . . Symbolism, which only has an interest as a transitory phenomenon, is dead.²

In his manifesto, Moréas described a group of poets with whom he was associated, known as the *École romane*. The *École* modeled poetry after earlier French models. Other French artists during this period also began feeling a disdain toward Wagner's music and looked to the French tradition for inspiration.³

According to Scott Messing, the term neoclassicism, or *néoclassicisme* in French, became much used after 1900. He stated that neoclassicism in the first decade of the twentieth century is characterized as “an expression pertaining to nineteenth-century composers who perpetuated the forms of instrumental music made popular during the

² Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988), p. 7, 158 footnote 27. Originally published in *Le Figaro*, 14 September 1891, reprinted in *Cent soixante-treize lettres de Jean Moréas à Raymond de la Tailhède et divers correspondants*, edited by Robert A. Jouanny (Paris: Lettres modernes, 1968), 148-49.

³ Messing quotes Lionel La Laurencie, “The Germans complicate by enlarging; we simplify by condensing . . .” and Jean Marnold, “Today, German music exists in a lamentable agony. It rattles sweetly along in Mendelssohn-Brahms neoclassic chloroform or is stupefied by romantico-Wagnerian morphine,” p. 11.

eighteenth century, but who sacrificed originality and depth of musical substance for the abject imitation of structure.”⁴ The French used this definition to illustrate the German music of Brahms, Mahler, and even Franz Schubert. Moreover, the progressively growing French nationalism further fueled this contempt of German music. In comparing Saint-Saëns to Brahms, Hugo Wolf attacked Brahms by stating that Saint-Saëns’s classicism “is a natural outgrowth of his musical development while with Brahms it serves simply to disguise his creative impotence”; Paul Dukas attacked the music of Schumann and Brahms stating that their music has “neoclassic tendencies representing nothing essential in the domain of the symphony”; Romain Rolland, who had also attacked Brahms on several occasions, attacked Mahler in the performance of the Fifth Symphony, conducted by Mahler. Rolland stated,

This heaping up of music both crude and learned in style, with harmonies that are sometimes clumsy and sometimes delicate, is worth considering on account of its bulk. The orchestration is heavy and noisy. The underlying idea of the composition is neoclassic, and rather spongy and diffuse.⁵

Evidently, in its early stages, the term neoclassicism embodied the works of German romantic composers as described by French musicians and music critics. The notion that German music was unpleasant and overdone, insinuating a mannerism of sorts, was drummed into the musical and artistic aesthetics of French artistic circles. A new classicism, however, was emerging in musical compositions and academic music conservatories. French music, French musicology, and performance practice would merge to create *un nouveau classicisme*.⁶

Impressionism No Longer Impressionable

The style known in music as impressionism, or symbolism, began around the 1890s, just after the symbolist movement began in other areas such as in literature and art. Claude Debussy was by far the leading figure in the short-lived impressionism

⁴ Messing, p. 14.

⁵ Messing, pp. 14-5. Also see Scott Messing, “Polemic as History: The Case of Neoclassicism,” *Journal of Musicology* (1991) 4/9: 482.

⁶ Messing, p. 17.

movement. Just as in the symbolist movement in the other arts, impressionistic music sought a sensual and immediate impression rather than an analytical one. Of importance to an impressionist composer were harmonic colors and an array of timbres that could be immediately perceived; of less importance were harmonic function, form, and rhythm--or any element that may bring the listener into an analytical state of mind, and that could only be perceived as a process through time.

Although composers from other countries composed impressionistic music--such as Frederick Delius, Ottorino Respighi, and Manuel de Falla--the ephemeral movement gave way to other modern, artistic movements, mainly German expressionism and primitivism. The French artists were again searching for a style they could call their own, a style that would last and contend with any contemporary German trend. The result was *un nouveau classicisme*, or a new classicism.

Nouveau classicisme was created and flourished around the turn of the century in the intellectual circles found in French schools, mainly conservatories, and French musicology. Academics and musicians began studying works of past eras and applied their study to performance practice and composition. The development of musical scholarship and high interest in older French music was important in beginning the new classicism, which was to become a truly French style.

