THE RISE OF IMPRESSIONISM IN MUSIC

BY

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Chapter I

THE POSITION OF PROGRAM MUSIC TODAY

For the last century antagonists and protagonists of absolute and program music have been engaged in continuous verbal skirmishes attacking and defending the weaknesses of compositions conceived in one fashion or the other. Around 1900 the pendulum swung to the extreme pro-programmatic left wherein certain writers believed that music, in order to be understandable, ought to express something or tell a story, even going so far as to provide Bach's Forty-eight with descriptive titles. Today this same pendulum has swung to the other extreme wherein the Harvard Dictionary of Music feels justified in saying:

> "Today such views (providing music with titles) are a thing of the past, at least among serious musicians and educated amateurs....As a matter of fact, one cannot help feeling that a good deal of the interest which composers have taken in program music is but the avowal of a lack of truly musical imagination and constructive ideas, a lack for which they hoped to make up by an interesting program."[1]

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1. Apel. Willi , "Program Music", Harvard Dictionary of Music, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1944, p. 604.

Somewhere between these two extremes is the sane, middle-of-the-road attitude toward program music. Such music is a vital part of the musical scene, both past and present. The violent reactions for and against this type lead to the realization of the need for re-evaluation of relevant music and, more important, the terminology closely allied with it. The most logical point of departure for terminological reform will be found in the music itself.

All music fits into one of two broad categories; it is either absolute or programmatic. The term "absolute music" is most generally used in contradistinction to music which is associated with extra-musical implications. Unfortunately, in accepting this method of differentiation, musicians have adopted one type, either absolute or programmatic, and defended it as the only "true artistic musical expression." Setting one against the other has done little for music except to confuse the student as to which path to follow. When subsequently discussing impressionism as a form of programmatic music, it must here be made clear that these two phases of music - absolute and program - are basically the same. An evaluation of any music as a work of art must be judged on its intrinsic value, not on its extra-musical implications. Should the quality of any given work be inferior, no programmatic addition or concept will serve to immortalize it.

If, then, all music must be evaluated from a strictly musical point of view, of what value is the program? In general this can be answered by saying that it serves to increase the listener's understanding of the music. In most cases the composer of program music had a very definite idea before him which he wished to express musically. Whether this idea was presented in the form of poetry or prose, or whether he was attempting to describe an emotion or a scene which he witnessed, the program becomes an important key to an understanding of the music as the composer conceived it. For example, in Tschaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet an acquaintance with the program will explain the reappearance of the theme in minor as a funeral march. Similarly, a knowledge of the four-line poem MacDowell has affixed to his From a Wandering Iceberg will aid in recapturing the mood and scene that MacDowell is injecting into his music.

The responsibility for the success of such music is contingent on the sympathetic approach of both the listener and the composer. First of all, the latter must possess the ability to express his ideas convincingly and secondly, the listener must cooperate with him by giving free rein to his imagination that it may follow the composer's ideas. If either fails in his share of the responsibility the music simply resolves into absolute music with an appended title. However, there is a great deal of music which in no way

conveys its program. An excellent example of this type would be Couperin's Clavecin pieces. In addition, many compositions have been mistakenly labeled as programmatic. Berlioz, for example, has written an article on Beethoven's Eroica Symphony in which, in the spirit of the age, he has developed an elaborate program which is not only far-fetched but actually detracts from the absolute quality of the music.[2] It is the opinion of the writer that Beethoven himself would have been incensed with Berlioz' inappropriate romantic musings. In either case no amount of poetic imagination on the part of the listener will make such sentimental tamperings and additions agree with the music.

Thus it has been established that program music in its broadest sense can be any music bearing literary titles or subtitles. This broad connotation includes within its scope all of its various types including impressionism, realism, and a third type which by its very nature we challenge as a futile attempt at description in the music and the implication of the title. This last area can best be described as a type of "non-descriptive" program music.

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2. Berlioz, Hector, A critical study of Beethoven's nine symphonies, translated from the French by Edwin Evans, London, Reeves, n.d., pp 41 - 50.

Subsequent delineation will crystallize the differences between the concept of realism, impressionism, and "non-descriptive" program music.

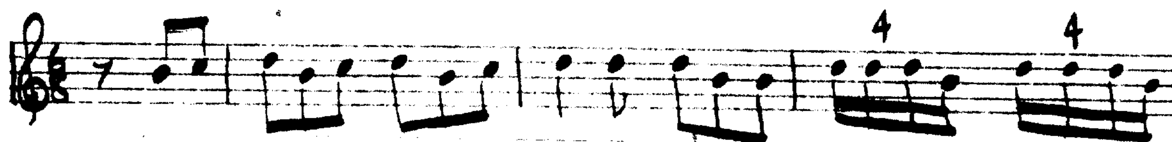
Chapter II

DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM MUSIC TO THE CLASSIC PERIOD

Art, regardless of the form it assumes, whether it be literature, painting, or music, matures, despite Cecil Gray's contrary beliefs, in a large measure through the process of evolution. Unlike Topsy it does not "just grow". Art is the developmental process of combining the production of preceding generations with one's own artistic ideas and evolving, through this intermarriage, an idealistic contemporary expression. The composer as a craftsman in the arts studies the music of the preceding generations and his contemporaries and borrows techniques and modes of expression while tempering them with his own artistic inspiration. Art, then, becomes a reciprocal borrowing and lending within fields and between related fields in an effort to create fresher and richer artistic expressions and concepts. Although this thesis does not concern itself with the influence of one composer upon another, nevertheless in studying program music in a chronological sequence the visibly improved techniques evidenced in the music of progressively later works is unmistakably the result of drawing on the previous experiences of another composer. The earlier attempts at

program music will be on a more simple and rudimentary level than those which came later, provided, of course, that the developmental theory of music holds true.

The earliest extant program music in the form of Italian Caccias dates from the late Fourteenth Century. These songs are typical caccias of the period in that the texts describe scenes pertaining to nature such as fire, hunting scenes, and the commotion of a fishing trip. A Bird Motet, written by Jean Vaillant, dates from this period and is typical of the program music composed in that era. This music recurs with a German text among the compositions of von Wolkenstein as part of the Denkmäler collection.[3] This phrase from that motet is intended to depict the song of a bird:



It can be seen from this example, and further study of the music, that the most fertile imagination could not be led to recapture the picture of birds from such an attempt.

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3. Wolkenstein, Oswald von, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich, volume 9, p. 181.

Although Vaillant's Bird Motet is a well written and charming example of the music of the period, as program music it is a failure and falls under the "non-descriptive" class referred to earlier in this paper.

Program music as a type virtually disappeared between the early writings of Vaillant (Fourteenth century) and the Sixteenth century.[4] At that time Clement Jannequin composed several shorter pieces to which he affixed descriptive titles:

La Guerre
La Bataille
La Chasse du Liévere
Le Chant des Oiseaux

Niecks in his book Program Music is much enamoured with Jannequin's pieces. Niecks, a romantic, possessing a highly poetic imagination, is able to hear "imitations of fifes, drums, bugles, cannon and musket reports, and all the bustle and noises of war" in these early "battle pieces."[5] It is immediately discernible upon examination, however, that what we are actually hearing is absolute music with a programmatic addition similar to the Bird Motet of Vaillant. In fact, of the two, the former's descriptive pieces show less imagination in realizing the program. His battle pieces, written some two centuries

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4. Apel, op.cit., 606.
5. Niecks, Frederick, Programme music in the last four centuries, London, Novello and Co., 1906, p. 8.

after Vaillant's Bird Motet and exhibiting less descriptive imagination than the latter's remarkable motet, are, in themselves, a contradiction of the statement made at the beginning of chapter two that the development of art is an evolutionary process. While this contradiction must be admitted here, later evidence will affirm the generalization regarding the progressive development of music.

The next examples of program music that should be considered in a chronological development such as this, are several selections found in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book dating from 1619, the year the various pieces were collected in a single volume by Tregian. The compositions of John Mundy (? - 1630) are particularly interesting because of the obvious attempt to recreate in music the sounds of nature. The work is composed of short pieces grouped suite-like under the main heading Fantasia. Each of the short selections bears a descriptive title indicating the scene Mundy attempted to represent. The sequence of Fair Weather, Lightening, and Thunder is repeated several times until the listener becomes as irrational as the rapidly changing weather Mundy attempted to portray. Thunder is generally pictured through rolling bass figures, brisk figures of disjunct notes depict lightning, while the fair weather scene is intimated through a markedly quieter tempo and ornamentation. However, even Niecks is forced to admit that this music as program music "is a very

primitive and child-like nature".[6] Furthermore, he reaffirms the general contention concerning program music of this period by asserting, in regard to Mundy's Fantasia, "without the labels no one could possibly recognize the light n ing, thunder, and the fair day."[7] This is simply another instance of a composer who had no instinctive feeling for the art of tone-painting, an art which will become increasingly significant as we approach the more convincing work of later composers. The pieces could just as easily have been labeled Girls Skipping Rope, Stock Yards, Butterflies or Opus 2½, for all the suggestion the music conveys. Like Vaillant and Jannequin, Mundy was a composer of excellent music who erred when attempting to affix a program.

My Ladye Nevell's Book, a collection of pieces for the virginal by William byrd, a contemporary of Mundy, contains several examples worthy of examination in this thesis. Byrd followed the general practice of renaissance programmatic composers in restricting himself to battle pieces or nature studies. In My Lady Nevell's Book,[8] a battle piece was included bearing the following elab-

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6. Ibid. 14.
7. Ibid. 15.
8. Byrd, William, MY LADYE NEVELL'S BOOKE, ed., Hilda Andrews, London, J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., 1926, pp. 15-42.

orate subtitles:

The March Before the Battle
The Soldiers' Summons
The March of the Footmen
The March of the Horsemen
The Irish March
The Bagpipe and the Drone
The Flute and the Drum
The March to the Fight
Here the Battle be Joined
The Retreat
Now Followeth a Galliard for the Victory

Although it has a descriptive title, this music suggests nothing. Byrd must therefore be relegated, along with Vaillant, Jannequin and Mundy, to the position of an instinctive absolutist dabbling in an unfamilar field.

For more than half a century following the English Virginalists of the late Sixteenth century no important contributions were made to the programmatic technique. In 1700 the German Composer Johann Kuhnau published a significant work entitled: Musikalische Vorstellungen einiger Biblischer Historien in Six Sonaten auf dem Clavier zu Spielen.[9] The titles of the six sonatas are respectively:

Der Streit zwischen David und Goliath
Der von David vermittelst der Musie currirte Saul
Jacobs henrath
Der todtkrancke und wieder gesunde Hisfias
Der henland Israelis Gideon
Jacobs Tod und Begräbniss

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9. Kuhnau, Johann, "Musikalische Vorstellungen etc." Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst, Leipzig, Breitkopf und Härtel, n.d., Erste Folge, Vierte Band.

These titles, however, are not the only verbal indications of the subjects; each sonata is provided with a lengthy argument which at the end is tersely summarized; and in addition to this, superscriptions are placed above the different parts.

Kuhnau's sonatas, the most ambitious attempts at program music up to 1700, are not sonatas in the modern sense of the word, nor are they suites, but a series of movements differing in length, tempo, measure, structure, and not infrequently also in key, which lead one into the other, each having at the beginning a superscription indicating what it is intended to express.[10]

An interesting example of the type of programmatic portrayal which Kuhnau employed is shown in the few bars of the following example:

Vien tirata la selce colla frombola nella fronte del Gigante

Casca Goliath

The rapidly rising scale-figure denotes the flinging of the stone at Goliath's head and the slower descending line signifies the Giant's fall from the fatal blow. This example demonstrates a primitive type of realism and represents

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10. Niecks, op.cit., 25.

an advance over the music already discussed. It should be equally clear that this is still pure music and the programmatic implication extremely remote.

George Phillip Telemann (1681-1767), now considered to be a lesser composer in an era which produced such musical giants as Rameau and J. S. Bach, was recognized during his lifetime to be a great musician and composer. His general recognition as an outstanding musical figure is understandable because of the general quality of his music and his phenomenal creative output. He composed prolifically for the church, wrote 40 operas and, among other things, he composed over 600 "French" overtures.[11] From our standpoint his occasional use of programmatic titles is important because of the impression he left on younger composers of the time to emulate his example in writing music of this type. Turning now to the Wassermusik of Telemann,[12] one of hundreds of his orchestral compositions, we find the following subtitles (translated from the German) which explain the scenes the composer is attempting to portray:

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11. Maczewsky, Herr A., "Telemann", Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5 volumes, third edition, ed. H.C. Colles, New York, MacMillan Company, 1928, volume 5, p. 298.
12. Gerber, Hisson, Ernest Ludwig, Neues hist.-biogr. Lexikon der Tonkünster, Leipzig, Kühnel, 1812, 1814, volume II p. 631.

The Sleeping Thetis
The Wakening Thetis
The Amorous Neptune
The Playful Naiads
The Sportive Tritons
The Stormy Aeolus
The Pleasant Zephyr
The Ebb and Flood
The Merry Mariners

Niecks says of the opening sections of the _Wassermusik_, "It begins with an overture in which we cannot fail to recognize a calm, smooth sea in the _Grave_,...and a breeze and rippling waves in the _Allegro_."[13] Whether Niecks is justified in stating that "we cannot fail to recognize" these oceanic wonders is subject to question. Anyone who is familiar with Telemann's _Wassermusik_ would be justified in disagreeing with Niecks and his elastic imagination which seems capable of being stretched to any dimension. A careful hearing and study should indicate to Niecks' closest admirers that Telemann's music has made little advance over Kuhnau's _Biblical Sonatas_ as far as verity to the program is concerned. Again we have music designated by the titles to represent something specific which actually can represent anything or nothing, depending on the fancy of the listener. Telemann was an absolutist attempting to write music suggestive of a program in an age seemingly indifferent to these attempts, especially when the composer lacked the poetic inspiration to create such music.

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13. Niecks, op.cit., 59.

Abbate Antonio Vivaldi (1680-1743), a contemporary of J.S. Bach, Couperin and Telemann, furnishes several excellent examples to indicate the expanding interest in program music in the late Baroque period. Niecks discusses several examples of Vivaldi's music in relation to their importance as program music:

> "The first three concertos of his (Vivaldi's) opus 10 have titles; (1) La Tempesta di Mare, (2) La Notte (3) Il Gardellino. In addition to these headings there occur two further superscriptions in the course of the second concerto - Fantasmi over the second movement and Il Sonno over the fifth. As to the tone-painting indicated by these titles, we may say that the somewhat stormy character of the first movement of the first concerto is more likely to have suggested the title, than the idea of a tempest the music. The second concerto is of a more decidedly programmatic character. The sombreness of the first movement, the eccentric figures of the second and the softness and vagueness of the fifth with its winding melodic lines and muted instruments are truly illustrative".[14]

Following an examination of the music, the logical question is raised, of what are the "muted instruments, eccentric figures and melodic lines truly indicative"? Or perhaps, this question should have been asked of Mr. Niecks. Apparently, however, even that over-subjective authority was not too enthusiastic over the suggestive prowess of Vivaldi and his music. Vivaldi's music is interesting and musically sound, but viewing it from a programmatist's approach we must concede that the outcome is unimaginative and colorless although entirely consistent with the devel-

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14. Niecks, op. cit., pps. 60 and 61.

opment of program music in his day.

The exploits of François Couperin (1668-1733) in the field of program music have been widely known, discussed, and accepted for some time. Many of the dance forms from his suites for the clavecin bearing descriptive titles are in the repertoire of today's concert pianist. Perhaps this very widespread acceptance and performance of his work is partially responsible for the lack of constructive evaluation of the work as program music. A very interesting comment by the composer himself regarding the conception and subsequent publication of these greatly expanded suites is found in the preface to the first book of <u>Pièces de Clavecin</u>, first published in 1713.[15]

> "J'ai toujours eu objet, en composant toutes ces piéces, des occasions différentes me l'ont fourni: ainsi les titres répondent aux idées que j'ai eues, on me dispensera d'en rendre compte: cependant, comme parmi des titres, il y en a qui semblent me flatter, il est bon d'avertir que les pièces qui les qui les portent, sont des expèces de portraits qu'on a trouvé quelquefois assez ressemblants sous mes doigts, et que la plupart de ces titres avantageux, sont plutôt donnés aux aimables originaux, que j'ai voulu représenter, qu'aux copies que j'en ai tirées." 16

From this enlightening paragraph we are able to draw several significant conclusions. The most important is

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15. Couperin, François, <u>Pièces de Clavecin</u>, Édition Classique, IV Livre, Paris, Durand et Fils, n.d.

