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ROMANTIC AND IMPRESSIONIST STYLE

IN THE HARP REPERTOIRE OF MARCEL TOURNIER

A Thesis in

Musicology

by

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Abstract
This thesis investigates the *Six Noëls* by Marcel Tournier (1879-1951), focusing on the unique synthesis of Romantic and Impressionist elements contained in this suite. Chapter one considers Romantic trends of melody, harmony, and rhythm and their existence in this music. Chapter two delves into Impressionist characteristics of melody, harmony, rhythm, and tone color. Tournier’s idiosyncratic blend of Romanticism and Impressionism led to important new approaches to harp technique and revolutionized the sound of harp literature during the early twentieth century.
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Introduction

This thesis will investigate the music of harpist and composer Marcel-Lucien Tournier, who bridged the gap between French Romanticism and Impressionism in the harp music of the early twentieth century. Among the French masters who wrought important changes in musical style during this time, Marcel Tournier played a crucial role with respect to harp repertoire. This study will investigate the unique synthesis of Romantic and Impressionist characteristics in Tournier’s harp works and the way in which the resulting sounds revolutionized harp literature.

Tournier lived mostly in Paris from 1879 to 1951. A teacher and student of theory and performance at the Paris Conservatoire, Tournier won many awards over his life span, including the second Grand Prix de Rome and the Prix Rossini for composition, while earning the first prize in harp at the school. He became the professor of harp at the Paris Conservatoire in 1912, where he had already begun to write competition pieces for the harp department. His tenure at the renowned institute started the legendary “Tournier School” of harp instruction. In 1922, he married chromatic harp virtuoso Renée Lénars, also a professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Tournier’s pedagogical gifts live on today as a multitude of harpists are descendents of the Tournier School. Tournier also wrote a treatise book, *La Harpe* (1960), under the tutelage of his close friend, the organist-composer Marcel Dupré (1886-1971).

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1 Scholarly opinion varies as to whether the term “Impressionism” is appropriate to describe the musical style of composers such as Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and Charles Griffes (1884-1920). Jann Pasler suggests that “Debussy’s aesthetic as Impressionist is not entirely accurate, for his notion of musical line was as Neo-Impressionist as it was Impressionist, and his musical innovations owed much to his predecessors” (see Pasler, “Impressionism,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy [accessed 5 October 2007], [http://www.grovesmusic.com](http://www.grovesmusic.com)). Conversely, Leon Botstein points out that recent Debussy biographers, including Lockspeiser, Lesure, and Nichols, “do not dismiss the link between Impressionism and Debussy” (see Leon Botstein, “Beyond the Illusions of Realism: Painting and Debussy’s Break with Tradition,” *Debussy and His World*, ed. Jane Fulcher, Bard Music Festival Series [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001], 144).
According to former Tournier student Elisabeth Fontan-Binoche, “Tournier’s world was one of great artistry. A man who delved into poetry, history, literature, and the arts, he counted Debussy and Ravel among his close friends, urging both to write for the harp. In his own music, Tournier explored the full capabilities of the instrument employing such innovative techniques as pedal glissandi, sliding chords, simplified glissandi, synonymous note combination, and enharmonics in his compositions.”

“Strongly influenced by Impressionism,” Tournier’s music, according to Fontan-Binoche, “is quite picturesque and poetic, he was a master in musical suppleness…”

The first chapter of this thesis will focus upon the Romantic qualities in Tournier’s harp repertoire, and specifically in his *Six Noëls* (1926). The Romantic elements in these pieces are usually vividly apparent to the performer, listener, and scholar, particularly in melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas. In terms of melody, one sees long *cantabile* melodic lines, intense climaxes, and motivic variation in the *Six Noëls*. Harmonically, one finds that altered chords, higher levels of dissonance, rich harmonies, broadened use of tonality, wider-ranging keys, coloristic progressions, and euphony dominate in these examples. Also, rhythmic freedom and varying harmonic rhythms exhibit the experimentation with musical time in Tournier’s more Romantic harp compositions. Finally, increased performance instructions offer the performer more freedom than one finds in works of the Classical period. Other compositions that lean toward Romanticism include the *Quatre Préludes* (1908) and the *Sonatine* (1924), especially in terms of their melodies and harmonies.

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Chapter two will highlight the features of Impressionism in Tournier’s harp suite, the *Six Noëls*. Melodically, Impressionist qualities used here include folk-song, plainsong, modality, pentatonicism, wayward contours, and the use of the whole-tone scale. With respect to harmony in these works, one notices a raised level of importance compared to the element of melody. The intensification of harmonic interest is evident in modality, non-functional chord successions, unorthodox voice-leading (especially in chords with ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, etc.), increased use of non-chord tones, whole-tone chords, elevation of dissonance to consonance, unusual juxtapositions of triads, and, finally, use of quartal sonorities. Tournier’s Impressionist works, such as this suite, also show an increased specificity of instructions for the performer, and they experiment with color in their detailed performance instructions on how to exploit the harp’s timbre.

Stylistically similar compositions include the *Étude de Concert*, “Au Matin” (1913) and *Thème et Variations* (1908).

Because very little writing exists on Tournier, this study will fill a gap in the coverage of an important harp composer. The literature includes writings from *The American Harp Journal*, *Harp News*, and Rosalyn Rensch’s *Harps and Harpists*. Very little of this material is analytical in nature. This study will take as a starting point scholarship on Romanticism (such as the work done by Rey Longyear and Kenneth Klaus) and Impressionism (in writings such as those of Jane Fulcher and Simon Trezise). The analytical methods employed by these scholars will be applied to Tournier’s music. In addition, the controversy surrounding “Impressionism” and “Symbolism” will be addressed. Some Debussy scholars now hesitate to categorize his music as “Impressionist,” feeling instead that his music responds more directly to Symbolist
poetry. For the purposes of this study, however, the aspects of Tournier’s music that resemble those of Debussy will be called “Impressionist” qualities. This approach will be taken for the sake of clarity in reading and because the author agrees with Debussy scholar Shengdar Tsai that while “Impressionism” defines art and “Symbolism” characterizes literature, the only appropriate word to describe music of this period might be “Debussysm.” In addition, Louis Laloy, friend and biographer of Debussy, agrees with Tsai’s view in his book, *Claude Debussy*, the contents of which Debussy supposedly felt cordial to.  

This thesis will have practical implications for research, harp pedagogy, and performance. Studying the Romantic and Impressionist synthesis in these pieces will illuminate features such as modal, folk-song-like Impressionist melodies and innovative Romantic harmonies, which have important performance implications. Hopefully, the study will also enable its author and other lecturers, scholars, instructors, and performers to speak more fluently about the historical and theoretical aspects of Tournier’s music. The formats of these events of scholarship may come in the form of colloquia, lessons, program notes, and performance. A possible lecture recital would use information gleaned in the writing of this thesis. For, by virtue of what the author studies, hears, and plays, Marcel Tournier should be considered the Chopin and Debussy of the harp’s idiom.

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Chapter 1-Romanticism in Selected Examples of Tournier’s Harp Repertoire

French Romanticism in music offers an array of colorful sonorities, full of both old and novel possibilities. French Romanticism falls under the larger category of Romantic music. Nineteenth-century Romanticism in music manifests itself in tendencies instead of norms. Musical elements already present before 1800, such as balanced phrasing and careful use of dissonance, characterize many Romantic musical traits, though in a less intense form.\(^5\) However, Romantic composers were indeed individualists who sought an artistic uniqueness like writers and artists of this period. Trends exist in the movement that separate it from Classical or Modern styles, or the Baroque or Impressionist periods respectively. These trends include the employment of free harmonic modulations, flexible rhythmic manipulations, and intense melodic climaxes. Although impossible to define fully, Romanticism centers around the following themes: “individualism,” “interpenetration of the arts,” and “escape into nature or a vaguely identifiable past.”\(^6\)

A survey of melodic elements in Romantic musical style shows a wide range of possibilities. Regular periodicity often defines the themes in Romanticism, as it almost always does in the Classical period. Thus, symmetrical phrase structure survives into the Romantic period. Nevertheless, individualism increases to become a hallmark of Romantic melody. In contrast to the typical “Classical” melody, Romantic tunes are generally longer because the melodies feature a more involved mode of construction. Melodic emphasis is enhanced by homophonic textures, which highlight the tuneful qualities. Intense melodic climaxes also epitomize Romantic melody. Motivic variation


\(^6\) Ibid.
is also associated with these Romantic themes. Moreover, as in much Romantic music, homophonic texture often emphasizes the melodic line’s characteristics.7

In the majority of the *Six Noëls*, the irregular phrasing typical of Romanticism abounds. In the fourth movement of the *Six Noëls*, for example, the melodies do not show a balanced phrase structure. (Please see attached score for details on number four of the *Six Noëls* and for the subsequent pieces of discussion.8) This same feature also occurs in movement three of the *Six Noëls*. For instance, the first period, mm. 1-8, is not balanced with period two, which encapsulates mm. 9-14. In the sixth movement of *Six Noëls*, the lines are composed within a significantly irregular phrasing structure. The first period contains nine bars, mm. 1-9, while the second spans ten measures, mm. 10-19. Period three, the final one, is elided with the end of period two in m. 19. Eleven bars make up the concluding section.

Drawing on the Classical period, lines often also feature regular periodicity in the *Six Noëls* by Marcel Tournier. The first movement of Marcel *Six Noëls* shows a symmetrical phrase structure. Overall, Tournier seems to display typical traits of a more conservative Romanticist, one who borrows many traits from the Classical period to frame novel musical ideas. This fact is significant because, in other ways to be discussed later, these symmetrical melodies nonetheless exemplify Romanticism to the fullest.