As the French musicologist Louis Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840-1910), a music history professor at the Conservatoire, pointed out, "If the study of music history has excited certain individuals of every era, it is one of the honors of our own epoch to have instilled this scientific movement with a freshness and completely new importance."⁷ He also indicated the newness of musicology in France by stating that, "Twenty years ago, it would have been scarcely possible to find ten people in Paris interested in musical archaeology. Today it can be said that the study of the musical past has entered education and, up to a certain point, artistic practice."⁸ Bourgault-Ducoudray also knew how to target the French public's tastes by revealing to the French artists the "patriotic pride" he felt when comparing "the actual progress of our studies with the state where

⁷ Messing, p. 17.

⁸ Messing, p. 17.

they languished twenty years ago.”⁹ He was also instrumental in creating and supporting French musicology.

The new interest in musicology led to the rise of two important institutions: The lesser influential *Société française de musicologie*, founded by Lionel de La Laurence (1861-1933) and Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938)--two students of Bourgault-Ducoudray--and the *Schola Cantorum*, which played a far more important role in the trajectory of *nouveau classicisme*. The *Schola* was originally a society for sacred music, but was later changed, in 1896, to a “school for the restoration of music of the past.”¹⁰

The *Schola* was founded by Charles Bordes, Alexandre Guilmant, and Vincent d’Indy, one of the leading figures in French music and musicology, in 1894. Each of these founders contributed in a unique way. For example, Bordes contributed his interests in Gregorian chant and sixteenth-century counterpoint; Guilmant contributed by providing Bach’s keyboard works and early keyboard music of other composers; and d’Indy contributed his knowledge of Baroque and Classic theater and opera, as well as the instrumental music of German composers and the works of his teacher, César Franck.¹¹

Although the *Schola* did not maintain the same desirability during the second decade of the twentieth century, it influenced many composers and performers who continued the tradition of the study and performance of early works. One such musician was the Polish harpsichordist Wanda Landowska (1879-1959). Her interests were in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century keyboard works; furthermore, she sought to perform those works on “authentic” instruments, even though some members of the *Schola* were disinterested in performing early works on period instruments.¹²

One performer prior to Landowska, who also took part in the revival of earlier works, was Louis Diémer (1843-1919). According to Messing, Diémer put together a

⁹ Messing, p. 17 footnote 67. In addition, others who also helped propagate musicology were: Albert Lavignac (1846-1916), professor at the Conservatoire; Lionel Dauriac (1847-1923), professor of musical aesthetics at the Sorbonne; Charles Malherbe (1853-1911), archivist at the Opéra; and Julien Tiersot (1857-1936), librarian at the Conservatoire; Messing also points out the importance of Marie Bobillier (Michel Brenet) who wrote extensively on early music, Messing, p. 18.

¹⁰ Messing, p. 19.

¹¹ Messing, p. 19.

¹² Messing, p. 21.

concert in 1889 in which several musicians performed works by Marais, Leclair, Handel, Legrenzi, Rameau, Milandre, Loeillet, Couperin, and Daquin--all on period stringed instruments and harpsichord.¹³ Interest in early music by Diémer led to the organization of the *Société des instruments anciens* in 1895. Six years later Henri Casadesus (1879-1947) formed a similar group named the *Nouvelle société des instruments anciens*.¹⁴

One other composer who also propagated neoclassicism was Erik Satie (1866-1925). Just like Landowska, Satie attended the *Schola* in 1905, receiving his diploma three years later. He learned much about French music of the past during his time at the *Schola*. Influenced by earlier music, Satie incorporated elements of Classic and medieval music in his works. He wrote neoclassic works comprised of clear textures, diatonic melodies and harmonies, and straightforward rhythms that were reminiscent of eighteenth-century music. Imitating parallel organum, Satie composed a few compositions modeling Gregorian chant by incorporating harmonies built in parallel fourths moving in succession without bar lines.

With the exception of d'Indy, the underlying theme of the interests of these composers and musicians was that of looking beyond the Romantic tradition. It appears as if there were a reaction to the overbearing Romantic period, which still haunted the French. An interest in the pre-Romantic past was becoming more and more pervasive, and, as Renaissance, Baroque, and Classic period composers were being researched and studied, two composers stood out as the champion of the French tradition: François Couperin and Jean-Phillippe Rameau.

