

Sound, Piano Touch and Refinement in Pavane op. 10 for piano by George Enescu

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Abstract: *Following his musical studies in the Art of Performance (Violin, Piano) and Composition in Paris, the young George Enescu came into contact with the French School and illustrious composers and teachers. Famous personalities of the early Twentieth Century, such as Jules Massenet, Gabriel Fauré and Ambroise Thomas, through pedagogical and compositional activity, opened the horizon of new possible stylistic paths in the music to young musicians, among which our compatriot, with this support, seems to have already found a formula of authentic and charming expression. The music for the piano, exemplified during this period also through the Second Suite op. 10 for the piano, presents to his contemporaries a new neoclassical compositional compendium, among which those that will attract special attention are the novelties, surprising associations proposed by the composer, in the use of the sound effects of the piano instrument, in order to achieve an almost orchestral exploration of these sonorities. In the former European compositional context, Pavane (the third movement of the Suite), remains in the epoch, an extremely interesting page, identifying many innovative elements, precursors to the great pianistic reference creations in similar stylistic expressions.*

Key-words: *piano touch; dynamics; agogics; suite; structure; sonorities; Romanian and French music.*

1. Introduction

As a whole, George Enescu's musical creation for the piano appears as a constant of the artist's preoccupations, from the early years of his youth, to the end of his life. The creative interest is diverse, consistent and individualized, his music is built on the basis of a solid Universal European tradition -*using classic patterns in modernist, neoclassical forms*-, but also assimilating the contemporary avant-garde elements within the consecrated forms: Suite Sonata, Prelude, Fugue, Toccata, Bourrée and so on. The idea of *triptych* multiplies for the genres, that is why, in the young composer's view there are three *Suites* and three *Piano Sonatas*. A *concert Fantasy* with the orchestra and *Variations on an original Theme for two pianos*, along with some miniatures and transcriptions, major work that completes a rather narrow, yet carefully elaborated repertoire, now considered Romanian piano highlights repertoire, so appreciated today by the performers.

Pavane (1903) is part of *the Second Suite in Re major op. 10*, a particular piano piece that differs from the first Suite (*The Old-style Suite op. 3*) through a diverse approach of the neo-classical forms. By incorporating new expressive means, which have become prefigured in the new pre-impressionist styles of French music of his time, (especially those coming from the area of harmonic language exploration), both the expressive content and the melodic language show a sharp relief of the composition's individuality. With the characteristics of this particular style, embedded in the formal neoclassical pattern, the melodic melange of the Romanian folk origin is discreetly stylized, remembering the reminiscent of the traditions and the loved ones from the natal lands..

At the beginning of the first decade of the new century (twentieth century), immediately after finishing his studies in the capital of France, the young Enescu, temporarily

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established there, conceived and finalized his first important opuses. Motivated and encouraged by the high and refined, intellectual living style of artistic entourage of his time (including pianists *Alexandra Bibescu*, *Louis Diemer*, writer *Marcel Proust*, poet *Anna de Noilles*, conductor *Edouard Collone*), he writes work after the work, conducting, playing, the piano and violin in the company of great performers, has a dense musical activity, sustained both abroad and in short visits, in the country.²

The Year 1903 is the year of extensive symphonic compositions and piano pieces.

Selected gender: Suite. For the orchestra: the famous Prelude Suite at Unison (Suite I in Do major op 9) that is dedicated to Camille Saint-Saens³ and two more for the piano.

