DUALITIES IN IGOR STRAVINSY’S COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS
AS SEEN IN THE NIGHTINGALE (1908-1914)

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ABSTRACT

Igor Stravinsky’s opera *The Nightingale* (1908-1914), based on a fairy tale by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), provides a unique example of the composer’s evolving compositional process. Stravinsky finished the opera’s first act in 1908, but the commission of *The Firebird* (1910) delayed *The Nightingale*’s completion. Not until 1914, after the premiere of *The Rite of Spring* (1913), did Stravinsky complete his opera. *The Nightingale* is significant because in the opera Stravinsky attempted to find his own voice while striving to abandon the influences of Romanticism. With the exception of Richard Taruskin’s analysis of selected musical sketches, the work has received limited in-depth scholarly attention. This may be due to the juxtaposition of Romantic and Modernist styles within the opera, resulting from the period of time separating the completion of the last two acts (1913-1914) from the first (1908). However, that abeyance in Stravinsky’s compositional process provides an opportunity to observe, in a single work, Stravinsky’s transition from Romanticism to Modernism.

This thesis provides an analysis of *The Nightingale* that examines passages that illustrate the duality between Stravinsky’s compositional styles, such as the contrast between the Real and Mechanical Nightingales. Set theory and Pieter van den Toorn’s observations about Stravinsky’s use of octatonicism and bitonality provide the framework for some of my analysis. Musical sketches for Stravinsky’s opera, housed in the Stravinsky Archive of Paul Sacher Stiftung will also be used to investigate the duality between the compositional processes Stravinsky used to compose the first act (completed in 1908) in and the subsequent two acts (completed in 1914).
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Introduction

Igor Stravinsky wrote in his autobiography: “The presentation of the Scherzo fantastique and Feu d’artifice at the Siloti concerts in the winter [of 1908] marks a date of importance for the whole future of my musical career.”¹ These concerts signified the time period when Stravinsky commenced writing his first opera entitled The Nightingale, a pivotal composition for the young composer.² Stravinsky based this work on a well-known literary fairy tale by Danish poet and author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875).³ The composer’s choice of subject is not surprising, for by 1908 the world of fantasy had dominated Russian literature, art and music.⁴ Stravinsky would finish the first act in 1908, but the commission of The Firebird in autumn of 1909 prevented him from completing the final two acts of the opera. It was not until 1914 (one year after the premiere of The Rite of Spring) that Stravinsky completed his unfinished opera. In this work the composer musically represents the dualities inherent in the Andersen story, such as the clash between the living and non-living (represented by a real and mechanical nightingale) in order to emphasize the underlying moral of the story.

In addition to the dualities in the Andersen story that Stravinsky chose to emphasize, The Nightingale holds significance because it illustrates the duality of

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² In the sketches housed at the Stravinsky Archive at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, the work appears under the titles Le rossignol and Solovey.
Stravinsky’s artistic style as it evolved from the Russian influences of Rimsky Korsakov’s (1844-1908) chromaticism towards finding his own individual voice; yet, with the exception of Richard Taruskin’s analysis of the musical sketches for the opera, *The Nightingale* has received limited in-depth scholarly attention. This may be, in part, due to the juxtaposition of chromatic and modernist styles between the first act and the rest of the opera, resulting from the period of time separating the completion of both sections. However, that abeyance in Stravinsky’s compositional process provides an opportunity to observe, in a single work, Stravinsky’s transition from a chromatic to a modernist compositional approach. In *The Nightingale*, the composer’s artistic process evolves as he builds upon his traditional Russian background and experiments with musical ideas that anticipate his later techniques. Stravinsky’s neighbor in Clarens, Switzerland, C. Stanley Wise, once recalled:

> Indeed, *The Nightingale* is throughout most interesting, and especially so because it marks the advance made by the composer in the course of a few years. The first act has not been much altered since it was completed about six years ago, and while there is perfect unity throughout the composition the music of the other acts is unquestionably riper, the harmonic and orchestral effects are more assured than in the earlier portion of the work.  

The following chapters will examine *The Nightingale* from various angles in order to illuminate many dualities present in Stravinsky’s opera. The first chapter will use the final published score to investigate the stylistic dichotomy between the first act and

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the subsequent acts resulting from the period of time separating the composition of the first act and the second and third acts. The second chapter will build upon the first by exploring the differences between the central characters of the opera (the Real Nightingale and the Mechanical Nightingale), and using that comparison to shed more light on how Stravinsky’s musical style and compositional process evolved from 1908 to 1914. Finally, the third chapter will use selected examples of the musical sketches for *The Nightingale* (housed in the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland) in order to determine how the composer’s compositional process developed in that period of time. A brief summary of the storyline is provided to familiarize the reader with the Andersen tale.

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7 Over 250 sketches for *The Nightingale* can be found in the Stravinsky Archive of the Paul Sacher Stiftung.
Plot Summary

Stravinsky chose the Andersen tale as the basis for the opera in an attempt to recapture the lost beauty of the fairy-tale world he knew in his youth. The composer and his friend Stepan Mitusov wrote the libretto together in 1908 while Stravinsky was learning composition from Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The storyline of this brief opera that takes approximately forty-five minutes will be summarized in the following paragraphs.

Eric Walter White describes the three acts as follows:

Act I. ‘The Edge of a Wood by the Seashore.’
Act II. ‘The Throne Room in the Emperor of China’s Porcelain Palace.’
Act III. ‘A Hall in the Palace containing the Emperor’s Bedchamber.’

The first act begins just before dawn. A Fisherman in his boat begins singing about a nightingale that he often hears. The Nightingale begins to sing, but the arrival of a few living characters (the Chamberlain, Bonze, the Kitchen-maid, and the courtiers) interrupts its song. The new arrivals invite the Nightingale to the palace to sing for the Emperor. Although the Nightingale prefers to sing in the open air of the woods, it accepts the Emperor’s invitation. The characters return to the palace with the Nightingale, as the Fisherman resumes his singing.

The second act begins with an Entr’acte that consists of a chorus of singers living

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2 Ibid.
3 In my opinion, the songs of the Fisherman frame each acts in the spirit of the Greek chorus.
at the Chinese court, who sing in front of the curtains expressing excitement about the Nightingale’s arrival. The curtains part and reveal the Emperor’s sparkling palace the Emperor is carried in, the Nightingale sings its song and emotionally moves the Emperor to tears. At that moment, three Japanese envoys enter carrying a mechanical nightingale as a gift for the Emperor of China from the Emperor of Japan. While the artificial bird is playing its song, the Real Nightingale slips out unnoticed. When the Emperor discovers this, he is so offended that he banishes the Real Nightingale from the empire. The curtain then falls as the Fisherman sings of the approach of Death.

The third act begins with an orchestral introduction. The Emperor is lying in his bedchamber dying while the character of Death (wearing the Emperor’s crown, sword and banner) sits beside him alongside a chorus of Spectres who torment the Emperor about all his past deeds, good or bad. The Emperor calls for music to be played, but the Mechanical Nightingale cannot perform without being wound. As tension mounts in the character of the Emperor, the Real Nightingale returns to save the dying ruler. The song of the Real Nightingale persuades Death to return the banner, sword, crown, and the Emperor’s life. As Death and the Spectres depart, the courtiers enter the bedchamber in a “Solemn Procession.” The Emperor, now fully restored to health, greets his subjects while dressed in the splendor of his ceremonial robes. As everyone rejoices, the curtain falls and the Fisherman sings off-stage.
The Allegory of Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale*: The Real Nightingale as A Bridge Between Two Worlds

The duality between the living and nonliving characters in *The Nightingale* is one of the central dualities extracted from the Andersen tale. In his opera, Igor Stravinsky enhanced the duality found in the libretto and the original tale by Hans Christian Andersen through his musical representation of living and nonliving characters with the pentatonic and octatonic pitch collections respectively. Stravinsky, however, added his own interpretation of this central duality by representing the Real Nightingale with florid, chromatic musical lines. Thus, through the musical representation, the Real Nightingale becomes a “bridge character” between the world of the living and nonliving characters. In creating this musical tapestry, Stravinsky intensified the element of the Andersen story that perhaps attracted him to the story in the first place. To a certain extent, he was following a long-established practice among Russian composers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who used pitch collections to represent opposing forces in an opera.

In this chapter, I analyze *The Nightingale* in order to illuminate the duality between living and nonliving characters. My analysis begins with a brief history of the completion of the libretto. I follow this with an explanation about certain exceptions to Stravinsky’s musical duality and why he chose to deviate from this defined “rule.”

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1 For my purposes, the word rule implies what appears to be Stravinsky’s conscious decision to maintain a set distinction between living and nonliving characters.
provides a brief background of how other composers depicted dualities in Russian music that might have served as an inspiration for Stravinsky’s novel musical scheme. My main argument will then be presented with musical examples to corroborate my claim.

Although the libretto was completed in 1908 and the music for the first act finished by the end of the summer of 1909, Stravinsky was unable to complete more than the first act before being interrupted from his work on The Nightingale by the commission of The Firebird. It took Stravinsky until the summer of 1913 to return to The Nightingale. The motivating force behind this return was a request from the Free Theatre of Moscow to complete this work. At first, Stravinsky was hesitant to accept this invitation because he feared that the first act would be too stylistically dissimilar from the music that he now envisioned for the final two acts. Nevertheless, Stravinsky agreed and completed the opera by mid-1914.