Although Couperin's *Pièces de clavecin* was in circulation as early as 1862, an effort to publish his complete works did not come to fruition until 1871.¹⁵ Under the supervision of Camille Saint-Saëns and Charles Malherbe, the publication of the complete works of Jean-Phillippe Rameau was begun in 1895 but ceased publication in 1911. Many renowned French composers participated in this collection, including Saint-Saëns, who worked on Rameau's keyboard works, chamber works, cantatas, and motets, d'Indy, who worked on Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, *Dardanus*, and *Zaïs*, Paul Dukas,

¹³ Messing, p. 22.

¹⁴ Messing, p. 22.

¹⁵ Messing, p. 23.

who worked on Rameau's *Les indes galantes*, *La princesse de Navarre*, and Guilman, who worked on Rameau's *Les fêtes d'Hébé*, and *Le temple de la gloire*; and Debussy, who worked on Rameau's *Les fêtes de Polymnie*.¹⁶

The New Classicism

As Messing indicates, musical works containing the phrase “*dans le style ancien(s)*” first appeared in the titles of works in 1871 and continued appearing well through the first decade of the twentieth century. He reveals that the implication in the title is that of nationalism and “a sympathy for the past.”¹⁷ That same sympathy was the impetus for utilizing dance idioms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the contemporary musical style.

Saint-Saëns was the first distinguished French composer to use such idioms. In some of these pieces, Saint-Saëns alluded to dances of the past by incorporating the same meter, tempo, anacrusis, and even formal layout of the dances suggested.¹⁸ Well educated in the works by Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven, Saint-Saëns also made arrangements of Bach's pieces.

Debussy and Ravel soon followed suit. French musicology sparked a great interest in Debussy. He would attend concerts where the members of the *Schola* would perform pieces by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century composers, especially Jean-Philippe Rameau.¹⁹ Debussy would hold Rameau and his works in high praise. Rameau represented for Debussy the conciseness and expression of musical composition. Debussy edited Rameau's opera *Les fêtes de Polymnie*, performed several of his pieces, gained extensive knowledge about him and his works, and even dedicated and entitled one of his pieces from *Images* (1905) “Hommage à Rameau.”²⁰

¹⁶ Messing, p. 23.

¹⁷ Messing, p. 24-5. Composers such as Léo Delibes, d'Indy, Albéric Magnard, Gabriel Pierné, Cecil Chaminade, Maurice Ravel, and Bourgault-Ducoudray composed works with “in the ancient style” in the title.

¹⁸ Messing stated that some of these pieces have similar melodic content and phrasing as those used by past composers.

¹⁹ Messing, p. 41. Debussy attended and, under the pseudonym *Monsieur Croche*, wrote flatteringly about the performance of Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, on 22 January 1903.

²⁰ Messing, p. 44-5. Debussy also lauded works by Gluck, Couperin, and other seventeenth- and

Another eighteenth-century French composer who was praised highly by Debussy's contemporary, Maurice Ravel, was François Couperin. Ravel was familiar with the works of Couperin, since several editions of Couperin's works were in circulation. Ravel's highest tribute to Couperin was his *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1914-7), which contains several movements with Baroque dance titles, e.g., *forlane*, *menuet*, and *rigaudon*.²¹

In essence, because of political differences during the Franco-Prussian War, the exhausted German music of the late Romantic era, and ardent nationalist support for French culture, it was easy for French composers to simplify their musical compositions based on past models and change the aesthetic outlook on current French music. The French accepted the new aesthetic because of the familiarity suggested by these compositions. This familiarity included the use of dance idioms that were associated with French Baroque and French Classic music, and common rhythmic and melodic gestures were easily recognized by the French musical audience, all of whom were able to connect the new style of music known as *nouveau classicisme*, with the older style of French music depicted in works by Couperin, Rameau, Gluck, and other composers.

This is not to say that the French were composing works that only imitated the works of the past. Composers of the pre-World War I era were still incorporating a complex harmonic language as found in late Romantic and impressionist music. As Messing has pointed out, "novelty was the prized hallmark."²² This leads to the conclusion that the aesthetic foundation was different than it had been twenty years before, and that it was this new aesthetic that was the most important aspect of the *nouveau classicisme*.

The juxtaposition of familiarity and novelty produced an aesthetic groundwork that had an impact Germany's version of neoclassicism. The following discussion will illustrate how German composers also looked to past musical and literary compositions

eighteenth-century composers; however, Rameau was his favorite by far.