2. Issue & Objectives

The *Suite II a in D Major op. 10* in D major is dedicated to the great pianist and pedagogue *Louis Diemer* and is written to be featured in a multi-section Composition Competition set up by the French Magazine *Musique*. The prestigious jury is composed of outstanding personalities of Parisian musical life and of the World musical history: *Vicent D'Indy*, *Claude Debussy*, *Edouard Lalo*, *Gabriel Pierne*, *Alfred Cortot*, *Charles Malherbe*. They are awarding the First Prize and the *Pleyel Prize* of the category (solo piano pieces) to the Suite presented in the competition with the motto ' *des cloches sonores*'. In fact ... the Suite of the very young graduated of the Conservatoire de Paris and Romanian violinist, pianist, conductor and composer George Enescu. The first audition of this extended work will be played at the piano by Enescu himself, and due to his successful presentation in front of the audience, it will be presented quite often in the following years.⁴

This Suite is a wide-ranging work delicate but also of magnificent posture which makes a stylistic reference to a modernistic French-inspired writing, composed with neo-Baroque elements and discrete Romanian references.

Four archaic dances: *toccata*, *sarabande*, *pavane* and *bourrée* (all in D major except Pavane in B minor), emanate powerful inner force, diversity, refinement through the fascinating ways of using *the edifying detail*, the score being dense, rich in sound plans and specific musical notation. On the canvas of the French writing of the time, this piece Enescu's stylistics proposes an eclectic music and in the same time a well-defined style closer to Faure's specific harmonic and modal subtlety than the Debussy's claro-oscuro sound and hexatonic system.

In order to weigh the impact of the innovation of this music in its epoch and specific appearance ambient (French music) is extremely helpful for us, from a postmodern view, to look of from a diachronic perspective, thinking of the entrance and the published or already composed pieces of the new stylistic fresh wave of the last anterior decades related to the piano repertoire.

In Paris, *Jules Massenet* and *Gabriel Fauré* were the teachers of the young Enescu for the Composition classes. Until 1903, from a stylistic and instrumental relevance point of

² He conducts and plays in Bucharest and Iasi his various works, in world auditions or repeating the concerts of his new works, presented before and published in French publishing houses.

³ This will be performed in the first world audition on February 23 in Bucharest, under the author's button and in 1904 in Paris, conducted by Gabriel Pierne along with a lesser known Enescu's work (Two Intermezzi op 12 for the String Orchestra).

⁴ Later, one of the Suite's interpreters was the composer Alfredo Casella, and after that went over to the repertoire of the two representatives Romanian Inter-war International Pianists: Clara Haskil and Dinu Lipatti. After 1958, on the occasion of the First International Piano Contest " G. Enescu ", is still one of the compulsory important pieces, the first post-war performances being given by the Chinese pianist Li-Ming Chiang (Electrecord recording). Other discographic versions: D. Lipatti and G Enescu (1943-44) where Lipatti plays Toccata and Bourree, Enescu median parts; Aurora Enei- (Electrecord) and Cristian Petrescu (CD) in the "Enescu's Piano Music", awarded with Dyapason d'Or and mentioned in the French Magazine Repertoire 10.

view, G. Fauré has already composed the *Suite "Dolly" op. 56*, (1895) *Barcarole op. 70*, (1900) *Nocturne op. 74* (1900).

By that time, about *Claude Debussy*, composer of the major impact of the *fin de siècle*, we find he has revealed to the audience almost reluctant compositions. Until 1903, looking into his Composition Catalogue of his published pieces, *Two Arabesques* (1888), the *Little Suite* for Four Hands (1889), the highlights are only the Suites, ‘‘the *Bergamasque Suite*’’ (1890) and the ‘‘*Pour le Piano*’’ Suite (1901).

The equally prestigious colleague of a new-born generation, *Maurice Ravel*, writes the ‘‘*Pavane for a Defunct Infant*’’ (1899), but a really relevant page to shaping a new stylistic trend is only the ‘‘*Jeux d'eau*’’ (1901).

Pavane (1903) is the third dance of the Enescu’s Suite, that we may strongly consider to be a *highly inspired page*, composed, above all, *in a totally original musical impost*.

Padova’s archaic dance (from the 16th century) does not significantly imprint on the Enescu’s piece, that emanates a rather strong feeling, somehow derived from its Romanian origins. Fauré’s *Pavane op. 50* (1887) exactly as Ravel’s one (*Pavane for a Defunct Infant*) originally written as a piano piece gains sound consistence once transposed by their authors into orchestral scores.