For example, despite their regularity, some of the symmetrical melodic material discussed above takes on a longer form than do typical lines in Classical music. In movement one of the *Six Noëls*, for example, the melody in the B section (mm. 17-34) emphasizes a meandering continuation of the original A line instead of original B

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thematic material, creating a sense of excessive length. In the third movement of the Six Noëls, the melody also features much more length than do typical Classical melodies, in keeping with Romantic tendencies. As in the first movement, no contrasting B melodic element appears, giving a sense of longevity to the A melody, which surfaces for the first time in mm. 1-8. In movements 4, 5, and 6, which contain more irregularly shaped themes, one also discovers purely Romantic tunes in terms of their lengthy construction. This especially occurs in the sixth movement where even the tune’s initial statement takes up an entire nine-bar phrase.

Tension-filled climactic moments often occur in Romantic melodies, as exemplified in Six Noëls. Movement one features an intense melodic climax at m.35 where the first inversion sub-dominant pivot chord in m.33 initiates an ascent in register. This climactic moment forms the pinnacle of the harmonic basis of the piece with the IV6 chord leading us back the tonic. An extraordinary harmonic passage like this becomes necessary because of the repetitious nature of the melody. In the third movement, an intense musical climax also occurs in mm. 16-17 within the regularity of the phrases, a unique Romantic feature. Production of this climactic moment comes about from the first authentic or V-I cadence in the piece thus far. In the fourth movement, an intense melodic climax, the place in the melody where the harmonic framework builds an intense tension and highlights a high point in the line, occurs at m. 20 with a German Aug+6 chord in the bass. An intense melodic climax characterizes these lines in m. 31 of the fifth movement, where a French Aug+6 chord tops a dominant pedal point, causing the relatively repetitive melody to peak in volume and underlying harmonic tension. These events follow a developmental section that begins in m. 23.
Motivic variation is also typical of Tournier’s Romantic themes. For example, in the fifth movement, the theme comes alive through motivic variation. In the developmental section previously referred to, the dominating rhythmic motive, an eighth note to a quarter note, receives much playful metric variation in the syncopation and mixed meters involved.

Rhythmically, the Romantic period features more freedom and flexibility than does the Classical movement. Rhythmic experimentation abounds in musical Romanticism in the form of syncopation and rhythmic counterpoint. One also encounters a proliferation of irregular, or complex, meters. In music of late Romanticism, one encounters further rhythmic complications such as increased use of compound meter. Also, many examples of shifting meters contribute to this style.9

Syncopation pervades Tournier’s Six Noëls. In movement two of the Six Noëls, one finds a variation of syncopated rhythmic freedom. In mm. 26-27, for example, emphasis occurs on beats two, one, and three after a consistent stressing of each measure’s first pulse. In the fourth movement, we find syncopation in m. 18, where bass note emphasis appears on beats two and five instead of on pulses one and three. The fifth movement features syncopation in mm. 26-27, where beats two, five, and eight receive intensifying emphasis.

One experiences multiple instances of rhythmic counterpoint in the Six Noëls. The first example occurs in movement two in mm. 53-56, where patterns of note values experience a tossing back and forth between the two hands. This phenomenon creates a relatively stable and consistent texture in the fourth movement, a piece that exemplifies this rhythmic characteristic throughout between the soprano and bass voices.

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9 Ibid., 25-27.
Mixed meter also occurs in the *Six Noëls* with a greater frequency than found in the Classical era. For example, in the fourth movement of this collection, one may notice two different instances of 9/8, the first in m. 8 and the second in m. 14. An additional appearance of this more unusual time signature happens in m. 26 of the fifth movement of the set.

A plentitude of compound meter permutations occurs in the *Six Noëls*. Simple meters like 3/4 receive replacement by signatures such as 9/8 in the fourth movement. This happens, for example, in mm. 13-14, where the meter changes from 6/8 to 9/8. In the fifth movement, one also encounters such permutations, specifically in mm. 12-13 and 25-26, where the meter again changes from 6/8 to 9/8.

When compared with earlier music, Romantic works show an increase in performance instructions, which contribute to the expression typical of this movement. Such moments include suggestions on tempi, dynamics, etc. Paradoxically, however, the frequency and variety of such markings create freedom for the performer. The directions offer enough information to give the musician new ideas for execution without dictating meticulous specifications for every nuance. Later, in reaction against these subjective Romantic interpretations, Impressionism found a specific instructive order for most gestures.10

Tempo markings in the *Six Noëls* proliferate to a number and variety beyond what one sees in Classical music. In movement one, we find indicators such as the *En retenuant un peu* seen in mm. 21-22. This marking is not only very specific, it also gives the performer freedom to “slow a little” in whatever capacity he or she wishes to. Another detailed instruction appears in the fifth movement, where, in mm. 37-38,

10 Ibid., 27.
Tournier instructs the performer to “slow little by little” with *pue à peu en retenant.* These markings, and more found in this suite of six pieces, feature the subjectivity, variety, and multiplicity needed to exemplify Romantic expressiveness.

In terms of dynamics, a plethora of markings exists in the *Six Noëls.* The first movement includes indications such as the explicit *poco cresc.**, seen in mm. 18-19, although specific dynamics range only from *p* to *mf.* In movement two, we do see dynamics which vary from *pp* to *FF,* more indicative of the Romantic period’s prolific offerings in performance instructions. Also, in the fourth movement, one encounters subtler dynamic specifications, such as the *moins p* in m. 15, which indicate a relatively precise response from the performer, as is common in Romanticism.

Other specific instructional notes abound in the *Six Noëls.* For instance, in terms of these markings, the second of the *Six Noëls* features the command *laissez vibrer,* or “to let [the strings] vibrate,” in mm. 24 and 31. Movement three shows an eclectic variety of instructions: subjective in manner, they encourage freedom from the performer. For instance, the question could arise as to what response the word *dolce* should bring forth in a harpist’s playing. How should one effectively render this instruction? The third movement introduces another indication…*soutenu,* which instructs the performer to “sustain” the notes. Similar and/or identical suggestions appear with regularity in the *Six Noëls.* In the final of the *Six Noëls,* one also finds orders to play *sans dureté,* “without toughness or hardness,” and *murmuré,* “with murmurings or whisperings.” These latter four notations give no clear and objective method with which the musician ought to perform, in keeping with the Romantic tradition of subjectivity.
In the Romantic era, a singing melody, along with accompanimental chords, dominates among the period’s characteristic elements. This lyricism usually consists of a cantabile line closely imitating the human voice. Such tunes often come accompanied by rolled chords in instrumental music, especially those works written for harp or piano. The tones of the accompaniment frequently encompass a wide range.\footnote{Owain Edwards, Graham Martin, and Aaron Scharf, Romanticism (Great Britain: The Open University Press, 1972), 40.}

The first of these elements, the singing melody, figures prominently in many of the Six Noëls. In the first movement, the soprano voice features a gently rolling contour, which rises and falls gracefully without any awkward leaps. The motion generally involves stepwise motion in this voice. This lyrical and expressive melody is complemented by subtle modulations to other modes. Likewise, the polyphonic lines of movement four show a strong cantabile quality. These quintessential elements of the Romantic cantabile melody frequent the Six Noëls, especially in both melodies of the fourth movement’s polyphonic texture.

The singing melodies as a tour de force of the Six Noëls are typically supported by chordal accompaniment, in a manner similar to the Nocturnes of Chopin. The chords often collaborate with the cantabile melodies in a rolled manner. The wide range of these chords in movement one causes an intensification of mood. This drama increases until the end of the developmental B section, mm. 17-34. Another example of this melodramatic effect of accompanimental chords occurs in movement three, a lyrical and expressive example typical of the Romantic harp sound. Here, one may notice a similar “heightening” effect until the climax on the downbeat of m. 17. The most dynamic moments of the fifth movement also collaborate with large rolled chords in mm. 27-33.
Musical Romanticism often features a “warm” harmony—a group of tones that contain the richness of dissonance treated as consonance. This type of sound almost always plays a more significant role than did the more basic sonorities of Classicism. Therefore, this quintessential characteristic of Romantic music creates more obvious expression and greater response. This phenomenon forms from a richer, more creative, tonal language than found in previous musical periods.\(^\text{12}\)

Examples of such harmonic richness abound throughout the *Six Noëls*. In the first movement, a harmonic climax, the spot of greatest musical tension, occurs between mm. 31 and 33. This moment eclipses the melodic climax in m. 35, the place where the line hits the highest point. Although the melodic climax leads into the recap of A, the modal harmonic build-up manages to keep the listener on the edge of his/her seat until its resolution, which shows Tournier’s preference for the tuneful musical element. Measure 32 in the second of the set features a colorful sonority filled with dissonance. The sound exists as a diminished chord on the downbeat of the measure. Measure 35 of the same piece introduces a polytonal chord, a sonority made of both g minor and f minor triadic sonorities, on beat two. The musical language throughout this suite conveys individuality and creativity in its presentation of such chords, which were rare in Classicism.

Harmony represents the main vehicle for Romantic individuality. The chief difference between Classical and Romantic harmonies focuses upon the use of dissonant chords. Classical music tended to treat dissonant chords functionally in the context of a progression or modulation. Romantic music uses these same chords, such as dominant

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 40.
sevenths and diminished sevenths, in a coloristic sense and also begins to treat them as consonances.\footnote{Longyear, 27; Klaus, 171.}

Harmonically, one observes dissonant chords serving in a coloristic rather than functional sense in many of the \textit{Six Noëls}. For example, in measure 23 of the first movement, an added-note chord appears. This chord functions as a i chord; however, the added raised 6\textsuperscript{th} scale degree bestows a dorian flavor upon the sonority, to be discussed more in chapter two. In addition, the V9 add 6/VII in measure 23 does not even perform a function like tonicization. Instead, the sonority purely adds color to this meandering harmonic passage. Also, clearly, in m. 29, the V7/III is there simply for sonorous beauty and not as part of a stable progression.

The third movement features a fresh and unique sound with the way it exploits dissonances as consonances. An example of this happens in m. 13 with the i7 in f minor. This chord acts as a consonance here as it enables the music to reach a VII+ sonority before a modulation back to c minor via Ab major. This occurs as the dissonant i7 establishes itself as a consonant tonic base.