²¹ Messing, p. 51. Ravel has stated that the homage in the *Le tombeau* is a homage to French music of the eighteenth century more so than it is a homage to Couperin. The statement was originally from Maurice Ravel's "Esquisses autobiographique," *La Revue Musicale*, December 1938, p. 17.

²² Messing, p. 59

for inspiration and innovation, resulting in a radical change in the definition of neoclassicism, from a pejorative to a paradigmatic term.

The German Neoclassicism

German neoclassicism began in the post-World War I era with the redefining of similar terms. According to Messing, *Neoklassizismus* first appeared after the war and referred to French art and architecture from the late eighteenth century. *Klassizismus* referred to an “imitation of models . . . that was stilted and pale in its subservience to the originals.” On the other hand, *Klassik* or *Klassizität* (*Klassik* hereafter) referred to works that were revered as venerable contemporary pieces and associated with Goethe, Schiller, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and other well-respected artists.²³

Following the redefinition of the three terms above also came a new viewpoint on Wagner’s music and the music of the late-Romantic period. Just as the French, some German writers were critical of Wagner’s music and all who represented his style, and were yearning for something new. Thomas Mann, a twentieth-century novelist, wrote about his desire for change in German music of the early twentieth century. In 1911, he wrote:

Wagner is nineteenth-century through and through. Indeed, he is the representative German artist of his epoch whose survival in the thought of mankind will perhaps be as great and certain as it will be unfortunate.

But I think about the masterpiece of the twentieth century and something occurs to me that differs very importantly and, as I believe, very favorably from Wagnerism--something that appears logical, structural, and clear; something that is equally austere and serene; something not from so petty a will as his, but from a fresher, nobler, and healthier spirituality; something which finds its greatness not in the Baroque or colossal, nor its beauty in frenzy-- a new classicism (*eine neue Klassizität*), it seems to me, must come.²⁴

As Messing indicates, the phrase *neue Klassizität* is comparable to the French *un*

²³ Messing, p. 62.

²⁴ Messing, p. 63. Despite this quote, Mann had a deep love for Wagner’s music. He described listening to Wagner’s music as an experience that gives him “a sort of nostalgia for youth and country . . . and puts my spirit under the old bright and thoughtful yearning and cunning magic.”

nouveau classicisme. Both terms described a new classicism that surfaced around the turn of the twentieth century and both terms had the converse meaning that their previously similar, yet derogatory, terms--Germany's pejorative *neoklassizismus* and the French's *néoclassicisme*--had.²⁵ Furthermore, while the French used the iconographic figures Rameau and Couperin, Mann used the works of Goethe as the true German genius and the foundation of Mann's idea of *eine neue Klassizität*.²⁶

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) was Mann's musical counterpart. As a traveling pianist, he liked the new trends in music, particularly those trends that employed extreme compositional methods and techniques. He explicitly stated these proclivities toward new music in his famous pamphlet entitled *Entwurf einer neuen Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music), written in 1907.²⁷ However, after the war Busoni's tendencies toward radically new music had diminished somewhat, and, as a result his interests turned to the conventional mainstream music of European culture.²⁸ It was in this vein that he wrote a letter to Paul Bekker, a contemporary music critic, stating his penchant for a new classicism. But rather than simply using Mann's definition, which was quite suitable, Busoni coined a new phrase, *junge Klassizität*, meaning "young classicism." Busoni believed that *neue Klassizität* meant an imitation of the past, whereas *junge Klassizität*, as Messing writes, "suggested that musical evolution embodied an ongoing, rejuvenative process, which [Busoni] likened to organic growth in nature."²⁹

In Busoni's *junge Klassizität*, there are three criteria a composer must follow in order to produce a work in such a style. The first of which is *Einheit* or unity. *Einheit* was not necessarily a practical criterion as much as it was a philosophical one. Basically,

²⁵ Scott Messing, "Polemic as History: The Case of Neoclassicism," from the *Journal of Musicology* (1991) 4/9: 489.

²⁶ Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music*, pp. 63-5.

²⁷ For further reading, see Ferruccio Busoni, "Entwurf einer neuen Aesthetik der Tonkunst," in *Source Readings in Music History*, volume 7, edited by Robert P. Morgan (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1998), pp. 51-8.

²⁸ Messing, p. 65. In 1919, Busoni featured himself as a soloist in a concert in which he illustrated through musical examples a history of keyboard works from Bach to the present.