16. Couperin, François, "Preface", <u>Pièces de Clavecin</u>, Édition Classique, IV Livre, Paris, Durand et Fils, Book one, n.d.

that "titles are given to the...originals whom (he) wished to represent (rather) than to the copies (he has) drawn of them". Apparently, either Couperin was not too confident of his ability to describe musically Folies Françaises ou les Dominos,[17] Abeille,[18] Papillo n,[19] Petits moulin à vent,[20] and so on, or else he was not attempting a poetic or realistic musical portrayal consistent with the object pictured in the title. He "had an object in composing the pieces, different occasions furnishing him with it", but his musical speech was capable only of the absolute, Baroque type of expression. Although he conceived his music with the program in mind, as he has stated, the very nature of his music and that of his contemporaries was simply not plastic enough to express through its rhythms and harmonic colors the objects they envisioned. Adequate proof as to his complete failure

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17. Couperin, op.cit., "Les Folies Francaises ou les Dominos", Book 3, suite 14, page 8.
18. Couperin, op.cit., "Les Abeille", Book 1, suite 1, p. 17 .
19. Couperin, op. cit.,"Les Papill o n" Book 2, suite 3, p. 65.
20. Couperin, op. cit., "Les Petits moulin à vent", Book 3 suite 17, p. 71.

as a composer of descriptive music may be had by comparing the pseudo-descriptive pieces of his harpsichord suites with other movements more modestly titled Pavanne, Rondo, Gigue, etc. The melodies, harmonic idiom, and forms are all of a similar type.

Couperin's attempts at descriptive chamber music were equally unsuccessful in suggesting a program. This failure can be largely attributed to his complete indifference to tone color and instrumental timbres. The importance of tone color to the programmatic composer will be discussed later. It is sufficient to state here that such means are indispensable to the composer wishing to paint a picture using sound as his medium of expression. Couperin, however, chose to ignore color. An excellent example of his unconcern for instrumental timbre is demonstrated in Apothéose de Lulli.[21]

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21. Couperin, François, L'Apothéose de Lulli, Paris, A. Durand et Fils, n.d.

The performers are given the choice of using any grouping of instruments which might be available at the time of performance.[22] With this apparent, though traditional lack of concern regarding instrumental combinations and the subsequent sacrificing of a valuable aid in programmatic suggestion, it is not surprising that this music in no way suggests the complicated program which was meant to signify the deification of Lully. The inevitable conclusion reached through

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22. Couperin composed this instrumental "suite" originally for two violins, 'cello, and a keyboard instrument, probably the harpsichord. However, he states at the beginning of the composition that any instrumental combination may be substituted. He has added the following programmatic sub-titles at the beginning of each new number:
    (1). Lulli aux Champs-Elysées concertant avec les Ombres lyriques.
    (2). Air, pour les mêmes.
    (3). Vol de Mercure aux Champs-Elysées pour avertir qu' Apollon y va descendre.
    (4). Descente d'Appolon qui vient offrir son violon à Lulli, et sa Place au Parnasse.
    (5). Rumeur souterraine causée par les auteurs contemporains de Lulli.
    (6). Plaintes des mêmes pour des flûtes ou des violons très adouces.
    (7). Enlèvement de Lulli ou Parnasse.
    (8). Accueil entre-doux et hagard fait à Lulli par Corelli et par les muses italiennes.
    (9). Remerciement de Lulli à Apollon.
    (10). Apollon, persuade Lulli et Corelli que la réunion des goûts Français et Italiens doit faire la perfection de la musique.
    (11). Lulli jouant le sujet et Corelli l'accompagnement.
    (12). Corelli jouant le auget à son tour, que Lulli accompagné.
    (13). La paix du Parnasse faite aux conditions, sur la remontrance des muses françaises, que lorsqu'on y parlerait leur langue on dirait dorénavant sonade, cantade, ainsi qu'on prononce, ballade, sérénade etc.

a careful study and objective appraisal of Couperin's programmatic music is that he, like his contemporaries, was first and foremost an absolutist whose reputation as a composer of program music was founded on the broad terminological concept that program music included all music having literary titles. Couperin's music is an excellent example of the non-descriptive type.

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1682-1764) assumes the role of an important figure in a study of program music because he was one of the first to expound and publish theories attempting to correlate specific harmonies and tonalities with moods and emotions. Hargrave summarizes Rameau's references to the relationship of music to moods thus:

> "He insisted that each chord correspond to an emotion; there are sad, languishing, tender, gay, and surprising chords. Joy is expressed by conchords, sadness by dischords....The scale of fa is appropriate to tempests and rages. Re, La, mi to grand and magnificent styles; ut and fa minor to 'chants lugubres' ".23

From a purely objective viewpoint Rameau's beliefs seem somewhat inconsistent and unscholarly today. A great many of the highly emotional concepts of the Romantic period perhaps stem in part from Rameau and his "sad, languishing, tander, and gay" chordal implications. Rameau cites the

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23. Hargrave, Mary. Earlier French Musicians, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1917, p. 79.

key of "F" as ideal for tempest and rages. One can only imagine his chagrin if he could know of Beethoven's successful and effective Pastorale symphony written in that key. Similarly, notions as to what constitutes "conchords, dischords or unprepared dischords" have become so confused in this century as to make Rameau's theories no longer tenable.

Although Rameau's theories were in part responsible for the rejuvenated interest in musical theory and aesthetics, we must remember that in many respects they were merely an adoption of principles established earlier. For example, the Greeks had considered the subject of aesthetics, the conclusions of which were fully formulated in the doctrine of the ethos. It was established by the Pythagoreans, developed by Plato and Aristotle, and further expanded through the schools of the Peripatetics and Stoics. Karl Nef explains it thus:

> "The doctrine of the ethos rests upon the view that the external movements, capable of being translated into hearing, stand in immediate relationship to the movements of the soul; upon the belief that certain tonal successions are capable of calling forth quite definite emotions of the soul. If this doctrine is true - and the Greek philosophers were fully persuaded of its truth - music has great ethical influence, and is therefore also important in the instruction of youth."[24]

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24. Nef, Karl, An Outline of the History of Music, tr. Carl F. Pfatteicher, New York, Columbia University Press, 1947, p. 9.

A variation of the doctrine of the ethos was formulated toward the end of the Sixteenth Century when the term musica reservata was expanded to include within its meaning the "expressive interpretation of the text, as was natural in the period of the late madrigal and the approaching nuove musiche. Thus, musica reservata constitutes a forerunner of the Affectenlehre of the Eighteenth Century".[25] The Sixteenth Century Maniera is another precursor of Rameau's theories as well as the Affectenlehre. The latter is the aesthetic theory of the Empfindsamer Stil of the later half of the Eighteenth Century as formulated by Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788). This theory, which is realized in the compositions of C. P. E. Bach, establishes the fact that the chief aim of music is to portray certain typical emotions, such as the tender, the languid, and the passionate, very much as propounded years earlier by Rameau.[26] Subsequently the Affectenlehre gave rise to the interpretation of music based on programmatic and allegorical concepts wherein it became a sort of psychological drama explained in terms of the "knocking of fate", "gloomy minor", etc. Berlioz was one of the many guilty of this type of literary misappropriation.

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25. Apel, op. cit., p. 467, column 2.
26. Ibid., 18, column 2.

A more intelligent use of this approach,

> "was attempted by H. Kretzschmar, the inventor of _musikalische Hermeneutik_. He considers music not as a substitute for the pictorial arts or for objects of nature, but rather for poetry, i.e., as a _Sprachkunst_ of lesser clarity, but of finer shades and deeper effects, than the ordinary language."[27]

The similarities between Kretzschmar's theories and those of the symbolist poets and the impressionist musicians will become apparent when the latter are discussed at a later point in this thesis.

The influence of the _Affectenlehre_ is still being felt today as evidenced by the increased activity in the field of musical aesthetics.. In the field of composition such composers as Paul Hindemith (1895-   ) in his song series for soprano voice, _Das Marienleben_, op. 27 and Paul Dukas, (1865-1935) in the opera _Ariane et Barbe Bleue_, have employed a system which roughly approximates the Eighteenth Century Affectenlehre.

Rameau's theoretical innovations, at once far-reaching and progressive, are still in use today in universities giving instruction in traditional harmony. He published many texts, the first in 1722, and continued to expand on his original theories year after year. In particular, the following five treatises are of great historical as well as

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27. _Ibid_., 18, Column 2.

practical value.[28]

Traité de l'Harmonie, 1722
Nouveau Systeme de Musique théorique, etc., 1726
Generation Harmonique, etc., 1737
Demonstration du Principe de l'Harmonique, 1750
Nouvelles Reflexions sur la Demonstration de Principe de l'Harmonie, 1752

But Rameau did more than just write and talk about music. As a composer he produced many examples of program music which merit consideration. Many of his shorter pieces from the collection Pièces de Clavecin were given descriptive titles. For example:[29]

Le Rappel des Oiseaux, 27*
La Villageoise, 33
Les Tendres Plaintes, 36
Les Soupirs, 45
La Joyeuse, 47
L'Entretien des Muses, 50
Les Cyclopes, 54
Le Lardon, 59
Les Tourbillons, 59

Of Les Tourbillons Hargrave says: "He anticipated Debussy in Les Tourbillons, in which he tried to render 'gusts of wind stirring up whirls of dust'".[30] Even allowing a broad interpretation of the word "anticipated" it would be unfair to both Rameau and Debussy to let this statement stand un-

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28. Thompson, Oscar, ed., The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1939, p. 194.
29. Rameau, Jean-Philippe, Pièces de Clavecin, Paris, A. Durand et Fils, n. d.
    *These numbers refer to pages as found in the edition published by A Durand et Fils.
30. Hargrave, op. cit., 80.

challenged. No more adequate refutation is needed than to examine the section to which she refers:

The mere coincidence of arpeggiated figures cannot be assumed to be an anticipation or even an influence of one composer on the other. With reference to Rameau's descriptive musical powers, Hargrave was more accurate when she stated later that "Rameau's descriptive harpsichord pieces follow(ed) the fashion of the day"[32] Like Couperin, Kuhnau, and Telemann, Rameau tried to synthesize music and the implications of a literary program and failed. "Non-descriptive" program music or, to define this treatment positively, absolute music with a descriptive title was the programmatic attempt of the Baroque and Rococo periods.

The musical examples and composers discussed thus far are by no means the complete programmatic representation of these periods. To present every such example from those two periods would entail a thesis in itself. However, those composers which were discussed represent the most

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31. Rameau, Jean-Philippe, "les Tourbillons", Pièces de Clavecin, Édition Classique, Paris, A. Durand et Fils, n. d., p. 53.
32. Hargrave, op. cit., 80.

significant of the contributors, and the compositions are in most respects a representative cross-section of the caliber of program music written at that time. If the Seventeenth and the greater part of the Eighteenth Centuries seem to have contributed little to the advancement of this type of music, it is because the movement for creating descriptive music really had its genesis in this era. To be sure, several of the off-shoots of the programmatic taproot were imbedded in the early Chinese musical symbolism (c.1500 B.C.)[33] the Grecian doctrine of the ethos, et cetera, but in the main it was the Baroque period which really supplied the impetus. Although the attempts to write descriptive music were numerous, they almost invariably ended in failure, as has been shown. The reasons for this, of course, are many. Basically the fault rested with the composer's approach to the problem. Absolute music with a title we can thrust aside as futile. The only other effort toward impressionism, then, was in realistic representation. The art of tone painting, that impressionistic touch which alone can be regarded as legitimate, but feebly glimmered, if at all during this primitive period of experimentation. Form, harmony, and counterpoint were not at the advanced stage where they could be easily moulded to give even a literal,

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33. Nef, op.cit., p. 5.

let alone a suggestive, representation. Thus, though this age was rich in great composers, from the standpoint of this paper their significance is largely historical. The roots of the impressionist vine are grounded in this early tradition, but the movement had to await technical advancement to witness its consummation.

Chapter III

THE CLASSICISTS: HAYDN AND BEETHOVEN

The age of the Viennese classics, embracing the decades from 1770 to 1830 and stylistically epitomized by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and to some extent Schubert, witnessed the elimination of many of the stumbling blocks of the earlier composers which were halting the advance of program music. With the advent of more stable forms, the use of newer color media such as the symphony orchestra as well as the innovation of the pianoforte, it would seem outwardly that the stage was set for the artistic creation of such music. Unfortunately, real liberating influences had not yet asserted themselves. The sonata-form became a device for restricting the poetic expression of the composer rather than freeing it; the symphony became just another medium of expression rather than being upheld as the acme of tone-color palettes; the pianoforte was too young for composers to be immediately aware of its many possibilities. Thus the early classic artistic concepts becamestable, balanced, objective and traditional and would not allow for <u>free</u> poetic expression. In order that this might take place music had to await the coming of the giant Beethoven.

To choose at random several representative examples of program music composed during this period bristles with the difficulties due to their sparsity. No really serious,

continous endeavor was made by any of the aforementioned composers to exploit this phase of music. In a sense there was a feeling of growing contentment, at the outset of the age, with the more objective, absolute treatment. As a result, program music represents a far less important facet of classic art than does the other. To make the case for classic program music even weaker, it must be mentioned that many of those efforts which are classified as descriptive are too often actually confined to the text used in the vocal lines. The music in no way imitates the descriptive power of the words. Two such compositions by Haydn, which are in many ways characteristic of the period, are the oratorios, The Creation and The Seasons. Both compositions were written following Haydn's visit to England where he was visibly impressed by the Handelian oratorios. Of the two, this influence is more pronounced in the former.

No discussion of the programmatic significance of The Creation would be complete without Niecks' pertinent comments. Of this he says:

> "The Creation begins with an instrumental introduction representing chaos; we have in The Creation the picturing of light of the throng of hell's black spirits sinking to the deep abyss; of lightning, thunder, rain, and wind; of the billowing sea, the flowing river, and the gliding, purling brook, of the roaring lion, the flexible tiger, and the noble steed; of the peaceful herds and flocks; of the eagle

> soaring on mighty pens, the cooing dove, the merry lark, and the tuneful nightingale; of the flashing shoal of fish and the immense leviathan; of the buzzing host of insects; of the sinuous serpent, etc."34

With all due respect to Niecks' scholarship and the eloquent music of Joseph Haydn, it must be pointed out that the former's phantasies in the field of program music are no longer taken seriously. In this particular work the composer's portrayals are on the most elementary of levels. The opportunities offered by the text for tonal suggestion are infinite but naturally fail in realization by an absolutist like Haydn. For example, the following extract from the air for tenor Now Vanish before the Holy Beams is typical of Haydn's failure to capture atmospherically the feeling of "The gloomy shades of ancient night" in the music.[35]

The gloo-my shades of an-cient night;

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34. Niecks, op. cit., p. 74.
35. Haydn, Joseph, The Creation, "Most Beautiful appear", New York, G. Schirmer, Inc., vocal score, p.5.

Further on, from the Terzetto, <u>Most Beautiful Appear</u>, another sterling opportunity presents itself in "Distil, in crystal drops". It would be interesting to imagine the way a natural colorist like Debussy would treat the accompaniment to "crystal drops". Haydn treats it beautifully, though from our standpoint, unimaginatively.[36]

Dis- tils in crys- tal drops.

Opportunities such as these are the rule rather than the exception in the text of <u>the Creation</u>. All are approached traditionally. Still another example of such futility may be found in the duet and chorus, <u>Of Stars the fairest</u>, at the point where the bass soloist sings "Ye dusky Mists".[37]

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36. Haydn, <u>op. Cit.</u>, p. 65.
37. Ibid., p. 117.