The fourth movement uses chords such as the augmented sixth in a coloristic way rather than in a traditional functional manner. These dissonant timbres are again exploited to the status of consonances. For example, the German +6 chord in m. 20 actually serves as the piece’s climactic musical moment instead of as a simple vehicle with which to modulate. This point in the music shows the individualism and expression garnered when such sonorities display more color than function in Romanticism.

The use of dissonance here in the fifth movement of this set strongly suggests a Romantic compositional style. The sonorities here lend themselves to color the music
rather than to function in a Classical and/or modulatory sense. The chords magnify their consonant contexts. For example, the decorative inflection in m. 7, a C-natural in the soprano voice, is used as freely as a consonant sound would have been in the Classical period. It possesses no function here except to color the phrase. The chord containing this dissonance arrives as a V6 over a D pedal point in F major.

In the suite’s sixth movement, Tournier’s Romantic individualism comes out in his use of chords traditionally considered as dissonances. In mm. 16-18, for example, one sees such “dissonant” sonorities employed in a non-functional way. The dominant sevenths, which appear on the initial beats of all three measures mentioned, seem to accentuate a kind of harmonic pause in the music’s middle section. The chords color the musical segment to the point where the “dissonances” relax to the level of consonances, because of the functional void they enhance. These particular sounds fail to bring us to new key areas or to demand resolutions.

Altered chords are very prominent in Romantic music and come in two different forms. The first form is the chromatically altered triad, usually with a raised fifth. This chord forms the Aug+ triad which, until the mid-Romantic period, often functioned only as a passing harmony between tonic and subdominant. Romantic composers eventually treated this sonority as a color chord, with independence of sound and function. The second form involves a chromatic enharmonic alteration of a chord containing a minor seventh. The most common of these sounds, the Aug+6, functions as color chords with a lack of irregular preparation and/or resolution process. From the mid-Baroque period up until this point in Romanticism, these kind of Aug+6 chords only enhanced dominant and tonic harmonies. The chords usually contained upward resolving leading tones and
Altered chords form an important part of the sound of the *Six Noëls*. For example, in the first movement, an altered chord, which contains a minor seventh, deserves mention. This sonority occurs in m. 30 and represents an unresolved dominant seventh sonority, which lacks the proper preparation and resolution typical of the Baroque and Classical periods. For example, the seventh of the chord, an Ab, moves up instead of down in the subsequent chord. Since the voice leading moves along so freely, the only chordal function in existence here is Romanticized musical colorization. In addition, the dominant sounding chord fails to resolve to its tonic, Eb major.

Another altered chord form emerges in the third movement, the chromatically altered triad with a raised fifth. Here in m. 14, the sonority, a VII+ in the key of f minor, acts as a pivot chord to the key of Ab major. Independence of sound and function is featured here as the chord plays a role larger than one of just a passing sonority—it utilizes the foreignness of its sound to move us from one key to the next, mid-phrase.

Another instance of the altered chord form that contains a seventh occurs in the fourth movement of the set. Here, in m. 20, we see a German +6 chord, which serves as the piece’s musical climax. The diminished seventh occurs between the G# and F-natural. This color chord does more than to simply function as a dominant enhancer. The sonority allows the listener to hear the contraction and release of very traditionally

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Ibid., 29-31.
dissonant sounds. This marks the place in the music where the harmonies evoke their most tension filled moments.

The altered chord example here in the fifth movement of this suite also constitutes a sonority containing a minor seventh. Such a coloristic chord occurs in m. 13. This group of tones essentially makes up a VI9 chord, which eventually resolves to a D major triad by m. 15. The notes simply retain the mood set by the sudden and mysterious modulation to A major, which occurs in m. 9, from d minor. The chord definitely fails to accomplish anything close to simply dominant enhancement, which proves that the sonority brings pure color instead of traditional function.

The Romantic period ushered in chromatically altered non-harmonic tones on the strong beats. In the Baroque and Classical periods, on the other hand, these non-chord members most often functioned as passing dissonances. A doubling of these notes a third or sixth below enhanced their sonorous effect in Romanticism. In previous musical periods, dissonances treated in this way either intensified cadences or delivered the expressive sigh motive. In the Romantic period, however, these sounds of yearning were even intensified by delayed resolutions to the more consonant tones.\textsuperscript{15}

Examples of chromatically altered non-diatomic tones often occur on strong beats in the \textit{Six Noëls}. For example, in the first movement, m. 30 shows a D-natural in the soprano melody. This tone does not appear diatonically in the music’s tonal center, Ab major, and occurs on the strong beat number one. This instance adds heightened tension of accented dissonance to the climactic section, mm. 27-35. In the second movement, one finds another example, this time with the delayed resolution, in mm. 24-26. Here, one finds chords that alternate between tense dissonant and relaxed consonant sounds

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 31; Klaus, 72.
before a final resolution to consonance occurs on the rhythmically and harmonically emphasized beat two of m. 26, a frame that lasts until beat two of m. 27. The third movement features a non-choral tone, Eb, on the downbeat of m. 8, which resolves to a chord-tone on beat four of that bar. The chord involved is a V7 in C minor. This exemplifies a delayed resolution from a dissonance to a consonance in the context of one chord. In the fourth movement, m. 20 sees an interesting sonority, a German Aug+6 in the bass accompaniment. This dissonance does not resolve to a more consonant sound until m. 23 and involves a IV6 chord in A major. This sonority, incidentally, still includes an added partial, the dissonant E-natural, on the soprano melody’s strong beats one and four in 6/8. Finally, in the fifth movement, mm. 21-13 show a sense of yearning in its unsettling sounding chords, which lead up to the more soothing VI chord, a D major triad, in m. 27. This technique features delayed resolutions of traditionally dissonant sonorities, such as the prominent VM7 in mm. 23-27, the tension filled developmental section.

In Romanticism, a phenomenon known as higher discord prevails. This technique results from fundamental triads and seventh chords that build larger sonorities via the thirds stacked atop their basic structure. These chords stand beyond the seventh and ninth chords of very early Romanticism. Instead, here, one encounters eleventh and even thirteenth chords. Sometimes, in these cases, ambiguity occurs when we attempt to decipher between certain tone collections.\(^\text{16}\)

One finds such higher discord used in the *Six Noëls* at times. A good example is found in the third movement where an eleventh chord graces m. 13, which has the potential for an incorrect iv add 4 analysis. Ambiguity may result here, when we analyze

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
the first sonority of m. 13, F-A-C-Eb-Bb. Another occurrence of such higher discord appears on beat two of m. 7 in the sixth movement, where a thirteenth sonority, D-F#-A-B, could potentially be mistakenly described as a I64 add 6 chord.

Generally, as progressions, chords tend to possess coloristic properties rather than functional characteristics in Romanticism. Also, part-writing rules and resolution standards lessened in restrictiveness. Thus, chords in late Romanticism should never be analyzed outside of their proper contexts within a piece.¹⁷

For example, movement one opens with the following coloristic progression: i ii half dim.7 i6 ii half dim.7 i VII iv6 (see Example 1). The chords fail to display the standard function and voice leading as the Classical i iv6 ii diminished 64 V7 i offers, for instance. This Tournier progression features decorative sonorities and parallel movement instead of tonic emphasis and efficient transitions. In addition, another mostly coloristic chordal progression occurs in mm. 24-26 of the second movement. Here, this dissonant sound sequence roughly consists of three i add 2, 6 sonorities followed by a iv m7add 6, 7 chord, all over an f tonic pedal (see Example 2). The tonic receives only faint enunciation amongst the strongly non-diatomic sonorities that surround it. Then in movement three, mm. 9-16 show us a tonic prolongation in the key of f minor, where the i chord serves as the downbeat of every bar until m. 14, where the passage finally arrives at a VII+5 sonority, a progression which serves no function except to emphasize f minor and to present surprising sounds. In mm. 14-17 of movement four, the tonality prolongs i in d minor for four lengthy bars, where the music stands relatively statically due to these embellishing rather than utilitarian sounds. The music moves little, in a harmonic context, away from its tonic. Other marginally functional progressions occur here, one of

¹⁷Ibid.; Ibid., 183.
which is found in mm. 24-26 of the fourth movement. Here, the I6 ii6 I sequence purely pronounces the key of D Major. In movement five, the progression between mm. 16 and 19 only enhances the G pedal point. The chords, I I6 vi I64 V I64 V, possess little function, as the music does not demonstrate a driving sound which would point out ear towards the thirdless V (see Example 3). Finally, in the sixth movement, the floating harmonies offer little functionality. For example, one color only progression occurs in mm. 10-15. Basically, the static harmonies include the following sequence: IM7 iiim7 iii ½ dim.7 IVM7 iiim7 i7 iii ½ dim.7 Vm7 ivm7 iii ½ dim. 7 ii ½ dim.7 i7 ii ½ dim. 7 bVII7 17 bVI7 bVII7 in D Major, which features parallel voice leading and a static coloristic quality (see Example 4).