²⁹ Messing, pp. 67, 169 footnote 28. Busoni's definition of *junge Klassizität* originally appears in *Scritti e pensieri*, translated and edited by Luigi Dallapiccola and Guido Gatti (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1941), pp. 68-70.

Einheit means that a piece of music does not have any intrinsic qualities, that is, a piece of instrumental music does not possess any extraneous meaning, whether by interpretation or assumption, unless indicated by the title or the text, if a text is used at all. In Busoni's words, "the idea of music *is* music, in and of itself, and that it is not split up into different classes."³⁰ Busoni added that the idea of *Einheit* is based on the concept that all music progresses from a single source, known as an "eternal harmony," which sounds through the universe, and all artworks exist within it.³¹ As Messing mentioned, this idea probably stems from nineteenth-century thought about music as stated and written by Eduard Hanslick, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Arthur Schopenhauer.

The second and third criteria are more practical in terms of musical composition, even though the third can be as subjective as the first criterion. The second criterion states that musical works should be generated from melody rather than harmony. That is, more emphasis and importance should be given to the melody rather than the harmony in order to produce a more highly developed counterpoint. The third criterion maintains that the use of tone-painting and "overripe" harmonies is inexcusable. Rather, Busoni preferred music that was "objective, absolute, serene, distilled, pure, and horizontally generated (melodic importance)" as opposed to music that was "subjective, descriptive, exaggerated, metaphysical, sensual, and vertically governed (harmonic importance)."³²

In Busoni's words:

A third--no less important--idea is the denial of the "sensuous" and the renunciation of subjectivity The substance of what is artistic relates only to proportions, to the limits of what is beautiful, to the preservation of taste--it means above all: an art which does not express propositions which lie beyond its nature.³³

Clearly, there is a major change taking place in France and Germany in the second decade of the twentieth century. The culmination of this change leads to Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) as the champion of French neoclassicism and Arnold Schoenberg

³⁰ Messing, p. 68.

³¹ Messing, p. 69.

³² Messing, p. 70.

³³ Busoni as quoted in the journal *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Messing p. 70, footnote 48.

(1874-1951) as the champion of German neoclassicism.³⁴ Furthermore, the idea of neoclassicism will have made an about-face from being a term used to describe the tasteless and effete late Romantic music, to a term used to describe the highly revered music of one the most influential composers of the twentieth century. The following paragraphs will discuss how Stravinsky became the chief icon for neoclassicism in France.

Igor Stravinsky in the 1920s: A Champion of Paris

In an article describing Igor Stravinsky's new style of music in 1923, Boris de Schloezer used the term neoclassicism for the first time in the same manner as it is currently understood today.³⁵ Schloezer's description was quite positive, affirming that Stravinsky's new style belongs in a class to be admired. Although Schloezer stated that he knew about the previous definition of the word, the fashion in which the word was being used to describe music in the recent years prior to Schloezer's comment was no longer carrying that pejorative meaning. Clearly, the definition of *néoclassicisme* became a definition of the past, used to describe the music of Mahler, Brahms, and Wagner, but now it is used to describe one of the leading styles of the twentieth century.

As Messing has shown, Stravinsky's music between *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Octet* may be classified into four topics: simplicity, youth, objectivity, and cultural elitism. These terms were used to describe the new style of music as opposed to romantic or impressionist music.³⁶ The French poet Jean Cocteau observed that simplicity applies to a style of music used to describe the music of Erik Satie and the music of the members of *Les Six*. Stravinsky was well aware of the new currents in music in France and, therefore, became associated with current French musicians who preferred to use terms such as "simplicity" and "simple" in order to describe their music. Objectivity refers to

³⁴ Schoenberg would not have considered himself to be a neoclassicist or his music neoclassicism.

³⁵ Messing, p. 87. Messing explained that by 1923, the terms *nouveau classicisme* and *néoclassicisme*, which was the term Schloezer used, were indistinguishable as opposed to prior to World War I, when both terms had opposite meanings.