These three examples should leave the impression, and rightly so, that Haydn's interest and genius did not rest in the support of the text from the standpoint of musically suggested colors and moods. Most instances of a conscious effort to reproduce effects are found in a very simple form. For example, in the opening recitative, In the beginning, following the orchestral introduction representing Chaos, the words "In the beginning God created the Heav'n and the Earth: and the Earth was without form and void", sung by a bass voice pianissimo, are not supported by the orchestra. The bass line sung alone somehow gives the impression of formlessness and emptiness. This is tone-painting of a sort just as the minor mode is often used to suggest the gloomy and mysterious in this recitative and at other points throughout the score. These examples, primitive as they are, illustrate Haydn's innate conciousness of the power of tones to suggest moods, etc., but his fundamental

adherence to the classic concepts of his day did not allow him the necessary freedom to pursue this as an end in itself.

The Seasons takes on remarkable significance to us for here one receives the impression that Haydn was deliberately attempting the role of a natural programmatist. This assumption is logical when considered in the light of the subtitles he has added to two of the four seasons: Spring and Winter. The overture of the former is Expressing the passage from Winter to Spring and the introduction to the latter is Expressing the thick fogs at the approach of Winter. Before proceeding further, examine the treatment of these late autumnal mists from the standpoint of tonal suggestion.[38]

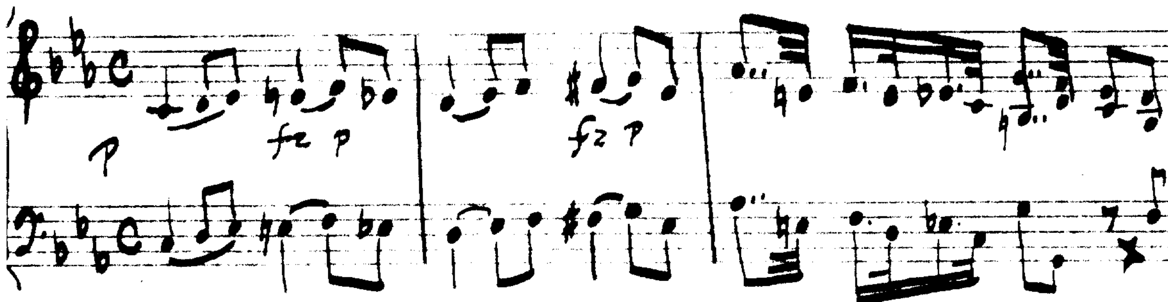
Considered in the light of the Bass recitative, Behold where surly winter flies, after the soloist has sung "and quit the

38. Haydn, Joseph, The Seasons, "Expressing the thick fogs at the approach of Winter", New York, G. Schirmer, Inc., vocal score, p. 165.

howling hill", the former example seems quite out of keeping.[39]

Both of the former excerpts seem pallid tonal expressions when compared with the Tenor recitative Her face in dewy veil conceal'd.

The following introduction is meant to establish the feeling of Summer, but, in reality, it would have been best suited as an accompaniment to Winter.[40]



The musical excerpts given above are unusual instances wherein the composer almost approached the outer fringe of the tone colorist's domain. Needless to say, these are isolated instances and are certainly not indicative of the character of the work as a whole. There is a great similarity between

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39. Haydn, The Seasons, op. cit., p. 8.
40. Ibid., p. 55.

the treatment of The Seasons and The Creation, Both, however, must be considered only as stepping stones when viewing them in the light of real poetic musical achievement.

This writer cannot agree with Niecks when he claims that,

> "In The Seasons we have the picturing of fleeing winter and his howling ruffian winds, the torrents of melting snow, the tepid air of spring and zephyr's breath; of the morning light on the mountain tops, the rising sun, dusky night, and gloomy caves; of the whispering foliage and murmuring streamlet; of thrilling nerves; of the ill-omened lich-owl, shrill-voiced cock, bounding lambkins, sporting fish, twittering birds, chirping cricket, croaking frogs, bright-coloured insects, and barking dogs; of the whirring spinning-wheel; of the shepherd's pipe, the merry fife and drum, the loud hunting horns, the spaniel roving in search of scent, the fleeing stag, and the pursing men, horses, and dogs. Of the many scenes conjured up vividly before the reader I will yet mention the thunder storm in The Season and moods of nature and man that precede and follow it."[41]

The following example, revealing the way Haydn treats the thunder storm, should help to convince any skeptic that Niecks, though consistent when focusing upon program music, was carried away by his imagination, a fault which makes a re-evaluation of this music so vital. This portion is from the Bass recitative, Behold! Slow settling o'er the lurid grove.[42]

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41. Niecks, op. cit., p. 74.
42. Haydn, "The Seasons", op. cit., p. 83.

the thun-der growls —

pp

While certain aspects in Haydn have demonstrated an advancement in the realm of program music, nevertheless he cannot be considered as a promulgator of this type of art. Despite advancement, formally, technically, and to some extent, aesthetically, he remains a giant, like his predecessors of the Baroque and Rococo periods, in the field of absolutism. The illustrations given from the two oratorios should serve to verify his position musically.

Where Haydn lifts the development of Classic art to a position of prominence, it is Beethoven, (1770-1827), who brings it to its fullest realization and even steps beyond into a foreshadowing of Romanticism. The realization of his influence grows daily to the point where he seems a musical Goliath rising from the past. Not only did works such as the fourth symphony, through the use of long, lyric themes, serve as a point of departure for the later Romantics,

Schumann and Mendelssohn; but music, seemingly as dissimilar as Wagner's "Music Dramas", received their impetus from the Beethoven tradition.[43] I would urge that the above list of Beethoveen influences be expanded to include that of the impressionist school. The whole field of program music, within whose broad connotation we must include impressionism, does not begin to take root until after the Pastoral Symphony (1808). The reason for its great significance does not lie in the deft treatment of the affixed program but with the attitude with which Beethoven approached the writing of the work and the attitude he asks the listener to adopt in evaluating it. His whole philosophy in regard to the literary side of the work is that he is not attempting to paint a picture either real or suggestive. He is attempting to reproduce through music the feelings of men on seeing and spending a day in the country.[44] In Beethoven's own words:

> "Pastoral Symphony: not a picture, but something in which are expressed the emotions aroused in men by the pleasure of the country or, in which some feelings of country-life are set forth."[45]

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43. Nef, op.cit., p. 266.
44. Howes, Frank, The Borderland of Music and Psychology, New York, Oxford University Press, 1927, p.46.
45. Niecks, op.cit,. p. 123.

We must not forget, however, that such philosophy would be natural to a man who was almost completely devoid of the divine gift of Debussy for pictorial suggestion. All absolutists, not Beethoven alone, are concerned only with the emotional element. This is their natural field of expression. The impressionist must have this also if his art is to live, but he has more, which will be revealed in later pages. Even then, when impressionism is discussed subsequently the whole basic concept of the movement, in literature, art and music will be drawn irresistibly to this early Beethoven aesthetic theory of the suggestion of emotion. How well he was able to achieve the principles set forth is, due to the very subjective demands of such an evaluation, difficult to determine. Criticisms pro and con have been leveled against Beethoven regarding this work since its conception. It can be the task of the reader to determine their justification.

The Pastoral Symphony, op. 68, is what Niecks calls "frankly acknowledged programme music in the fullest sense of the word".[46] It is divided into five movements, the last three of which are continuous, each movement bearing a superscription:

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46. Niecks, op.cit., p. 122.

I. Erwachen heiterer Gefühle bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande.
II. Szene am Bach.
III. Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute.
IV. Gewitter, Sturm.
V. Hirtengesang - Frohe, dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm.

Though the music which follows each of these titles is meant merely to suggest the emotion of the individual on witnessing these rural scenes, Howes, nevertheless, feels "he does use the method of painting to some extent to arouse them".[47] Certainly one of these instances of painting to which Howes alludes occurs in the fourth movement, Gewitter, Sturm. Assuming the first twenty bars to represent the storm brewing, in bar twenty-one the fury of nature is presented in a manner foreshadowing the realism of seventy years hence. Realism is achieved through use of the full orchestra, tremolando strings, as well as the low-pitched four against five rhythm of the basses and celli respectively. The latter is responsible for the ominous character of the storm. It must be admitted that this treatment of a storm represents a far cry from the "storms" of Mundy and, more recently, Haydn. Even extreme absolutists like E. Hanslick and August Halm who advocate the separation of the musical work from the emotional world of both the composer and the

47. Howes, op. cit., p. 46.

listener, and the emancipation of the musical thought from "sensuous intoxication and hallucination", admit this passage is "powerful".[48] It is the opinion of this writer that Beethoven has not only captured the mood of nature's fury, but he has gone a step farther and created a picture which subsequent realists used as a point of departure for their own works. Although this sort of thing is not to be commended, the fact that the symphony was performed with scenery and even as a pseudo-ballet or pantomine attests to a common basis for feeling that Beethoven achieved what he had set out to do.[49]

Another realistic moment occurs in the second movement, Szene am Bach, to which MacDowell took great offence. He refers to the "bird imitations" of that movement when he says:

> "In Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony the cuckoo is not a bird which mysteriously hides itself far away in a thicket, the sound of whose voice comes to one like a strange, abrupt call from the darkness of the forest; no, it is unmistakably a cuckoo, reminding one strangely of those equally advanced and extremely cheap art products of Nuremberg, made of pine wood, and furnished with a movable tail."[50]

Here is the section of the score to which he alludes:[51]

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48. Apel, op.cit., "Aesthetics", p. 19, column 1.
49. Wier, Albert, editor, The Nine Symphonies of Beethoven in Score, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., n. d. p. 167.
50. MacDowell, Edward, Critical and Historical Essays, "Declamation in Music", Boston, A. P. Schmidt, Co., 1912, p. 254.
51. Wier, op. cit., p. 186, Second movement, Measures 129 to 133.

Fl. Nachtigall

Hb. Wachtel

Kl. Kuckuck

On the whole Beethoven should be given credit for creating a work which furnished many subsequent composers with the impetus to create a more subtle type of program music.

Before leaving the discussion of Beethoven, other programmatic works should also be mentioned. These bear no reference to the quasi-program music - music to which some one has added descriptive titles.[52] Of the string quartets one has a superscription: opus 135. The somewhat cryptic question and answer "Muss es Sein?", "Es muss sein"! stands at the beginning of the last movement. This composition, like the two of the thirty-two piano sonatas which have descriptive titles, is treated, in

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52. This practice was not limited to the music of Beethoven but became universal. Mendelssohn's <u>Lieder ohne Worte</u>, Haydn's "Surprise", "Clock", and "Jupiter" Symphonies as well as Beethoven's "Harp" quartet, and the "Moonlight" Sonata (Sonata quasi una fantasia, op. 27 no.2) are just a few of the instances of misplaced "poetic imagination" by some well-meaning, but mis-guided "music lover".

relation to its program, more in the style of Haydn and his predecessors. The afore-mentioned sonatas include the Sonate Pathetique, op. 13, and the Sonate in "E" flat major, op. 81. The latter is divided into three sections and superscribed Farewell, Absence, and Return, respectively. The absolute character of these compositions, combined with the almost universal acquaintance with them, makes a critical analysis of their programmatic character superfluous. However, Niecks, who has again gone overboard to see that the music "tells a story" or has "intelligible meaning" has this to say of the Sonate Pathetique:

> "...there is a speaking expressiveness and an unmistakable depicting of moods in every one of the three movements - in the first, of storm and stress; in the second, of devout contemplation and a trustful upward looking; and in the third, of agitation and sweet melancholy".53

Although Beethoven has written program music which is in the traditional vein, it was he who, through the sixth symphony, opened the door to a whole treasure chest of musical gems. The colossus who, with a flourish brought classicism to its greatest height, also became the fountain head for the new Romantic movement. From him program music found two new paths to follow: realism, demonstrated in the "storm" and the "imitation of birds" of the sixth symphony,

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53. Niecks, op. cit., p. 116.

and impressionism, given as an outgrowth of his aesthetic theory as evidenced in his desire to recreate previously experienced emotions through music.

Chapter IV

THE REALISTS

The composers who exploited the literary expressiveness of music to the farthest degree were exponents of a special facet of program music known as realism. Realism in music, like its counterparts in literature, painting, and sculpture, was an artistic movement designed to depict things as they were. A photographic type of art emerged with a concentration on the accuracy of detail, the composite resulting in a mirroring of the situation as it was. Music, unlike its sister arts, was not able by the very nature of its medium, to embark on a full-scale pursuit of the principles of photographic representation. To be sure, many examples of the exact reproductions of the sounds of nature are to be found in existing compositions, but on the whole they are the results of an unconscious over-programizing. In other words, it is the outgrowth of an over-zealous composer's efforts to inject the 'spirit and the letter of the program' into his music. Instances of too great an emphasis placed on naturalness can be found in the work of most composers who have tried their hand at writing descriptive music. No artist can be pigeon-holed as a subscriber to a "school"

or a national group or even an esoteric society banded together for reform such as the "French Six". A realistic movement as such never gained impetus, and those composers who are frequently given this classification have become the notable exception because of the character of their music rather than because of any theory of musical aesthetics or principles.

In the last chapter Beethoven was discussed as the instigator of a trend toward realism in music. Musicologists are generally agreed that the next step in this geneology is occupied by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). "He felt himself", says Nef of Berlioz's gathering of the Beethoveen reins, "to be the successor of Beethoven, and with justice, in so far as he could appeal to the Pastoral Symphony"...[54] Here Nef is referring more specifically to the type of "symphony" which Berlioz composed. There is a great deal of similarity between the "tone-poem-symphonies" of Berlioz and Beethoven's work. However, the inference is clear that Berlioz borrowed more than the form of the Pastoral Symphony as a point of departure. His subsequent turn to realism more than confirms this fact.

Like Beethoven, Berlioz recently reached the stage where his full importance as an influence on later music

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54. Nef, op. cit., p. 297.

is beginning to be understood. His contributions are threefold: (1) the use of the orchestra as a color medium was exploited for its own sake. His orchestrating showed the hand of genius; (2) He developed the leit motive, or Idée Fixe as he called it, as a part of the symphonic web; (3) program music, particularly of a realistic nature, was expanded in keeping with the new emphasis on orchestral color. It would be difficult to ascertain which of these developments has contributed most to the creation of great music, but from the standpoint of this paper the revitalization of program music probably has wielded the greatest momentum.

In deciding that his descriptive symphonies should attempt to portray the program in a realistic manner, after certain sections of the Pastoral Symphony, Berlioz had established a pattern which was to be indicative of many of his compositions, particularly Les Francs-Juges, Harold in Italy, and Symphonie Fantastique. To attempt to pursue a program realistically is beset with many problems all of which center in the inability of music to express the tangible. The problem with which Berlioz is faced is summarized adequately thus:

"It (music) certainly can express joy, sorrow, gravity, playfulness; it can mark a striking difference between a queen's grief and village girl's vexation, between calm, serious meditation and the ardent reveries that precede an outburst of passion. Again, borrowing from different nations the musical style that is proper to them, it can make a distinction between the serenade of a brigand of the Abruzzi and that of a Tyrolese or Scotch hunter, between the evening march of pilgrims impregnated with mysticism and that of a troop of cattle dealers returning from the fair; it can contrast extreme brutality, triviality, and the grotesque, with angelic purity, nobility and candour. But if it tries to overstep the bounds of this immense circle, music must necessarily have recourse to words-sung, recited, or read - to fill up the gaps left by its expressional means in a work that addresses itself at the same time to the intellect and to the imagination."55

Berlioz at the time however, thought he could overcome the ambiguous character of music and actually weave a narrative thread into the music which would be intelligible to the listener. The greatest obstacle that remained for him to overcome was the question of how to express the soundless by use of tones. Beethoven suggested the solution when, in refering to his sixth symphony, he claimed he had expressed the emotional impressions made by the countryside. On the other hand Berlioz felt that the emotions aroused by the countryside were not consistent from one person to another, depending on the associations a person might have had with rural scenes. For example, a forest to the woods-

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55. Niecks, op. cit., p. 226.

man beginning his days work would call to mind entirely different impressions than those of a frightened child lost at night among the gloomy shadows of this same woods. The wide gulf separating Berlioz from the impressionist is evident in his failure to understand the true implication of the prophetic Pastoral Symphony. "His impulse", writes Mason, "is, in short, realistic rather than lyrical, and the art in which he embodies it is descriptive and narrative rather than emotionally expressive."[56] Had he been more sympathetic toward this type of expression his works perhaps would have been strengthened through a more subtle treatment of the program.

