



Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine

2020
Varia 2020

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/7663>

DOI: 10.4000/rga.7663

ISSN: 1760-7426

Publisher:

Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine, UGA Éditions/Université Grenoble Alpes

Electronic reference

Adrià San José Plana, Jordi Martí-Henneberg and Justino Losada Gómez, "Music and the perception of the mountains through the symphonic poems of Liszt, Franck and Strauss", *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine* [Online], | 2020, Online since 30 December 2020, connection on 13 January 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/7663> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.7663>

This text was automatically generated on 13 January 2021.



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Music and the perception of the mountains through the symphonic poems of Liszt, Franck and Strauss

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Introduction

- 1 In the course of the 19th century, the high mountains of Europe passed from being feared or admired to forming part of the space experienced by its inhabitants. The alpine and hiking clubs that were created in many countries following the founding of London's initial Alpine Club (1857) played an important role in this process. In this way, an interest in high mountains passed from being reserved for only the elite to becoming widespread among the middle classes. At the same time, literature (Lacoste-Veysseyre, 1981) and art (Gamble, 1999) were incorporated into the mountain experience, as a central theme and one particularly associated with Romanticism. Music was no exception and many composers found inspiration in mountain landscapes and, in particular, in the Alps, although also in other areas, such as the Pyrenees.
- 2 The romantic sublime conception of nature and the colonization of the high peaks by the civil society laid the ground for the birth of mountain-themed music. In turn, this same music prescribed (rather than merely described) a relationship with the mountain that ultimately conditioned its social perception. The goal of this article is precisely to understand this process of bidirectional influence between the birth of mountain-themed music and the genesis of mountaineering.
- 3 The context is the interpretation of nature that is specifically provided by art. In these lines, we propose to focus our analysis on music either directly related to specific mountains or that composed with the aim of transmitting feelings inspired by the high mountain scenery. For every play, we will study the social conditions that made their composition possible and the specific conception of mountains they transmit.
- 4 We also conceive music as a way of studying and learning more about the dissemination of the concept of nature in the European society of the 19th century. In

this article, instead of focusing on visual arts, which are acceptedly regarded as a source of political and cultural discourse, we propose to shift the attention to soundscape and consider it an equal valid bearer of cultural meaning, as also suggested by (Smith, 1997).

- 5 The mountains offer us the most synthetic expression of the values associated with the relationship between man and nature: risk, overcoming individual limitations, purity, emotions, reflections on the urbanised world, the quest for the sublime, and the expression of religious sentiments (Andrews, 2008: 21-28; Ruskin, 2005; Hayman, 1990: 151). Along similar lines, mountains could be understood as a source of artistic inspiration, as they were the last great natural element to have been developed or colonised. In a world dominated by mechanisation and where new discoveries were changing the ordinary life of people so quickly, the image of the mountains gained value as a symbol of stability and purity. It became an aesthetic standard for romantic values, in which rural life in the heart of nature gave way to the unhealthy urban and industrial societies.
- 6 The body of this article is formed by a selection of symphonic works in which the theme of the mountains is the main component. To be more precise, we are interested in the romantic symphonic poems “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” developed by César Franck and also by Franz Liszt and “Eine Alpensinfonie”, by Richard Strauss. These compositions have enabled us to better present to what point music can describe feelings in particular places (Losada *et al.*, 2017).
- 7 Since the nineteenth century, there have been many examples of orchestral works related to the mountains (Knight, 2006). Apart from the works studied in this article, and without being exhaustive, it is possible to count other compositions that were either partially or totally inspired by the mountains, ranging from Berlioz’s “Harold in Italy”, Mussorgski’s “Night on Bare Mountain”, Grieg’s “Peer Gynt”, Delius’s “A Song of the High Hills”, Indy’s “Symphony on a French Mountain Air” or Joachim Raff’s seventh symphony “In the Alps”, Ives’s “From the Steeples and the Mountains”, Vaughan William’s “Antarctic Symphony”, Copland’s “Appalachian Spring”, Jon Leifs’ “Hekla” or the 2nd “Mysterious Mountain symphony” by Hovhaness.
- 8 The choice of works for this article was based on some specific reasons. On the one hand, on the programmatic character of the symphonic poem, both in its origins, which are reflected in “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” as interpreted by Franck and Liszt, and in the epitome of its formal development, through “Eine Alpensinfonie” by Strauss. These are works which, although of different origins, coincide in identifying the Alps as one of the primordial scenes for the development of the romantic aesthetic. On the other hand, they also bestow upon it the scenic attributes derived from a new understanding of the concept of the sublime. In this way, the need to travel and the development of hiking subject to this aesthetic were brought together in Romanticism, in combination with the artistic currents which brought to the table the natural values of the mountains and their relationship with the people (Scaramellini, 1996: 49-57).
- 9 There is therefore a relevant artistic tradition which has adopted the mountains as a setting for inspiration. This has helped to transform society’s perception of the mountains, which has changed from one of an inhospitable and imperfect setting (Figure 1 below) to another worthy of admiration.
- 10 Considering that the question of how and where to set such a study of the mountains is both wide and complex in its cultural dimension, we also decided — for the purpose of