Stravinsky’s initial concerns about the stylistic differences between the first act and the final two acts of The Nightingale were justified. In fact, Alexandre Benois, the original set designer for the opera, once noted the “glaring incongruity of style between the first act of The Nightingale and the two others.”² Because of this stylistic discrepancy, my paper will discuss only the music occurring in final two acts of Stravinsky’s opera. Therefore, the living characters of Bonze and the Kitchen-maid (who only appear in the first act), will not be discussed. Instead, this paper will focus solely on those living characters featured in Acts two and three (all represented by the pentatonic pitch collection) such as the Cook, the Emperor, the courtiers, the Japanese envoys, and the

general people of the Chinese court (featured prominently at the beginning of Act two).

All nonliving characters such as Death, the Mechanical Nightingale, and the Spectres (all represented by the octatonic pitch collection), appear only in the second and third acts, and therefore will all be included. However, even though Stravinsky chose to preserve the Fisherman’s music and the Chamberlain’s octatonic motive from the first act in the second and third acts in a futile attempt to create continuity between acts, these two characters will not be included in the following analysis.³

These two characters, however, are not the only exceptions to Stravinsky’s musical representations in the second and third acts. A few other characters break Stravinsky’s rules. It seems likely that the composer consciously made this decision in order to represent the narrative of the story in a more effective manner.

It is well documented that Stravinsky experienced difficulties composing this opera. One quotation reflecting these difficulties can be found in an interview that Stravinsky had with Michel-Dmitri Calvocoressi, “I can write music to words, viz., songs; or music to action, viz., ballets. But the cooperation of music, words, and action is a thing that daily becomes more inadmissible to my mind.”⁴ This statement suggests that Stravinsky, in his frustration when writing this opera, could have used musical clichés such as establishing a rule (e.g. the representation of the duality between living and nonliving) then breaking it to draw the listener’s attention towards the character breaking the rule. The music confirms this postulation because only notable characters such as the

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Cook, the Japanese envoys, the Emperor, and Death break this rule. These exceptions are used for various purposes: to bring a character out of the texture of the “common person’s music,” to musically convey a character’s thoughts, and to musically represent the character’s status.

Before delving into the analysis, it would be helpful to provide a glimpse of the history of dualities in Russian music—dualities such as the one that Stravinsky incorporated into *The Nightingale* between the living and nonliving characters. Stravinsky clearly drew inspiration for this juxtaposition of opposing forces from his Russian heritage, and the history of this tradition reveals the degree of originality in Stravinsky’s musical representation.

Stravinsky’s use of specific pitch collections (or scales) to represent different worlds did not represent a musical innovation, because the foundation for this practice stemmed from the history and tradition of nineteenth-century Russian opera. In his book, *Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring*, Pieter C. van den Toorn traced the origins of this tradition back to Mikhail Glinka’s opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (1842). In this opera, Glinka used specific pitch collections to represent the dichotomy between magical and non-magical worlds. Stravinsky’s former composition teacher, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov perpetuated this technique by using diatonic and chromatic pitch collections (sometimes using non-tonal or even octatonic partitions in place of the chromatic) to differentiate between the real and magical worlds in his music.

This approach must have had a profound influence on Stravinsky, for when

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6 Ibid.
Stravinsky was studying with Rimsky-Korsakov, the young composer spent hours on assignments from Rimsky such as orchestrating piano reductions of his teacher’s operas. Stravinsky spent nearly three years learning the process of orchestration and, in doing so, gained an intimate familiarity with Rimsky-Korsakov’s works. This familiarity manifests itself in many of Stravinsky’s compositions in terms of methodology. A few such instances embedded themselves in the composition of Stravinsky’s ballet, *The Firebird*.

In the first sketches for the scenario of *The Firebird*, Stravinsky denotes the presence of two Horsemen: the “Horseman of the Night” and the “Horseman of the Day.” The fact that Stravinsky included these two characters in the preliminary scenario that he and Fokine sketched for the ballet indicates that the composer and choreographer considered the idea of dualities in the early stages of their collaboration. On a broader scale, Stravinsky, in the spirit of his former teacher, emphasized the dichotomy between the two worlds, real and magical, by representing the real with the diatonic pitch collection and the magical with the chromatic pitch collection. Written only a few years prior to Acts two and three of *The Nightingale*, *The Firebird* and the musical techniques used in its composition would profoundly affect Stravinsky’s conception and composition of the final two acts of *The Nightingale*.

In *The Nightingale*, Stravinsky expanded upon his Russian heritage by combining it with his own intuitive musical nature and the resources that he gathered throughout his travels. This amalgamation of resources manifested in *The Nightingale* resulted in something novel and unprecedented—a new twist on an old tradition. Stravinsky had a

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8 Ibid., 1:580.
mathematical mind and enjoyed creating and solving musical puzzles. The way in which Stravinsky composed the opera reflects this predilection. Stravinsky’s neighbor in Clarens, Switzerland, C. Stanley Wise, once referred to Stravinsky’s penchant for musical experimentation in an article for The Musical Quarterly:

In the charming little opera Le Rossignol the barbaric Chinese March is written mainly in the keys of five and six sharps,— [sic.]most evidently selected on account of the facility with which experiments with the pentatonic scale could be carried out on the black keys of the pianoforte. As to his passion for harmonic experiment, I shall never forget the eagerness with which he hurried me to the pianoforte one day to exhibit the capabilities that he had just discovered in that Chinese pentatonic scale.¹⁰

In keeping with Wise’s observations, this paper will begin by exploring how Stravinsky utilized the pentatonic. As Wise mentioned, Stravinsky viewed the pentatonic scale as a “Chinese pentatonic scale.” In fact, in a letter to Benois of 30 July/12 August 1913 Stravinsky called the “black-key scale” he had been experimenting with fausse-chinoiserie, and included an illustration of this fausse-choiserie scale at the bottom of the letter (a transcription of the illustration is shown in example 1.1).¹¹

Example 1.1: “Black-key scale” as illustrated by Stravinsky in a letter to Benois

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Richard Taruskin, in his two-volume work *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra*, states quite aptly that the pentatonic (or *fausse-chinoiserie*) is “just the place to begin an investigation of the music of The Nightingale’s new scenes.”\(^\text{12}\) The capabilities that Wise may have been speaking of can be seen in the finished score for the post-\textit{Rite} acts of the ballet. In those acts, Stravinsky experimented with fragments of the pentatonic collection (not the scale as a whole) in order to imply various “polymodal contexts.”\(^\text{13}\) He also explored the way in which the pentatonic and octatonic pitch collections relate to each other, for “as Stravinsky was no doubt overjoyed to discover, the anhemitonic pentatonic pitch set is a subset both of the diatonic and (with one eminently exploitable discrepancy) the octatonic collections.”\(^\text{14}\)

This concept is clearly seen when the two scales are superimposed upon one another (Example 1.2).\(^\text{15}\)

Example 1.2: “Chinese scale” superimposed on collection III with the “discrepancy” circled.

![Example 1.2: “Chinese scale” superimposed on collection III with the “discrepancy” circled.](image)

A musical example that exemplifies this interaction can be seen at the climax of the Chinese March in Scene 2 at rehearsal 77 (Example 1.3).

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 2:1092.
\(^\text{14}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{15}\) For reference, the octatonic collections referred to in this paper correspond to Pieter van den Toorn’s three collections. Collection 1 = \{1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11\}; Collection 2 = \{0, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11\}; and Collection 3 = \{0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10\}. For more information read van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring*, 147-148.
This example, transcribed and simplified from Stravinsky’s thorny notation, displays the pentatonic march theme extracted from the texture of the vocal and orchestral scores over a pentatonic ostinato bass harmonized through the use of the octatonic collections. In a stereotypically operatic fashion, this introductory passage (occurring at roughly the beginning of the second act) foreshadows the duality that characterizes the rest of the opera.

The “Performance of the Mechanical Nightingale” (rehearsal 92 in the score) provides one of the clearest examples of the way in which Stravinsky used specific pitched collections to represent the two separate forces in *The Nightingale* (Example 1.4). In this passage, Stravinsky composed a white-note pentatonic melody over a regular,

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16 Richard Taruskin notes in his book *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions* that Stravinsky approached harmonizing this passage in a very systematic fashion, and that the use of the various octatonic reference collections follows a pattern. For more information read Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 2:1094.
formulaic measure-long octatonic ostinato based on collection III. The tortuous melody is comprised of numerous brief spurts of melodic material that sound as if the Mechanical Nightingale is being wound up to perform each phrase. The unrelenting drone of the octatonic ostinato sounds like clockwork underneath the melodic line. In fact, in a sketch dated 19 July/1 August 1913, Stravinsky showed that he thought of the orchestral underpinning of the melody as a simple, repeating drone, because he sketched the first measure and then wrote repeat signs for all subsequent measures. That drone and formulaic melodic line keeps the nonliving characteristics of the Mechanical Nightingale present at all times in the music, while the pentatonic tonality of the melody does not allow one to forget the bird’s origins.

Example 1.4: *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 92, Mechanical Nightingale music

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17 Richard Taruskin proposes the idea that Stravinsky used the white-note pentatonic collection here to represent the Japanese, while in the rest of the opera, the black-note pentatonic collection represents the Chinese people. *Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 2:1096.
18 The transcription of this sketch (identified and explained to me by Dr. Maureen Carr) does not appear in this paper.
Sources such as the sketches for The Nightingale found in a sketchbook for The Rite published by Boosey and Hawkes and edited by Robert Craft suggest that Stravinsky was thinking of the duality between octatonic and pentatonic along with a systematic melodic line in the early stages of composing the opera. Pages 41-45 in this sketchbook (dated January, 1912) interrupt the sketches for the “Dance of the Earth” and represent material in Act II of The Nightingale. This interruption coincidentally came at the time when Diaghilev informed Stravinsky that the production of The Rite would be postponed until May, 1913. Although Robert Craft says in the commentary for these sketches that the composer attributed this appearance of sketches for The Nightingale “not to importunities of his muse,” it is difficult to believe (given the material in this sketchbook and the relative proximity of time between both compositions) that The Rite and Act II of The Nightingale are not somehow linked. Richard Taruskin also suggests a link between the works when discussing the Mechanical Nightingale, “the elements of the octatonic collection maintain a rigidly hypostatized (that is, “mechanical”) timbral and registral distribution that harks back to some of the more “elemental” pages of The Rite (even as it looks as far forward as the stones-to-bread machine in The Rake’s Progress).”