With many of the problems of expression left unsolved, he attacked the difficulties that beset him and thus

> "...became the pioneer of that realistic movement which in our own day had assumed such prominence, providing, as early as 1830, in the Symphonie Fantastique, which is essentially a realistic work, with program and leading motives, the prototype of many famous modern masterpieces."[57]

The composition of which Mason speaks as epitomizing the realistic bent of Berlioz's art is the one which depicts the bizarre dreams of a youth under the influence of opium. A complete translation of the program given at the beginning of the score reads thus:

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56. Mason, Daniel Gregory, Romantic Composers, New York, MacMillan Company, 1926, p. 277.
57. Mason, op. cit., p. 290.

"A young musician of morbid sensibility and an ardent imagination poisons himself with opium. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by strange visions, during which his sensations, sentiments, and recollections are translated in his sick mind into musical thoughts and pictures. The beloved woman, she herself, has become for him a melody and, as it were, an idée fixe, which finds and hears everywhere."[58]

There is almost an analogy between the weird, neurotic nature of the musician characterized in the Symphonie Fantastique and the erratic, impulsive life of the composer.

How well Berlioz is able to succeed with his realism is a matter of personal opinion and will be largely tempered by the degree of sympathy of the listener to his music. This writer concurs with Mason's opinion of the composition:

"Doubtless it is quite possible, and mildly amusing, to follow, on hearing the Symphonie Fantastique, the general outlines of the story, but did Berlioz suppose that any one would be able to recognize in his music, otherwise often unintelligible, the details of the 'plot'? If so, he was certainly overrating the descriptive powers of sound, and placing too much dependence on the definiteness of a medium which is by nature vague and indeterminate".[59]

Perhaps Mason could not forsee the possibilites of the specific expression of objects through the use of tone as will be demonstrated at a later point in this chapter. Although Berlioz has not succeeded completely in his

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58. Niecks, op.cit., p. 251.
59. Mason, op.cit., 298.

attempt at realistic portrayal, the thought must always be kept in mind that this phase of program music was in its infancy and that he, as its father, was responsible for its conception, not for its growth in stature.

Earlier in this chapter it was pointed out that the proponents of realism in music were not organized or distinguishable as a distinct school. Thus a great problem arises in tracing this lineage as a movement through various composers. In this particular instance the realistic trend, carried from Berlioz through Franz Liszt, (1811-1886), appears incidental. The strongest link between them is the treatment given to their orchestral works, which, in the case of Berlioz, are referred to loosely as "symphonies" and with Liszt as the "symphonic poem". Berlioz's influence on the latter, in this respect, was tremendous. It is said that after hearing the Symphonie Fantastique for the first time, Liszt began an arrangement for piano that very night. What elements in this work besides that of realism did Liszt incorporate into his own compositions? First of all the Idée Fixe and secondly the dramatic organization. Thus by combining the musical organization of the classics with the Berlioz influences he "secured the advantages of the realistic school: freedom from the shackles of the strict

traditional sonata-form, and a 'poetic' principle of Coherence".[60]

Mason goes on to say:

> "By retaining thematic development, he reënforced this poetic coherence by musical logic, and avoided to some extent the fragmentary effects into which unmodified realism generally falls. To the thirteen orchestral pieces in which he most strikingly embodied this plan of interlinked dramatic and musical structure he gave the name of "Poëmes Symphoniques," generally translated as "Symphonic Poems" though more precisely as "Orchestral Poems."[61]

It is the heritage of the symphonic poem for which the realist movement is grateful. As a form and a technique the basic ideas were enlarged upon to serve as a foundation for later composers in this area.

Despite the techniques which Liszt used, his music is not that of the realist in the proper sense of the word. His choice of program was generally of a nature which did not demand the specific but concerned itself more with the abstract. The symphonic poem Les Prēludes[62] illustrates the character of the typical Lisztian program. It was taken from Lamartine's Mēditations poetiques and begins, "What is our life but a series of Preludes to that unknown song of which death strikes the first solemn note?" This program, it will at once be seen, is far more favorable to musical

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60. Mason, op.cit., 339.
61. Ibid., 339 and 340.
62. A brief thematic analysis of this work is to be found in Mason, op.cit., pp. 340 to 347, which confirms the "half-hearted" realism of the composer.

treatment than Berlioz's "hotch-potches" of petty details and wild, incongruous fancies. It is but slightly narrative and descriptive, "presenting", as Mason says, "rather such abstract emotional states as music can best depict".[63] Liszt further estranges himself from the realist when he wrote:

> "It is obvious that things in so far as they are objective are not at all within the department of music, and that the merest tyro in landscape painting can with one stroke of his pencil produce a scene more faithfully than a consummate musician with all the resources of the cleverest orchestra. But the same things, in so far as they in a certain way affect the soul, these things subjectivated... and become reverie, meditation, elan, have they not a singular affinity with music? And could not music translate them into its mysterious language?"[64]

Guided by this idea of the expressiveness of music it is not surprising to find his realism limited to the creation of emotion.

But the symphonic poem was his forte and his greatest contribution to music. The formal synthesis of Beethoven, Berlioz, and Liszt resulted in the foundation which made subsequent attempts in photographic portrayal possible. This does not imply that all works of this type are naturally realistic; as a form it gave the composer the freedom which made such representation feasible. Le Rouet d'Omphale by Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), a contemporary and acquaintance

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63. Mason, op.cit., p. 341.
64. Niecks, op.cit., p. 277.

of Liszt, was a realistic expression owing its influence to the latter composer.[65] Here is realism of the most obvious sort. There could be little question that the undulating motion in the orchestra was meant to be anything but the turning of the spinning wheel. <u>Danse Macabre</u> by the same composer is another symphonic poem of the same type. However, such musical photography shows the result of too much "developer" in the traditional sense of the word.

As Beethoven represented the glorious culmination of the classic period, so Richard Strauss (1864-) has come to be regarded as the man who carried realism to its farthest point. Superlatives are dangerous, but there is really no other musician who has consistently pushed to such an extreme the power of music to depict details, animate and inanimate. He is reported to have made the remark that music was becoming so definite that the composer would soon be able to portray a tablespoon with such unmistakable characteristics that it could be distinguished from the rest of the silverware. Although such exaggeration is to be taken lightly, if it came to a matter of putting this proposition to a test, certainly Strauss would come closest to succeeding. In the meantime, if not a tablespoon,

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65. Nef, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 300.

"we have a sufficiently varied collection of portraits in his gallery, each sketched with a Sargent-like penetration."[66]

Tracing the lineage of realism through the development of the symphonic poem, it assumes greater meaning in the light of its use by Richard Strauss. As a form he brought it to its height, and as a consequence dramatic realism became an integral vehicle for its realization. An examination of representative compositions will reveal some of the devices used to achieve his effects.

The program prefixed to Don Juan was taken from Lenau's dramatic poem of same name. Niecks summarizes each of the three passages in this way:

1. Don Juan's desire to rove through the immeasurable charmed circle of variously attractive womanhood, and die in a kiss on the lips of the last;
2. Mortifying individual, he worships the species; a woman's breath that to-day seems to have the fragrance of spring, may tomorrow be to him like the air of a dungeon; pressing forward to new and ever new victories as long as youth's fiery pulses fly;
3. The beautiful storm is stilled, the combustive material consumed and the heath has become cold and dark...67

Of the many examples of realistic delineation which could be cited, none is more striking or familiar perhaps, than the piercing, dissonant high trumpet note depicting the fatal sword-thrust of the hero delivered by a girl's

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66. Mason, Daniel Gregory, Contemporary Composers, New York, MacMillan Company, 1929, p. 55.
67. Niecks, op. cit., p. 499.

father.

Turning now to the symphonic poem Tod und Verklärung which Romain Rolland feels is "one of the most moving works of Strauss, and that which is constructed with the noblest unity",[68] we find the entire work dedicated to an absolute portrayal of the program. The latter is composed of thirty lines in four divisions, the translation of which is:

1. In a poor little room, dimly lighted, and fully and ominously silent, except for the ticking of a clock, there lies on his bed, fallen asleep after an exhausting desperate struggle with death, a sick man, with a smile on his face as if he were dreaming of childhood's golden time.
2. Before long the battle begins anew between the desire for life and the power of death, but without victory on either side; and again there is silence.
3. Sleepless, as in a fever delirium, the sufferer sees passing before his inner eye the rosy dawn of innocent childhood, the more daring sport of youth, and the ardent striving of manhood that turns obstacles into stepping-stones to higher things, the storm and stress continuing until the hour of death that now strikes.
4. From heaven descends towards him, resounding grandly, what he had longingly sought here below: world-redemption and world-transfiguration.69

Here the gasping of breath, the insistent faltering of the man's heart, the ticking clock are all set incongruously against the lyric beauty of the "childhood reminiscences"

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68. Rolland, Romain, Rolland Romain's Essays on Music, New York, Allen, Towne and Heath, Inc., 1948, p.143.
69. Niecks, op. cit., p. 500.

and the dynamic grandeur of the full orchestra in the "transfiguration". This writer concurs in the opinion of Rolland that this is truly great music. The crass realism and the close adherence to the program never hinder the music from its natural development and expression, but coöperate with each other in enhancing the over-all effect. In Chapter One of this paper the importance of the music being able to stand without the program was stressed. Tod und Verklärung is an example of music capable of such self-support. It demonstrates realism, to be sure, but it is music of the highest order with or without its program.

While this last composition has gained in brilliance through its literary associations, this cannot always be said to be true of many of Strauss' creations. Very often, particularly in the later works, he becomes so concerned with the program and its realistic portrayal that he forsakes the natural development of the music. As his interest in the externals has increased he has put himself in the dubious position of exalting the program at the expense of the music. "His native tendency," writes Mason, "is to concern himself more with concrete appearances than with essential emotional truths."[70] His concern for detail in

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70. Mason, "Contemporary Composers", op.cit., p. 87.

some cases "seems exaggerated to such a degree as (to) seriously...disturb the balance of his art."[71] As a result his music, despite its brilliance, its virtuosity, and its power, "has become over-emphatic, ill-balanced, hard in finish and theatrical in emphasis."[72] Of this Bauer complains,

> "His Domestic Symphony carries this realism outside the bounds of artistry. The whirring of the windmill and the bleating of the sheep in Don Quixote and the introduction of the wind machine,...remind us only too forcibly that we are living in an age of materialism which has threatened to overpower idealism even in art."[73]

Unfortunately, then, his love of realism, revealed at an early stage, has kept pace with the extraordinary powers upon which it is parasitic. Of course, such mechanical devices as a wind machine, et cetera, have no place in musical art. This desire for literalism reached its zenith when Respighi, in the score of The Pines of Rome, asks that the call of a nightingale be 'simulated' by playing a phonograph recording made of a real-life bird singing. Certainly the duties of the harassed percussion section are increasing by leaps and bounds! Respighi is obviously intent on making the 'cuckoo' of Beethoven look like an untutored amateur. It need not be reiterated that

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71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Bauer, Marion, Twentieth Century Music, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933, p. 91.

resorting to such devices only tends to place a blot on programmatic art.

The possibility is always present that the composer in writing descriptive music may approach, or even achieve unconsciously, a realistic musical portraiture. For example, the actual line between impressionism and realism can become so fine at times as to allow a certain piece of music to fall into either category. As an illustration, Debussy's La Mer, on the whole an impressionistic work, often becomes literal. The opening of the first movement is a decidedly realistic imitation of waves crashing against a rocky cliff. Honegger's Pacific 231 was meant to be an expressionistic work, but its realism is only too apparent.[74] Since the dividing line between realism and closely allied programmatic movements often becomes so blurred that it becomes difficult to categorize "borderline cases" the listener himself must decide what meaning the composition has for him. In most cases truly impressionistic, or realistic music can be distinguished by its characteristics. The difficulty and ambiguity of expressing these characteristics in words can only be overcome by a knowledge and a feeling for the music itself. Then and only then will the aesthetic judgment for such evaluation

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74. Nef., op.cit., 349.

have a logical and valid basis.

Thus did the Beethoven, Berlioz, Liszt, Strauss tradition lean toward an exact aural imitation of a program, as distinct as possible in every detail, limited only by the fiendish devices and imagination of the composer who found solace in this type of music. Perhaps the best analogy could be drawn between the works of those composers and the vast majority of Chinese paintings whose detail and symmetry are perfect down to the smallest, insignificant item. How far removed are those traditional artists in painting from the masters who could far more powerfully present the picture through a few strokes of the brush! The musical counterpart of this last group of painters was already formed and composing in a characteristic idiom which stood juxtaposed to the realists.

Chapter V

COLOR IN MUSIC

"Like color and light in painting, the last aim of impressionistic music was sonority and tone color; everything that in a fleeting, momentary impression excites the ear, satisfies and intoxicates it."[75] Thus Lang emphasizes the importance of harmonic and orchestral color to the impressionist. How really vital a part it plays will be shown later, but this statement will suffice to indicate the necessity for its discussion.

It is quite amazing that Lang, in his great book Music in Western Civilization, should choose to ignore a definition or a delineation of the word "color", despite his frequent references to it. Unfortunately, its very nature, though seemingly elementary, almost defies concrete associations, especially when applied to music. Its seemingly indefinable qualities make a definition imperative, however, especially so since it is such an integral ingredient in the impressionist's art, whether in painting, literature, or music.

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75. Lang, Paul Henry, Music in Western Civilization, New York, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1941, p.1019.

The word "color" is perhaps most frequently used in connection with the graphic arts, painting in particular. Here, certainly, one would expect tangible associations which call to mind something absolute. Scientific measurement of the light-reflecting powers of various colors has led to the conclusion that each tint has three qualities: (1) hue or color tone, (2) value or luminosity, (3) chroma, purity or intensity. Investigation of this kind has its value and place, but wherein does it help to establish a common ground in ascertaining the "colorful"? Actually it does not. It is true that every hue possesses these three qualities but how can one prove or disprove that an effect of coloration is produced by chiaroscuro in an engraving or monochrome as defined in Webster's Dictionary? The scholarly mind will perhaps be disappointed in the obvious answer, for it must be decided through aesthetic judgment. How else can we explain the reference to color in a type of art which depends on shades which are almost antithetic to it? The surroundings or environment of an otherwise pallid color will often lend it warmth merely by contrast. In a monochrome the "colors" white and gray assume the role of "color-agents" largely through comparison and fusion with the black. Conversely, a painting profuse in brighter shades might not seem as colorful as its neighbor wherein a chiaroscuro technique

was employed. Thus the matter of color can be scientific only to a certain point and from there on in it becomes a relative matter, relying on the aesthetic discrimination of the art critic or the musician to determine the presence of color or the lack of it.

Where the definition of color in art presents many intangible difficulties and seems inadequate at best, in music it is the proverbial "insurmountable obstacle". Attempts have been made to isolate this elusive quality in sound, but as with the plastic arts, the efforts were to a large extent unsatisfactory. Hence authorities such as A. Eaglefield Hull, in writing about "modern harmony", circumvent the problem as far as possible. Definitions, such as the one for harmonic color, "rich effects produced by varied harmonies",[76] are the result and are obviously inadequate. The progression I - VI - IV - I in major is a series of "varied harmonies", but are productive of harmonic color in only an insignificant way. In Modern Harmony Hull has attempted to distinguish between the harmonic devices used by one "school" of composers and another. The results are more a testimonial to the accuracy of the old cliche that "there is nothing new under the sun" and that all harmonic tricks and devices have been

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76. Hull, A. Eaglefield, Modern Harmony, London, Augener Ltd., n.d., p. 215.

used in one form or another by composers in all periods of later musical history. "One cannot", remarks Lang, "distinguish sharp lines of demarcation between systems and groups; ideas and inspirations are exchanged, theories are neither clearly conscious nor well drawn up, the most domesticated composers show a desire for emancipation, the most independent bear the mark of servitude."[77] Hence the whole approach to the problem of harmonic colour cannot be specifically defined and allocated to one type of composer or composition. Just what constitutes color in music cannot be ascertained except through subjective appraisal wherein one musician's opinion is as valid as another's. However, let us attempt to define its origins in order that a semblance of congruity may be rendered.