this research – we should limit our analysis to the most influential symphonic poems that have chosen the mountains as their key element. As previously explained, two of the three works selected have the same name: “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne”. They were inspired by a well-known romantic poem of the same name by the French writer Victor Hugo. The third: the well-known “Eine Alpensinfonie” by Richard Strauss, is a work that describes a hike up into the mountains and then the walk back down again. In this article, we are concerned with interpreting the meaning of these works within the context of the literature, thought and society of their time.

- 11 The incorporation of the mountains in symphonic music saw its greatest development during the Romantic period. In its search to global understanding, this movement used music as a channel to universal expression. To be precise, Romanticism sought to explore human passions within a natural setting; and what better place was there for establishing the limits to these feelings than in the high mountains? (Morris, 2012). Following this line, we decided to limit this study to the Romantic period and to interpreting the musical works within their original context. Even so, it should be noted that their influence remains to the present, as shown by the fact that “Eine Alpensinfonie” has been recorded on numerous occasions and still forms part of the modern-day concert repertoire.
- 12 As nature is one of the central themes in which music has found inspiration, it seems to us interesting to understand this relationship. With this in mind, it is relevant to study the way in which music has helped us to interpret nature and to make it better known to us and – more specifically – perhaps its purest setting: the mountains.
- 13 It is also necessary to refer to the mountains as a specific element within nature and, in particular, to how they were incorporated into art, a field upon which literature has traditionally had a greater influence. Martínez de Pisón (2017) has made a particularly innovative contribution to the subject from this perspective, with this being principally based on Spanish and French literature, but also including English literature. This author has combined poetic references (to the works of the likes of Coleridge, 1802 and Shelley, 1817) with scientific ones (Carbonières, 1789) as well as information about a large number of novels with mountain themes.
- 14 In our case, another recent reference work was *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema* (Morris, 2012), which contains constant intertextual allusions to questions relating to literature and philosophy. As we shall later explain, this book complemented *The Romantic Generation* by Charles Rosen (1998) and helped us to fit our chosen theme in with that of the evolution of ideas and cultural traditions (Rosen, 1998).
- 15 After this general introduction, we will develop this article as follows. In the first section, we shall identify the aspects that provide the framework for a study of symphonic music relating to the mountains, such as the social impact of the alpine movement and the framework of the ideas behind Romanticism. We will then present the essential characteristics of the symphonic poems examined here, based on “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” by Victor Hugo. After that, we will consider how this was set to music by Franz Liszt and César Franck, before finishing with an analysis of “Eine Alpensinfonie” by Richard Strauss. These works will be analysed from the perspective of discourse structure by means of the semiotic relations approach proposed by the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce. Later, modern musicology developed the concept of musical sign, which refers to any sound section capable of

carrying meaning according to Peirce's theory (Monelle, 2001). So this concept could also be employed taking into account its geographic nuances (Losada, 2016).