Example 1: Measures 1-4 of Movement One of Six Noëls

Example 2: Measures 24-26 of Movement Two of Six Noëls
Example 3: Measures 16-19 of Movement Five of *Six Noëls*

![Example 3: Measures 16-19 of Movement Five of *Six Noëls*](image)

Example 4: Measures 10-15 of Movement Six of *Six Noëls*

![Example 4: Measures 10-15 of Movement Six of *Six Noëls*](image)

The types and speeds of Romantic harmonic rhythms vary greatly, depending upon the mood a composer wished to evoke. Harmonic rhythm genres range from very slow to extremely fast. In addition, the patterns exude anything from straightforwardness to syncopation.¹⁸

In terms of harmonic rhythm, the first movement showcases rapidity and flexibility to evoke tension. The harmony changes quickly and often in the piece. Generally, each dotted quarter note of the 6/8 meter possesses its own harmony in relation to the surrounding sonorities. Also, the harmonies increase in complexity,

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¹⁸Longyear, 32.
depending upon the melodic direction. For instance, as soon as the opening soprano motive from m. 1 comes back in an inverted form with m. 23, the sonorities become more chromatic and full. The speed and changeability shown here in the harmonic rhythm depict an unsettling mood. In movement two, slow harmonic rhythms in the outer section, A (mm. 1-23) and A’ (mm. 45-70), create a light and happy mood. However, the quicker harmonic rhythm in the intervening B section (mm. 24-44) evokes a contrasting heaviness, traced with gloom. Syncopated harmonic rhythms, such as the polytonal chord which comes in on the weak beat two in m. 26, adds to the dismal aura in the piece’s middle section. A somber mood here in the third movement is a result of the very slow harmonic rhythm. Phrase two, in addition, features harmonic ambiguity in its patterns. For example, until m. 13 the rate remained steady at the major harmonic change per measure. Then, in m. 13, weak beat six of the 6/8 meter receives a surprisingly strong harmonic change. The shift occurs from a im7 add 4 in f minor to a ii add 2, which leads into the unusual VII+5 sonority. A restless, almost esoteric, mood dominates the fourth movement because of the quick harmonic rhythm. The vibrant rate of harmonic change here matches well with the active two-voice polyphony present. In mm. 24-27, one notices a sprightly harmonic rhythm become syncopated when the changes, strong sonorous moments, begin to occur on off beats. The otherwise steady plod of sonority variations on downbeats evokes a generally happy and stable aura. The sixth movement’s ethereal mood is created by its slow harmonic rhythm. Specifically, the music presents a static feel as, for example, the first two phrases (mm. 1-9) center almost exclusively upon the tonic and sub-mediant add 6 chords.
During the nineteenth century, some music looked to functional diatonicism and modality to react against the chromaticism of the day. The adventurous harmonic innovations against which composers reacted were most strongly evident in the music of Wagner. Rebellious activity sprang forth from major composers such as Brahms and Rimsky-Korsakov. This behavior took the form of more straightforward tonality, non-diatonic modality, and revival of Gregorian chant. The simple harmonies, however, portray their charm in the guise of a broadened tonal vocabulary. Strikingly different harmonic palettes shine through the many Romantic composers who participated in such activity.\textsuperscript{19}

We now turn toward reactionary stylistic features employed by Tournier. Tournier’s \textit{Six Noëls} showcase his unique musical language in the context of the non-orthodox harmonies already mentioned in previous sections. These complex color sonorities exist within a relatively simple chordal structure. For a prime example, let us focus on the first movement. Although the progressions base themselves mainly upon non-traditional mediant relationships than on orthodox dominant to tonic movements, the A (mm. 1-22) and the abbreviated or $\frac{1}{2}$ A’ (mm. 35-41) sections remain mostly Classically diatonic in b-flat minor. On the other hand, the B (mm. 23-34) section employs the revived pre-Baroque Dorian mode on b-flat and f juxtaposed alongside of late-Romantic chromaticism.

The definition of tonality broadened in Romanticism. This occurred to the point where the mediant and submediant scale degrees which were often flatted, held as much clout in determining key as did the dominant and tonic. Many chromatically altered sonorities, such as the deceptive cadence, enharmonically spelled diminished chords

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 14-15
(augmented sixths) and borrowed chords (like flatted mediant or submediant tonal pivots) started to assume functional character in music. Dramatic and sudden modulations also increasingly gained acceptance into the repertoire.\textsuperscript{20}

In the Six Noëls, one often finds that the mediant and submediant determine the tonic key. For example, in movement one, the B (mm. 17-34) section, which begins and remains in F major until m. 23, utilizes the flatted submediant, Gb, to establish the F major tonality as often as it employs the repeated I6 chord. In fact, the Gb frames the tonic as F major’s Neapolitan. Gb is used as a passing tone, which leads into a I6 statement in mm. 18-19. Also, the note, over an F pedal, forms the base of a ii triad in the last three beats of m. 20. Finally, in m. 21, the tone acts as the third of a vii sonority. This sound, the Gb, receives augmentation in mm. 23-34 in b-flat Dorian. This contrast, in excess to the roles previously mentioned, adds to the Gb’s function of emphasizing the F major. Then, in the fifth movement, the lowered submediant and flatted mediant enharmonically aid the F major sonorities to establish the F major tonic. For example, the two tones appear enharmonically in mm. 30 and 31 as an F# (the Gb flatted submediant) and G# (the Ab lowered mediant) respectively. The corresponding roles of these tones include preparation and construction of a French +6 chord. This sonority then embellishes the dominant, which leads us back to tonic. Finally, in m. 8 of the sixth movement, the submediant’s dominant sonority aids in moving our ears toward the V7, which, in turn, points toward the D Major tonic in m. 9.

In the Six Noëls, one sees examples of chromatically altered chords which take on functional roles not seen in periods before Romanticism. In the fourth movement, the enharmonically spelled diminished sonority, the German +6 of m. 20, captures a

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 34-36.
significant role. Here, this sound serves as the work’s harmonic climax, or highest point of expressed musical tension. Also, in the fifth movement, we notice a productive use of a borrowed chord. The flatted submediant chord in m. 24, an f# diminished triad, becomes a tonal pivot. It coordinates the transition of sound between the d minor sonority in the last three beats in m. 23 and the D major sounds in the entire m. 25.

Dramatically sudden modulations also occur frequently in the Six Noëls. For example, in the first movement, one experiences a turn to a rapidly moving modulatory sequence in the second half of B (mm. 23-51). In the midst of these thirteen bars, the music quickly shift from the tonic of bb minor (m. 23) to bb Dorian (mm. 24-29) to f Dorian (mm. 30-32) and, finally, to eb minor (mm. 33-34), which brings us back to bb minor by m. 35. In the third movement, we see another such rapid variation of key. A dramatic modulation occurs between mm. 9-17, where the music directly and suddenly modulates to f minor from c minor in m. 9. Then, the sonorities see a surprising turn from f minor to Ab major via a VII+5 chord in f minor. To end our discussion of this piece, musical chromaticism yields another change back to c minor by m. 17 with a secondary dominant chord in Ab major. The sixth movement offers yet another sudden modulatory instance. In mm. 10-18, an aesthetically moving and unexpected modulation to D major’s mediant occurs. For, although this musical interlude begins and ends in D major, through many lowered sixths and sevenths, the tonality lingers briefly upon a C dominant seventh sonority. The mediant’s dominant, or diatonically structured chord on scale degree five, is approached chromatically and non-traditionally, in terms of progression and voice-leading. The process uses parallel melodic and chordal motions,
instead of the more classically oriented and functional means of transition. Such methods involve more traditional patterns of chord succession and melodic style.

Expanded use of tonality normalized itself in Romantic music. Several composers like Chopin and Skryabin, took the lead from J.S. Bach and wrote sets of music that visited all major and minor keys. Keys that are unusual to find in the Classical period arose often in Romantic music. In particular, f-sharp minor became the quintessential Romantic key. Other minor keys also became increasingly popular during Romanticism. While only five percent of Classical symphonies are in minor, seventy percent of Romantic symphonies are written in the minor mode. Fittingly, considering the harmonic vocabulary of Romanticism, chromaticism and altered harmonies abound more easily in minor. Also, keys defined by dominant rather than tonic emphasis occupy a major role in such repertoire. In late-Romantic compositions, freer modulation appears. Finally, tonality from this period expanded through its use of unrelated or non-orthodox keys in the separation of movements and even of theme groups.

Newly normalized minor tonalities emerge frequently in the Six Noëls. The first movement sets the tone of the set in its exploration of bb minor. The middle B (mm. 24-44) section of movement two is predominantly in f minor. C minor represents the tonic of the set’s third movement. F# minor, the most popular key of the Romantic period, receives reference in the use of its relative major key, the tonic A major, in the fourth movement. The music also spends a good amount of time in d minor in the movement’s central portion (mm. 14-22).

\[21\text{Ibid., 37-39.}\]
\[22\text{Ibid., 37-39.}\]
The dominant chord often takes precedence over the tonic chord in establishing key in the midst of the *Six Noëls*. For example, in the first movement, b-flat minor’s dominant, F major, emphasizes the piece’s key more than the tonic itself does in mm. 17-22. In actuality, we could argue that this chunk of music resides in the key of F major. However, this does not erase the fact that this dominant key emphasis supports the tonic, bb minor, with its preparation of tonal recapitulation, which occurs in m. 23. In fact, one may articulate that the stress upon the F major chords here sets up the tonic’s sound even more than the small bb minor hints sparsely found throughout this movement. In movement two, the A (mm. 1-23) and A’ (mm. 45-70) sections express similar amounts of tonic and dominant emphasis. For instance, while the first sub-phrase (mm. 1-4) elaborates the tonic of Ab major with the sub-dominant, Db major, the second (mm. 5-8) uses the dominant, Eb major. These incessant dominant to tonic movements justify the Ab major key as much as the other tonic references, which occur only within the unorthodox progressions and parallel motions seen in the rest of the section. Mm. 1-13 of the fourth movement contain more dominant material than tonic music. The section does cadence relatively strongly onto a I7. However, at this point, this sonority serves more as a secondary dominant here than as a tonic establisher. Then, the climactic portion of movement five, mm. 27-34, uses the dominant more than the tonic to stress the home key of F major. For example, look at the dominant C pedal point, which exists here below the entire section. A similar occurrence happens in the final piece where a dominant A pedal point appears near the end between mm. 24-25. This presentation along with the strong dominant to tonic cadence at the conclusion indicates a large role
for the dominant A major to define the tonic D major. However, in this example, we fail to observe an actual match or overshadowing of the tonic’s key defining function.

In terms of free modulation, such musical events abound in the *Six Noëls*. In the first piece movement, mm. 27-35 contain rapidly moving key changes, from db Dorian to f Dorian to eb minor and back to bb minor, in the course of only nine short bars. Mm. 8-9 in the third piece add more validity to our musical evidence. Here, we see a direct modulation from c minor to f minor, without the use of any preparatory linking chord. The fourth movement features upward sequential motion (mm. 18-19), which leads to the German +6 chord in m. 20. Here, as usually occurs in sequential passages, the music advances rapidly from one key to the next with the scalar melodic and harmonic movement seen in consecutive motivic statements. Finally, in the sixth movement, free modulation exists between mm. 10 and 18. Here, the music travels to a different key, F major, via the lowered sixth and seventh scale degrees, B to B♭ and C♯ to C-natural. The music unexpectedly slips into F Major, although our ears and minds tell us that we observe the more closely related key of d minor, which also contains these altered scale degrees. However, without the leading tone, C♯, and with the addition of F major’s dominant, C7, Tournier artistically leads us surprisingly into the key at hand.

