

AN ANALYSIS OF DEBUSSYS ARABAESQUE

I'm currently in the early stages of posting a series of articles through my music blog on the process of analysis of the Debussy piece.

I figured if I could master the three against two problem in the Debussy Arabesque, I could execute the technique with my eyes open. Brown, Maurice J. In music, arabesque refers to the use of three compositional devices: The decoration of a theme using counterpoint The use of gruppetti turns to decorate themes Harmonies that rapidly change without urging the piece forward 8 These devices act as the curlicues that extend from each musical idea and intertwine with one another. The version used is an electronic rendition by Isao Tomita, from the album Snowflakes are Dancing. Back in measure 6, the two against three polyrhythm gives the piece its whimsical and buoyant feel, like an autumn leaf gently gliding to earth or a music box ballerina poised in an arabesque and spinning away. The transition into the impressionist style required Debussy to have strong opinions and to stand by them. But in the Debussy First Arabesque , I had to master four consecutive triplets against a string of eighth notes. Let these ideas be a part of you as you seek to create your own magic by playing these pieces on the piano or by composing similar pieces. Lastly, the arabesque serves to evoke a certain emotion; one of peacefulness and calm, due to the soft use of the pedal and soothingly repetitive triplets in the right hand. The head was a strange one: the enormous forehead bulged forwards, while there seemed something missing at the back of the huge skull. Romantic pieces were traditionally longer, such as the long-form symphony or concerto, while Impressionistic pieces were usually short, such as the nocturne, prelude, or arabesque. It was one of his earliest pieces published when Debussy was still in his twenties , and are therefore much less free-form than some of his later works, but still has many impressionistic qualities characteristic of Debussy's compositions. The piece begins with parallelism of triads in first inversion, a composition technique very much used by Debussy and other Impressionists which traces back to the tradition of fauxbourdon. Composers, let the melody lead, even if it is as simple as a series of half notes descending by step, and embellish and arrange it later. Play through to the end of the phrase. The piece then moves to C major, where the polyrhythmic first theme reappears. As always with artists of the finer sort, the hands were most beautiful. Forms come down to noticing how many times an idea repeats and in what keys these repeats occur. A History of Western Music. The pieces makes several transpositions and explores a lower register of the piano. At the age of 11, he entered the Paris Conservatory to study piano. If the piece were longer, I imagine Debussy might have included this idea as chapter headings for each episode, but it is a fairly short piece overall, so he ends here with a delightful and cheery coda section built of the material from the beginning: Debussy, Arabesque No. Perhaps this is why his music is reminiscent of ocean waves on the shore. The style more closely resembles some of Debussy's later works. Its descent, or fall, is what drives the piece forward, which is why, despite being built from a still scale, Debussy cannot end the piece with this motif. Arabesque No. Again notable is a hint of the pentatonic scale. Stone relief with arabesques of tendrils, palmettes and half-palmettes in the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus. New York: Norton, This piece begins with parallelism of triads in first inversion, a composition technique very much used by Debussy and other Impressionists, tracing back to the tradition of fauxbourdon. It can also be argued that the piece served not to evoke a strong emotion, but rather to suggest and create an atmosphere; the arabesques, after all, were supposed to remind the listener of the beauty and fluidity of Arabic architecture, not to tell a story. The takeaway for performers is that understanding the repeated harmony patterns can help you learn the piece much quicker, especially the left hand arpeggios, as there are plenty. Overview The piece begins in E Major, in a series of triads in the first inversion, and introduces us to the first theme. Related Posts. There is more harmonic exploration, but eventually we get back to the familiar bookend idea of the first measure. The motion then, comes from the melody itself. She merely uses her presence to create a whimsical and peaceful mood. The music feels like it got lost in the woods and is trying to find its way back. Allegretto scherzando Arabesque No.