Intellectual framework and social context in Europe: alpinism and Romanticism

- 16 The exploration of high peaks was initially a pursuit mainly reserved for the elite. This was not a spontaneous movement, but one that had clear antecedents. On the one hand, there was the tradition of the Grand Tour, dating from the eighteenth century, which consisted of making almost obligatory visits to Paris, Florence and Rome, which could also include other cities, with travellers contemplating the Alps along the way. On the other hand, as a colonial power, Britain founded the first geographical societies, which contributed the necessary knowledge of the countries of the world to facilitate commerce and the exploitation of their resources. Between the years 1869 and 1879, the number of geographical societies in the world increased from six to thirty-four and they had around 22,000 members by the end of this period. This was, therefore, a movement that both preceded and ran parallel to the development of the alpine clubs. The first Alpine Club was founded in London in 1857 as the result of a confluence of interests in acquiring scientific knowledge and admiring and conquering the highest mountains.
- 17 It was not a coincidence that the first clubs to be constituted were in Alpine countries, partly as a reaction to the "colonisation" of their own peaks by the English. Thus, the 1860s saw the founding of the Italian Alpine Club (1863), the Swiss Alpine Club (Bern, 1863) and the German Alpine Club (1869). In the 1870s, a further three associations were set up in Austria¹ and two more in France.
- 18 In summary, during the second half of the nineteenth century, there was an increase in the number of societies created to promote alpinism and hiking. This was a clear expression of the growing interest in: the mountains as a geographic setting; understanding nature; enjoying sport; and searching for new experiences. Group excursions, for between one and various days, were now organised on a regular basis. Thanks to these associations, for the wider public, knowledge of the mountains passed from being solely based on indirect references –such as the accounts of excursionists illustrated with drawings – to an experience that could be enjoyed at first hand. The mountains therefore lost their status as a largely imagined space to be contemplated from a distance and instead became a place that formed part of everyday life. The number of people wishing to get to know the mountains better, rather than simply relying on the chronicles of others, therefore increased. As we shall see in the next section, literature encouraged this interest and music incorporated the sensations that mountaineers could experience at high altitudes.
- 19 The birth of hiking had an evident link to the growing interest in nature that emerged in the modern age. To understand this interest in the natural environment, it is necessary to remember that Romanticism originated at the time when the first great cities were emerging, which opened the way to modern life. We should highlight the painting: "Wanderer above the sea of fog" (Friedrich, 1817), which is perhaps the Romantic picture par excellence. The subject that it portrays, who is immersed in a sublime landscape, is none other than an "urbanite". It is frequent in writers of this period to focus on the combination of the urban poet – capturing the new sensations of

the modern city – and the romantic poet; indeed, Victor Hugo was one of the maximum exponents of this tendency. One of his poems, entitled “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” (1829), inspired Cesar Frank and Franz Liszt to transgress established musical formulas and to write works whose discourse gravitated to new, freer musical forms, referred to as symphonic poems. In this way, they intended to musically expose and relate both the global sensation of the poem and the natural values of Romanticism. Although these composers based their works on a poem that presented the mountains in a determined way, they subjected the literary content to a series of transformations that we now seek to study. To do this, and before entering the territory of music, it would perhaps be a good idea to analyse how Hugo himself presented the mountains in his poem.

“Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne”: Hugo, Liszt and Franck

“Ce qu’on entend...” (1829) by Victor Hugo

- 20 “Ce qu’on entend...” presents the contraposition between humanity and nature. In Hugo’s time, mankind’s age-old fear and respect for the mountains, which stemmed from legend and superstition, was disappearing and was being replaced by a rational fear: that of a difficult and dangerous ascent (Macfarlane, 2003). Hugo’s trips to the mountains – self reported in his travel diaries – provide evidence that the aim of the new generations was to make them part of their everyday space. This is further shown by his reference to the touristic peak called Mount Rigi (See Figure 1), which he described in his journey to the Alps (1839) as “swarming with people” (Hugo, 2012: 245). Even so, Hugo cynically showed the falseness of the human pretence to have conquered nature in an episode from his trip through the Pyrenees (1842). After an ascent, the French writer describes reaching a mountain cabin; in other words, a human construction within the domain of nature. There, Hugo noted the “Curious room, in which the mountains seemed to feel at home; the rock lodged there, the stream ran by there” (Hugo, 2012: 188). Mankind cannot therefore evict nature from its constructions. In fact, Victor Hugo was showing us that it is not possible to distinguish between one domain belonging to mankind and another to nature. Both are intermixed and inseparable.
- 21 In the first paragraphs of “Ce qu’on entend...” the poetic “I” speaks to us of a confusing sound that flows through the world”: of an “eternal hymn that flood the whole world” (Hugo, 2001: 242). In fact, this “ineffable music” (Hugo, 2001: 242) is only describable via vague metaphors. On the ear getting used to it, the poetic “I” perceives “two voices within [this] single sound”, and little by little it begins to distinguish them more clearly: one corresponds to nature and the other to humanity. This demonstrates that man and nature form a single unit, as also suggested by the episode of the mountain cabin, and only at a second moment is it possible to conceptually separate them. It will be interesting to study whether or not the compositions of Liszt and Frank present the evolution of a confused sound in a melody for two voices, in the same way as in the poem.
- 22 The mountains, like the ocean, are a perfect habitat in which to perceive the relationship of coexistence between mankind and nature. This is a coexistence that, to