³⁶ Messing stated that Stravinsky was probably influenced by a new group of composers known as *l'esprit nouveau*, or "the new spirit," who used phrases such as "the new simplicity" or "return to simplicity" in order to describe their music. The New Spirit group consisted of Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, and the composers known as *Les Six*.

the “absoluteness” of Stravinsky’s music composed after *Le Sacre*. Objectivity is apparent in his choice of titles for his pieces. Stravinsky titled his pieces in a manner that would be free from programmatic expression and extra-musical meaning; for example, *Three Pieces for String Quartet*, *Three Easy Pieces*, and *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. Cultural elitism is a term that refers to Stravinsky’s music that alludes, quotes, or borrows music from pre-nineteenth century music in order to show the admiration for traditional music in a twentieth century musical setting. *Pulcinella* is the model that best fits this type, because it parodies the music by Giambattista Pergolesi.³⁷

The second term--youth--refers to Stravinsky’s keyboard compositions that exuded “childlike simplicity.”³⁸ Other composers composed in this manner prior to Stravinsky’s compositions, suggesting that his compositions were not innovatory. Max Reger composed *Aus der Jugendzeit* in 1895, Bartók composed *Gyermeknek/Pro děti* (For Children) between 1908-10, and Satie wrote three sets of piano pieces in 1913, all of which emphasized childlike qualities and performance. The three pieces are *Menus propos enfantins*, *Enfantillages pittoresques*, and *Peccadilles importunes*. According to Messing, Satie might have provided the model that Stravinsky followed, since Stravinsky’s earliest sketch of a simple piano piece dates from 1913.³⁹

Possibly as a reaction to the manneristic compositions of the *fin de siècle*, and following the model of other composers before him, Stravinsky composed a series of piano compositions between 1914-21 that had a childlike simplicity. Three representative pieces of this period are *Three Easy Pieces*, *Five Easy Pieces*, and *The Five Fingers*. Stravinsky commented on these pieces stating that *Five Easy Pieces* were composed “for amateurs little practiced in the use of the instrument” and as music lessons for his children.⁴⁰ He also observed that *The Five Fingers* were intended “for any piano

³⁷ Martha M. Hyde, “Neoclassical and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music,” from *Music Theory Spectrum* 18 (1996): 211-4. According Hyde’s four models of imitation, eclectic imitation would suit Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* because the ballet “alludes” or “echoes” Pergolesi’s music. One may argue that *Pulcinella* also falls under reverential imitation, which follows a classical model with a “nearly religious fidelity or fastidiousness.”

³⁸ Messing, p. 95. Children’s pieces proved to be influential among Spanish composers (see Chapter 3).

³⁹ Messing, p. 97.

⁴⁰ Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (New York: W W Norton & Co., 1962), p. 64; Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963), p. 41.

debutant.”⁴¹

As for those composers who followed Stravinsky’s maxim, a handful of Spanish composers, who either studied or associated themselves in one way or another with Stravinsky, wrote pieces that refer to childlike enthusiasm or character. Among the Spanish composers influenced by the French school, Joaquín Rodrigo wrote numerous pieces between 1924 and 1977 about and for children. His first composition concerning the subject is *Cinco Piezas Infantiles* (1924) for orchestra.⁴² Each of these pieces is titled after a typical children’s scene, from the rustle of children passing by to a final shout by the children.⁴³ Rodrigo’s proclivity for writing for his only child and two grandchildren is also evident in his compositions. In 1948 he wrote *El Album de Cecilia (para manos pequeñas)* dedicating it to his only child Cecilia; and, in 1977, he composed *Sonatina para dos Muñecas* (for four hands) for his two grandchildren.⁴⁴ The 1948 piece is comprised of six pieces intended for study of the piano.⁴⁵ The *Sonatina para dos Muñecas* is similar to the *Cinco Piezas Infantiles* in the sense that the former alludes to typical events in a child’s day.

Another device Rodrigo incorporates into his children’s pieces is the use of carols or nativity music. He composed several pieces utilizing carols or poetry that refer to the nativity. In 1952 he composed *Villancicos y Canciones de Navidad*, a five-movement piece for orchestra and soprano, with three poems written by Rodrigo’s wife Victoria Kamhi. In 1973 he set two anonymous poems to music entitled *Dos Canciones Para Cantar a los Niños*. In the first of these two movements, the poetry refers to a white lamb (entitled *corderito blanco*), which may be a reference to the nativity scene.

As a final example, the *Berceuse d’Automne* (1923) exploits the subtleties of

⁴¹ Stravinsky and Craft, *Themes and Episodes* (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 30.

⁴² Rodrigo later published this piece for two pianos in 1928.