This particular piece dares to express, with a pastoral but subtle effusion poured in an eclectic refined structure, all that is specific to the Romanians: the ineffable of *Doina*.⁵ It is obvious that the author wanted to impart more freedom to the form, the general concept being *the Eclogue*⁶ and not necessarily *the Dance*. From another point of view, the atmosphere of the song, that is *Doina* (genre from the Romanian folk repertoire), is detached with a clear reference: the very dense, polyphonic writing, which in the pointillist manner appear and disappear melodic fragments in a alternative nostalgic rhetoric and passionate one.

It is important to remember that in all the interviews and occasions, George Enescu affirmed his almost obsessive childhood preoccupation to capture into music idiom the peasant environment, the nature, the atmosphere of the village - a musical footprint (sound) of the *Mioritic Space* -with the subtle evocations of his early memories of the field crickets, the song of the evening horn which irises sublimated in new combinations of [piano’s] sounds, unheard yet-, a new and extraordinary concept improved and developed extensively in his later creation in the Romanian music before to reach the field of the Romanian literature and philosophy’s authors.⁷

⁵ In general terms, *Doina* is a vocal, lyrical or instrumental collective creation specific to the Romanian people, in which the unknown authors express directly their feelings of alienation, longing, mourning, sadness, love or revolt. A deeply variety of feelings, aspirations, ideas are reflected in this folk origin genre and it draws inspiration from the life of the Romanians, revealing the communion of humans with nature or humans’ attitude towards Death and Life or over Time.

⁶ Starting from texts and pastoral motto other composers from the 20th century are inspired (literally or stylistically evocative): Claude Debussy writes his "Afternoon of a Faun" by a Eclogue of Stephane Mallarme, Igor Stravinski uses "Eclogue I e II" as title for two of the piece for violin and piano *Duo Concertante's* from 1932 s.a.m.

⁷ "The sense of Destiny of the Romanian folk Soul broke through with plasticity and mutual depths of perspective within the "mioritic" horizon. Mioritic space [n.n. matrix space] has penetrated all the wisdom of life of this people as a flavor. By guiding research in this way, we will meet many of the decidedly characteristic attitudes of the popular soul. But let us not lose sight of the fact that we find ourselves in a field of shades, of the atmosphere, of the ineffable and impenetrable. [...]The Romanians were born when the space-matrix took shape in their soul. The matrix space or specific unconscious horizon, which along with other factors had the gift to determine the inner style of his soul life. The unconscious spatial space gave to the Romanians, wherever it might be, the nostalgia of the plaice." Lucian Blaga, *Spatiu Mioritic -Trilogia Culturii* (translated from Romanian) <https://studiiculturalaromaneasca.wordpress.com/2014/02/23/spatiul-mioritic-trilogia-culturii-lucian-bлага/> (accesat 5.05.2019)

3. Material and Methods

Three different motives are combined into a fantasy development within a large-tripartite lied scheme. The amplification of these motives makes the specific frame of the *Pavane*, the old dance, more like an internalized expression and less like a musical structure. The tonal plan is varied, the nostalgic character of the beginning, generally in *mf* and *p* nuances preceded by a short solemn and emotional introduction in a declamatory recitative style,

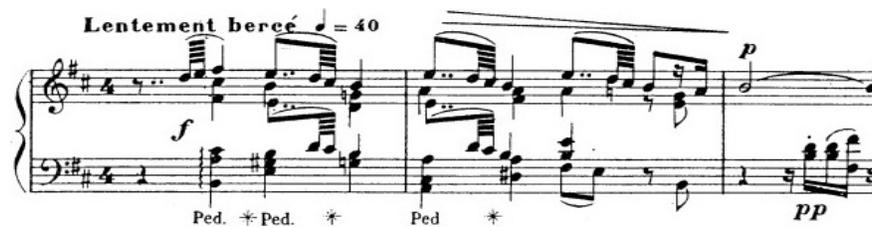


Fig. 1

will be followed by a dynamic discourse (the return to the homonym - the B minor) where the motives are found on a long harmonic pedal. The last final chord is a Picardy third (B major), releasing a calm, solar atmosphere.