quote Hugo's poem, "floods the whole globe" and, as a consequence, also its cities. However, despite always remaining in force, this relationship of coexistence is only clearly perceptible out there where mankind abandons the false sense of dominion and control conferred upon it by its metropolises. Speaking in more abstract terms, we could say that humanity, whether residing in the midst of the mountains – or an ocean – can appreciate its essence in a particularly refined way. This explains why Victor Hugo's trips to the mountains were also journeys of self-exploration.

- 23 This parallel between the sea and the mountains was very characteristic of Victor Hugo and was also very much present in his travel diaries. It is particularly relevant to underline the fact that, in the poem, the symphony of nature comes from the ocean and, more specifically, from the waves which, to a measured dialogue, give an impression of unity. Hugo assigned that voice to the harp, in a gesture that Liszt and Franck later followed, using it in combination with other instruments to create texture. According to Hugo, the voice of nature is pure and beautiful; unlike that of humanity, which he defined as being sad and close to a scream. However, the difficult differentiation between the two voices which Hugo described at the beginning of the poem, vanishes later and almost ends in confrontation.

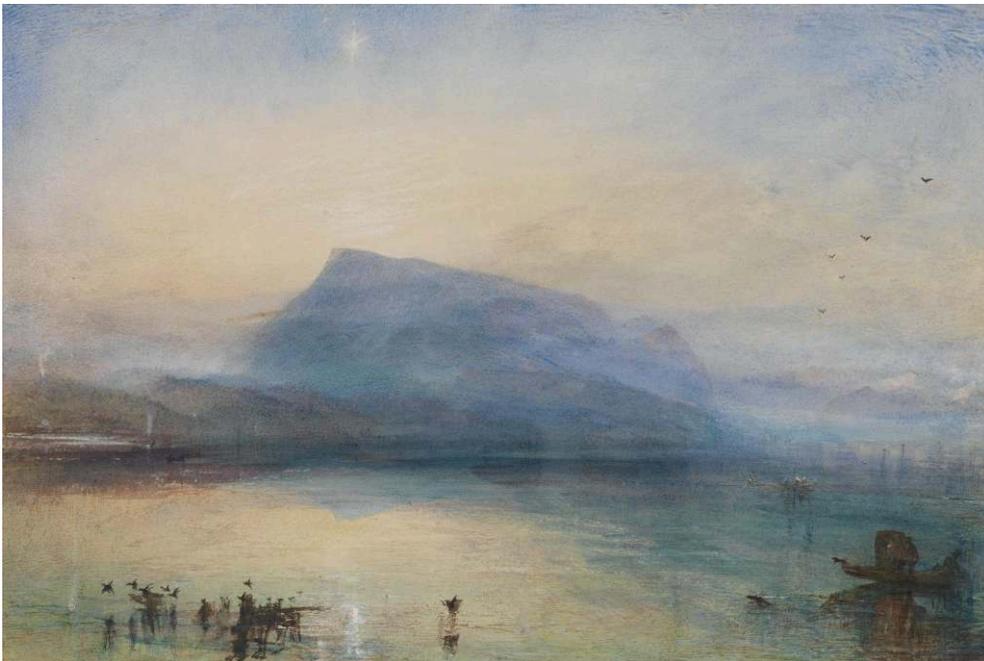


Figure. 1: The blue Rigi, Sunrise (1842) – J. M. W. Turner

Source: The Tate Modern (Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 (Unported)Photo © Tate. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-blue-rigi-sunrise-t12336>).

Mount Rigi used to be in Hugo's time an emblematic symbol of romantic values.