⁴³ The titles are: *Son chicos que pasan* (Children rustling through), *Después de un cuento* (After a story), *Mazurka*, *Plegaria* (Prayer), *Gritería final* (final shout). The present author translated all titles.

⁴⁴ Translations for the titles are: Five Children’s pieces, Album for Cecilia (for small hands) and Sonatina for two dolls.

⁴⁵ Antonio Iglesias, *Joaquín Rodrigo: Su obra para piano*, 2nd edition (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, S. A., 1996), p. 205. Iglesias added that, at eight years of age, Cecilia Rodrigo (the composer’s own daughter) premiered this piece in 1949 in Madrid.

Rodrigo’s compositional technique.⁴⁶ Although Rodrigo did not explicitly state that this piece was for or inspired by children, there is a suggestion of a childlike simplicity in this piece. The accompaniment consists of the same two chords played throughout the whole piece.

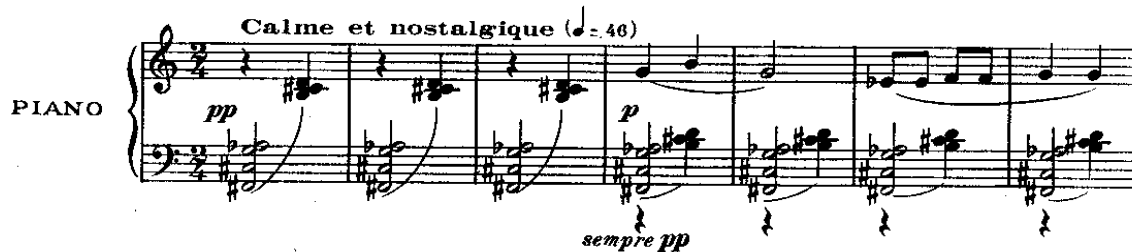


Figure 2-1. Joaquín Rodrigo, *Berceuse d'Automne*, mm. 1-7.

This accompaniment is suggestive of the nanny rocking back and forth in her rocking chair while singing a simple lullaby, suggested by the melodic line. This piece is similar to Satie’s *Gymnopedie* No. 2 (1888) in its harmonic coloring, simple melody, and structured form.



Figure 2-2. Erik Satie, *Gymnopedie* No. 2, mm. 5-8.

Clearly Rodrigo composed children’s pieces in a similar vein to that utilized by Stravinsky, Reger, and Bartók. The “childlike simplicity” in Rodrigo’s *Album de Cecilia* and *Sonatina* is quite evident. Even though Rodrigo was directly influenced by his child, grandchildren, and his religiosity when he composed these pieces, one may argue that he clearly showed respect and admiration for Stravinsky’s “childlike” pieces and the current French school of thought. His reverence for Parisian musical thought manifested itself in his compositions, particularly his *Berceuse d'Automne* and *Cinco Piezas Infantiles*.

⁴⁶ Joaquín Rodrigo, *Deux Berceuses: Berceuse d'Automne*, (Mainz: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1928), pp. 6-7.

Conclusion

French neoclassicism spread throughout other parts of Europe rapidly during the early part of twentieth century. The current trend was fresh, new, and an alternative to German romanticism. The leading French composers, including Stravinsky, elevated themselves in high positions and were admired by some and hated by others. Those who admired and emulated the French enhanced their careers and advanced to a higher level.

No other group of composers benefited from the French neoclassicists as much as the Spanish composers of the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning with Manuel de Falla and Joaquín Turina, on through the group of composers known as the *Generación del '27*, and concluding with Joaquín Rodrigo, Spanish composers took advantage of the latest trends in France, absorbed the new material, and showcased their interpretations of neoclassicism in Spain. Along with the nationalistic tendencies these composers already possessed, *casticismo* was the result of the combination of neoclassicism and Spanish nationalist style.

Other Spanish composers also profited from the current musical trends in Germany, including the twelve-tone method of composition. Most of these composers thrived in the symphonic poem genre, following in the same vein as Richard Strauss, while a few excelled in twelve-tone composition, emulating Schoenberg. The following chapter will discuss how the music of Spain broke free of the traditional genre of the *zarzuela*, exploiting the musical capabilities of flamenco music, inspiring a European trend of Spanish nationalistic compositions, and later coalescing with French neoclassicism and musicology to produce *casticismo* and *neocasticismo*, both of which propelled Spanish music to respectable ranks, while maintaining the uniqueness of being Spanish.