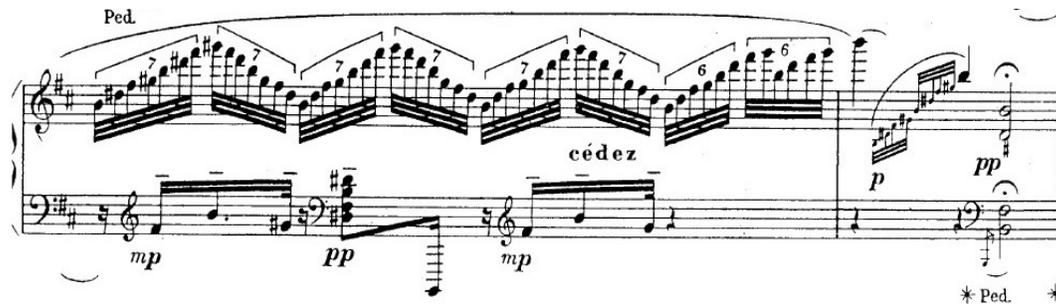


Fig. 2

After the introductory majestic phrase in a harmonic arrangement on the quiet pace of a typical lira accompaniment, there is a melismatic in almost a nostalgic style first theme, where the composer above wrote the orchestra *quasi flute* sign. This theme is built on the basis of four descending sounds, a musical motive that gives rise to improvisational variations and is proceeding into rhapsodic type, in an intimate, disclosing *sotto voce* dynamic register.



Fig. 3

Another more incisive motif at a dotted rhythm (11th bar), overlaid on a recurrent variation, comes in alternation in the form of arpeggios (ternary and binary divisional formulas) in the left hand. This is still appearing in the 17th bar expressing the moment of ascension, growth and developing of dynamics. For the time being, asserted in a shy mode (maximum ascension in the *mf* nuance with a tempered *sforzando* by a *subito piano*).

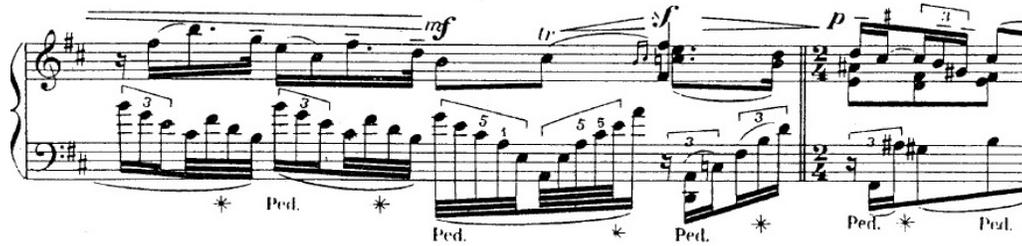


Fig. 4

A resurgent variation with a much more elaborate and melismatic development of the first motif, installs the beginning atmosphere of the piece, overlapping at some point, *en dehors* with the opposing motif (bar 17), a musical image in two level plan, transposed in transparent sonorities, as viewed as a wave of silk rolled over the *arpeggiato* sound cascades. These exposures prepare a delicate and carefully constructed musical multi-level image (the third motif), in a slow and expressive median portion (*en peu plus lent et expressif*), in colourful and ethereal sonorities tied in *pp* and *ppp* nuances, following harmonic developments combined to melodic counterpoint, creating miraculous heterophony - one of the first successful and evocative, ineffable expression of the imaginary Romanian (*mioritic*) space that the young composer would begin to express in deeper way in his later chamber music and orchestral creation (*rêveur*).