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19 My own research and examination of the sketches housed at the Stravinsky Archive of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland confirms this hypothesis, for the duality between the pentatonic melody and octatonic accompaniment is present even in the early sketches for this section of the opera. Igor Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring: Sketches 1911-1913, ed. Robert Craft (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1969), 41-45.
20 van den Toorn, Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring, 34.
22 Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 2:1096.
Page 42 of the aforementioned sketchbook contains three measures of a melody that are easily recognizable as fragments of the Mechanical Nightingale’s melody (Example 1.5).

Example 1.5: Sketch of Mechanical Nightingale music transcribed from facsimile edition of the sketches for The Rite of Spring

As shown in this example, the characteristic melody of the Mechanical Nightingale is, even in this early stage, completely derived from the white-note pentatonic scale. Furthermore, this sketch shows that Stravinsky originally thought the melody should begin and end on a Dᵇ. This revelation is significant due to the relationship between octatonic pitch collection III and the white-note pentatonic scale, for when the two scales are superimposed, the pentatonic collection is a subset of the octatonic with the exception of the Dᵇ (Example 1.6).

Example 1.6: White-note pentatonic scale superimposed onto collection III

Many composers would mask or hide away this alien tone, but Stravinsky chose instead to highlight it.23 The Dᵇ begins or ends many of the Mechanical Nightingale’s

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ephemeral phrases. Example 1.5 reveals that Stravinsky began composing this section of the opera with the D♭ highlighted even more than in the final score. This highlighted exploitation of the discrepancy in both collections will characterize the music of the last two acts of *The Nightingale*.

When the curtains open in Act III at rehearsal 108, the two worlds, living and nonliving, finally meet as the conflict between the two actualizes. At this point, a group of Spectres are looming over the dying Emperor in his bedchamber. Their sinister song, based on the octatonic pitch collection, is sung above a three-note ostinato and seemingly random sixteenth-note punctuations of the celesta (Example 1.7). Here, Stravinsky exploits the characteristics of the octatonic scale along with a simple melody that circles around F to engender an atmosphere of stasis appropriate for this scene.24

Example 1.7: *The Nightingale*, Act III, rehearsal 108

![Musical notation](image)

This passage derives its power not only from the use of the octatonic scale, but also from the motivic network that Stravinsky initiated at the opening of the act (Example 1.8 provides a graph of this network). This opening displays what I term an additive motivic process that foreshadows the music performed at the entrance of the Spectres at

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rehearsal 108.\textsuperscript{25}

At rehearsal 101, four motives can be traced as they transform over the course of the passage. Each of these motives is outlined in Table 1.\textsuperscript{26} However, the fourth motive that occurs on the small stave beginning in rehearsal 104 has been left out because it remains the same throughout the passage. The purpose of this motive is simply to allude to the opening of the Mechanical Nightingale’s performance described earlier in this paper. This allusion ominously informs the listener that the mechanical bird is to play a role in the coming section of the opera, and that the nonliving characters are on the same side as the Mechanical Nightingale. The motive also suggests the feeling of stasis that the Mechanical Nightingale’s previous performance created. The motives introduced here will later become the main motives of the entire act.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Allen Forte examines rehearsal number 101 in the article “Harmonic Syntax and Voice Leading in Stravinsky’s Early Music” from \textit{Confronting Stravinsky}. However, I find that his analysis is far too removed from the essence of the music. In this analysis, Forte was much too vertical in his thinking of this section. Allen Forte, “Harmonic Syntax and Voice Leading in Stravinsky’s Early Music,” in \textit{Confronting Stravinsky}, ed. Jann Pasler (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1986), 124.

\textsuperscript{26} For the purposes of this table, the indication of “+1” means the second bar of the music in the designated rehearsal number.

\textsuperscript{27} With thanks to Jonathan Cross for the inspiration for this chart, based on his chart for \textit{The Rite}. Jonathan Cross, \textit{The Stravinsky Legacy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97.
Table 1.1: Motivic transformations in Act III, rehearsals 101-104

Motive A

Motive B

Motive C
Example 1.8: Tracing the motivic transformations in Act III, rehearsals 101-104
Stravinsky’s transformations of each of the motives involve techniques such as: truncation, segmentation, inversion, rhythmic augmentation and rhythmic diminution. Motive A begins with a 9-note, octatonic figure that is reduced to six notes. This truncation and the subsequent alterations give momentum to the passage, which is otherwise static harmonically and temporally. The octatonic pitch collection coupled with the inherent symmetry of Motive A contributes to the static ambience. This sense of stasis provides the ideal mood for this part in the story where the Emperor is on his deathbed facing his past deeds in the presence of the nonliving character of Death.

Motivic interactions enhance the feelings of stasis produced by Stravinsky’s use of the octatonic. This enhancement is accomplished, in part, through the use of the tritone. For instance, motives A and B can both be seen as outlining a tritone transposed a half step apart from each another. At the beginning of rehearsal 101, Motive A outlines the tritone from A⁷ to E♭, while motive B contains the tritone from A♭ to D♭. This tension between the two motives, coupled with the static sonic quality of the tritone, adds to the feelings of stasis and unease appropriate to the coming scene. However, in the fourth measure of rehearsal 103 (marked with an [A] in the score), Stravinsky transposes Motive A so that Motives A and B share the same root (D♭) in the left-hand portion of the piano reduction, which helps keep the listener engaged and gives the music more momentum despite the overwhelming feelings of stasis.

Stravinsky utilizes the static feelings associated with these motives later in Act 3 in various locations. For example, motive A later becomes associated with the character of Death, because it often introduces Death right before it sings (Example 1.9). In the
measure before rehearsal 122 Death actually sings the motive itself. Furthermore, Motive C later becomes the motive signifying the Spectres that is reiterated in rehearsals 108 and 109 (Example 1.10).

Example 1.9: The Nightingale, Act III, rehearsal 120, Death motive

Example 1.10: The Nightingale, Act III, rehearsals 108-109

In addition to generating a static atmosphere, rehearsals 108 and 109 also exemplify the duality between octatonic and pentatonic pitch collections. As described earlier, the Spectres and their accompaniment are entirely octatonic. However, when the Emperor begins to sing, he uses only the pentatonic pitch collection (Example 1.10). The transposition that Stravinsky chose for the Emperor’s melody shares three notes (C#, E♭, B♭) with the melody of the Spectres and their accompaniment (both set in Collection I). This interaction possibly symbolizes the Emperor’s struggle to cling to life while
surrounded by Death.

As shown by these examples, Stravinsky utilized the capabilities inherent in the pentatonic and octatonic pitch collections in order to create two worlds that are separate yet fundamentally connected. This concept reflects a common belief that the line between the worlds of the living and the nonliving is blurry rather than concrete. This ambiguous line is appropriate for this opera because, in addition to the twist on the traditional duality between diatonic and non-tonal collections, Stravinsky introduced a further complexity into the opera: a bridge character to span the gap between the two worlds—living and the nonliving.

In the opera, the Real Nightingale does not fit completely into either world, yet participates in both worlds. These characteristics enable the Real Nightingale to serve as a bridge character between two worlds. The concept of a bridge character is significant because, while Stravinsky inherited the tradition of using two separate pitch collections to represent two opposing forces, he built upon these Russian roots in *The Nightingale* and gave a new flavor to the old tradition. Instead of the traditional clash between good and evil, Stravinsky chose a story where the central conflict is life versus death; further, he created a bridge character and placed the Real Nightingale in this central role. This character is an ethereal being that spans both worlds and plays a crucial role in saving the Emperor’s life.

Stravinsky represents this bridge character by making the Nightingale’s music almost entirely chromatic. This chromaticism bridges the gap between the two worlds represented by the octatonic and pentatonic collections, because the Nightingale’s chromaticism contains both the notes of the pentatonic and the octatonic.
The Real Nightingale’s first appearance in the second act at rehearsal 82 (or “The Song of the Nightingale”) epitomizes this chromaticism. This freely gliding cadenza serves as a paradigm for the Nightingale’s role in Stravinsky’s musical representation. Although the cadenza may seem like a hodgepodge of chromatic flourishes, this passage contains structural notes that outline the use of the octatonic pitches of collection II and its subset, the pentatonic (example 1.11). In the following example, all notes not included in the pentatonic collection or collection II are crossed out, while all notes contained in both collections are circled to highlight their structural significance.\textsuperscript{28}

Example 1.11: \textit{The Nightingale}, Act II, rehearsal 82, chart of pentatonic and octatonic interaction

Primary sources support the idea that a connection to the octatonic and pentatonic collections is ensconced within the Real Nightingale’s chromaticism. In his book, \textit{Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions}, Richard Taruskin shows a sketch for the Nightingale’s song in Act III where the Nightingale wins back the Emperor’s soul from Death (Example 1.12).

\textsuperscript{28} Richard Taruskin presents this same passage in his book \textit{Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions}, but only with the octatonic highlighted. Though Taruskin’s points are valid, I believe that the analysis for this passage is strengthened through examining the interaction of both the pentatonic and octatonic collections in the cadenza. Taruskin, \textit{Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions}, 2:1106.
Example 1.12: Early sketch of the Real Nightingale’s music transcribed by Aaron Grant and translated by Richard Taruskin

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Pe-chal' n'y sve - tit me - syats
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[The mournful moon is shining]

The sketch was written on a loose sheet containing a rough draft of the text. This sketch would later become the main theme of the Real Nightingale’s song and comes from collection III (except for the D⁴). Stravinsky, however, changed the song in the finished score to deviate from the octatonic and be more chromatic in nature; thus, the Real Nightingale transcends its octatonic framework and therefore either of the worlds in Stravinsky’s duality.