In discussing color in painting on a previous page, the theory was advanced that environment often leads to a coloring of an otherwise ordinary or even drab shade as in a black and white engraving. Similar analogies can be cited in the field of music where the unusual use of a common chord in an otherwise traditional setting will be transformed into a sudden burst of harmonic color. Two examples of the many hundreds which can be found in earlier music are given. The first, a section from the Schubert "Unfinished Symphony",

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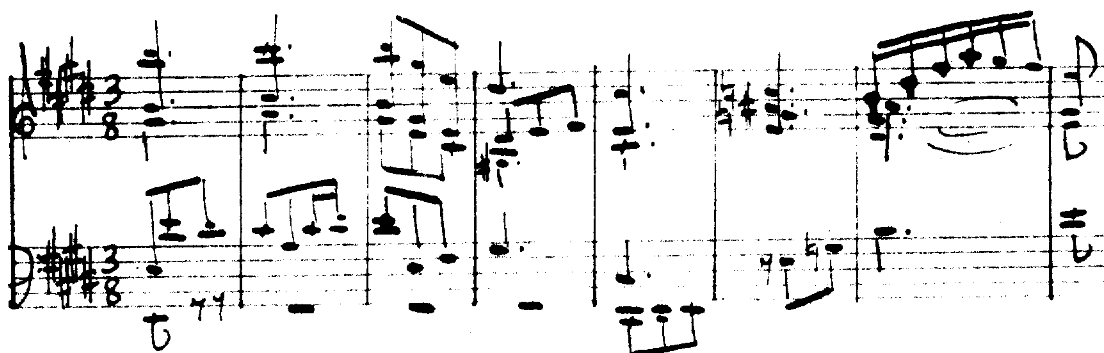
77. Lang, op.cit., p. 1024.

transcribed for piano, shows us an arrival to an enharmonic dominant seventh through voice leading which has the effect of a color splash:[78]



A similar instance is found in J. S. Bach's Bouree from the second violin suite where the tonic seventh on the first beat of the measure lends a distinct coloristic tinge:[79]

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78. Schubert, Franz Symphony #8 in 'B' minor, Scarsdale, New York, Edwin F. Kalmus, n. d., p. 41, measures 9 to 16.
79. Bach, J. S. Album of Twenty-one Pieces for the Piano, edited by Sara Heinze, New York, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1898, volume 12, "Bouree from the second violin suite."

Moments of color in the harmony are not unusual in early music; it is the sporadic frequence of occurrence within the space of a long composition which distinguishes it from later uses.

It was thus the task of the composer who wished to use color more or less for its own sake, to take harmonies similar to the ones shown above and weave them into a continuous fabric like the carpet-maker who incorporates multicolored threads into his tapestry. Many later composers have used this device at one time or another as stated previously. To use colorful harmonies does not align the composer with any "school" or group. Many of the "realists" already discussed have used it in the same way as the later impressionists, groups who, in principle, are almost diametrically opposed to each other. Berlioz and Liszt are examples of the former.[80] Thus, the whole problem of where to assign the origins of the colorist technique becomes very complex and obscure. For the sake of convenience, and to avoid any scholastic wrangling, let us begin with Chopin to whom many of the coloristic origins can be traced.

The harmonic color of Chopin can be best explained from a more objective technical standpoint through his treatment

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80. Lang, _op. cit._, 815.

of dissonance (another chameleon-like appelative which changes in application with each succeeding generation). This device, freely used in the nocturnes, consists of harmonic embellishment, thus creating a dissonance against the implied harmony. These devices often take the form of grace notes and have a filigree or "swash-like" character. If, in the playing of these arpeggiated figures the touch is clear and distinct as one would hear in the rendition of a Bach fugue, the nature of the dissonance would assume a harshness that would destroy the harmonic shading which would otherwise spring forth under a more delicate touch. "To play him too distinctly", Mason says, "is as fatal an error as to examine a charcoal sketch with a magnifying glass, or to bend over a canvas of Monet and peer curiously at each spot of paint."[81] Here is an example of his coloristic use of dissonance taken from the ending of the third Nocturne. In the following example the grace notes are dissonant to the main harmony, but they are in no case meant to be heard individually. These splashes of color were not used as a foreground, but as a means of blurring an otherwise too bold outline. Chopin's scores are full of these delicate veilings and obscurations.

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81. Mason, Romantic Composers, op. cit., p.22.

To quote Mason in this regard: "If a Bach fugue and a Mozart quartet are the steel engravings of music, Chopin's pieces are its impressionistic paintings and pastels."[82] Treatment such as this is to be found extensively in the impressionist and other schools. Harmonically he has been a great innovator and has wielded tremendous influence, especially in impressionistic music.

82. Mason, <u>Romantic Composers</u>, op. cit., p. 221.

To draw once again from Mason:

> "His daring use of consecutive fifths and other such bugbears of the scholastic, entitle him to a high place among the pioneers of modern methods. He constantly surprises us with premonitions of Liszt, Wagner, the French and Russian composers of today, and even Richard Strauss.[83]

Certainly a marked premonition evidenced in his music is the advanced use of harmonic color, more or less as an end in itself.

The significance which Chopin has achieved as a composer was accomplished in part through his sympathetic understanding of the pianoforte's capabilities. That his work was restricted in large measure to this medium is fortunate, not only for the wealth of great piano literature which he contributed and its subsequent influence, but because his talents were not as pronounced in other media. The few works he wrote which incorporate the orchestra are in most part of less stature than his compositions for the piano, and even then depend on the latter as a solo instrument. His security rested with the piano, and through him it was moulded to give voice to new harmonic as well as instrumental colors.

To delve even superficially into the many developments and contributory factors giving rise to the use of color in music would occupy more study than an average thesis would permit. Unfortunately, then, it must be

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83. _Ibid_., p. 246.

passed over lightly here. It has been shown how Chopin became an innovator in the use of colorful harmony, exploiting the piano as the medium for such expression. Serving as a background, he became the first of many who subsequently added new color techniques, harmonically and instrumentally (orchestrally, if you prefer) through Scriabin and Schönberg. The Russian school of composers of the Nineteenth Century, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Moussorgsky, Borodin and others were great promulgators of this technique. Their influence upon the late Nineteenth Century French composers can not be underestimated.[84] Likewise, the music of Wagner exerted a powerful influence over them, both positively and negatively. At the outset of this chapter, Lang was quoted as suggesting that definite lines and influences are hard to distinguish or trace from one composer through another. This is especially true here because of the intangible nature of the device and the reciprocal exchange of techniques. Seemingly all schools of composition advanced together to expand tonal and orchestral tints, yet each was able to maintain a characteristically expressive sound that identified and set it apart from others.

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84. Cobbett, Walter Willson, Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music, London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1929, p. 317, Column 1.

No better case can be cited than that of the French composers who were able to develop remarkable harmonic and orchestral hues and yet maintain within their music a quality which was typically and singularly French. It is not surprising, then, that the French, with their penchant for clarity and purity, should inject into their music a coloristic use of harmony which would serve to identify and express these ideals. Their influence and contribution to the expansion of interest in harmonic and orchestral shading is therefore significant.

Edouard Lalo (1823-1892), is important to this study through his contributions to the advancement of orchestral color and predilection for themes of exotic and sensuous character.[85] Symphonie Espagnole, the Norwegian Rhapsody, and the Russian Concerto will serve as illustrations of this tendency. His use of color results in a picturesque kind of music "still further emphasized in various works by Debussy, Ravel, Schmitt and others".[86] For this reason his probable influence cannot be overlooked.

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85. Hill, Edward Burlingame, Modern French Music, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924, p. 40.
86. Ibid. p. 33.

Another pioneer in the attainment of a specifically French coloristic harmonic idiom, was Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894). How important his influence grew to be can best be appreciated by a comparison of the harmonic technique employed by both Ravel and Chabrier.[87] The latter was an innovator in certain colorful chordal progressions which were considered extremely modern at the time. In particular an unorthodox succession of seventh chords, and experimentations with the whole-tone scale are accredited to him. "Music to him", remarks Hill, "was primarily a means of subjective expression",[88] for which "radical" harmonic tints were a necessity and an outgrowth of his more liberal interpretation of basic principles of harmonic construction. One of his more widely known compositions demonstrating his "modernity", is España. Here the full beauty of his coloristic orchestral and harmonic hues is strikingly evident. In this respect Hill regards Chabrier as having evidenced a kinship with the impressionistic painters Monet, Renoir, and Degas for whose works he (Chabrier) had shown an intense appreciation.[89]

The songs of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) serve as another influence in the development of harmonic color as well as an advancement in the technique of song composition in

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87. Ibid. p. 243.
88. Ibid. p. 74.
89. Ibid. p. 74.

general. His enhancing of the text with just the right harmonic shade to suggest the immediate implication of the word ultimately induced later French impressionistic musicians to emulate his technique, notably Debussy, Ravel, and Florent Schmitt.[90]

Vincent D'Indy (1851-1931), was another great colorist, both in his use of harmony and deft treatment of the orchestra. Many of the innovations ascribed to him have their origin in his teacher, Cesar Franck. Without dwelling on his specific contributions let us dismiss him with a parting reference to the _Istar_ variations and the _Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français_ as examples of his inclination toward the more colorful aspects of harmony and orchestration.

Last, but not least, Erik Satie (1866-1925), must be included as the final link in the colorist chain before its incorporation as a technique and device by the impressionists. Debussy, in particular, was fascinated by the daring harmonies of this "eccentric humorist" whom he met as a pianist in a Montemarte cabaret.[91] _Gymnopedies_, a series of short compositions for piano forwhich Debussy was particularly fond, is remarkable for its advanced harmonic idiom.

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90. _Ibid_., p. 100.
91. Thompson, Cyclopedia, _op.cit_., p. 1619, column 1.

Satie's influence on the latter was quite pronounced and evident early in the other's career as a composer.[92] Debussy had a penchant for the eccentric and unorthodox which MacDowell, as a fellow student in the Paris Conservatoire, noticed and commented upon later. It is not surprising that he should find Satie's music refreshing and intriguing.

With the expanded orchestral and harmonic palette impressionism in music was now fortified with a means which could be moulded to its needs. All that was required to set the movement in motion was the revolt against the abuses of the late German romantics and the absorption of artistic principles and standards promulgated by the other arts, poetry and painting, into the creation of a new type of music. The aesthetics of impressionism are discussed in the following chapter.

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92. Cobbett, op.cit., p. 317, column 1.

Chapter VI

The Aesthetic Principles of Impressionism

It has been illustrated thus far how program music as an art developed and expanded to the point where Beethoven's Sixth Symphony became its bifurcation, the divergent aspects of which led in almost opposite directions. This dichotomy within a phase of music witnessed the immediate assimilation of one facet of the art and the temporary neglect of the other. Thus the development and pursuit of a genus of musical realism became a more or less accepted compositional routine, a technique which culminated in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries in the music of Richard Strauss.

While the move toward realism was bent headlong to achieve perfection, the graphic arts were experimenting with a new type of expression which only concerned itself incidentally with external realism, sacrificing the bold and linear to an interpretative subjectivism. Realism was discarded through the crystallization of the artistic philosophy of the painter Delacroix, the fountain head of the impressionist school of painting. He emphasized in his writings that the imitation of nature alone cannot lead to art, it is merely one of the artistry's fun--

damental media. He felt that all great art, in the final analysis, must be a product of man's imagination, the infusion of certain subjective elements into a work. Hence realism was put aside and a fresh effort made to display on canvas or through verse an interpretation or a "translation" of a scene after being subjected to the inner personality of the artist. The subjectivism sought for and exploited by the impressionists in many ways parallels that of the romantics and expressionists. The distinction is one of degree. The romantic, influenced from without, gave free rein to his emotional reactions while the expressionist evidenced no restraint when concerning himself with the outward manifestations of his own inner motivations and impulses. Somewhere between these two is the personal and more intimate subjectivism of impressionism. This phase of it can best be explained as a "digestive" or "tempering" process wherein an external stimulus is mentally "swallowed" and then given back, the original having been tempered by the inner promptings of the artist. It is unlikely that a fully comprehensive insight into the true character of musical impressionism is possible without first studying comparable movements in the other arts to which this type of music traces its origins. Let us consider the approach of the impressionist painters first.

The term "impressionist" grew out of a review written about an art exhibition of Manet and others of the Garde Nationale by Jules Claretie who referred to it as a "salon des Impressionistes".[93] The paintings had been cataloged as "impressions" of this and that, from which Claretie coined the word now freely applied to the movement in general. It is unfortunate that this name was accepted, for it leads to confusion. Most of the creative output of an artistic movement is an "impression"; that is, an artist puts into concrete form a record of the scene of a moment as he sees it, and his interpretation or "impression" of it is the final result. Hence, in principle, all art is "impressionistic", yet it in no way implies the use of the delicate subtleties of the school which bears this title as a distinguishing label. The symbolists as well as the cubists, abstractionists, and like factions are primarily concerned with creating a picture which presents their "impression" of the way an object appears to them. In art the differences in the end result of such varying subjective interpretations are more easily distinguishable than in either poetry or music. The former has no movement known as "impressionism" while the latter lays no claim to a symbolist

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93. Caffin, Charles H., The Story of French Painting, New York, The Century Co., 1911, p.170.

school, although both are in evidence in painting.

Delacroix was to the impressionist painters what Chopin was to a similar movement in music. The Frenchman destroyed the form of the classicists, obscuring the definite lines and surfaces, dissolving them in a maze of seemingly disembodied color patches. The disembodying substance is light, the element which blurs and softens the outline. With the paintings of Jean Baptiste Corot, rhythm, content, and form became inseparable through the unification of light, color and the object. The early impressionists, Courbet, Troyon, and Millet adopted this technique; it received its fullest development in the works of Manet, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Pissarro and others. The total effect of the pointillism technique was a hazy merging of line, the antithesis of the plastic-linear. This does not imply that the subject was indistinguishable, for impressionistic representation was pictorial and recognizably so. It simply means that the subject, composition, and detail were of secondary importance, being superceded in consequence by "planar, uncertain color oscillations with no pretense at corporeal roundness".[94] The subjects lack clarity of outline due to the change of emphasis to the sensuous stimuli of color and light.

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94. Lang, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 1016.

In the preceding chapter we referred to the "relative coloring" of a monochrome and the impression of a tinge which the observer can receive from it. With the impressionists color and light become such an important aspect to its realization that Lang remarks, "even the shadow is colored".[95] As in the monochrome, the impressionist's predilection for color can be restricted somewhat in the manner of Whistler's "colorless" grey. The effect depends on the skill of the artist in manipulating the light effects and transitional shades.[96]

The ethereal haziness of the impressionist painters was the logical outgrowth of his new emphasis on color. The primary objective of their art was to intimate rather than depict, and this technique fitted their purposes admirably. Caffin, in his book the Story of French Painting, explains it as "the principle of viewing the subject... in its 'milieu'".[97] The analogies he draws later on will, perhaps, serve to clarify this objective:

> "Compare, for example, Kipling's method of creating a vivid impression in coöperation with the reader's imagination and that of George Eliot who relies on detailed statement; or Miss Ruth Denis's dances with those of Miss Isadora Duncan. While the former depends largely upon elaborate stage effects

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95. Ibid., p. 1016.
96. Ibid., p. 1016.
97. Caffin, op.cit. p. 171.