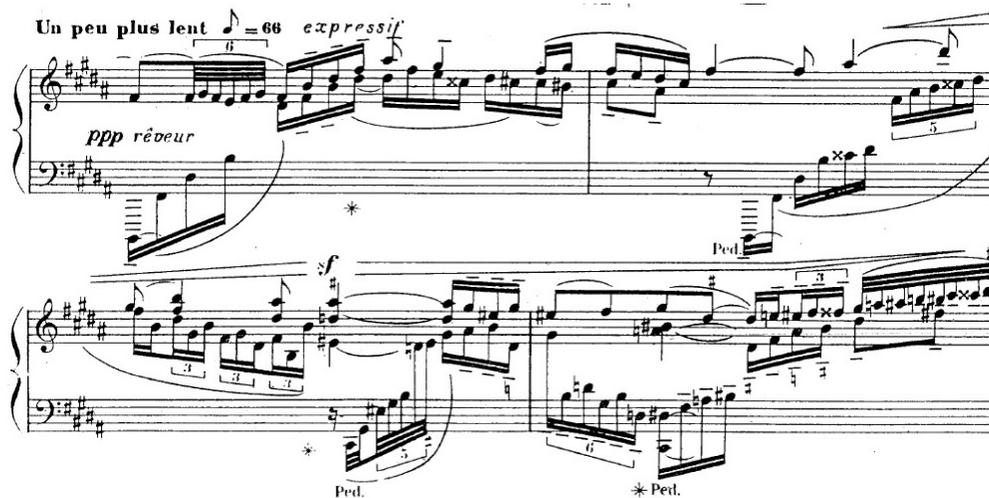


Fig. 5

A capricious arabesque (measure 22 – *en peu agite*) brings movement acceleration, being a transition area between the slow, static, almost timeless section that seemed to leak from one sound to another as dense texture and another section which features a different texture that rises, melted in transparent sound and less melodic lines.

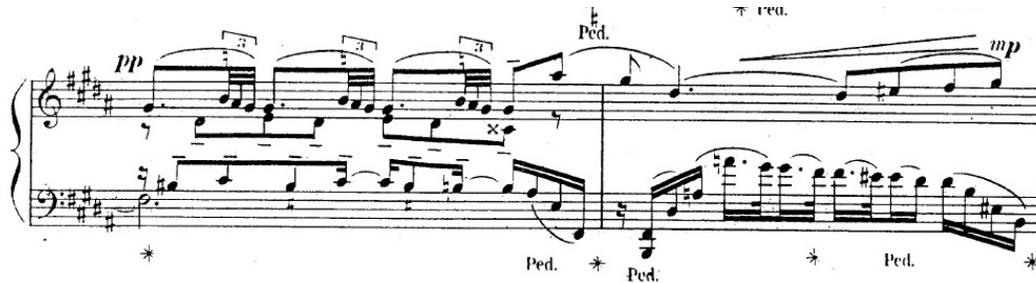


Fig. 6

There is a *gradual densification and a conscious thinning of the textures*, thought to be sophisticated in the development of sound plans, not found in the creation of the previous Romanian composers and in most cases, a particularity rarely approached by the European composers of his or previous Age. The sublimation of the musical discourse takes place up to the line level, like a thread, and increases to three or four layers (measure 26) where, with the help of *tenuto accents*, some sounds come off shining from a wave of loose weave, sometimes a diaphanous one, sometimes just dense, consistent.

In this atmosphere, it can be said that we decode a cosmogonic image of an appreciable musical expressive tension one, a brilliant rise of force, just like a mighty sunrise, in the fullness of the forces and dynamics (*f* and *ff* to *p*) the second motif (punctuated), sustained in virtuoso mode by a left-handed accords. The initial accompaniment goes harmoniously using a heavy tune and dabbled sounds in the octaves on the right hand, over which the fast, changing and inspired garlands come in motion on contrary movement to the sound plane of the right hand.

A short development section follows a texture in a Romanticism style with the reintroduction of the first motif, with modulations to major tones, resolving the tension of the climax in a consoling manner.