There are various examples in the score where Stravinsky musically represents the interaction between the two worlds and the Real Nightingale. One such example hides under the surface of the published score shown in a previous example showing the Chinese March at rehearsal 72 (Example 1.3). If one respells the chordal accompaniment in this passage, a chromatic line is clearly displayed in the topmost voice of the accompaniment (Example 1.13). One of Stravinsky’s sketches for this passage suggests that Stravinsky thought in these terms when composing this part of the score (Example 1.14).²⁹

²⁹ In my examination of this sketch at the Stravinsky Archive, Stravinsky filled the rest of the page with musical incipits showing similar interactions between the chromatic, pentatonic, and octatonic pitch collections. With thanks to Richard Taruskin for providing me with this sketch from his book Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions. Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 2:1094.
Example 1.13: *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 77, respelled accompaniment to reveal chromatic underpinnings

Example 1.14: Transcription of a sketch for *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 77

The sketch clearly shows a chromatic line in the upper voice over a pentatonic ostinato bass that was later harmonized with the octatonic collections, and is displayed note-for-note in the upper voice of the accompaniment for example 1.13. This respelled example provides the perfect paradigm for illustrating the way in which the three forces of the living (represented by the pentatonic collection), nonliving (represented by the octatonic collection), and the Real Nightingale (represented by the chromatic collection) all interact in Stravinsky’s opera *The Nightingale* to form one coherent musical passage.

The allegory of Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale* may appear to be innovative in its usage of specific pitch collections to represent opposing forces in the opera, but it is not.
Instead, Stravinsky decided to take a typical Russian technique used by his composition teacher, Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov, and put his own signature on that tradition.\textsuperscript{30}

Stravinsky, upon discovering the connection between the pentatonic and octatonic pitch collections, represented the two opposing yet connected forces he saw in the Hans Christian Andersen tale (living and nonliving) with these opposing yet connected pitch collections. To add the finishing piece to his puzzle, the composer created a third force—a bridge character—to be apart, yet incorporated into both opposing forces. The chromaticism of the Real Nightingale represents the true ingenuity of this work and Stravinsky’s artistic output as a whole. The role of the bridge character reveals the way in which Stravinsky saw the Real Nightingale when reading and interpreting the Andersen tale. The Nightingale, representing art, beauty, and creativity, transcends all others and prevails over the forces of the nonliving or artifice. In accomplishing this representation, Stravinsky ensured to carry on the message of the Real Nightingale, the message that art triumphs over all.

\textsuperscript{30} van den Toorn, \textit{Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring}, 116-119.
2.

Stylistic Dualities of Stravinsky’s Nightingales

The previously described stylistic transformation that Stravinsky went through between 1908 and 1914 presents itself in the dichotomy between the composer’s representation of the Real Nightingale in Act one and the same bird in the subsequent two acts, for the musical style of the Real Nightingale heard in Act one is startlingly dissimilar to the same character’s style in the latter two acts. The Real Nightingale in the first act (written in 1908) exemplifies Stravinsky’s earlier chromatic style. While the Real Nightingale in the second and third acts (completed in 1914) typifies Stravinsky’s later modernist style of composition, a style characterized by a more developed harmonic vocabulary and an increase in novel orchestral effects. This contrast provides the ideal model to demonstrate Stravinsky’s transitioning compositional style between 1908 and 1914.

In this chapter, I will analyze melodic and harmonic aspects of Stravinsky’s musical representation of the both nightingales in the opera, which are the central characters of the Andersen story. I will then compare the Real Nightingale from Act one to the same bird in Acts two and three to represent the evolution of Stravinsky’s musical style. I will then do a comparison between the music of the Real and Mechanical Nightingales in Acts two and three. To accomplish this I will utilize pitch class set analysis as an analytical tool to display the musical characteristics of the nightingales.

The compositional style of Act one is exemplified by the Real Nightingale’s
initial appearance in the opera at rehearsal 18.\(^1\) Stravinsky’s use of melody in this section typifies his older style of composition (see my analysis in example 1 in this chapter). The Real Nightingale (sung by a soprano) enters with an octave leap followed by a melodic line that includes a minor triad and a major second [pitch class set (0237)].\(^2\) At rehearsal 19, the notes make up pitch class sets (027) and (024), which foreshadows rehearsal 20 where two instances of (0247) appear. This passage also hints at the pentatonic scale, a scale that Stravinsky used throughout his opera to portray the Chinese court.\(^3\) Rehearsal 21 is a climactic point in the song, and represents the melodic goal found in the steady development of pitch class sets: (0237) going to (0247) to (02468t). Here, the melody sung by the Real Nightingale that unfolds is based upon the whole tone scale (02468). This melodic development represents a linear progression beginning at pitch class set (0237), and working steadily towards becoming a whole-tone hexachord (02468t). This development towards the whole-tone goal, however, is never quite realized. This is because even though the melodic material at rehearsal 21 can be reduced to a whole-tone hexachord (Example 1.1), the music at this whole-tone climax contains diatonic elements suggesting F major. In fact, most of the linear progression contains hints of diatonic material, because triadic subset (037) is included in much of the Nightingale’s material. This tonal ambiguity is the essence of the Real Nightingale’s music, for though the Nightingale can be considered whole-tone, Stravinsky embedded suggestions of diatonic

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\(^2\) The following analysis will utilize pitch classes and pitch class sets as analytical tools in order to represent the structure of the music. This by no means is a reflection of what the composer would have been conceptualizing, for this system of analysis had not been invented yet.

material throughout to create a sense of ambiguity. In this first act, Stravinsky experiments with fragments from different scales, and frequently uses the whole-tone scale with hints of diatonicism to represent the Real Nightingale. These two different worlds (triadic and whole tone) are essential to Stravinsky’s representation of the Real Nightingale, and are the musical embodiment of this central character.

Example 2.1: *The Nightingale*, pitch class set analysis of the melody from rehearsals 18-21, vocal score.

Moreover, Richard Taruskin has traced the possible source of the melodic line at rehearsal 22 to coloratura soprano Shemakhanshaya Tsaritsa’s melody in Act II (m. 86-88) of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Le coq d’or* (Example 2.2). The rough rhythmic similarities along with the characteristic silky chromatic line provide striking resemblances, and further reveal Rimsky Korsakov’s ubiquitous influence on the young composer’s early music.

a. Rimsky-Korsakov, *Le coq d’or*, Act II, mm. 86-88 (Shemakhanskaya Tsaritsa)

Harmonically, this section also typifies Stravinsky’s earlier style. The rich harmonies in this section involve many ninth chords that sound like the 19th century Russian music the composer heard as a child. The chordal accompaniment in this section appears to follow the Real Nightingale’s melodic line. In other words, the accompaniment seems to react to the vocal line rather than the two forces acting as separate entities.

The section between rehearsals 18 and 21 (see my analysis in example 2.3) has a tonal center of G-flat, for Stravinsky chose to start almost every phrase on a G-flat chord (though often a G-flat seventh chord). D-flat is also emphasized, and represents a dominant function. An examination of each chord’s set class reveals that Stravinsky relied heavily on sonorities that can be reduced to (0248), (02468), and (0158). The first two are whole tone in nature, and support the melodic whole-tone goal at rehearsal 21 described previously. This combination of whole-tone chords and the rough sense of tonality created by the emphasis on G-flat and D-flat is interesting because of the climax at rehearsal 21. Here, the melody suggests that the accompaniment should be a whole-
tone chord. As the melodic analysis revealed, the climax at rehearsal 21 epitomizes the essence of the Real Nightingale, for it is whole-tone in nature yet still presents some tonal ambiguity. Harmonically, this climax should have a root of G-flat due to the polarity between G-flat and D-flat that is present until this point. However, Stravinsky chose to obscure the anticipated tonal arrival by using G-natural for the root of the whole-tone chord then following that measure’s whole tone sonority with a sweeping chromatic gesture, followed again by another whole-tone sonority. The beauty of the Real Nightingale in Act one is characterized with a central whole-tone sonority obscured by chromatic and diatonic suggestions.

Example 2.3: *The Nightingale*, pitch class set analysis of harmonies from rehearsals 18-21, vocal score
The section between rehearsals 21 and 22 provides further evidence that Stravinsky included diatonic implications underneath the supposedly whole-tone surface of the music for the Real Nightingale, for hidden underneath this surface, at a lower structural level, is ensconced a circle of fifths progression (see Taruskin’s analysis in example 2.4). In this example, Stravinsky succeeded in hiding the traditional tonal hierarchy underneath the already tonally ambiguous whole-tone musical material associated with the authentic avian. This tonal hierarchy is not immediately evident when listening to the music; however, the tonal implications provide the magical beauty for the music of the Real Nightingale.

Example 2.4: Analysis showing a circle of fifths progression in *The Nightingale*, rehearsal 21.


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The music sung by the Real Nightingale in Act two of the opera (under the subtitle of “the Song of the Nightingale”) contrasts with the music sung by the same character in the previous act. The material in the second act is much less tonal, and more harmonically complex than the music of the previous act. This difference is clearly seen in a side-by-side comparison of the opening melismas in both sections (Example 2.5).