> and fascinates her audience by the structural beauty of her form and the detailed figures of the dance, the other eliminates as far as possible from our conciousness the perception of concrete form and figures, creating around herself an aura of suggestion so that the feeling or spirit of the dance rather than the fact of it which is rendered."[98]

This excerpt might mislead the reader into believing that the impressionist painters were perpetuating and encouraging an art which was basically formless, an unjustified accusation frequently leveled at impressionistic composers. "Impressionism is not formless in the sense of having no stylistic logic", says Lang. "It is rather beyond both form and formlessness; it is free of 'form', its particular beauty lying in its ability to enhance the effect of that which remains when the intellectual associations are suspended; and since the criterion of style is impressionability and harmony of sensory perception, it possesses a style of the most refined quality."[99]

The symbolist poetry of this same period was of equal consequence in its influence on the experimenting impressionist composers. Like its daubing counter-

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98. Ibid., p.171 and 172
99. Lang. op.cit., p. 1016

part it had the impelling influence of a 'Delacroix' from this same period. The man who has been given credit for indirectly instigating the poetry of the Verlaines, Mallarmés, T. S. Elliots and Gertrude Steins was the American "terrorist" poet and short story writer, Edgar Allan Poe. The latter, together with Shakespeare, had been widely read on the continent, particularly in France, for some time. His position was unique in that he had not only created a different literary aesthetic but had also explained and discussed his ideas in a series of important essays. French poets of the late Nineteenth Century seized upon this unusual literary art like starving men snatching at a crust of bread. As a result the symbolist poetry came into existence which was to hold so great a fascination for their musical colleagues.

What had Poe, a poet of the romantic period, accomplished to merit such lavish attention? Being a romantic and an able imaginative artist, he merely cultivated certain aspects of it and thus transformed the whole into something unusual and different. By careful selection of just the proper words he has created poetry and prose of "effects." "I know,"

we find Poe writing, "that indefiniteness is an element of the true music (of poetry)-I mean of the true musical expression...a suggestive indefiniteness of vague and therefore of spiritual effect."[100] According to Wilson, this effect of indefinitness

> "was produced not merely by the confusion I have mentioned between the imaginary world and the real; but also by means of further confusion between the perceptions of the different senses...And we find Poe, in one of his poems hearing the approach of the darkness, or writing such a description as the following sensations which follow death: 'night arrived; and with its shadows a heavy discomfort. It oppressed my limbs with the oppression of some dull weight, and was palpable. There was also a moaning sound, not unlike the distant reverberation of surf, but more continuous, which, beginning with the first twilight, had grown in strength with the darkness. Suddenly lights were brought into the room...and issuing from the flame of each lamp there flowed unbrokenly into my ears a strain of melodious monotone!"[101]

Prose, playing on the super-rational sensations of the reader, was the inspiring influence of the symbolists as was the homophonous use of alliteration in poetry, such as Annabel Lee, Ulalume, and the "nonsense syllables" of The Bells. All devices such as these were employed with the end in view of creating an effect and a mood. As in impressionistic painting, symbolism

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100. Wilson, Edmund, Axel's Castle, New York, London, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940, p. 12.
101. Ibid., p. 13.

was concerned with color; with the latter, however, sonorous words were substituted for it in creating musical pictorial moods.[102]

What, then, were the chief aims of the symbolists? Wilson summarizes their primary objective as an attempt "to approximate the indefiniteness of music."[103] "They did not seek in their language the intellectual and objective function of words," writes Lang; "they sought their sensuous, musical, and plastic functions".[104] This concept is expanded further by Wilson:

> "I have called attention in speaking of Poe, to the confusion between the perceptions of the different senses, and to the attempt to make the effects of poetry approximate to those of music. And I should add, in this latter connection, that the influence on Symbolist poetry of Wagner was as important as that of any poet: at the time when Romantic music had come closest to literature, literature was attracted toward music. I have also spoken, in connection with Gerard de Nerval, of the confusion between the imaginary and the real, between our sensations and fancies, on the one hand, and what we actually do and see, on the other. It was the tendency of Symbolism-that second swing of the pendulum away from a mechanistic view of nature and from a social conception of man—to make poetry even more a matter of the sensations and emotions of the individual than had been the case with Romanticism; Symbolism, indeed, sometimes had the result of making poetry so much a private concern of the poet's that it turned out to be incommunicable to the reader."[105]

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102. Lang, <u>op.cit</u>., 1017.
103. Wilson, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 12.
104. Lang, <u>op.cit</u>., 1021.
105. Wilson, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 19 and 20.

That the esoteric character of much of the symbolist poetry renders it unintelligible to the average reader seemed of little consequence to these self-centered artists. Their chief concern was to write poetry of a nature that intimated rather than stated explicitly. To them explanation in an expository manner lacked artistic imagination. Mallarmé felt very keenly the lack of artistry in realism when he wrote:

> "The Parnassians, for their part take the thing just as it is and put it before us - and consequently they are deficient in mystery: they deprive the mind of the delicious joy of believing that it is creating. To name an object is to do away with three quarters of the enjoyment of the poem which is derived from the satisfaction of guessing little by little; to suggest it, to evoke it- that is what charms the imagination."[106]

Thus with Poe as a point of departure, using the sonorous colors of certain words, exciting the emotion with others, and throughout only intimating, never becoming specific, the symbolist movement gained momentum and popularity. The breadth of its sphere of influence was of a significant enough scope to instigate the formation of a comparable coterie in the field of music. whose creative philosophy was derived from that of the symbolists and hence bore a strong affinity to it.

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106. Ibid., p. 20.

Chapter VII

IMPRESSIONISM IN MUSIC

In the last chapter we discussed the aesthetic principles of impressionistic painting and symbolistic literature, movements which were shown to bear striking similarities with each other in many respects. Both began as a reaction to realism, substituting for the latter a restrained subjectivism which accounted for its subtlety. The effort was made to obscure lines that reflected traditional formalism, emphasizing instead a highly imaginative form of art concerned with effects and moods achieved through a marked favoritism for color. The resultant artistry, created through adherence to these principles, was meant to intimate and subtly suggest, a quality which was conspicuously absent in much of the contemporary art of the period. It was these same principles which enchanted and obsessed Debussy, Delius, Schmitt, Loeffler and others generally accepted as belonging to the impressionist entourage.

The close association between the arts in dealing with the impressionistic style is by no means an original or recent discovery. Lang, in his chapter on impressionism, deals at great length with these movements in order that an understanding might be gained of its musical elements. This

new musical style, he claims, "evolved from the disintegrating post-romantic and national schools, seized upon certain elements (of)...music...and reacted sympathetically to influences emanating from contemporary poetry and painting."[107] Most authorities on the subject admit the affinity of music to the other arts in this instance. The whole matter is summarized thus when, in speaking of the foremost exponent of this kind of music, Myers wrote:

> "...He (Debussy) was but reflecting the analogous importance which the painters of the impressionistic school...attached to light as an essential, integral part in their pictures. A similar preoccupation with isolated words, chosen for their 'pictorial' or 'musical' value, could be observed in the work of the so-called symbolist poets."[108]

In addition to the common predilection for the sensuous effect of color, many other similarities can be shown. Impressionistic music first began, like its sister arts, as a reaction to realism. The heavy Teutonic elements in the music of Wagner and Strauss compelled musicians, who were anxious to escape this influence, to concern themselves with a kind of music which was antithetic to that of those German composers who interested themselves in realistic depiction. The negation of these elements was fortunate for this phase of music; the Germanic penchant for formalism

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107. Lang, op.cit., p. 1018.
108. Myers, Rollo H., Music in the Modern World, London, Edward Arnold and Co., 1939, p. 158.

and weighty "beer-sodden" harmonies would have stifled the aspirations of those who were anxious to pursue the aesthetic doctrines of the impressionist poets and painters. An analogy also exists between music and the poetry-painting art-sphere in the treatment of certain linear aspects. In the preceding chapter we discussed the artist's lack of concern with distinct outline, preferring to ignore it and thus not detract from the importance of the central element. Melody in music is handled similarly by avoiding the bald outline and obscuring that which should play a subservient role to the central aim of the work.[109] That central aim or primary function was to suggest, to imply, to intimate, but never to state definitely. Impressionism, as such, is a form of program music, differing from other phases of it through the fundamental regard for the subtle hint in preference to the bold declamation. Lang calls it "poetry translated into music, the 'landscape poetry' of French literature and painting".[110] It must be understood that such an expression is far removed from the more common type of program or descriptive music. Lang feels that the basic ingredients of the latter applied to impressionism

> "would mean the negation of the spirit of impressionism for the more extramusical moments there are in a composition, following a prearranged plan, the more characteristic episodes it has, which

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109. Mason, <u>Contemporary Composers</u>, op.cit., p. 139.
110. Lang, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 1018.

> later induce definite associations, to the detriment of mood and atmosphere."[111]

To hinder the expression of mood and atmosphere that is meant to suggest the scene would serve to crucify the composition as a work of art, since such expression is a vital part in impressionistic poetry, painting, and music.

Thus, as in the graphic arts, impressionistic music may be characterized through its neglect of elements heretofore considered constructive. Instrumental color, harmonique piquancy, undulating rhythms and swinging repetitions of phrases become prominent features in the new music.[112]

It has been mentioned previously that impressionism is considered a subtle, refined phase of program or descriptive music. Hence, the preoccupation with mood and atmosphere is not merely enjoyed as an end in itself but as a means to suggest the program. The whole aim in working with these emotional elements is to invoke a response in the listener that would correlate with the reactions the composer experienced on first coming in contact with his "program". These emotional responses are infused into the music and recreated at each subsequent performance. Thus it does seem illogical that the impressionists should lean heavily on mood and atmosphere to aid in evoking the

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111. Ibid., p. 1018.
112. Ibid., p. 1018.

emotions called to mind through association.[113] However, these recreated emotions are more than mere sensations. Speaking of Debussy in this respect, Oscar Thompson feels that "in transmitting nature into harmony, he (Debussy) has made sonorous his own emotions."[114] Mason expands on the impressionist's art when in writing of Debussy he says:

> "The Frenchman's imagination...is primarily literary, dramatic, pictorial. He is led... to a keenly sympathetic realization of the mood suggested by the program, and to the most subtle musical evocation of it by appropriate means, chiefly sensuous. He is thus, literally, a painter of 'mood pictures'".[115]

Thus we see that the effort was made to reproduce a musical description of a program by means of its mood and atmosphere. These in turn were meant to arouse certain emotions which would instill or suggest a hazy outline of the program. And, after all, is not this reliance on emotional stimulation legitimate in art? Was not Beethoven, in his Pastoral Symphony, attempting to achieve this

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113. It would be well to remind the reader at this point of the importance placed on the necessary coöperation between the listener and the composer, that the latter may achieve his end. This implies the freedom of an unrestricted imagination that takes delight in recreating the subtle elements of the art into a hazy, ethereal impression of the essential features of the program. The mood of a musical section should call not on the memory but on a faculty of sensory impressionability that can only be supplied by each individual listener.
114. Thompson, Oscar, Debussy, Man and Artist, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1937, p. 23.
115. Mason, Contemporary Composers, op.cit., p. 141.

very thing?

> "Any music, which is worth the name...expresses something, and that something is mainly composed of emotion. Every mental process, i.e. all experiences, involve emotion in some degree. We feel somehow about everything, but it is only when the emotion (which gives value to the experience) is a prominent part of the experience that it is appropriate for artistic treatment,. Thus when you look upon a rural scene you feel somehow about it, and if strongly moved by it, you could express your feelings in a pastoral symphony which would then be the expression of a "feeling of the country-side" emotion. One way of inducing this country-side emotion in your audience is to reproduce the sounds of the country. There are others. It is possible... as did Delius...to write Nature music which is not imitative but which does produce emotions similar to those which you experience when you contemplate Nature.... When a composer does this (the former) he is writing the cruder kind of programme music.[116]

Howes,has, in a paragraph, summarized the importance and legitimacy of the Beethoven programmatic aesthetic principle. Thus the impressionist, treading in his footsteps, adopted the technique of first establishing a musical mood which evokes varying emotions in the mind of the sensitive, sympathetic listener and which in turn suggests to him the program as interpreted or seen through the eyes of the composer. The impression left is meant to be indefinite and vague so as not to destroy the privilege of the mind to imagine and create. Whatever suggestion in the music is made from the program is done through recreated emotion,

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116. Howes, Frank, The Borderland of Music and Psychology, New York, Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 44.

for this is the only way music can "suggest".

The immediate aim of an impressionistic composer is to give his music a mood or an atmosphere. In this, as with the poets and painters, color became the principle ingredient. In music this element assumed two forms: orchestral and harmonic. In the former the trend was away from the massive and grandiose orchestras of the German romantics. The emphasis was placed upon the softer, haunting, muted sonorities achieved through divisi, muted strings, often in their highest register, low-register woodwinds, muted brasses, harp, celeste, tam-tam, and muffled percussion.[117] The whole is handled with the utmost artistic discretion and delicacy to achieve the intimate effect of an orchestration "shimmering in a thousand colors, achieving a remarkable crescendo of sensuous effects by the subtlest means, without having recourse to violent colors, harmonies or dynamics."[118] The piano, largely through the expanded technical concepts attributable in many ways to Chopin, became a favorite "color" instrument. A new touch was required which would achieve the effect of a strange, soft, almost muted phosphorescent atmosphere. Besides its instrumental timbre, the piano was

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117. Lang op.cit., p. 1019.
118. Ibid., p. 1019.

capable of harmonic coloring which further aided in raising it to a popular position as an impressionistic instrument.

The second medium for enhancing the effect of color, which often becomes synonymous and inseparable from instrumental tinting, is harmony. Of this Lang writes:

> "The coloristic-pictorial element dominates even the harmonic structure, for the phenomenon of merging tones is superimposed on the principles of tonal-chordal architecture, which again results in a changed role for the dissonance, whose use and desirability now depend entirely on its value as a color agent."[119]

One cannot help but notice the similarity between Chopin's use of dissonance and that of later impressionists. Mason expands on its use further:

> "The use of dissonance for the sake of color enrichment is a familiar proceeding in modern music, especially in that of impressionistic type...To a more or less clearly defined harmonic nucleus are added softer tones, clashing with it, and thus forming about an aura or atmosphere elsewhere compared to the mist which softens outlines of the landscape."[120]

Here we have the whole harmonic technique of the impressionists summarized in the proverbial "nutshell". Many attempts have been made to analyze the way in which harmony is used by various schools, but in the main they are quite unsatisfactory. Hull, for example, in a chapter entitled "Impressionistic Methods" has tried to put his

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119. Ibid., p. 1018.
120. Mason, Contemporary Composers, op. cit., p. 69.

finger on the exact harmonic principles which were instrumental in obtaining the effects we have come to associate with impressionistic composers. At the outset of the chapter he openly admits the enigma which faces such delineation when he says: "It is difficult--indeed, it seems almost impossible--to draw a line between impressionistic things and the more formally constructed music."[121] A summary of the chapter reveals a propensity among impressionists, according to Hull for the following devices:

1. consecutive fifths
2. common chords in similar motion
3. chords of the seventh and ninth
4. chords built by fourths and fifths
5. other discords

Strikingly conspicuous because of its absence is the augmented chord and its derivatives, also the whole-tone scale, frequently considered an impressionistic device. However, this is not our objective in formulating this summary. It is meant to illustrate how impossible it is to ascribe a particular harmonic idiosyncrasy to one group of composers. This shows only too well that such generalizations are worthless inasmuch as they are devices used by almost every Twentieth Century composer. The only substitute in this case for an actual study of the music itself (and should there be a substitute?) is the definition given by Mason

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121. Hull, op.cit.,p. 115.

and Lang when they state that harmonic color results from the treatment of dissonance. It is impossible to settle upon the exact elements which furnish the ingredients for color in music as was shown in chapter V. That color is important to the impressionist composer is generally agreed upon. How a composer arrives at an evocation of it may vary greatly as already illustrated in the example from Bach and Schubert in the Fifth chapter. Again this question is a subjective one and must devolve upon the individual to define to himself what is and what is not color. However, it is generally agreed that the characteristic sound of impressionistic music, whether one calls it color or not, is gained through the diversified and heterogeneous application of dissonance.

We stated before that impressionism was a negation of many of the elements of music hitherto considered constructive. In order to suggest musically a subtle program, the impressionist could not be strait-jacketed with purely formal considerations or polyphony in the traditional sense. "These are alien to the type of art, and are wisely avoided."[122] However, much unjustified criticizm has been leveled at the impressionists for avoiding these elements in their traditional implication.

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122. Mason, Contemporary Composers, op.cit., p. 139.