"Ce qu'on entend..." (1829) by Franz Liszt

- 24 "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne" by Franz Liszt, also known as Berg-Symphonie, was the first exponent of the genre known as the symphonic poem. It was published in 1856, after a previous premier at Weimar (1850). This was the fruit of a long compositional gestation which dated back to at least 1830. Through a structural progression based on various themes and motifs that narrate a mountain ascent, it

expresses the conflict of coexistence between modern man and nature. In this way, the intertextuality of the score is enriched, under the almost pictorial influence of the orchestral resources. This occurs, for example, at the beginning of the work² [0:13], when the strings come in with rapid tremolos, presenting a fluid, hazy sensation (Johns, 1986). This is how the oceanic theme of the eternal hymn is developed, before it gives way to the conflict by means of the brass section [0:49] and the lyrical theme of nature with the support of the woodwind instruments [1:39]. These initial themes, which have a melodic and introspective character, contrast with those dedicated to humanity, which are more rhythmic and lively [20:42]. It is a case of contrasting the purity of nature with the profanity of man. Liszt took this aspect of the poem, which is mixed together with other themes, as the leading thread for developing his work. In addition, and as linking elements, Liszt seasoned the symphonic poem with a number of mountain resources (Haselbock, 2011) such as instruments (like the violin and tam-tam) [7:27] playing solos [8:34], or frullato (flutter-tongue) effects by the brass section or in misty passages [8:40]. The intention was to evoke the sensation of distance typical of mountain scenery. In the central section, he placed the hymn to the God of nature, which is sung as a choral piece by the brass section [12:46]. After the final development of the conflict of themes relating to humanity, the hymn resurges as a final coda, including much calmer dynamics, expressed by the string and brass sections [24:05]. In this way, the work gradually dissolves the themes in conflict and directs them towards a final mediation which is religious in character.

“Ce qu’on entend...” (1829) by César Franck

- 25 The symphonic poem by the Belgian composer César Franck that was also entitled “Ce qu’on entend...” was composed in around 1846: before that of Liszt. However, it was only recovered as an unpublished piece by the composer and musicologist Julien Tiersot in 1922. Franck’s music was about twenty-five years ahead of its time in its use of the orchestra, as it laid numerous choral crescendos over the rhythms marked by the string section. We later find such aspects in more recent works, such as Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, and in the symphonies of Bruckner. This orchestral resource, with a differentiation between the rhythms provided by the string and brass sections, allowed Franck to express the influence of the dichotomy between nature and humanity present in the poem by Victor Hugo. Unlike Liszt, Franck focused on a symphonic development which turned out to be much more abstract, as it does not fragment the progress of the work into different themes associated with the poem. In this way, Franck managed to establish a guiding thread. He opted for suggesting an atmosphere by means of a wide E Major chord that according to Malvano (2009) implies a certain mysticism that would evoke the Ocean theme of the eternal hymn³ [0:10]. The composer achieved this through a powerful presentation of the work, with a majestic rising and expanding chorale-like motif [2:50] that also resurges triumphantly later. A chromatic development by the violas and clarinets [4:50] points Franck to emphasize the points of encounter between the two works on finding allusions to the hymn to God through brass choral sections, and the human lamentation set around the rhythmic climax [9:52] to the central section [14:32]. Finally the conclusion emerges with grandeur and solemnity taking first theme back after a series of vigorous contrasts and harmonic modulations [22:59]. From our perspective Franck’s *Ce qu’on entend...* could be an attempt in which the concept of the mountain goes beyond the human condition

according to an ideal of pure, beautiful and eternal Nature, reflecting the human loneliness and fears of the pantheistic Victor Hugo's poem when opposed to the forces of natural phenomena.

“The alpine symphony”: Strauss and Nietzsche

- 26 We are now going to make a small jump through time and to speak about the Alpine Symphony. We shall adopt a similar approach to that followed in the previous section and start by analysing the works that most influenced Richard Strauss in his creation of this piece. To help us do this, we shall first quickly review the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche that had most influence on the German composer.