Example 2.5: The Nightingale, vocal score

a. Act 1, rehearsal 18

b. Act 2, rehearsal 82
As shown in this example, the nearly whole-tone melody in the first act has a sweeping line that is lost in the second. However, the melismatic melody in the second act is much more florid and intricate due to the system of interlocking thirds filled in chromatically. When examining the melody beginning in rehearsal 83 (see my analysis and transcription in example 2.6), it is evident that Stravinsky saw this nightingale represented most effectively through the chromatic scale instead through the use of the whole tone scale. In this act, the melodies are much more cohesive and complex, for almost every phrase of the melody in rehearsals 83 and 84 stem from the group of notes represented in prime form by pitch class (01236).⁵

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⁵ The first five notes of rehearsal 83 marked in prime form (01236) can be related to the Firebird motive when put in the normal order of [9, 10, 11, 0, 3]. The Firebird motive (0126) is a subset of this first collection of pitches. For more information on the motivic network in Firebird please read Maureen A. Carr, “Le Carillon féerique, une clef disparue de L’oiseau de feu de Stravinsky,” Analyse musicale 32, no. 3 (July 1993): 40-53; Allen Forte, “Harmonic Syntax and Voice Leading in Stravinsky's Early Music,” in Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist, ed. by Jann Pasler (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986), 95-129.
Example 2.6: The Nightingale, pitch class set analysis of rehearsals 83-84, vocal score

The harmonies in certain places of this section relate to the melody in order to keep the two forces (melody and harmony) sounding cohesive (Example 2.6). The beginning of the phrase at rehearsal 84 features two (0124) pitch class sets superimposed upon one another. However, some cohesiveness is lost due to the disjunction between the melodic line and the harmonies. In this example, the melody and harmony do not always follow one another smoothly the way they did in the previous act. This is due, in part, to the added rhythmic complexity of the accompaniment. Upon first glance, it is clear that
Stravinsky expanded his rhythmic vocabulary in the latter two acts of his opera, a characteristic that would later become an integral characteristic of his musical thumbprint.

Now that the differences between the two real nightingales are understood, the duality between the real and mechanical nightingales will be addressed; for this duality is at the core of the Hans Christian Andersen tale. For this reason, Stravinsky placed a large amount of emphasis on this clash between the two birds: mechanical and real. The composer confirms this postulation with his choice to devote two out of the three movements to the two birds when composing his ballet that premiered in 1920 under the title *Song of the Nightingale* [*Chant du Rossignol*]. In the ballet, one movement is called “Song of the Nightingale” and another is called “Performance of the Mechanical Nightingale.” This clash represents more than life triumphing over Death, for Stravinsky places, within the confines of the music, more dualities detailing the victory of unrestrained artistic inspiration over learned artifice. Due to the stylistic gap between Act one, and Acts two and three, only material from Acts two and three will be used in this comparison. Furthermore, the aforementioned ballet was comprised of material almost exclusively from the second and third acts. Therefore, it can be inferred that by the premiere of the ballet Stravinsky was convinced that the Real Nightingale should be the one featured in the latter two acts and not the one that appeared in Act one.

The Mechanical Nightingale’s performance is brief, yet significant (refer to example 2.7 for the music from the Mechanical Nightingale’s performance). The melody of the mechanical bird, played by the solo oboe, is based upon the pentatonic scale with a pitch class set of [0, 2, 4, 7, 9] (which is also the set’s prime form). Though the scale
starts on pitch class 0, the melody is centered on pitch class 9. This melody is also striking because there are no chromatic tones added anywhere in the performance. The formulaic melody always seems to be made up of two simultaneous scales or skips and leaps superimposed onto one another. The precise rhythms give the impression of control and automation. The melody exudes a feeling of haste and artificiality instead of beauty; in particular, each phrase is also very short, giving the impression of having to wind up the machine at the conclusion of each phrase.

Furthermore, the Mechanical Nightingale’s song is based upon the pentatonic scale and is superimposed over a repeating measure-long octatonic ostinato that is introduced by a three-measure introduction. This introduction sets the stage for the entire performance, and presents, for the first time in this work, a section of complete octatonic music within the framework of an ostinato. The introduction also allows the listener to pick up on the first layer of sound, for this passage is a prime example of textural layering. Even after the oboe begins playing the Mechanical Nightingale’s song, the listener can still hear the ostinato set up in the introduction because of the way Stravinsky continuously adds layer upon layer. The accompaniment throughout the Mechanical Nightingale’s performance is completely octatonic with a pitch class set of \([0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10]\) with the 9 being borrowed from the implied melodic focus of the pentatonic melody above.
Example 2.7: *The Nightingale*, rehearsals 92-93 in vocal score without dynamics or tempo marks.
In his book, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, Pieter C. van den Toorn refers to this set of pitches as collection 1. In this book van den Toorn provides two lists of octatonic passages in Stravinsky’s output, but this passage from *The Nightingale* cannot be found in either list.

Focusing on the octatonic collection in Stravinsky’s music is important, for the octatonic scale can be considered one of the most notable symmetrically conceived pitch collections. Van den Toorn introduced the idea of the impression of harmonic stasis being created by these symmetrically conceived pitch relations, a technique Stravinsky utilized often. In his musical

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6 For reference, the octatonic collections referred to in this paper correspond to Pieter van den Toorn’s three collections. Collection 1 = \(\{1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11\}\); Collection 2 = \(\{0, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11\}\); and Collection 3 = \(\{0, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10\}\). For more information please read van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring*, 147-148.
created by these symmetrically conceived pitch relations, a technique Stravinsky utilized often. In his musical examples, van den Toorn notes one of the ways Stravinsky created this stasis was by partitioning the octatonic scale into equal parts. However, the Mechanical Nightingale’s octatonic ostinato accompaniment does not lend itself to this method of partitioning. Nevertheless, the static atmosphere engendered is appropriate for the entrance of this mechanical bird, for it sounds like clockwork to the listener. In the latter two acts, the octatonic would be used to represent the non-living characters of the piece such as the Spectres as well as the Mechanical Nightingale. This scale comes from Stravinsky’s Russian past, but Stravinsky’s manipulations of it here and later in the opera hint at the complexities he would bring to the use of pitch collections in his later music.

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8 For more information on the origins of the octatonic scale and Stravinsky’s early acquaintances with it read Pieter van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and the Rite of Spring: The Beginnings of a Musical Language* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1987), 115-131.
The Evolution of Stravinsky’s Compositional Process from 1908-1914: The Nightingale From Sketch to Score

The previous chapters of this thesis have used The Nightingale as a case study for explaining the evolution of Stravinsky’s compositional style from the time he studied with Rimsky-Korsakov to when he began to establish his own identity as a composer after The Rite, around 1914. However, if one is to understand Stravinsky’s development as a composer during this time period, one must consult the musical sketches. Fortunately for music theorists and historians, most of the musical manuscripts for Stravinsky’s opera The Nightingale are housed in the Stravinsky Archive of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland.1 These documents provide the key to unlocking the secrets of Stravinsky’s compositional style.

The following chapter will use the sketches for Stravinsky’s opera in order to trace various sections of the work from sketch to score, and, in the process, compare and contrast how Stravinsky’s compositional style evolved while composing The Nightingale between 1908 and 1914. This chapter will begin by detailing how Stravinsky composed the first act (begun 1908) by using compositional techniques including: voice-leading paradigms (a tool learned from Rimsky-Korsakov) such as interlocking thirds, working out a melody before finalizing the harmonic setting, and working from a piano score first.

1 Due to multiple grants awarded to me by Penn State University, the Penn State School of Music, the Schreyer Honors College, and the Penn State College of Arts and Architecture, I was able to be in residence at the Stiftung in late November, 2010. There, I transcribed many of Stravinsky’s sketches for The Nightingale, all of which will be used as the musical examples for this chapter.
then orchestrating within the confines of a predetermined instrumentation. For the second and third acts, Stravinsky composed copious amounts of rough sketches as he explored new techniques, such as a more unencumbered compositional technique than seen in the first act, where rather than letting the paradigms dictate the music, he created his own sound world. In addition, he sometimes orchestrated directly onto his piano reduction or orchestrated and composed skeletal notes before determining melody and accompaniment. He also moved towards a thinner instrumentation and at the same time relied less on “normal” triadic sonorities. Stravinsky was also preoccupied with strategies such as how a melody could fit perfectly into an already established texture. Furthermore, as Stravinsky’s compositional style developed, one thing clearly remains constant–his predilection for establishing one aspect of the composition (an ostinato, orchestration, a paradigm, etc.)—keeping that part “fixed” as he worked the other elements of the music around the established musical component. In fact, Stravinsky once noted that “the more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one’s self of the chains that shackle the spirit.”

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2 This quote comes from the book Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons, which was a result of six lectures that Stravinsky gave at Harvard in 1939. Though this quote may have reflected Stravinsky’s viewpoint regarding musical composition, the problem with trusting Poetics is that Stravinsky wrote only fifteen hundred words of these lectures, and Alexis Roland-Manuel was one of the ghostwriters for the remainder. Furthermore, the philosophy behind this quote may have its origins in a lecture given by André Gide in 1904, which revolved around the philosophy that “art is born of constraint, lives by struggle, dies of freedom.” For more information please refer to Maureen Carr’s book Multiple Masks. Igor Stravinsky, Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 65. André Gide, “The Evolution of the Theater,” presented as a lecture at Société de la Libre Esthétique, Brussels, 25 March 1904, trans. Jackson Matthews in My Theater: Five Plays and an Essay (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 263. As cited in Maureen Carr, Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky’s Works on Greek Subjects (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 7.
Act I

Act I: Music of the Introduction

The musical sources for the opening measures of the introduction to *The Nightingale* have often been discussed among scholars who have related the opera’s impressionistic opening to Debussy’s “Nuages” and Moussorgsky’s *Without Sunlight* cycle.³ A passage with such clear musical influences provides the perfect place to begin a discussion of Stravinsky’s compositional process for *The Nightingale*, which began around the year 1908. After examining the extensive collection of sketches at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, it appears that Stravinsky began by composing this opening passage with a piano reduction seen in example 3.1.