That the music we know as impressionistic would not have existed in its present form had it been subjected to these restricting elements seems of small consequence to opponents of this art. There is form and there is polyphony in this music, it just is not the type with which the average theoretician is familiar or which he will accept. Form is merely a synonym for structural unity and certainly exists in other art works besides those created in the classic tradition. Of this Lang comments:

> "The unifying effect is no longer achieved through grouping and building, but through the similarity of the sections, their character and mood. Thus it is not the order, but the mood of the particular sections which achieves 'form'".[123]

Similarly, there is a type of counterpoint which is capable of a vertical analysis, but which is still polyphonic. If we may quote once again from Lang, the reason and the injustice of some of impressionism's criticism in this regard will become apparent.

> "...the denunciators of a new art or style see only that which this new art has dethroned, heretofore revered and held inviolate. They never realize that the abandonment of the means of expression, forms and devices which are the property of a particular style is a necessity for a new style if it hopes to express the spirit of its own era; that this turning away from the traditional is a prime requisite for an art eager to give something positively new and

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123. Lang, op.cit., p. 1018.

> vital that the biased critic does not see. Thus when the painters and musicians assert that they did not intend to draw unequivocal contours and profiled melodies, that their aim was a dissolution in color, that they wanted to create aesthetic enjoyment through color rather than through design, they have every artistic and moral right to do so, and it is totally irrelevant whether their creations fit the criteria of a previous artistic code."[124]

Let us now concern ourselves with a summary of the chapter thus far so that criteria for judging authentic impressionistic music may be established. Two essential elements must enter into a work under this classification. First, there must be a program or a descriptive title of some kind. With a title in mind the composer must surround his music with a mood or an atmosphere that will evoke emotions in the listener similar to those he himself experienced. These emotions, in turn, are meant to arouse in the mind an actual image of the program or descriptive scene being thus suggested. The second element that is required is a harmonic idiom which is similar to the one discussed above; one which treats dissonance not as an end in itself but uses it to obscure the basic harmonies with the close intervals of the higher harmonics of the overtone series. Such harmony is exemplified in the music of Debussy, Schmitt, Loeffler, Ravel, Delius, Cyril Scott, and many others including MacDowell. This last requirement is most difficult to determine because

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124. Lang, op.cit., p. 1020.

it can often be a matter of opinion whether a harmonic-contrapuntal idiom is of this type. Many compositions satisfy one or the other requirement but not both. For example, returning once again to the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven, we have a program developed in a true impresionistic sense. But what idiom does Beethoven use? One that found expression in a style which was so natural to him and other composers of his age. Can one by any stretch of the imagination claim his style to be similar to the one used in the Afternoon of a Faun? The answer is obvious. Arnold Schönberg in his second quartet has treated his program in the manner of an impressionist, but again we could not call his contrapuntal dissonances akin to those of Debussy and his contemporaries. Works such as these are impressionistic only in their handling of the program; media of expression are simply not those of the composer bent on an intimate, suggestive portrayal. In some cases the converse of the two criteria is found to exist wherein an impressionistic harmonic idiom is used but without a program. Again we do not have truly impressionistic music since the composer has not given an "impression" of anything. Debussy's String Quartet is an example wherein the tools of his art were adapted to an absolute instrumental form. Since no program exists and the listener

has none to follow, he must appreciate the music for its abstract and strictly musical qualities alone. Thus we see that in order to have a truly impressionistic result we must have these two elements present in the music: a program and a typical harmonic idiom. This does not, by any means, stand as a criticism of music which does not concern itself with these aesthetics and media; it is merely a defense against those works which are labeled as impressionistic, but which do not fall under this designation.

It is not surprising that evidences of impressionism existed long before the movement gained full momentum. In these instances the music was not inspired by the poets and painters of the late Nineteenth Century, but more likely evolved from a careful consideration and moulding of certain elements of the romantic heritage. Despite this, the results are definitely impressionistic and foreshadow later compositions of this genus. These early outcroppings are not restricted to any one composer or national school, but are scattered in a heterogeneous fashion among widely diversified composers. One of the best and earliest examples of this tendency is evidenced in several compositions by Robert Schumann (1810-1856): <u>The Prophetic Bird</u> for piano, and the <u>Beautiful Month of May</u>, written for voice and piano. A short example of the former is quoted

below in which are found manifestations of the two criteria established earlier in this chapter as prerequisites for true impressionistic music.[125]

Notice first how he handles the subject, not as a realistic portrayal of a bird as Beethoven had done in the Pastoral symphony, but through the creation of a mood or atmosphere which suggests the erratic flight of a bird which is largely a figment of the imagination. The atmosphere which pervades this little piece is created through both the use of the subtle dissonances (not typical of Schumann's style)

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125. Schumann, Robert, "The Prophetic Bird", Complete Works for Piano Solo, Edited by Clara Schumann, Scarsdale, New York, Edwin F. Kalmus, n.d., Book V, p. 126.

and a neurotic, disjunct rhythmic structure. Like the true impressionist, he only hints at his subject. Only in the middle section of this three-part form does he resort to an expository style. MacDowell seemed conscious of Schumann's innate striving for a highly poetic expression evidenced in this composition and in others. In a lecture given at Columbia University, MacDowell said of the latter's music:

> "....it represents the rhapsodical reverie of an inspired poet to whom no imaginative vagary seems strange or alien, and who has the faculty of relating his visions, never attempting to give them coherence, and unaware of their character until perhaps when, awakened from his dream, he naïvely wonders what they may have meant."[126]

Johannes Brahms, in several compositions, reveals occasional gropings toward the impressionist technique. Even these do not continue beyond a few measures. In a song like The Skylark, for example, only the piano introduction and interlude suggest the atmosphere surrounding his literary subject. An excerpt from this song follows:[127]

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126. Gilman, Lawrence, Edward MacDowell, A Study, New York, John Lane Co., 1908, p. 78.
127. Brahms, Johannes, 40 Songs of Johannes Brahms, "The Skylark", op. 70 #2, Edited by James Huneker, the Musicians Library, Boston, Oliver Ditson Co., 1903, p. 80.

Notice the similarity of technique between this and the later programmatic delineation of the impressionist. Similar to Schumann, Brahms has used dissonance with an ethereal touch to suggest the title. Rhythmically we have an undulating effect which adds to the over-all mood. The most striking facet of these four bars reveals to us a composer who was not striving for a realistic effect, but one who was interested only in establishing a certain atmospheric aura around his program.

It would be virtually impossible to cite examples of all pre-impressionistic leanings due to the infrequency of occurrence, for the bulk of material that has been written, coupled with the breadth of the area, would require exhaustive investigations. In some remarkable instances such as that of Ernest Fanelli (1860-1887), who is

reported to have anticipated Debussy in many stylistic characteristics,[128] the music is not available for study. We must accept Hill's estimate of him that he was an important precursor in the impressionistic movement. However, the examples already quoted should serve to demonstrate that this type of music did exist to a very limited extent before the actual movement, later called impressionism, began in earnest.

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128. Hill, op.cit., p. 107.

Chapter VIII

THE CULMINATION OF IMPRESSIONISM IN MUSIC

In the final quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the United States, following its unification politically, if not spiritually, became increasingly conscious of the cultural heritage of the old world. This awareness was effected in several ways and in many directions. The first American to become associated with the leading European musicians of the day was William Mason (1829-1908) who, upon his return to the United States continued his father's missionary work in the field of music. This influence, coupled with the expanding interest in learned musicological societies and the rapidly multiplying symphony orchestras, interested many Americans in music. The result was an adoption of music as a profession for which many students went abroad to acquire a background. The almost unanimous choice for such study was in Germany where Leipzig, Weimar, and Dresden were regarded as the musical centers of the world. Of the many who went abroad to study, John Knowles Paine, George Chadwick,

Arthur Foote, Horatio Parker, and Edward MacDowell[129] were the most representative. Of these the last two were the "Rheinbergers, Faurés, or Parrys of America; that is, they ranked with the eminent men of their period. They were no giants - even the old musical nations, Germany, France, and Italy had them but singly - yet they were fully as representative of the culture of their homeland as were the others...and bear comparison with the best of them."[130] This sentiment was echoed by Howard when he wrote:

> "MacDowell need never be put forward with the chauvinism he hated so heartily himself. He is probably the first of our creative musicians for whom we need make no allowances for lack of early training. None of his limitations were caused by his being an American. Whether he shall eventually be judged great or small, he may be considered simply as a composer, without our being kind to him because he was our countryman. And after we have put him under the magnifying glass, stripped him of the idealization that has been wrapped about him by admirers more zealous than wise, he will emerge with several of his banners still flying."[131]

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129. This thesis will concern itself with a biographical account of MacDowell's life only in so far as it bears a direct effect on the music itself. A complete biography can be found in:
    (a) Gilman, Lawrence, Edward MacDowell, a Study, New York, John Lane Co., 1908.
    (b) Porte, John F., Edward MacDowell - A Great American Tone Poet, His Life and Music, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1922.
130. Lang, op.cit., p. 937.
131. Howard, John Tasker, Our American Music, New York, Thomas Crowell Company, 1930, p. 380.

With the lapse of almost a half century since MacDowell's death, a more rational perspective of his position as a composer can be undertaken, although, as Lang said, he was not a musical giant, he was a genius in handling sounds. It was his lack of craftmanship which keeps him from being considered really great. However, his importance as a musical figure is not to be thrust aside lightly. He was the herald of a "new growing civilization, springing from a musical soil hardly tilled, yet equaling the feats of those who had behind them the unbroken past of centuries of great music."[132] Besides his great influence on America's rapidly expanding interest in cultural pursuits, his music itself is worthy of serious study especially in conjunction with this dissertation.

The position which Edward MacDowell (1864-1908) occupies in relation to the impressionist movement, as characterized by individual composers of the early Twentieth Century in France, England, and, to some extent, the United States, is not difficult to ascertain if certain salient facts are kept in mind. First, from the standpoint of chronology, he was a contemporary of Debussy, although the latter outlived MacDowell by some ten years. Secondly, MacDowell's compositional activity ended for all practical purposes before 1902, the last publication date of his music

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132. Lang, op.cit., p. 938.

before his death, a period in which impressionism as an artistic movement was just beginning to gain momentum. In the third place, MacDowell was primarily and predominantly a product of the late German romantic schools who were treading the traditional paths discovered by Wagner (died 1883), Brahms (died 1897), Liszt (died 1886), and many lesser composers such as MacDowell's composition teacher, Joachim Raff. All of these musical giants were alive and active while MacDowell was still a student. Despite the few years spent at the Paris Conservatory, little or no French influence is present in his music; by far the greatest part of it reflects a decided preference for the German romanticism of Liszt and Raff. Finally, it must be remembered that MacDowell's talents were not restricted to music; he was also an artist and a poet of considerable stature. This will explain, in part, his interest in the field of literature and his penchant for program or descriptive music of all kinds. By combining these four influences we see the composite of a man who wrote at a time when the ink of the impressionistic masterpieces was not yet dry on the page and who, through German tutelage, was thus removed from the influence of the symbolist poets and impressionist painters, yet was compelled by an inner motivation to write music that would approximate their aesthetic ideals. That MacDowell was able to arrive at a type of impressionism which emerged from the romantic

program music exemplified in the works of Wagner, Strauss, and Liszt, was much to his credit as a persevering composer and artist. However, the name of MacDowell should not be associated with impressionism alone, for his "sorties" into this territory were relatively infrequent and comprise only an infinitestimal part of his output. The greater portion of his works represent the late Nineteenth Century romantic traditions. His piano concertos and sonatas, as well as his songs are exclusively representative of this style. Significantly enough, impressionistic leanings are evident only in five of his sixty-four opus numbers, all of which were written for piano:

1. Four Little Poems, op. 32, 1894, revised by the composer in 1906;
2. Woodland Sketches, op. 51, 1896;
3. Sea Pieces, op. 55, 1898;
4. Fireside Tales, op. 61, 1902;
5. New England Idyls, op. 62, 1902.

Even in these compositions we have evidences of the romantic period, as the over-sentimental "To a Wild Rose" from the Woodland Sketches will attest. However, impressionistic tendencies are also present which will be unearthed and discussed at a later point in this chapter.

One of the most outstanding and resilient features of MacDowell's music is its individuality. He developed a style which bears a characteristic flavor all his own.

> "Hearing certain melodic turns, certain harmonic formations, you recognize them at once as belonging to MacDowell, and to none other. This

> marked individuality of speech, apparent from the first, became constantly more salient and more vivid, and in the music which he gave forth at the height of his creative activity... is unmistakable and beyond dispute."[133]

Either as a result of his efforts to create music which would stand apart from the general or universal musical praxis, or because of a natural reaction to the unrestrained emotionalism of the romantic period, severe indictments have been leveled against his art. These indictments seem justified when they pertain to the sentimentality in his music. Certain idolatrous worshipers of MacDowell were blind to the saccharine elements which his music contained. As a result, reactions such as these are much in evidence in the publications of that period:

> "As a tone poet MacDowell has none of the sensuous emotionalism that wins popularity in the drawing room and at the musical recitals of popular pianists. He is never sentimental and his strength and passion is always finely controlled, never feverish."[134]

It seems inconceivable that an objective appraisal of his music would fail to reveal MacDowell's over-emotionalism. From the Woodland Sketches, such a piece as "To a Wild Rose", "An Old Love Story", "By Smouldering Embers" from the Fireside Tales as well as "An Old Garden", "Midsummer", "With Sweet Lavender", and several others of the New England Idyls opus literally "drip" sentiment. The titles themselves have

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133. Gilman, op.cit., p. 172.
134. Porte, op.cit., p. 17.

a "honied" flavor from which MacDowell was only partially able to escape.

> "Were it not for MacDowell's Celtic descent, one might almost be tempted to attribute this group-wide weakness for the odors of sanctity to a racial strain, so many instances arising in which Saxondom and snobbery...seem almost synonymous... In music, this weakness took the form of sentimentality."[135]

MacDowell's treatment of form has also been subject to considerable criticism and not without some justification. Formal considerations had received a great deal of thought both in his music and his writings. However, he seemed unsure of himself as to how the problem should be approached. The following excerpt from one of his Columbia University lectures will explain:

> "If by the word 'form' our purists meant the most poignant expression of poetic thought in music, if they meant by this term the art of arranging musical sounds so that they constituted the most telling presentation of musical idea, I should have nothing to say. But as it is, the word in almost its invariable use by theorists stands for what are called 'stoutly-built periods', 'subsidiary themes' and the like, a happy combination of which in certain prescribed keys is supposed to constitute good form. Such a principle, inherited from the necessities and fashions of the dance, and changing from time to time is surely not worthy of the strange worship it has received....In our modern days we too often, Procrustes-like, make our ideas to fit the forms. We put our guest, the poetic thought, that comes to us like a homing bird from out of the mystery of

135. Rosenfeld, Paul, <u>An Hour with American Music</u>, New York, J.B. Lippincott and Company, n.d. p. 379.

> the blue sky - we put this confiding stranger straightway into that iron bed; the 'sonata-form' - or perhaps even the 'third-rondo form'; for we have quite an assortment; and should the idea survive, and grow, and become too large for the bed, and if we have grown to love it too much to cut off its feet and thus make it fit (as did that old robber of Attica), why then we run the risk of having some wiseacre say, as is said of Chopin: 'Yes - but he is weak in sonata-form!... Form should be nothing more than a synonym for <u>coherence</u>. No idea, whether great or small, can find utterance without form; but that form will be inherent in the idea, and there will be as many forms as there are adequately expressed ideas in the world."[136]

Although he feels that the musical idea should dictate the form, one somehow gets the impression that he is disturbed by the formal restrictions of the "Wiseacre" theorists. It is amazing that MacDowell should be rebelling against a type of "scholarship" from which we haven't fully escaped even to this day. There are seemingly many "scholars" who place great credence in the formalistic studies as devised by such men as Percy Goetschius, Stewart MacPherson, and Howard Murphy. As the above quotation illustrates so graphically, MacDowell was bitterly opposed to that which naturally stands in direct opposition to the freer technique of an impressionist, and, had he lived longer he perhaps might have been instrumental in deterring the subsequent formal analysis which unfortunately is still

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136. Gilman, <u>op.cit</u>., pp. 80 and 81.

in vogue. Assuming that he would attempt to apply his ideas relative to the subservient position of form, an examination of the music should then reveal a widely divergent idiomorphic structural plan. However, only the direct opposite is to be found. Formally, MacDowell was a traditionalist and adhered closely to the accepted skeletal outlines. As a result his output was characterized by sonatas (4), concertos (2), songs, and many smaller forms, particularly for piano which followed the traditional plan. The sonatas were organized in the customary sequence of sections and movements, an attempt that, more often than not, ended in disunity. Of the "First Sonata" subtitled the Tragica, MacDowell's biographer, Porte, wrote:

> "The great demerit of the sonata, however, is its lack of cohesive thought. As a whole it suggests the spectacle of a highly gifted poet, full of emotional ardour and desire for self expression, but lacking the requisite skill to bind long continued efforts into a cohesive whole; and who makes the mistake of trying to cramp his undoubtedly beautiful ideas by compressing them into a set form... He tries to write in the traditional form, and only succeeds in drawing the student's attention to the futility of it."[137]

Nor was he an iconoclast in handling the smaller forms; they are mostly clearly defined binary or ternary structures, with an occasional simple variation of the rondo form making its appearance. It seems amazingly inconsistent that a man who objected so strongly to putting "the

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137. Porte, op. cit., p. 90.

poetic thought..into an iron bed" should choose to do just that to his own musical ideas. Only the composer can know if his ideas control the form or vice versa. In MacDowell's case, however, we cannot escape the suspicion that form was the controlling influence in the writing of his smaller pieces. One thing is certain, like Grieg he was at home in dealing with more diminutive forms.[138] These do not lack coherence as do his larger works. Their formal logic stamps them as MacDowell's greatest achievement.