The range of dynamicis very large, in order to effectively emulate the musical message. Especially we can found diversity in the low and medium type of nuance. There is a gradual development of intensity in the sonorities that are slowly heard. The musical effect is massive, as we are hearing a dense texture moving and transforming almost in a mysteriously way.

The ineffable ways of expressions is underlined by *a revolutionary for those times manner of using the pedals*. The Pedal marks are all over the places. The Damper, the Soft, even the Sostenuito pedals are not working alone but in pear in an extravagant and luxurious style, hard to imagine before. Those sounds and sonorities indicated explicitly or not a lot of mixtures: connecting chords pedaling, syncopated pedal, pedaling against and through phrases, pedal mixt for colors, dry and Liquid Staccatos in pedal, Contrasts or other unusual effects.

Figure 7 shows two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is marked '1. M!' and 'mf'. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a complex arpeggiated accompaniment. The second system is marked 'ff' and continues the arpeggiated pattern. Both systems include multiple 'Ped.' markings indicating pedal use. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

Fig. 7

Coda, is ample and carefully developed. The virtuoso type is predominant by extended arpeggios, in the right-hand and fast sound artefacts in the 6th and 8th sounds of the left hand, creating a game and a variation of the musical speech of impressionist type. The relaxed atmosphere is enchanting, of originality and refinement that is hard to imagine, considering the works already published in the new Impressionist modernist style. It can be said that Enescu finds a parallel way to diversify and development of the French writing he takes from Massenet and Faure in a unique personal style, even with this piece, in 1903.

Figure 8 shows a single system of musical notation. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a complex arpeggiated accompaniment. The system includes 'Ped.' markings and a '10' marking. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

Fig. 8

The final arpeggios (the last 8 measures, *très doux*) carry us with the thought of *A Barque sur l'océan* (Ravel) in our ears,(a piece that has not yet been written!), under which we hear a motif treated in the mysterious Debussy style three-note motif (taken from a previous movement of the *Suita - Sarabande*), closed in the bell type chord, then, with Picardy third cadence, to reinforce the positive, consoling message of the melodic epic developed on those five pages of music.

4. Conclusions

With Enescu, particularly this larger piece (the Second Suite op. 10), the use of classic patterns in modernist, neoclassical form came to a new development and larger scale. Until the Second Suite was composed we had encounter miniatures structures on his school time masters (Faure, Debussy, now with Suites and later on with a Sonata (The Third Piano Sonata one), he develops predilection for this style in the piano repertoire, in his musical creation in order to present a real compendium of a personal neoclassical revised manner.

Surprisingly, in this music we find a lot of associations proposed by the composer – musical image to sounds plasticity, or sounds to musical image effect researched in a truly and effective orchestral way. The young Enescu solidly affirmed his very good knowledge of the orchestration writings not only in the Piano works but in his Chamber Music, too.

The exploration of the sonorities varies in different parameters; from a very large dynamic range to refined pedal support, changing the substance in the sound from a thinner type of sonority to a dense but in the same time heterophony's transparent textures. That start it's explained by his previous training at the French School in the company of the great masters of his time.

Most of all, we need to mention and to reflect to the innovations proposed by himself in the musical language for the Piano Repertoire of his time, surprisingly those type of innovations affirmed in front of many already appreciated composers of the Age.

The writing style is eclectic (mixes fluently different types of writing: from Romanticism to a form of Impressionism and personal Heterophony's texture style and motifs use have their value and essential place in developments sections. The miraculous effect of a refined gradual densification and a conscious thinning of the textures is something to be highly noticed and valuable for a year as 1903.

Hearing this music, we are always amazed by the imagistic creativity in sonorities, the recreation of particular images - cosmogonic and out of time sound image recreations - in a unique and subtle treated manner, in a constant research of the musical childhood memories of a specific musical space in which places of his origins and the sound of traditional instruments of these territories is so present and in a distinctive present.

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