Example 3.1. *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to opening measures of Act I.

³ Constant Lambert makes the ingenious suggestion that a common origin for the introductory music may be found in one of the songs in Mussorgsky’s *Without Sunlight* cycle. Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985), 39.
This may be one of the earliest sketches for this musical source. Composing in the format of a piano reduction makes logical sense for a few reasons. First, Stravinsky was trained primarily as a pianist before turning to composition. Second, as previously mentioned, in his compositional lessons from Rimsky-Korsokov, Stravinsky spent hours orchestrating piano reductions of his teacher’s music. These experiences apparently left the young composer quite adept at orchestrating from piano scores.

When comparing this sketch to the final score, it is clear that Stravinsky knew the type of musical aesthetic that he wished to employ in the opening of his opera, but the exact notes in the final score are not found in this sketch (see example 3.4 for the final score). Instead, Stravinsky established the musical texture that would survive in the final published score. From the amount of repeated pitches in this sketch (the first measure, for example, alternates between two intervals), the composer simply wanted to establish a musical framework. Stravinsky even left the tempo marking blank, but indicated that the unit of beat should be the quarter note. It is of note, however, that this sketch has a slightly different key signature (F major instead of F minor), but the same opening interval (a perfect fifth), notes (F and C), and meter (3/4) as seen in the finished score.

The next step in the compositional process for this introduction was to begin the orchestration. The sketch shown in example 3.2 shows how Stravinsky began his orchestration.

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Example 3.2. *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to opening measures of Act I.
In this sketch, it appears that Stravinsky chose to begin orchestrating for a small string ensemble. He outlined parts for violins I/II, viola, cello, and bass. From the arrows and cross-outs, it is clear that Stravinsky had not yet decided how he wanted this opening to sound. There is also a fair amount of reordered parts in this sketch. For instance, in measure 12 of the sketch, Stravinsky was unsure as to whether he wanted to bring in the first violins or not. Another way the composer showed his uncertainty regarding this passage can be seen in measure 12 with the arrow that points from the second to the bottom stave. This arrow shows Stravinsky’s thought process when composing this passage. He would often decide that he did not like a certain line, draw a new musical line on another staff, cross out the original, and then draw an arrow to the new line. Here, the composer knew he preferred a rising chromatic line in the violins (notice how he would simply write part of the line then “etc.” to show that it would continue), so he simply crossed out the old line and inserted the chromatic figure.

At this point in his compositional process, however, it appears that Stravinsky had a key and meter finalized for the passage. When compared with the final score (Example 3.4), it appears that most of the notes are, in fact, quite comparable. Measures 1-10 in the sketch contain music that is almost identical to the final score (with differing instrumentation), but the subsequent measures leading into what would be rehearsal 1 in the final score seemed to have been troublesome for the young composer. These measures initiate a change in the musical texture of the introduction. Therefore, Stravinsky might have been having difficulty deciding how to transition into this new aesthetic. Although he was undecided exactly how he would orchestrate the introduction, the notes and musical gestures were reasonably finalized, suggesting that the composer
would not provide instrumentation for his works at this time until after he had almost completed the composition.

Stravinsky orchestrated this passage many times in subsequent sketches that lead up to the final score (Example 3.4). In those sketches, Stravinsky began with an already predetermined instrumentation and then would proceed to fill in the musical lines. This method seems to be a reflection of his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, who wrote a book on techniques of orchestration.5 Furthermore, this method of orchestration brings to light a trend in Stravinsky’s compositional process that pervades all acts of The Nightingale: the trend where the composer seemed to feel the need to have at least one fixed element around which everything else could be composed. In this case, the instrumentation is fixed, and he can then compose everything from that fixed point. This process is almost like laying the bricks of a foundation. Table 3.1 shows two of the subsequent instrumentations that Stravinsky used as the cornerstone for this passage. The instrumentation is standard for a full orchestra, though Stravinsky did experiment with different combinations of wind instruments. In the final score, Stravinsky would eventually return to utilizing a small string ensemble consisting of violins, violas, and cellos for the opening passage. Winds would enter beginning at rehearsal 1, because as the introduction progresses the instrumentation continues to become larger and larger.

Table 3.1: *The Nightingale*, table that corresponds to the opening measures of Act I.

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<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Piccolo</td>
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<tr>
<td>#1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flute II</td>
<td>Flute II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oboe I</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-Clarinet (or Oboe II)</td>
<td>Oboe II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clarinet in Bb I</td>
<td>Clarinet in Bb I</td>
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<td>Clarinet in Bb II</td>
<td>Clarinet in Bb II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bassoon I</td>
<td>Horn in F I</td>
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<td>Bassoon II</td>
<td>Horn in F II</td>
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<td>Horn in F III</td>
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<td>Trombone in Bb III</td>
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<td>Celesta</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Harp</td>
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<td>#2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Timpani</td>
<td>Violin I</td>
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<td>Cello I</td>
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<td>Cello III</td>
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<td>Double Bass</td>
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</table>
The final sketch that will be discussed in relation to the introduction to The Nightingale is shown in example 3.3.

Example 3.3: The Nightingale, transcription of sketch that corresponds to Act I, rehearsals 1-2.

Unlike the previously discussed sketches, this sketch does not refer to the introductory measures. Instead, it follows the opening musical material. This sketch appears to be a relatively early rendition of the passage that would become the few measures leading up to rehearsal 2 through rehearsal 3 in the final score (see example 3.4 to compare to the final score).
As with the primitive sketches that were previously discussed, this sketch has elements that identify its early origins. The sketch is a reduction of the material, and much of the musical material is nowhere close to its final version. The first four measures of the sketch are almost entirely absent in the completed score. For this reason I have marked where the music related to rehearsal 2 begins in the sketch as [A]. Another reason to suspect this sketch’s early creation is the fact that Stravinsky did not even notate instrumentation at all on this sketch. Instead, it is clearly a reduction of Stravinsky’s initial musical conception of this passage.

This sketch solidifies our perception of Stravinsky’s early compositional process at this time. One of these characteristics is the composer’s propensity for establishing the musical texture and general gestures for a given passage early on in the process. The notes for this passage, and the tonal center are not completely finalized until later. Stravinsky also enjoyed working with reductions in the earlier stages of composition. Finally, the composer clearly preferred to work on his compositions in small sections that seem to have become rehearsal numbers in the finalized score rather than simply sketching an entire movement or act at once and making minute changes to his sketches. This attitude may have come from his lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov, for one of Rimsky-Korsakov’s musical convictions seems to have been “the vestigial realist notion that if the short range is properly attended to, the long range will take care of itself.”

This paper will continue to show that working in small sections appears to be Stravinsky’s preferred method of composition throughout The Nightingale.

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6 Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 1:170.
Example 3.4: The Nightingale, Act I, rehearsals 1-3, orchestral score.
Act I: Music of the Real Nightingale

The Real Nightingale, as described in previous chapters, is the central character in Stravinsky’s opera, and may, in fact, have some of the most intriguing musical material in the entire score. Of all the sketches for the first act found in the Paul Sacher Stiftung, the documents related to the music of the Real Nightingale provide perhaps the clearest traceable process from sketch to score.

As described in earlier chapters, a possible source for the Real Nightingale’s melodic line after her first entrance at rehearsal 18 may be from Rimsky Korsakov’s
opera *Le coq d’or* (see example 3.5 for a comparison between the final music source of *The Nightingale* at rehearsal 22 and Act II, mm. 86-88, of *Le coq d’or*).  


a. Rimsky-Korsakov, *Le coq d’or*, Act II, mm. 86-88 (Shemakhanskaya Tsaritsa)

b. *The Nightingale*, Act I, 1 after  

One of the earliest sketches in the collection at the Stravinsky Archive relating to the Real Nightingale’s music seems to have been created after Stravinsky had this melodic inspiration (Example 3.6).  

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Richard Taruskin, in his book *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, first traced origins of this melodic line from *The Nightingale*. The examples in example 3.5 can be found with his translations in Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 1:470.
Example 3.6: The Nightingale, transcription of sketches that correspond to rehearsals 18-19.

This sketch displays an example of how Stravinsky began to combine a harmonic accompaniment with his melodic inspiration, and contains a wealth of insight into his early compositional process. As seen in the diplomatic transcription, Stravinsky began...
composing at the top of the page with a rough idea of what he wanted to see in the final score (Label 3.6:A), and then elaborated on his first sketch twice more on the same document (Labels 3.6:B and 3.6:C), each time getting closer to the final musical setting. The first and earliest section of the sketch shows a clear indication of the contour of the melodic line that can be seen in the final score (to compare see the final score in example 3.7). The rhythm of this section in both melody and accompaniment appears to be in its early stages, yet still resembles a rhythmically condensed version of the final score because these two measures represent what would ultimately become four measures of music. Due to this similarity, subsequent versions of this passage only needed to be tweaked before arriving at the final score. Harmonically, this section of the document is also close to the published score. The first measure has notes identical to a reduction of the final score, but the accompaniment in the second measure is transposed up a half step from the final version. The harmonies present in this sketch (beginning on a $G_b$ major chord) are still bound to triadic sonorities and chromatic voice leading typical of Russian music at this time.