The use of non-traditional key combinations is common in the *Six Noëls*. For example, movement four in A major follows movement three in Ab major. These two tonalities are extremely distantly related. Although the other movements’ tonics share relatively closer ties, such as the mediant association with movement three’s c minor and movement four’s A major, nothing like the Classical period’s almost consistent sub-dominant and dominant motions between adjacent movements or sections occur here.
Even these groups within the pieces sometimes contribute to the non-orthodox juxtaposition of keys. In movement one we observe f Dorian and the very distantly related eb minor hooked together by the latter key’s V42 chord in f Dorian (mm. 32-33). Also, in the sixth movement, one sees a motion from the tonic, D major, to the flatted mediant, F major, in mm. 10-16. Such standardized key transitions which were typical of Classicism were abandoned periodically here.

Although Romantic music is generally homophonic, polyphony plays a minor yet important role. Counterpoint, however, is accompanied with other textures more often than not here. Devices such as canons and fugues appear frequently in the Romantic period, usually as developmental material. Also, linear counterpoint, a multi-voice texture laced with complicated chromaticism, came into existence during this period. Free dissonance also characterizes late Romantic linear counterpoint.²³

The role of polyphony in the Six Noëls seems significant, despite its scarcity. In the second movement, for example, one sees a masterful use of imitation in mm. 53-56. The accompanimental parallel thirds and the thematic melodic motive experience a tossing back and forth between right and left hand ranges. The thematic material begins in the lower left hand part in mm. 53-54 and travels to the higher right hand space in mm. 55-56. The accompanimental chords move in the opposite direction, enacting a switch in melodic and harmonic roles between the two voices until the regular homophonic motivic material recurs with its accompaniment in m. 57. This transitional imitation heightens the return of the piece’s main motive, which we first hear in m. 1. The fourth movement features counterpoint between soprano and bass voices. Although accompanied, this polyphony remains clear throughout. With all the chromatics seen in this movement, one

²³Ibid., 43-53; Ibid., 211-240.
may assign the term “linear counterpoint” to this musical discourse. For instance, in mm. 11-16, take note of all the non-diatonic tones marked by accidentals. Within this, we often see the bass and soprano moving in imitation, as they do in mm. 11-12, and in opposite directions, as the two voices exhibit in mm. 18-20. The interactions between bass and soprano found here intensify the modulations. Finally, the fifth movement displays much polyphony. Although juxtaposed with a chordal backdrop, traditional counterpoint evidences itself almost throughout this music in a very obvious manner. All four voices indeed interact in similar, imitative, and at times, contrasting ways. For example, in m. 13, one observes linear counterpoint which begins with the Eb on the soprano’s first beat. Such dissonance exists alongside mainly imitative counterpoint between soprano and tenor lines. Such musical activity occurs here and in movement four to set these two almost entirely polyphonic pieces apart from the rest in terms of their textures, which aids to formulate a shape to the overall suite.

The Romantic period holds a unique place in the history of music because of its composers’ fascination with and exploration of sound. Romantic sound divides into two components. The first is euphony, or beautiful noise, brought about by octave doublings and fuller chords. The second division deals mainly with color, or the exploitation of vocal and instrumental timbres. Tournier’s *Six Noëls* deal mainly with the euphonic aspect of Romantic sound.24

Euphonic sounds are present throughout the *Six Noëls*. Fuller chords and octaves aid to bring the music to a melodic and harmonic climax between mm. 24-31 in the first movement. The second piece beautifully depicts euphony in its ½ A’ (mm. 45-70)

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section, where octaves and fuller chords increase in frequency as the music charges
towards its dramatic ending. Full sonorities and octaves dominate the third movement,
especially as the piece approaches its dramatic close. Euphony in movement four comes
in the form of grandiose tone collections throughout in the bass. In addition, the music’s
melodious character receives enhancement via octave doublings, which usually occur at
the beginnings or endings of phrases. For instance, the end of phrase one sees the
soprano’s note, B-natural, duplicated in the tenor line. Finally, the melodic and harmonic
peaks of the last two movements are characterized and enhanced by lush chords and
doubled tones. This phenomenon happens in mm. 27-33 of piece five and in mm. 10-18
of the last movement. Such euphonic sounds illuminate the richness and beauty in
Tournier’s harmonic palette.

The Romantic period did not see the introduction of many new formal paradigms.
Classical forms, such as sonata form, the rondo, ternary forms, the symphony, concertos,
overtures, and chamber-music structures, remained in the Romantic period and flourished
in instrumental music. However, instrumental cycles played a greater role in
Romanticism and strove to outdo the limitations of Classical equilibrium. These cycles
featured the circular idea, a varied number of movements, continuity between parts,
contrast between sections, programmatic content, and an expansive size. Instrumental
cycles appeared as serenades, suites, character pieces, and instrumental sonatas. These
sets were linked through thematic transformations of sonata-oriented cycles. These
individualized pieces ranged from small musical fragments to miniature forms up to
complex ronds and sonatas. Slow movements in these works are often aria-like, hymn-
like, or romanza-like. Other movements often came in minuet and trio form or in an
intermezzo-like form. Variation sets abounded in Romantic final movements, usually in the major mode in order to evoke a triumphant finale. Variation forms of different types took shape in the Romantic period. The free variation cycle also existed, where motives remind one of the original theme despite their continued transformations. Finally, at the end of Romanticism, all musical forms started to resemble those of the Baroque period, such as the *concerti grossi* for smaller groups of instruments.  

A certain faithfulness to older form prevails in Romanticism, as evidenced by the prevalence of Baroque and Classical forms in the *Six Noëls*. As a whole, the work reminds one of a Baroque suite in its multiple movement structure filled with miniatures which usually relate harmonically and contrast melodically. The first movement shows a ternary structure, at least in terms of its tonality, with its A (mm. 1-16) B (mm. 17-34) 1/2A’ (mm. 35-41) design. Movement two is also clearly in the Classical A (mm. 1-23) B (mm. 24-44) A’ (mm. 45-70) form in reference to both its melody and harmony. Although the third and fifth movements combine a more Romantic, lyrical, through-composed, aria-like, intermezzo form, the fourth and sixth movements regress to the more antiquated ternary set-up in terms of harmony. The more Romantic free variation style does exist, however, in the A (mm. 1013) B (mm. 14-31) ½ A’ (mm. 32-37) tonal framework. In the last piece, the harmonic layout entails a ternary or A (mm. 1-9) B (mm. 10-18) A’ (mm. 19-29) structure.

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25 Ibid., 43-53; Ibid., 211-240.
Chapter 2-Impressionism in Selected Examples of Tournier’s Harp Repertoire

French Impressionism in music, part of the broader artistic movement of Impressionism, introduces new and innovative harmonies, melodies, and forms without a strict set of rules, as with Romanticism. Some of the elements of Impressionism in music evolved from inspirations practiced in late Romanticism, such as a higher degree of dissonance (e.g. eleventh and thirteenth chords) and coloristic progressions. However, some elements of Impressionism, such as modality and open form, came to distinguish the movement from Romantic music and other styles of twentieth-century music.

Impressionist composers, like Symbolist poets and Impressionist artists of the same period, tried to capture, both literally and realistically, the picture, mood, or emotion of a natural setting through vehicles such as descriptive titles and rhythms emulating nature. While one hesitates to posit a definite formula for Impressionism, the music tends to exhibit the themes of “color,” “texture,” and “gesture.”

Tonality in Impressionist music stems largely from its origins in the chromatic idiom of late Romanticism; however, the Impressionist style withdraws more severely from diatonic function with its sequences on open fifths, quartal/quintal chords, and sound’s preeminence over function. Like the Romantics, Debussy and other Impressionist composers used a unique harmonic vocabulary within a tonal framework including repetition, ostinati, and note-alteration rate to determine hierarchically organized ternary, cyclic, and through-composed forms. The folk melodies’ tonal centers are reinforced both harmonically and melodically by tonic, dominant, or dominant-

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substitute reinforcement. Composers also used triadic consonances and monotonality (one consistent key) in their music. However, the more adventurous harmonic language alluded to here, such as embellishing dissonance, texture-driven progressions, and ornamented melody over static harmony, often combines distantly related chromatic areas against foreign sounding modal scales. For instance, Impressionists tended to use diatonic, whole-tone, octatonic, and/or chromatic scales.

In Tournier’s *Six Noëls*, one sees examples of exotic sonorities juxtaposed with a traditional functional harmonic base. In movement one, while one may analyze the piece diatonically as in b-flat natural minor, many more outlandish features also come into play. For instance, in the A section, the first two phrases (mm. 1-16), the melodic and harmonic ideas consist of a whole-tone collection. While the middle section (mm. 17-34) offers a taste of the Dorian mode (a natural minor scale with a raised sixth), the final phrase, or A’ section (mm. 35-41), again works with the whole-tone scale.

Another instance of this musical technique involves movement two of the *Six Noëls*. Here, Tournier also juxtaposes two types of harmonic language. The piece as a whole features mainly functional Romantically tinged common-practice sonorities like major and minor tonalities. Yet we also find non-traditional harmonies, such as the opening auxiliary progression (IV-I in Ab major), an Impressionist chromatic touch where the piece begins off tonic and emulates the non-tonic openings found in Romanticism. Also, in the mid-section of the piece (mm. 24-44), one notices use of

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28 Ibid., 199.
modality. The bookend sections of the music (mm. 1-23 and 45-70) feature a diatonic framework with hints of pentatonicism.\(^{29}\)

In movement six, one observes another example of such combinations of contrasting musical vocabularies. As a whole, the piece retains functionality in the key of D major marked by perfect authentic cadences like the one in mm. 8-9. However, juxtaposed against such traditional musical landmarks appear foreign sounding scales such as the D mixolydian mode used in mm. 10-12. Interestingly enough, m. 10 begins with a I\(^7\) sonority, which includes the C# later lowered in this mostly modal passage.