This view directly concerns itself with the topic of our thesis - impressionism; for in several of these select musical delicacies we find evidences of the most subtle kinds of programmatic suggestion. His impressionism, though motivated by different influences from those of the French school, bears a striking resemblance to the type of composition written by his foreign contemporaries who were engrossed in the movement proper. This similarity is evident not only in the music itself but in the close affinity of their aesthetic ideals. All that differed was the source of inspiration. With the French impressionists this was inspired by the poets and painters of the day, while MacDowell's impressionism was an outgrowth of the German romantic school.

Fortunately, through his lectures at Columbia

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138. Howard, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 38.

University,[139] MacDowell left to us a great many of his musical philosophies which makes the task of divulging them relatively simple. These lectures reveal MacDowell as primarily a romanticist in the true Lisztian tradition; but more than that, they show his distaste for the obvious and his love for the more subtle expression. The reader will recall the quotation from MacDowell used in the chapter on the classicists concerning the realistic "bird calls" found in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. This is typical of MacDowell's disdain for the obvious. His main interest, and the one of which he writes most fondly, is music that "suggests". References to this can be found throughout his Critical Essays. His position in relation to the musical world is summarized by Barnes in this way: "He (MacDowell) was a romanticist and much of his music was programmatic, not uncompromisingly so but suggestively."[140] MacDowell felt that music could suggest forcibly certain things and ideas.

> "Though he (MacDowell) conceives the prime mission of music to be interpretive, he insists no less emphatically that in its function as an expressional instrument, it shall concern itself with essences and impressions, and not at all with transcriptions."[141]

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139. MacDowell, Edward, Critical and Historical Essays, delivered at Columbia University, Edited by W.F. Baltzell, Boston, New York, Arthur P. Schmidt, 1912.
140. Barnes, Edwin N.C., New Immortals? Washington,D.C., Music Education Publications, 1940, p. 22.
141. Gilman, op.cit., p. 100.

The type of suggestion just referred to could be achieved, according to MacDowell, in four ways:

1. Suggestion brought about by pattern;
2. Suggestion conveyed by means of pitch;
3. Suggestion offered by movement;
4. Suggestion conveyed by means of tone-tint, the blending of timbre and pitch.[142]

The end result of such devices is to suggest in the mind of the listener a hazy, impressionistic image of the program. Or to put the matter in MacDowell's own words:

> "As we know, music is a language which may delineate actual occurrences by means of onomatopoetic sounds. By the use of more or less suggestive sounds, it may bring before our minds a quasi-visual image of things which we more or less definitely feel."[143]

Thus we see that all of MacDowell's efforts were directed toward creating music that would suggest rather than expostulate. He was concerned primarily with more subtle utterances and had little patience with realism in any form. In this respect, and consistent with all his aesthetic theories, he bore a striking affinity with the French impressionists. An examination of his music will show to what extent this parallel was carried out.

It is in his music itself that MacDowell reveals himself as only an incidental impressionist.

> "His sonatas, the *Tragica*, the *Eroica*, the *Norse*, and the *Keltic* have literary programmes and are

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142. MacDowell, *op.cit*., p. 270.
143. *Ibid*., p. 254.

> written in a free romantic form in which he has used theme transformations."[144]

An absence of the impressionistic element is typical of his larger forms. Even the songs must be considered a product of the romantic age. Debussy, in his songs, rises to his greatest impressionistic heights. This seems logical if we consider the music as an adjunct to the text, the former suggesting the more delicate, pastel atmospheres and moods which cannot be expressed in words. MacDowell's conservatism and lack of imagination is due to a very traditional, though valid, concept of the song's purpose.

> "The accompaniment should be merely a background for the words. Harmony is a frightful den for the small composer to get into - it leads him into frightful nonsense. Too often the accompaniment of a song becomes a piano fantasie with no resemblance to the melody. Colour and harmony under such conditions mislead the composer; he uses it instead of the line which he at the moment is setting, and obscures the central point, the words, by richness of tissue and overdressing."[145]

With this idea in mind, it is small wonder then, that his songs in no way reflect the impressionistic influence; for the piano, which alone could express it, is thrust into the background. Only in his short pieces for the piano was this really achieved.

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144. Bauer, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 59.
145. MacDowell, <u>op.cit</u>., pp. 263.

> "In MacDowell's happy use of the short piano forms, he has often been compared to Grieg. In his impersonal aloofness, and objective descriptiveness, MacDowell caught the first reflections of impressionism which he enclosed within the pages of Sea Pieces, Woodland Sketches, Fireside Tales and New England Idylls." [146]

Let us focus upon some examples from these works.

In the music which MacDowell meant to suggest, and which most closely approximates that of the impressionists, he, like the latter, used dissonance for the sake of harmonic color. A recent abstract from a paper delivered on The Meaning of Dissonance in Modern Music, was published in the summer issue, Volume II, Number two, of the journal of the American Musicological Society, the contents of which should clarify the concept of dissonance in contemporary music, particularly, impressionism.[147] W. L. Ogdon, who read the paper at a meeting of the American Musicological Society in Austin Texas, November 20, 1948, distinguished four species of Dissonance:

1. Color dissonance;
2. Shock dissonance;
3. Expressive dissonance;
4. Functional dissonance.[148]

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146. Bauer, op.cit., p. 60.
147. These comments, which rightly belong in the chapter on Color in Music could not be made at that time since the journal was distributed subsequent to the writing of that chapter.
148. Ogdon, W. L. "The Meaning of Dissonance in Modern Music", Journal of the American Musicological Society, Volume II, Number 2, p. 128.

Of these, the last three need not detain us. However, the first, the "color dissonance" defines the type of usage given by MacDowell in several of his shorter piano pieces.

> "The color dissonance...is often grafted to an otherwise conventional work in order to disguise its essentially commonplace character. This dissonance treatment is primarily coloristic and may be for purposes of embellishment or for producing a persistent sonority. Examples may be found in impressionistic and polytonal writing."[149]

Several examples from MacDowell's music will serve to clarify and substantiate Ogdon's method of differentiation. In these small pieces the influence of both Schumann and Chopin is quite evident. The former represents the German romantic element and the latter the arpeggiated swashes of color dissonance and early impressionism. That MacDowell was familiar with Schumann's music seems quite evident in the light of similar excerpts drawn from their respective compositions. From Schumman's Papillons:[150]

149. Ogdon, op.cit., p. 128.
150. Schumann, Robert, Papillons, op. 2, Scarsdale, New York, Edwin F. Kalmus, n. d., Volume I, p. 23.

and From a German Forest--MacDowell,[151]

However, with this exception, we can find no other direct influence upon the impressionistic composition of MacDowell. We must turn from Schumann to Chopin for further illustration of more general similarity. Compare the following examples with the filigree in Chopin's Nocturnnes and the methods will be seen to bear a close relationship.

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151. MacDowell, Edward, "From a German Forest", Fireside Tales, op. 61, #3, New York, Boston, Arthur Schmidt, 1902, p. 10.
152. MacDowell, Edward, "Mid-Winter", New England Idyls, op. 62, New York, Boston, Arthur Schmidt, 1902, p. 9.

153.

Very often these grace-note arpeggios assume the outward character of the whole-tone scale, a device too often exaggerated when attempting to identify it as a technique of the impressionists.

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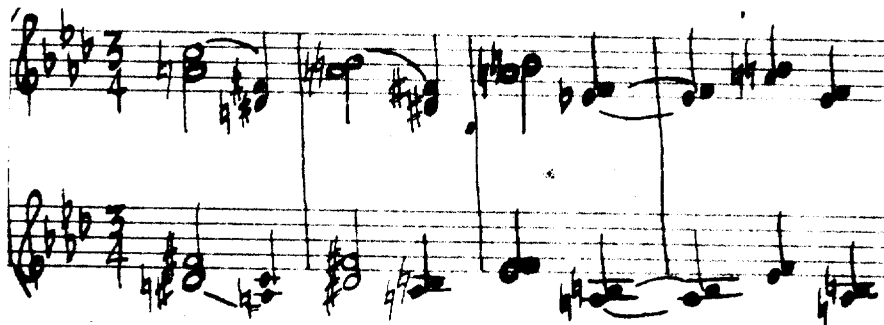
153. MacDowell, Edward, "Winter", Four Little Poems, op. 32, New York, Breitkopf and Hartel, Inc., 1906, p. 8.

154. MacDowell, Edward, "Of Bre'er Rabbit", Fireside Tales, New York, Boston, Arthur Schmidt, 1902, op. 61 #2, p. 9.

155.

Another harmonic device attributed to the impressionists is the use of major seconds merely for their veiled color. Several examples of this technique can be found in MacDowell, notably from "By a Meadow Brook" from the <u>Woodland Sketches</u>.[156]



Very often the minor second is used for similar coloristic purposes. The theorist would classify these incidents of color dissonance as accented appoggiaturas resolving to a

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155. MacDowell, Edward, "From Puritan Days", <u>New England Idyls</u>, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 23.

156. MacDowell, Edward, "By a Meadow Brook", <u>Woodland Sketches</u>, op. 58, New York, Boston, Arthur Schmidt, 1899, p. 40.

consonance. With MacDowell their over-use degenerates into a fetish or mannerism. Their most frequent occurrence is between the melodic line played by the left hand and the chordal harmonies in the right. An example from the "Nautilus" of the Sea Pieces follows:[157]

MacDowell often uses another device, classified as an idiosyncracy of the French impressionist school, that of similar chords in parallel motion. An excellent example from the Fireside Tales illustrates this point.[158]

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157. MacDowell, Edward, "Nautilus", Sea Pieces, op. 55 #7, New York, Boston, Arthur Schmidt, 1898, p. 32.
158. MacDowell, Edward, "From a German Forest" Fireside Tales, op.cit., p. 12.

In several cases MacDowell achieves his effect through a recurring rhythmic sequence. In "To the Sea", he has captured the rhythm and might of the sea by very simple means which are ultimately traceable to the recurrent rhythms. This rolling rhythm is established toward the middle of the piece and continues through to the end.

He uses the same technique in suggesting the illusion of a water-lily gently swaying on slowly undulating waves. Again the effort is created through simple rhythmic means. No one knew better than MacDowell the power of simplicity, a quality glaringly ab s ent in much of Debussy's music.

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159. MacDowell, Edward, "To the Sea", Sea Pieces op.cit., pp. 4 and 5.

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MacDowell's finest impressionistic treatment is admirably demonstrated in two compositions from the <u>Fireside Tales</u>: "From a German Forest" and "Of Salamanders". It is the opinion of the writer that these represent MacDowell at his best because real vitality in musical content is never absent. This is more than we can say of many subsequent writers. A short excerpt from

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160. MacDowell, Edward, "To a Water-lily", <u>Woodland Sketches</u>, <u>op.cit</u>., p. 28.

each follows.

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Thus we see that MacDowell used the techniques of

161. MacDowell, Edward, "From a German Forest", Fireside Tales, op.cit., p. 10.
162. MacDowell, Edward, "Of Salamanders", Fireside Tales, op.cit., p. 13.

impressionism. While W. L. Ogdon and other eminent musicologists and composers now relegate the color dissonances of MacDowell and other impressionists to the questionable position of clichés,[163] other authorities feel that the subtle powers embodied in such dissonance have not been fully exploited. However, both groups are in agreement that for MacDowell and his contemporaries this idiom was a legitimate one. The disagreement arises as to whether compositions of this type written today have validity. Since the basis for the argument is an aesthetic one, no conclusions can be reached, for in this instance, one musician's opinion is as valid as the next's. Regardless, both factions agree that MacDowell's use of the color dissonance was a legitimate one. However, he only represents a milepost in the impressionist movement. In him we have a fore-shadowing of the really great art of Debussy which was to follow. However, even to fully appreciate what MacDowell has accomplished requires a highly poetic imagination if there is to be a sympathetic response. In speaking of music as a type that "suggests," he said:

> "The successful recognition of this music that suggests depends not only upon the susceptibility of the hearer to delicate shades of sensation, but also upon the receptivity of the hearer, and his power to adopt freely

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163. Ogdon, op.cit., p. 129.

and unrestrictedly the mood shadowed forth by the composer. Such music cannot be looked upon objectively. To those who would analyze it in such a manner it must remain an unknown language; its potency depends entirely upon a state of willing subjectivity on the part of the hearer."[164]

When we weigh MacDowell's simplicity of treatment and the vitality of the music itself in his best work against the occasional extravagant use of means to be found in Debussy, then there is much to be said in defense of the former. With MacDowell, however, we have seen where coloristic devices must still be regarded as so many separate entities, but when we move up to his great French contemporary, all such devices are incorporated into the music itself; they form a definite part of the thematic material and are woven into it. This approach accounts for the difference, for it reveals the craftsman. Nothing is redundant, there is no superfluous material. Then, as it concerns form, we have in Debussy that mastery of diversified structure which MacDowell associated with impressionism as indispensable, but which he was never able to achieve.

The following is an excerpt from Debussy's L'isle joyeuse[165] which illustrates some of the commendable qualities already set forth, and represents the final word in

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164. MacDowell, "Critical and Historical Essays", op. cit., p. 259.
165. Debussy, Claude, L'isle joyeuse, Paris, A. Durand et Fils, 1904, p. 3, measures 24 to 29.

impressionistic art.

The influence of Debussy spread widely and rapidly, and the movement thus became international in scope. In America Loeffler came under the impressionist spell of Debussy as did Cyril Scott and Frederick Delius of England. Germany, too, had her impressionists, also Russia, although in the latter case the elements of it were largely attributable to Scriabin. However, the real center of this music remained in France where Debussy, Ravel, Schmitt and many others continued the tradition. The strength of the movement is still in evidence, for we find reflections of it in much of the contemporary music of today. Composers

such as Samuel Barber, Darius Milhaud, and Aaron Copland, to mention a few, show very marked impressionistic influences in their music. In addition, many composers have found a new source of inspiration in the impressionists and are expanding and enlarging upon their techniques, thus achieving a similar type of musical expression - that of suggestion. Just what course music will take in the future, or to what extent impressionism will play is, of course, impossible to ascertain. Many composers feel that the impressionist "mine" has worn out and that the movement henceforth will be of little importance. However, there are others who feel that the real "motherlode" of the impressionist "mine" is yet to be found and are thus pressing forward in an attempt to exploit this area more fully. Only the future can decide as to the validity of either present-day viewpoint.

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