Stravinsky’s first elaboration of his initial musical idea (Label 3.6:B) is found directly below the original (Label 3.6:A). The first noticeable embellishment is the added musical material in the third stave, which is a portion of the soprano’s motive reiterated in the bass voice. This elaboration survives all subsequent revisions, and appears in the third measure of rehearsal 18 in the final score. Another alteration seen in this version of the material is a rhythmic augmentation of all the music (all durations are doubled), and a displacement of the vocal line and accompaniment so that they no longer line up
rhythmically. The Real Nightingale’s melody is offset by a quarter note (established by
the addition of a quarter-note rest in the beginning of the material).

The second elaboration of the material (Label 3.6:C) is the closest so far to the
final score. In this version, Stravinsky again augments some but not all of his durations.
Rhythmically, all the notes in the melody and accompaniment are in their final places,
though most of the durations are altered in the published score. For instance, the second
G♭ in the nightingale’s melody lasts for 4½ beats in the sketch, but in the final version it
lasts only 2½. In this version of the nightingale’s first entrance, Stravinsky again adds
new musical material that extends the phrase to the four measures it would remain. One
aspect of this version of the sketch that is unique is the addition of the metronome
marking of quarter note = 58 b.p.m., which is the final marking that would survive in the
final score. The last two chords in the accompaniment however, are still a half-step
higher than they would be in the final version.

The final portions of this diplomatic transcription (Label 3.6:D) are simple
sketches where Stravinsky was working out the melody for rehearsal number 19 (see
example 3.7 to compare to the final score). The sketches that expand upon these simple
melodic fragments are not found in the Stravinsky Archive.

In terms of Stravinsky’s compositional process, this sketch brings to light much
about the composer’s bend of mind. At this time, Stravinsky clearly enjoyed beginning
his process with a musical inspiration such as a melodic line from another musical
composition (i.e. Le coq d’or) or a simple sketch of a melodic line (i.e. label 3.6:D). He
then would compose the melodic line from his inspiration over an unembellished
harmonic backdrop (Label 3.6:A). Following this, he could expand upon this fixed
amount of musical material and make it more complex until it transforms into the final
musical source. At this time, he was also still evidently bound to “normal” triadic
sonorities that he only escaped through the use of chromatic voice leading shown in all
versions of this section of musical material for rehearsal 18.

Example 3.7: *The Nightingale*, Act I, rehearsals 18-19, vocal score.
Example 3.8, another sketch from the Archives, supports the postulation that Stravinsky enjoyed working from melodic fragments before working out the rest of the composition.

Example 3.8: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 17.

Stravinsky scrawled this melodic fragment on single small sheet of paper that is included in the inventory of sketches at the Stravinsky Archive. This fragment relates to the flute melody in rehearsal 17 (see example 3.9 to compare to the final published score), though it does not correspond exactly. Instead, this example seems to be a rough idea of the musical gesture that Stravinsky wanted to emerge from this texture. In the compositional process for *The Nightingale*, gesture seems to be an important starting point for the young composer. The solitary nature of this sketch suggests that Stravinsky’s muse came on suddenly, and the composer felt compelled to transcribe it on paper. Given the methodology suggested by the previous sketch examined in this chapter (Example 3.6), it would be no stretch of the imagination to perceive this sketch as the start of a similar process to the one that was utilized in composing rehearsals 18 and 19 (Example 3.7).
Example 3.9: *The Nightingale*, Act I, rehearsal 17, orchestral score.

A musical sketch related to the Real Nightingale’s music between rehearsal numbers 21 and 22 further illustrates Stravinsky’s process of orchestrating his pieces (Example 3.10).

Example 3.10: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketches that correspond to rehearsals 21-22.
In this primitive sketch appears to show Stravinsky’s attempts to compose the accompaniment to the music in rehearsal 21 (see example 3.11 for the final published score). In both versions labeled [A] and [B] Stravinsky was more concerned with groups of sounds rather than concerning himself with specific instruments as of yet. However, although he did not notate a key signature, it is likely that he was thinking of this passage in G-flat major as evidenced by the cautionary accidentals he used and the outcome in the finished score. The process seen in this sketch is similar to his orchestration attempts for the introduction where he first provided instrumentation for the passage scored for strings alone, and then expanded his instrumentation to include winds.

Section [A] contains four distinct parts on four separate staves. There is also a fifth stave used to show a substitution that Stravinsky wanted to employ in the second stave (the arrow pointing from the fourth beat of the second stave to the fifth stave’s music clearly displays this). When composing, Stravinsky would often cross out a fragment of previously composed music that he did not like and draw an arrow to another place on the sketch where he would then notate a substitution. In this first version, Stravinsky apparently was trying to double the vocal part in the uppermost stave since the highest voice is exactly the same music that the Nightingale has at that moment. The third stave in section [A] also reveals an interesting compositional tool that Stravinsky would employ. Here, Stravinsky wanted to experiment with a change of register. He kept track of each note in the chord as originally notated by drawing lines from the first chord to the second (e.g. a line goes between the two G’s, the two D’s, and the two F’s). Another indicator that this sketch was composed early in the compositional process is that
Stravinsky left a lot of music blank such as the music in the second measure of section [A].

Section [B] is quite similar to section [A], except that in section [B] Stravinsky decided to abandon his earlier idea of doubling the vocal line. This sketch shows what would eventually become the final accompaniment in the top stave (played by the winds in the final score). Also, in the second stave of section [B], Stravinsky employed the substituted music that he had previously drawn an arrow to in section [A]. However, the composer then crossed out this new version of the second stave in the second measure, and wrote another substitution in the fifth stave of section [B]. An interesting development from section [A] to [B] can be seen in the music of the third stave where Stravinsky had experimented with changes in register. Here, Stravinsky chose to keep his original notation in the first measure, but the third measure was changed to the newly appropriated register. In this stave, the composer also tried to change the register for the second measure, only to change it back to the original in the end.
Example 11: The Nightingale, Act I, rehearsal 21, orchestral score.
The final sketch of the Real Nightingale's music to be discussed in this chapter is perhaps the most fascinating (Example 3.12), and can be roughly related to the musical material from rehearsals 19 through 21 in the score (for a comparison with the final score, see example 3.13).

Example 3.12: The Nightingale, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsals 19-21.
In this early sketch, Stravinsky decided to try out the previously discussed melody from rehearsal 19 in F-sharp major. There are many indications in this sketch that suggest its early origins. For instance, the key signature was hastily scribbled on the sketch in pen (when the rest of the music is in pencil) at a later time than the music itself. In fact, the key signature was written so quickly that it is almost illegible on the sketch. Furthermore, the music, when transposed to its enharmonic equivalent, G-flat Major, is not yet close to its final form. First of all, the music for the accompaniment in this sketch is only a portion of what the accompaniment would become (for reference, this accompaniment is only two thirds of the accompaniment written in the sketch shown in example 3.10). There are hints of the final version, however, in places such as the second beat of the fourth measure in the sketch where it shows a reduced version of the upward chromatic flourish in measure 2 of rehearsal 21 seen in the final score (Example 3.13). The general shape of the melodic line is also similar to the material between rehearsal numbers 19 and 21. Another similarity is the grace note figure that resembles the tweets from a bird labeled [A] in example 3.12. These gestures are very similar to the sketch material for example 3.8. The last piece of evidence that suggests the early nature of this sketch is that the metronome marking was crossed out then changed to what would eventually remain the final tempo of 72 b.p.m.
As shown in previous examples, the first fragments of this melody were written in G-flat major, and the final score is in the key of G-flat major as well. Clearly, this sketch was an aberration, an early notion that the composer decided to not include. A possible reason for the enharmonic shift in key may be due to Stravinsky’s aforementioned predilection for puzzles and thorny musical orthology, for F-sharp major is a more abstract key than G-flat major.\(^8\) F-sharp major also forces the melody to contain a plethora of double sharps, which is a characteristic of Stravinsky’s compositions.

One feature of this document that is characteristic of Stravinsky’s compositional process is the use of colored pencils. The (x), written by Stravinsky in red pencil towards the end of the sketch, indicates that the composer wanted to either insert music at that point later on, or stop the composition at that point and begin where the corresponding (x) in red pencil is found. In this case, Stravinsky recomposed that section of music, and did not want to take the trouble to erase the two measure of music that he had already written. So he simply marked that spot with an (x), and began composing at another point on the page where he wrote a corresponding (x) to indicate that the composition should now continue using this new music. He separated the old music from the new with a line written in blue colored pencil. This practice is a common compositional tool, and one that Stravinsky would employ often throughout his career. However, this is one of the only instances of this technique Stravinsky used in the composition of *The Nightingale*.

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Act I: Prophetic Voice-Leading Paradigms

In his composition lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky learned many techniques and ideals that would engrain themselves in the young, impressionable composer. It seems that in his lessons, Rimsky-Korsakov would always take the ends for granted and concentrate almost solely on the technical means of composition. Alexander Ossovsky once recalled of these lessons and Rimsky-Korsakov, “Nikolai Andreyevich would always say that in art one must know and know how [znat’ I umet’], and the more you know the more you know how to do, the more you can express in music. This was his deepest conviction.” In Stravinsky’s lessons, Rimsky-Korsakov would often assign the young composer exercises from Rimsky’s harmony text where Stravinsky would be made to write out harmonic progressions with proper voice leading. The text contains a set of models of which the student is then expected to complete, and covers topics such as “false progressions,” “circle of major thirds,” “scale by whole tones, and “circle of minor thirds.” Richard Taruskin states that evidence proving how much these exercises influenced Stravinsky can be found in Vasilii Vasilevich Yastrebtsev’s memoirs. Here, Yastrebtsev recalls how Rimsky-Korsakov once picked out the harmonizations in Stravinsky’s works that stemmed from these progressions, noting one particular instance where Rimsky pulled the examples out of Scherzo fantastique by ear. Example 3.14 shows an example of some of these exercises from Rimsky-Korsakov’s harmony text.