What Christopher Palmer calls the “atmosphere” of Impressionist music maintains its existence by such unique uses of harmony; however, Palmer’s “melodic reform” necessarily came along with sonority qualifications. Debussy and other Impressionists used folk-song. The employment of folk-song from Russia and the Far East yielded what Palmer describes as “wayward melodic lines,” pentatonicism, and use of the whole-tone passages.\(^{30}\)

Folk song-like material is strongly in evidence in the Six Noëls. In movement one, meandering melodic material surfaces between mm. 9 and 35 especially to accommodate the wandering tonalities evident here. The opening eight-bar phrase, the melodic tour de force of the entire piece, encapsulates the whole-tone scale, with the first four-bar sub-phrase in pentatonic pitches. In movement two of Six Noëls, one also notices such an influence. Wayward melodic lines occur in passages like mm. 27-30 and 36-44. Pentatonicism, as briefly discussed previously, decorates the A section (mm. 1-22) and the A’ section (mm. 44-69). Other instances of the folk-song character occur in

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\(^{29}\) See pp. 3 and 5-4 for more information on modality and pentatonicism.

movement four where the seemingly endless melodic material wanders through several keys and formal constructs. The two-voiced polyphonic melodic material at times exemplifies the pentatonic scale, as in mm. 3-8. The melody evolves into a whole-tone collection in mm. 15-17, part of the d-minor section in B (mm. 14-17) and thus evolves out of the folkish tradition.

The tonal language used by Debussy contains several “idiosyncratic” elements, described by Boyd Pomeroy. First of all, in general, the relationship between tonic and dominant generally differs from that of traditional music from the Classical and/or Romantic periods. However, third relationships evolved into preeminence over the fifth dominance long before Impressionist composers such as Debussy came along, for example in the works of Brahms. Also, relationships of fifths still occur in Impressionist music, although they represent a deeper harmonic activity rather than Pomeroy’s described “chord-to-chord” motion, a truth especially applicable to Impressionism’s large-scale musical structures.31

Such novel interplay between tonic and mediant occurs frequently in the Six Noëls. For example, in the first movement, the tonal structure as a whole focuses upon dominant tonic relationships. For, in mm. 17-22, the entire section outlines the dominant seventh of b-flat minor leading to the tonic’s return in m. 23. However, when one looks at a chord-to-chord analysis, more third relationships delineate the phrase structure. If a chord-by-chord analysis of mm. 1-8 is done, more third relationships surface.

Overall, the second movement of Tournier’s Six Noëls relies not upon dominant tonic relationships, but on auxiliary progressions, pedal points, and the relative minor

key, which serves as a substitute dominant. First of all, both the A (mm. 1-22) and A’ (mm. 45-60) sections begin with the sub-dominant tonality, the auxiliary function. Then, in the B section (mm. 23-43), one encounters use of a pedal point for tonal clarity below color chords. In the large-scale structure of this piece, the key of f minor, the relative minor tonality with a third relationship to Ab major, serves as a kind of dominant as the tonality for the B section, which brings us back to the melodic and harmonic recapitulation of recap of A. The B section also ends on the tonic key’s V/V secondary dominant and then introduces another auxiliary progression starting with the sub-dominant of Ab major. This technique brings about another third relationship. The b-flat minor first inversion chord that concludes the B section exists a third below the tonic’s sub-dominant that then sounds at the beginning of ½ A’, which is half the size of A.

Especially in the A section, many of the progressions also feature this third-relationship movement, such as in the movement from c minor to a minor in m. 2. Thus in this piece third relationships serve the music in its underlying and superficial activities.

In movement five, one also observes third relationships as substitute dominants. After the first two-phrase period (mm. 1-8), the music tonicizes both of the tonic’s third relationships, A major in m. 9 and D major in m. 15. In addition, the music uses D major to reach the climactic French +6 to V in mm. 27-34. In more traditional contexts, we would see the dominant serve these purposes and fulfill such roles.

These idiosyncratic elements also include Pomeroy’s description of a “diatonic modality.” In general, Impressionist pieces contain features of the classic tonal system.
However, modal details conjure up what Pomeroy calls “problems” in the analysis of music in pure major and minor modes.\textsuperscript{32}

Such modal influence represents itself often in the \textit{Six Noëls}. Modality occurs in movement one of \textit{Six Noëls}, within the piece’s b-flat minor tonal framework. For example, the A (mm. 1-16) and A’ (mm. 35-41) sections use the Aeolian mode or the natural minor scale. In the B section (mm. 23-32), one comes across Tournier’s use of the dorian mode, a natural minor scale with a raised sixth scale degree. In movement two of \textit{Six Noëls}, one also sees modality expressed. In the B section (mm. 24-44), m. 31 features a lowered fifth scale degree, mark of a locrian modal inflection. Additionally, in B, the dorian mode persists in mm. 32-43. Finally, in movement six, we have the D mixolydian mode (mm. 10-12). Therefore, these modal scales hinder an analysis of the \textit{Six Noëls} as purely major or minor, due to their differing patterns of whole and half steps.

Two types of chromaticism persist in Impressionist music and represent the third idiosyncratic element. First, Pomeroy’s described “tonally functional” chromaticism allows for reliance upon the traditional rules of resolution in tonal music. Next, Pomeroy’s termed “non-functional” chromaticism features chordal activities which go beyond the constraints of traditional tonality, with preeminence upon collections of octatonic and/or whole-tone scales. While the latter genre of chromaticism occurred in some of the late-Romantic works as well, such examples remain secondary in the writings of composers like Sibelius and Richard Strauss.\textsuperscript{33}

\\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 157.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
Functional chromaticism often appears in the *Six Noëls*. For example, in movement one, mm. 23-35, one sees many non-diatonic tones which provide tension in the key of b-flat minor with the modal inflection discussed previously. Then, the music relaxes back into the diatonic version of b-flat natural minor by way of the sub-dominant, eb minor, in mm. 33-34. Chromaticism in movement two of *Six Noëls* also features functional progressions. Here, as in movement one, a portion of the piece contains non-diatonic modal inflections. This section, B (mm. 24-44), also lacks the octatonic and whole-tone scales needed to imply non-functional chromaticism.

Non-functional chromaticism is found less frequently in the *Six Noëls*, but the instances do demonstrate an Impressionist slant in the music. This fact is important indeed to note, as the presence of this type of chromaticism points toward the Impressionist slant in this music. An isolated instance occurs in movement three, m. 24, where the key of Ab major produces a purely coloristic or non-functional chromatic sonority composed of a whole-tone collection on beat number one. This is a color inflection which immediately rebounds to the temporary Ab major tonic chord which continues on until the music modulates back to c minor in closing.

“Non-functional diatonicism,” the fourth of Pomeroy’s idiosyncratic elements, involves the lack of what he describes as “harmonic goal-directedness” included in the harmonic language of previous musical periods. Although Impressionist style contains this technique as well, non-functional diatonicism dissolves in a sea of pentatonicism. An example of this phenomenon occurs in the opening of Debussy’s *La Mer*.34

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34 Ibid., 157-158 (Of course, other factors dictate lack of tonal direction, including certain rhythms and phrase structures. Further discussion of these two characteristics appear in subsequent paragraphs.)
One notices non-functional diatonicism in the meandering modality in movement two from the *Six Noëls*. In the B section (mm.24-44), although the F pedal point emphasizes the key of f minor, the tonality is never really established with a traditional cadence with a chord containing the leading tone. In addition, movement three shows this characteristic in the form of a repetitive and wandering pentatonic melody (mm. 1-8). Thus, the music does not travel far from its original key and starting motive. Very little progress occurs toward the production of a functional musical line. The filigreed right-hand part accompanies the more melodic left hand straightforwardness in simple alterations between tonic and dominant. This static harmonic line struggles to reach even the dominant in m. 8, due to the sea of pentatonicism seen here.

The fifth idiosyncratic element, the chordal vocabulary of Impressionism, features color rather than function to a greater extent than exists in Romantic music. Seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords often present themselves without the traditional preparation and resolution actions of the various tones. These broken rules of preparation and resolution react against the normal practice seen in the Classical and even the Romantic period. Many times, these Impressionist “chordal dissonances” make up stationary and ornamental versions of the traditional triadic chord. The newly developed higher discord distances itself from simpler sonorities because they lack downward and stepwise motions between chords. See m. 26 of “Sirènes,” where the tonic of B Major arrives, for an instance of this. Here, the A naturals form what Pomeroy calls “chordal flat sevenths” and present a non-functional movement to the subdominant by a purely embellishing function.35

35Ibid., 158.
Such embellishing functions appear in the *Six Noëls*. For example, in movement one, a freely approached and left seventh chord presents itself in m. 27, where one sees an abruptly placed half-dim. i 42 add 4 and sharp 6. The sonority is not approached or left by stepwise movement. Another example concerns what Pomeroy classifies as “improperly” exited V43/V in mm 30-31. Here, one sees parallel voice-leading, a definite coloristic sound lacking traditional function, as it fails to resolve to V. In movement two of *Six Noëls*, the minor seventh chord in m. 31, a VII9 in f minor, serves a solely coloristic purpose. The chord lacks the leading tone E-natural to bring us back to a tonic i triad. Tournier accentuates this process by putting a breath mark between this sonority and the acting tonic sonority on beat one of m. 32, an added-note chord with the 7th scale degree interacting with the 1st, 3rd, and 5th tones of the f minor scale. The ninth chord of interest here receives free treatment in terms of its preparation and resolution not featuring stepwise movement in either direction. Also, chordal dissonances, like the one seen in measure 24 with the tonic triad’s added second note, occur here with color acting as on one of its primary jobs. The ornamented sonority remains stationary without the traditional stepwise motion expected to occur in and out of the tonic triad. Another example of such freely approached and left higher discord occurs in movement three. Here, on beat number on of m. 13, one observes a i7 add 4 sonority in the midst of parallel voice-leading from and to the surrounding chords.