Nietzsche and the mountains

- 27 “When the centre of gravity of life is placed not in life but in ‘the beyond’ – in the nothing –, the centre of gravity has been removed from life” (Nietzsche, 2000). According to Peter Pal, this quote reveals the logic that is contained in much of Nietzsche's thinking about nihilism (Pal Pélabert, 2009: 294). According to Nietzsche, Western history has been the history of a constant lack of respect for life in favour of certain metaphysical values considered to be of a higher order. This has afforded a reason and meaning to our existence, but also reduced life to little more than a passing stage on the road towards an idealised future. Nietzsche, wanted to put the centre of gravity back where it should always has been: in life, and the earthly world, instead of leaving it subject to an ideal. Nietzsche would say that it is necessary to affirm and accept life as it is, with all of its potential and limitations.
- 28 In line with these ideas, Nietzsche always felt attracted by contact with the world of the senses and by physical activity in contact with the Earth; these were activities that he sought and carried out throughout his life. Thus, when he left the University of Basle, he decided to dedicate his life to horticulture (De Botton, 2001). This was, however, a rather short-lived passion, on account of his physical problems, but it is one which illustrates his interest in the earthly world. In fact, when he was at Sils-Maria, Nietzsche said “I used to bet up at five in the morning and work until midday, then I would go walking up to the highest peaks that surrounded the town: Piz Corvatsch, Piz Lagrev and Piz de la Marna” (De Botton, 2001: 237) on long and demanding hikes. He thought that the mountains were a source of risk, suffering and pain, but that once in the mountains, they offered their compensation; this made the tough ascent worthwhile. For Nietzsche then, the mountains were a symbol of the legitimacy of suffering which, as an integral part of life, it is necessary to accept.
- 29 Richard Strauss was very much influenced by these ideas and, throughout his life, he expressed an interest in the thoughts of Nietzsche. In fact, one of his best-known works was entitled “Thus spoke Zarathustra”, in reference to the book of the same name by Nietzsche. Furthermore, the original title that Strauss gave to his “Eine Alpensinfonie” was *The Antichrist*.
- 30 Bryan Gilliam holds that “Strauss did not describe a finite individual who is jealous of eternal Nature, but instead presented one who, on the contrary, celebrates it, and feels inspired by their natural setting, which helps them to achieve great feats [...]. Strauss emphatically insisted that both Judaism and Christianity – or in other words,

metaphysics – are as unhealthy as they are unproductive, because they are incapable of understanding Nature as the primary source of life and of reaffirming it” (Gilliam, 1999: 113). In line with Nietzsche, Strauss called for a finite and mortal individual who would not simply accept their condition with romantic suffering, but with a vital affirmation. In consequence, he thought that nature should cease to be a reminder of an unreachable immortality and instead become a source of creation. Strauss believed that Christianity denigrated the Earthly world, the world of the senses, and he called for man to return nature to its central role in human life.

“On the Alpine Symphony”

- 31 Sketched out since 1911, and concluded in around January 1915, it has a programmatic structure supported by 22 sections whose titles act as semantic vectors: as elements that contribute additional meaning. It narrates the events that occur during a field trip and subsequent climb in the mountains by a group of excursionists. To express this via music, Strauss did not skimp on either narrative or orchestral resources. He wove a complex language which was given to symbolic polysemy under a pantheistic vision of the meaning that the mountains express. In this way, readings of “Eine Alpensinfonie” do not only provide an orchestral portrayal of the events, but also highlight the feelings encountered in the experience. On the one hand, there is the suffering and sacrifice associated with the Nietzschean vision, while on the other, there is the reverential and mythical attitude to the mountains. Taken all together, this is a metaphor for what life represents for the human being: from birth to adulthood and then to old age and finally death. “Eine Alpensinfonie” could be also a homage to Gustav Mahler, whose sudden death affected Strauss, who never understood Mahler’s conversion to Christianity from his atheistic-pantheistic approach to religion. There are, therefore, different layers of meaning here, which lie on top of each other like the layers of sound discourse present in this work.
- 32 This translates into the elaboration of themes that reappear as *leitmotifs* in various different sections of the work. These motifs vary in their tonality (major/minor modes) and employ structures that imitate the sensory information crossed by *gestalt* resources. For example, it works through the use of descending scales in an analogical reference to the water cascading down a waterfall⁴ [14:53]. There is also the direct imitation of what are habitual mountain sounds (such as birdsong [17:19], the bleating of sheep which is transmitted by flutter-tongue effects [17:09], yodelling songs [26:25] and hunting fanfares [7:59]), the use of instruments that either generate easily identifiable sounds (like cowbells [16:54]) or imitate them (using wind machines/aeoliphones [39:59] and thunder sheets [43:11]) which is fundamental to its development. With this artillery of re-sources, Strauss created a vast symphonic story, exploiting all of its possibilities and playing with various leitmotifs – key themes that appear several times along the work – at the same time as organising the discourse of the sound.
- 33 The first themes are associated with moments from the excursion such as its beginning, in Nacht (Night) [0:44], which alternates between smooth dynamics in a minor mode before it later resurges in a fortissimo in major mode in “Sonnenaufgang” (Dawn) [4:15]. Later, in “Auf dem Gipfel” (At the summit), it recovers this motif, exhibiting a certain polysemy between the dawn and the wish to express that, at the summit, the

sun is the only thing that lies above the horizon [28:47]. This same theme later resurges in deeper tones in “Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich” (The sun darkens) [34:00]. The same thing happens with the melodies that imitate and relate to sensorial experiences, such as the ascending progression that is related to “Der Anstieg” (The rising) [6:01]. This theme comes out again, in part, in “Auf dem Gletscher” (At the glacier) [21:53], and it is then inverted in “Gewitter und Sturm”, “Abstieg” (Thunder and storm, descent) [40:28]. In this way, the central theme – which is organised in descending form that alludes to the descent part of the excursion. Another similar formulation is determined through the descending theme, which is brilliantly orchestrated in “Am Wasserfall” (at the waterfall) [14:53] and imitates the water falling. This later reappears in “Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg” [41:21]. According to this criterion, the use of deep registers by the orchestra, as in “Eintritt in den Wald” (Entry into the forest) [8:22], shows a darker development in the instrumental tone (Del Mar, 1969). In this way, it is possible to relate this resource with the darkness and shadow of the woodlands under its dense foliage.

- 34 Strauss developed a series of structured themes into a leitmotiv that was continuously repeated in order to symbolise different elements with a common base (as in the case of water in “Am Wasserfall and in Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg”). The mountaineering ambience achieved using its own imitated sounds was equally decisive in this respect. Thus, the touches that hunt in *lontano* (outside the scenic space), which are heard in the final section of “Der Anstieg” [7:59], would explain the existence of another group of excursionists, somewhere in the distance. It is also relevant to comment on the references to birdsong via the high woodwind registers in “Auf der Alm” (On the alpine pastures) [17:04]. In this section, the sonic material is also enriched through the sound of the cowbells [16:54] which, as well as showing the existence of cattle in “Auf der Alm”, could symbolise the memory of the figure of Gustav Mahler. As Del Mar (1969) points out, the numerous *frullati* (flutter-tongue effects) by the woodwind instruments could imitate the bleating of the sheep [17:26].
- 35 Just after this, near the climax of the work (“Vision”) [32:50], the sound discourse is synthetically nourished by all the other themes presented. In this passage, the composer describes the visual field from the summit, expressing how victory lies in an initial resignation to suffering and sacrifice before later imposing itself. This was in line with the influence of Nietzsche on Strauss’s pantheistic approach. In the end, what Strauss explained is also the journey of the romantic hero, who needs nature in order to live, and his struggle to be reborn.
- 36 Similarly, the use of the wind and thunder machines [43:08], together with the organ and the rest of the orchestra [40:50], are key in the agitated “Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg”. This section is developed with very vigorous rhythms and alternates the use of high and low register effects in the percussion. This makes it possible to discover the thunder and lightning together with the descending themes (such as the water falling and the return and descent of the excursionists) [40:23]

Conclusions

- 37 Within the context of the expansion of alpine clubs and a growing interest in nature, music turned its attention to mountains and by doing so contributed to popularizing them. This came with a combination of artistic currents which highlighted the

projection of human values, such as purity, to the mountains. It also highlighted how people interact with them and helped to create an artistic tradition which used the mountains as its main source of inspiration and cultural significance.