The sixth of Pomeroy’s idiosyncratic characteristic is “chordal syntax,” or harmonic planning. Impressionist chord progressions occur more frequently in the context of melodic thickening than as traditional successive chordal movements. Triads
arranged in parallel motion and/or open fifths result from this “non-functional melodic doubling.” The mentioned triads may occur in any inversion.\textsuperscript{36}

Movement two of \textit{Six Noëls} contains planing, which produces non-functional chord successions. One notices an increase in melodic texture in mm. 23-25 and 32-34. This music lacks identifiable and traditional chordal progressions. Rather, the function of these chords comes from the heaviness caused by the added fourth voice, which causes much dissonance. Here in these two examples, melodic doubling has the effect of producing non-functional successions. For instance, the C on beat two of m. 24 and on beat three of m. 25 receive simultaneous sounding in the soprano and bass. Triads arranged in parallel motion result in mm. 24-25. In mm. 31-32, we see parallel open fifths in the bass, partly as a side effect of the melodic doubling between soprano and bass. In addition, chordal syntax occurs in movement five. Here, melodic doubling happens twice on the bottom of each of the two stacked D major triads. This non-functional doubling produces triads arranged in parallel motion in mm. 27-29. No traditional function occurs until the progression evolves into a French +6 to V progression in mm. 33-34.

Finally, “arabesque and chord progressions” remains as the last element dubbed “idiosyncratic” by Pomeroy. This characteristic, according to Pomeroy, actually goes on to tell us “why” Impressionist tonality “ticks.” Debussy, by common consent the most influential musical Impressionist, “idealized,” according to Pomeroy, the embellished kind of melodies found in Bach and Palestrina. In Debussy, this kind of ornamental work comes in the form of what Pomeroy calls “harmonic inactivity,” leaving the melody’s

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid.
shape uninterrupted by a lot of harmonic movement. One finds, according to Pomeroy, “self-contained melodic phrases” or “thematic entities” as a result of this harmonic inactivity. Some scholars relate this ornamental aspect of Debussy’s Impressionist music with certain embellishments within the visual arts. As Pomeroy argues, in the Art Nouveau movement, which differs from Impressionist art, an “irresistible decorative impulse to fill available space” prevails. Musical Impressionist treatment of melodic ornaments compares with this artistic technique in that it fills Pomeroy’s termed “registral space” in a “combination of stepwise” and “disjunct” movements. Pomeroy says that the “pentatonic subset of the diatonic scale” especially complies with this type of motion because it lacks scale degrees 4 and 7. These tones function as mandatory ingredients in tonal chordal motion. So, without their inclusion, the subset of notes needs to act as purely tonic “embellishers,” according to Pomeroy. Other than pentatonic decorations, one also finds modality, including the major mode, and chromaticism. In terms of the chromaticism, combinations of these occur with octatonicism and/or use of whole-tone collections. Examples of solely octatonic or whole-tone tonic embellishers rarely surface in Impressionist music. These small melodic concepts form larger partitions. By the inclusion of several little thematic units, Pomeroy’s “chain” comes together consisting of parts only two measures in length. According to Pomeroy, the contrast and combination of elements like motives, texture, and harmonic rhythm

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 158-159.

39 Ibid., 159.
combine with other indicators such as instrumentation and dynamics to form a unit of a chain. These chains then come together to construct a more massive organization. The chains, in combination with the “non-goal-directedness” of the sonorities, produce a unique characteristic of Impressionist musical large-scale organization, as described by Pomeroy. The process allows for a relatively clear make-up of Pomeroy’s “thematic” material despite the lack of tonal chordal successions. Harmonies often move slowly underneath all of this other activity. A metrical regularity results, as described by Pomeroy. These harmonically inactive portions, according to Pomeroy, very frequently team up with chromatics on a lower level, which often form whole-tone or octatonic scalar constructions. Although these groups of notes hinder Pomeroy’s functional harmonies on the surface level, regular traditional patterns of harmonic movement often occur at a deeper level of the music. Impressionist music also at times focuses upon half-cadences to play a role in using tonal means on the surface level, often to enunciate a major thematic statement. These often correspond with normal parallel periods. However, as indicated above, a “I-V-I” movement accompanying a melody at surface level, as said by Pomeroy, appears rarely. Even less commonly, thematic material accentuated with “non-tonally-functional chromatic progressions,” according to Pomeroy, may occur.

To put this into simpler terms, let us look at examples from the Six Noëls. For instance, see mm. 30-35 of movement one. Here, melodic embellishment accompanies relatively static harmonic activity. The slow harmonic rhythm correlates with the very

\[^{40}^\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{41}^\text{Ibid., 159-161.}\]
chromatic and lively melodic activity. Of course, as discussed previously, the dorian mode surfaces in the melody, an element common in this style. Also, a chain of two-measure thematic units appears here, the first of which begins in m. 29. In movement two, we find a great deal of ornamented melodic material matched with relative harmonic inactivity. The pentatonic scale found in the melody of the first sub-phrase of the A (mm. 1-4) heightens the functional effect because it lacks a leading tone. This scale purely embellishes here. Use of the major mode and/or modality tends to enliven this particular technique. So, the A section (mm. 1-23) and A’ section (mm. 45-70) in Ab major enhance the ornamental turning melodic features with a dearth of harmonic movement. Then, in B (mm. 24-44), the locrian modal inflection in m. 32 and the more established dorian modality in mm. 33-44 additionally restrain the harmonies in terms of mobility and zoom in on their meandering melodic character. Finally, one notices that almost this entire piece possesses a large-scale construction of two-measure chains of thematic unity. For example, the opening phrase of the A section, mm. 1-10, construct a sentence structure, 2+2+4+2. Similar patterns continue throughout the piece. These chains of “melodic” phrases create a self-contained type of effect in the music with the metric regularity in the melody over slowly moving harmonies. I-V-I motions underneath these melodies never occur at the surface level or, as in the case of this piece, in a deeper structural context. In addition, the same characteristics accompany a similar example of arabesque technique in movement five where we find ornamented melody matched with slow harmonic progression in mm. 1-8. The repetitive melodic motive correlates with the tonic pedal point’s occasional interaction with the dominant. Here, as well, the line is composed of a chain of two-measure thematic units that begins in mm. 1-2.
Impressionists also had a penchant for harmonies outside of the traditional tonal system, such as higher discord sonorities and added-note chords. It would be relatively unusual for them to add chords from what Pomeroy calls the “major-minor key system” to these radically different scales, despite the third-based harmonies often used as the backdrop to Debussy’s whole-tone effects. However, just as important as the exotic sonorities, Palmer’s “status” of harmony here goes beyond that of the melody in Impressionist music. The chords hold importance in their own right apart from any of what Palmer dubs the “subservience” to melodic material. Non-functional harmonies result, according to Palmer. Impressionist “consonances,” as described by Palmer, come in forms such as dominant and secondary chords that lack proper preparation and resolution. These add up to seventh, ninth, eleventh, and even thirteenth sonorities at times. Added-note chords abound, such as added sixth sonorities and whole-tone chords.  

In movement one of the Six Noëls, we find such sonorities. Non-functional chords here come in several varieties. The V43/V in measure 31 manifests itself as a freely approached and left chord in terms of traditional voice leading and progression. There is a lack of stepwise motion and dominant resolution. For an additional instance of this phenomenon, see the whole-tone chord in m. 34 on the fourth beat. Although the sonority leads us to the tonic, the chord does not function as a dominant in the traditional sense, because it lacks a leading tone. The group of tones in question equates to a iv m7 in b-flat minor. Finally, in m. 23, a i add 6 graces the first beat in a coloristic sense. Additional examples of such dominating sonorities come in movement four. In mm. 21-

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42 Palmer, 21.
22, we hear a i chord over a dominant pedal point in d minor resolve to a quartal chord over the same bass before evolving back into the piece’s home key, A major. These chords serve not the melodic material but stay their own course and bring the melody along. To the ear, these non-functional harmonies, which lack traditional stepwise voice-leading, sound much more powerful than does the weak conjunct soprano melody. The quartal chord of m. 22 serves as an appoggiatura to the A major tonic’s resolution in m. 24. This effect is due to the added fourth and fifth partials, as well as to its missing third.

Debussy, Tournier, and other Impressionists treated the “common chords” and regular intervals with just as much originality. A harmonic device used by Impressionists includes what Palmer calls the “juxtaposition” of sonorities such as root position triads. Or, one may see sequences on an open fifth interval. Also, quartal and quintal chords, sonorities composed of fourths and fifths, abound in Impressionist music.43

The following examples show how Tournier devises common chords and regular intervals by non-traditional means in the Six Noëls. In movement one, Tournier uses parallel movement of root position triads in the first two eight measure phrases (mm. 1-16) in A. This root position movement returns in ½ A’ (mm. 35-41), the second A section, to end the piece. Another instance of this technique occurs in m. 34, where we see parallel motion in the progression leading us back to the tonic in m. 35. Another example of the juxtaposition of root position triads occurs in mm. 1-2 of movement three.

Sequences on open fifths also occur in the Six Noëls. For example, note mm. 18-20 over a dominant pedal point in movement one. The two sequence events happen in mm. 18 and 20 on broken open diminished fifths. The sequence motive travels upward.

43 Ibid., 21.
A downward sequence of open fifths occurs in mm. 31-32 of movement two, here in the tenor and bass voices.

Quartal and quintal sonorities appear frequently in the Six Noëls. See movement one for various examples of the chords built upon the intervals of fourths and fifths. The piece’s first sound is a quintal sonority while a quartal chord appears in m. 22 of movement four in the bass clef.

In terms of large-scale form, Debussy and the other Impressionists preferred ternary constructions. Sometimes in their works, one sees closed ternary forms where the A section ends in the tonic. At other times, open ternary forms appear with the A section ending in a non-tonic key. Another popular Impressionist form is Pomeroy’s “cyclic” structure which revolves around the return of a previously stated sequence. Also, one sees through-composed forms abound in Impressionist music. The structural roles of the different sections within each Impressionist form show the biggest difference between these and traditional formal models of the Classical and even the Romantic periods. The lengths of the formal units that comprise Impressionist music vary greatly at all hierarchical levels: entire sections, subsections, or phrases. In Classical and Romantic music, these sections carry more consistent weights in proportional terms.

The Six Noëls show some of these principles in action. Movement one has an A (mm. 1-16) B (mm. 17-34) ½ A’ (mm. 35-41) form. Despite the closed ternary form, the A section does not end with a strong dominant to tonic cadence in b-flat minor. Although

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44 For an example, see “Sirènes” by Debussy.

45 Pomeroy, 163-165.

46 Pomeroy, 199.
this music is in a traditional form, the functions of the different sections do not comply to earlier set standards here. For example, the second A section is not really a true recap because of its very small size in ratio with the other sections. Also, the B section functions more as developmental music than as contrasting material. These characteristics depend upon the fact that hierarchical elements construct the form rather than any proportionality. For instance, the rate of alternations between notes of the main motive determines the sectional form. The rate increases within B until it again slows at the outset of ½ A’. These formal principles may also be easily analyzed in movement three, a through-composed piece. The phrases here arrange themselves hierarchically and not proportionally. They grow in size as the music progresses. The first two phrases each consist of eight measures. The third phrase, however, comprises eleven measures. This hierarchical organization highlights the musical climax which occurs in m. 17. A proportional arrangement of these phrases would have placed the largest segment in the middle of the two smaller sections. Or, Tournier might have used three equal phrase-lengths in the piece.

Some of Impressionism’s characteristic sonorities focus on sound rather than function. Traditional progressions occur, such as perfect authentic cadences and imperfect authentic cadences, but they do not strike us as characteristic Impressionist features due to their earlier origins. Pomeroy’s “non-functional dominant,” however, determines a kind of quintessential Debussy or Impressionist chordal element. Pomeroy’s “dominant ninth” collection of tones, so common in Debussy and other Impressionist music, appeared rarely before Wagner and, when it did, the resulting function was dominant or as “extended chromatic voice leading,” according to Pomeroy.
However, in Impressionist music, the dominant function of the dominant ninth virtually disappears.\textsuperscript{47}

This non-functional dominant appears in the \textit{Six Noëls}. In the B section of the first movement (mm. 17-34) one sees this non-functional dominant. For example, in the first half of B (mm. 17-22), we find the non-functional dominant ninth. The music here simply builds off of the dominant. For example, see the V9 in measure 18, formed from a passing Gb in the soprano. This chord does not feature a dominant to tonic function. Another example exists in movement two with m. 31. Here, a V9 chord encompasses the entire bar. However, no dominant function associates itself with this sonority, for the chord deceptively resolves to its minor i instead of to its major I. Also, non-orthodox voice-leading graces the progression in lieu of the traditional stepwise entrance and exit to each successive chord. Finally, this V9 serves no role to bring our ear back to the original tonic of Ab major, although it occurs within the middle section in f minor.

Debussy and the Impressionists use a lot of repetition in their music, according to Richard Parks. These instances appear as easily recognizable Impressionist musical elements. They promote heightening or relaxation to the musical prose in terms of harmony, melody, rhythm, etc.\textsuperscript{48} Instances of this kind of flexible repetition are found at various moments in the \textit{Six Noëls}. In movement one, one notices melodic repetition. In the B section (mm. 17-34), the thematic material basically builds upon the main tune from A (mm. 1-16) and causes a heightening of musical activity by reiteration and development. Next, when the melodic material from A comes back unchanged in the $\frac{1}{2}$

\textsuperscript{47}Pomeroy, 188-189.

\textsuperscript{48} Pomeroy, 200.
A’ section (mm. 35-41), a relaxing occurs in the sounding rhetoric. Finally, the tonal repetition of b-flat minor to recap the A section here in ½ A’ also causes a lessening of musical tension. An additional example of reiteration manipulation occurs in movement four. In terms of harmony, a gradual heightening happens first as the original A major tonic begins to modulate each time the melodic material first introduced in mm. 3-7 repeats. In m. 9, the melody is reintroduced in the dominant, E major. Then, in m. 14, a more mysterious and distant key, d minor, accompanies the polyphonic tune and begins the most intense build-up heard here. A harmonic relaxation finally occurs with the tonic’s return in m. 24. The original melodic material then reiterates its final statement in mm. 28-30. All the way through, the almost constant melodic repetition correlates with the alteration of keys to produce the desired musical result. Reiteration techniques here in the forms of harmony and melody aid the music to produce effective build-up (mm. 1-18), climax (m. 20), and release (mm. 21-37).

Another characteristic of Impressionist music lies in the form of Park’s “durations between successive attack points.” The rate of alterations between adjacent notes points again towards that heightening or relaxation in the musical rhetoric. This element also remains conveniently clear to notice and analyze.49

In movement one of the Six Noëls, a heightening occurs when the durations between successive attack points lessen. This increase in musical tension happens in the developmental part of B (mm. 28-32). Then, a relaxation comes when ½ A’ recapitulates the opening rate of change between notes in mm. 35-41. In movement six, the middle section, mm. 10-18, exemplifies such heightening which occurs due to the lessening

49 Ibid., 200.
durations between successive attack points. The melody, as well as the harmonic rhythm, becomes busier in this section. The relaxation then occurs in A’ (mm. 19-29) where the durations between successive attack points increase. Also, the melody’s action diminishes, and harmonic rhythm subsides in frequency.

Impressionist music often uses simultaneous ostinati, a technique that produces complex textures and that results in multiple rhythmic lines.\(^{50}\) In the *Six Noëls*, two examples of simultaneous ostinati stand out. First, in movement four, the repetitive rhythms in each of the two voices produce a complex texture, which highlights the homorhythmic harmonies. At times, as in the climactic section of mm. 18-22, two different rhythms coincide between the two melodic voices. In movement six, then, another instance of a homorhythmic ostinati occurs in mm. 1-6. However, the real interest lies in the recapitulation of these simultaneous ostinati (mm. 19-25). Here, one observes a complex texture formed from the ostinati above a descending pedal point in the bass line. In addition, we also see multiple rhythmic lines formed between the simultaneous ostinati and the moving bass line.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 206.
Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the *Six Noëls* of Marcel Tournier with respect to the unique synthesis of Romantic and Impressionist elements contained in this suite. Tournier’s innovative stylistic choices revolutionized the sound of harp literature during the early twentieth century.

Chapter One considered the Romantic qualities of Tournier’s *Noëls*. Melodically, the music highlighted the long *cantabile* lines, intense climaxes, and motivic variations. In terms of harmony, altered chords such as augmented triads and Aug+6 chords figured prominently as did coloristic dissonances used on strong beats, higher discord, and broadened use of tonality in the form of sudden modulations and certain sonorities with novel functions. In addition, Tournier used wider-ranging keys, coloristic progressions, and euphonic rolled accompaniment in the *Six Noëls*. Rhythmically, counterpoint, syncopation, and variation in harmonic rhythms all played important roles. Finally, the works show an abundance of performance instructions, such as tempo and dynamic markings, in the midst of Classical formal procedures.

Chapter Two investigated the Impressionist characteristics in the *Six Noëls*. Elements found include the following melodic elements: meandering pentatonic as well as whole-tone folk-song and modal plainsong. In terms of harmony, an obvious increase in sophistication was noted in the suite when compared with standard Classical or even Romantic music literature. The elevation in harmonic interest evidenced itself in the employment of modality, non-functional chord successions, unorthodox voice-leading in higher discord, solely “under the surface” dominant to tonic motion, non-chord tones, whole-tone chords, dissonance to consonance elevation, various types of chromaticism,
harmonic planing, quartal sonorities, non-functional V9, ornate melodies within static harmonies. And increased specificity in performer instruction occurs here within various inventive formal procedures, such as through-composition and cyclic construction organized hierarchically, by alterations in note repetition, ostinati, and rate of attack between adjacent notes.

The features listed in the previous paragraph are discussed in standard sources on Romantic music and Impressionism. For example, in Chapter One, analytical models such as those used by Rey Longyear and Kenneth Klaus were applied to the *Six Noëls* by Tournier. In addition, Chapter Two utilized musico-analytical tools typical of Impressionist scholarship, by authors such as Boyd Pomeroy and Simon Trezise, to dissect Tournier’s *Six Noëls*.

Interactions between the two sets of characteristics/chapters exist. While Tournier’s lines showed the Romantic characteristics noted previously, i.e. motivic variation, the Impressionist aspects of the melodies took these principles a bit farther to include elements such as the meandering shape. Harmonically, the music showed a more Impressionist style: for instance, the importance of the harmonic sonorities goes beyond simply coloristic progressions, as seen in Romantic music. Likewise, the music shows Impressionist treatment of non-functional chord successions, unorthodox voice-leading, dissonance used as consonance, and, finally, non-functional chromaticism. The amount of performance instructions also reach the volume often associated with Impressionist literature, although Romantic music also often contains much such instructions. Here, however, nuances appear to be notated in the Impressionist fashion. The formal procedures discovered also deviate from the Romantic duplication of traditional Classical
structures. Tournier’s forms often adopt the Impressionist alterations between basic ternary and through-composed, for instance. Finally, although most forms here were found to be simple Romantic ternary, the process by which these take on their shape include more complicated Impressionist procedures, such as hierarchical structures interwoven by means such as simultaneous ostinati.

In sum, this thesis has confirmed that Tournier bridged the gap between French Romanticism and Impressionism in the harp music of the early twentieth century. The *Six Noëls* vividly display a unique synthesis of Romantic and Impressionist characteristics—an amalgam typical of Tournier. These stylistic elements, along with Tournier’s innovative technical apparatus revolutionized harp literature forever. Hopefully, the fruits of this labor include practical implications for research, pedagogy, and performance concerning the music of this important harp composer, who for his instrument stands simultaneously as Chopin and Debussy.
Bibliography