- 38 This helped to transform society's perception of the mountains, which changed from viewing them as inhospitable areas of imperfect scenery to seeing them as areas worthy of admiration. In this respect, Art transformed the way of viewing and evaluating the landscape, and Music made a decisive contribution to achieving this and to enriching mountains in their conceptualisation as places.
- 39 To be more precise, geography was influenced by the catalytic influence that music had on academic thought as a result of its association with the aesthetic values of Romanticism. This movement possibly highlighted music as a highly valuable bearer of geographic significance, in terms of both its descriptive and symbolic contributions. The link between music and geography lies in the discursive and programmatic character of the symphonic poem, which exhibits potential as a vehicle of musical communication.
- 40 Intertextuality is also key to understanding this relationship, as it defines the bridges between music and literature, providing the meaning that the music is able to describe. Due to this semantic mediation, it is possible to feed the cultural dimension of the mountains with respect to the selection of the symphonic works presented in the article.
- 41 Under this premise, this paper provides an explanation of the influence of Victor Hugo's poem "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne" on works of the same name by Cesar Franck and Franz Liszt. It explains their musical discourse, paying particular attention to the more abstract character of Franck's music and to how Liszt's work expresses a more programmatic and global interpretation through its dialogue with the poem.
- 42 This example illustrates the theoretical circle over which this article's analysis, which is the existence of a circular bidirectional influence between the empirical experience of the mountains and mountain-themed music. Victor Hugo wrote his poem after a series of experiences in the Pyrenees and the Alps. His poem, in turn, inspired a series of musical works that prescribe a way of understanding our relationship with the mountain, thus creating for many a "pre-experience" that will guide their future interactions with the mountain, thus closing the circle.
- 43 In the case of Strauss' "Eine Alpensinfonie", it is shown how the mountains form part of the metaphor developed within the complex plot of the different plans that contain the meaning of the musical work. These plans range from the symphonic story of the excursion to the suffering involved, the personal progression and the portrayal of the stages of life. In this way, it can be observed how the programmatic and semantic character of the symphonic poem developed and reached its highest levels of context and meaning.
- 44 These different views of the mountain emerge parallel to the tourist interest on mountain landscapes since the 19th century, and in a certain way evolve from the more abstract and metaphorical music of an inaccessible mountain landscape by Franck and Liszt to Strauss's musical description in which the mountain emerges in a more descriptive and evocative manner while explored by hikers and travelers.
- 45 These aspects, together with those outlined in the proposals by Franck and Liszt, highlight the mystical background to the mountains within the romantic context, as do

the synergies associated with its transcendental implications for the human being, which are explained in Strauss' "Eine Alpensinfonie". These synergies are fundamental for an understanding of the boom that took place in knowledge of the mountains and in the interest in conserving them as a heritage asset.

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NOTES

1. We refer those who wish to deepen in this topic to *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860-1939* by Tait Keller (2015).
2. The time references that appear in brackets work as a listening guide related to a performance of Liszt's "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne" by the Hungarian National Philharmonic conducted by Zoltan Kocsis. It can be heard on Spotify on this link: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6YovkiRg1TH238uvHyrCbK>
Last accessed 5th July 2020.
3. The time references, which appear in brackets, refer to a listening guide of a performance of Franck's "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne" by the Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège conducted by Christian Arming. It can be heard on Spotify on this link: <https://open.spotify.com/track/4xfjbWzqSy6tYpeEGf3g5k>
Last accessed 5th July 2020.
4. The time references in brackets refer to a listening guide which provides examples of orchestral effects and musical discourse. They are associated to a public video performance of Strauss' "Eine Alpensinfonie" by the hr-Sinfonieorchester conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada that can be watched on Youtube on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsTo7QxxgYg>
Last accessed 5th July 2020

ABSTRACTS

The aim of this article is to study the contribution that music has made to the perception of a very specific place: that of the high mountains. In particular, we present the ways in which symphonic music has helped to incorporate the high mountains into the known and inhabited space. This is a process that began and was developed in Europe in the course of the 19th century.

To do so, we propose a study of the symphonic poems entitled “Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne” by César Franck (1822-1890) and Franz Liszt (1811-1866), and “Eine Alpensinfonie”, by Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949). The areas that we focus on are the Alps and the Pyrenees as these areas are where these works were set. By doing this, we will show how sonic discourse offers a multitude of levels of meaning relating to the romantic values associated with these European landscapes.

In this article, we seek to examine the contribution that symphonic music made to the knowledge and appreciation of high-mountain areas by part of society. The works that we have chosen as references were premiered between 1850 and 1915 and belong to a specific cultural context whose key points we shall present in the course of this study.

INDEX

Keywords: Music, Romanticism, Alps, Mountaineering, 19th-20th centuries

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