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9 Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 1:170.
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid, 1:304-305.

FALSE PROGRESSIONS ALONG THE CIRCLE OF MAJOR THIRDS

-294. From tonic triads:

\[ \text{Example:}\]

\[ (F_b - E) \]

\[ \text{Major}\]

\[ (F_b - E) \]

Assignment: Write ascending progressions

\[ (A_b - G^\#) \]

-295. False preparation, but correct resolution of dissonances:

\[ \text{Assignment: Write the same in minor.}\]

2. Elaborate with chromatic passing tones.
These lessons and exercises given to Stravinsky by Rimsky-Korsakov seem to have created a strong technical foundation for Stravinsky’s compositional process that reveals itself quite often in this first act of *The Nightingale*. Perhaps one of the most interesting practices acquired from Rimsky-Korsakov that Stravinsky appears to have utilized in this composition is that of voice-leading paradigms. For our purposes, a voice-leading paradigm will be defined as a musical pattern that is repeated sequentially to create a model or paradigm.

The next set of sketches to be discussed will trace a voice-leading pattern known as interlocking thirds through its apparent development from sketch to score. Interlocking thirds has origins from the “ladder of thirds” developed by Liszt and Rimsky-Korsakov, which perhaps explains where Stravinsky may have received the inspiration for his idea. The ladder of thirds was a series of four major thirds spaced a minor third apart.\(^{15}\) The ladder is simply a series of thirds in which the lower note of each unit is a semitone below the upper note of the previous unit. Stravinsky’s pattern builds upon this by substituting a minor third for every second group of notes (see example 3.15 for a diagram of this new pattern).

Example 3.15: diagram of ladder of thirds paradigm.

\[\begin{align*}
&\text{m3} \quad \text{M3} \quad \text{m3} \quad \text{M3} \quad \text{m3} \quad \text{M3} \quad \text{m3} \quad \text{M3} \quad \text{m3} \quad \text{M3} \\
\end{align*}\]

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 1:280.
The result of this interlocking thirds paradigm is that all major thirds now lay a perfect fourth away from the next, and the same is true for all minor thirds. This means that they all participate in the circle of fifths progression, and that there would have to be twenty-four progressions of thirds (an entire complex) before a specific set of notes could reoccur. Through this pattern, Stravinsky could achieve any harmonic modulation he wished with ease. This paradigm of alternating thirds also allowed Stravinsky to have a fixed point in his composition that everything could then work around, as described previously. These thirds provide the perfect cornerstone for his compositional process, and would continue to do so for many of Stravinsky’s works that would follow The Nightingale.

In a way, this pattern can be seen, in a way, as a breakthrough for Stravinsky, for it prophetically anticipates Stravinsky’s next large stage production, Firebird. Richard Taruskin states that this breakthrough provides “an excellent illustration of the methodical technical continuity that led Stravinsky on his ‘calm onward march’ from work to work throughout this early period.” Indeed, the pattern would manifest itself in much of The Firebird (see example 3.16 for a reduction of rehearsals 195-197 to demonstrate the interlocking thirds present in the composition).

Example 3.16: Reduction of The Firebird, rehearsals 195-197. From Taruskin, Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions, 1: 486.

16 Ibid, 1:481.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid, 1:486.
The first sketch that will be discussed in reference to the interlocking thirds is for the music of the Fisherman from *The Nightingale*, and, at first glance, seemingly does not have a place in the finalized score (Example 3.17).

Example 3.17: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 8.

In this sketch, Stravinsky not only indicated the Fisherman’s name, but the melodic pattern at the beginning is also similar to that of the Fisherman’s music that begins many of his verses in the final score (see example 3.18 to compare the Fisherman’s music at rehearsal 8 to that of the sketch).
Example 3.18: The Nightingale, Act I, rehearsal 8, vocal score.

Of note in the sketch shown in example 3.17 is how Stravinsky appears to have attempted to combine the music of the introduction with the Fisherman’s music by using the introductory music in the accompaniment for the Fisherman’s music. This is not the only sketch where Stravinsky considered the possibility of this combination, for he tried to combine the two musical ideas in sketches numerous times (for another sketch where Stravinsky experimented with this same procedure see example 3.19). Stravinsky could have experimented with this notion for a few reasons. Perhaps he was striving to find a way to transition from the introduction to the Fisherman’s music or maybe he was thinking about a way to conclude the act in a recapitulation that even Mozart would have been proud of.
Example 3.19: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch corresponding to the Fisherman’s music.

The most interesting aspect of the sketch shown in example 3.17, however, is the series of thirds that introduces the Fisherman’s music. These thirds are a prime example of the interlocking or alternating thirds described above, and are perhaps one of the first examples of this paradigm in any of Stravinsky’s compositions. This sketch is likely to have been written early on in the process due to the fact that none of it remains in the published score except in spirit. Notice how Stravinsky begins on a minor third between C-sharp and E, then alternates between minor and major until the paradigm concludes. This paradigm provided Stravinsky with an extraordinarily smooth way to move from the minor third between C-sharp and E to the perfect fifth between F and C that begins the introductory music in the accompaniment, for the F-flat in the bass of the final third of the paradigm smoothly resolves down a semitone to the F-natural that is in the bass of the perfect fifth in the upper stave of the accompaniment to the Fisherman’s music.

On the same document as example 3.17, written directly below this sketch, Stravinsky wrote in his scrawled script “*Instrumentovat’ tak*” [“Score it thus”], and then a quick sketch showing that he wanted this introductory material to be played by two clarinets pitched in A (Example 3.20).
Example 3.20: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch corresponding to interlocking thirds.

Though Stravinsky would not use this exact sketch for the transition between the introduction and the Fisherman’s music in the final score, he would find a way to incorporate interlocking thirds in the transition to the Fisherman’s music. Though, instead of using the interlocking thirds harmonically, Stravinsky would “treat the cycle in good Rimsky-Korsakov fashion as a background model for melodic sequences.”

The following sketch shows the beginning of this process, where Stravinsky, in his typical manner, establishes a texture without notating instrumentation (Example 3.21).

Example 3.21: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 5.

The interlocking thirds in this sketch are shown in the second stave from the top, and are still in their harmonic form. This sketch appears to be primitive in nature because only the texture, bass line, and overall downward voice leading remain in the final score (compare to the final score of rehearsal 5 shown in example 3.24). The thirds are

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19 Ibid, 1:482.
transformed into a melodic figure in the next sketch of this passage (Example 3.22), where Stravinsky not only transposes the entire passage to where it would eventually remain in the final score (notice the bass line starts on an A in the first sketch, but now starts on an E), but also transforms the entire soprano line, elaborates on the tenor line (now shown in the alto voice), and changes the interlocking thirds from a harmonic figure to a melodic one that now appears in the tenor voice. This sketch, though still a long way from the published score, contains in it the exact note-for-note melodic expansion of the alternating thirds paradigm in the second stave from the bottom (beginning with a minor third on D).

Example 3.22: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 5.

This sketch also provides an interesting opportunity to show how voice leading can play a major role in Stravinsky’s compositional process, for even though the notes change from this sketch to the final score, the overall voice leading remains quite similar (see example 3.23 for a diagram of the voice leading for this sketch and example 3.24 to compare to the final score). Thus, it appears that Stravinsky again had a texture and overall musical aesthetic predetermined for this passage, and simply needed to rearrange

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20 With thanks to Maureen Carr for inspiring this portion of the analysis.
the notes to fit his plan. As mentioned previously, having the interlocking thirds paradigm fixed and the overall texture planned may have made Stravinsky feel like he had more freedom with this composition.

Example 3.23: voice leading diagram for sketch corresponding to rehearsal 5.

Stravinsky would experiment extensively with the alternating or interlocking thirds paradigm in subsequent sketches, expanding what he could harmonically accomplish with the paradigm. Such sketches rarely survived to make the final score. An example of one of the more extravagant instances of this can be seen in example 3.25.

Example 3.25: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch showing voice-leading paradigm.
On the surface, example 3.25 is complex enough from a rhythmic standpoint, but the true complexity lies in the harmonic backdrop for the passage. In this example, Stravinsky integrated a plethora of harmonic traditions into this one passage. The interlocking thirds paradigm can be seen in the two upper voices of the second stave from the bottom beginning on a minor third with A as the root. Underneath the thirds are three notes of a major scale notated as a quarter note triplet that modulates up a perfect fourth each measure (around the circle of fifths). Above both of those figures are two sets of chromatic flourishes. The flourishes in the second stave from the top embellish each of the interlocking thirds chromatically, while the other is a downward chromatic figure that modulates down by a perfect fifth each measure (around the descending circle of fifths). Finally, all of this was placed over a pedal tone of F. The ingenious aspect of this paradigm is that Stravinsky could extract even more sequential structures from paradigms such as this, thereby enriching the potential for creating his compositions.

**Acts II and III**

As previous chapters have described, Igor Stravinsky began *The Nightingale* as a one-act scene depicting part of the Hans Christian Andersen fable of the same name. Due to the commission of *The Firebird*, Stravinsky stashed away *The Nightingale* in his portfolio until the spring of 1913, when he was contacted by Alexander Akimovich Sanin (1869-1956) and was invited to provide the Moscow Free Theater with a three-act musical work to show off his music to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and all of Russia. Stravinsky, at first disagreed, but then after Sanin suggested the addition of one other scene, Stravinsky responded to Sanin by stating that he wanted to, in fact, compose two more scenes in order to “round off” the Andersen story. Stravinsky stated:

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The fact is, the scene from Andersen’s *Nightingale* that is already in my portfolio does stand *toute seule* in a fully finished and rounded off form. By adding to it the final scene of the Chinese Emperor’s illness, we would end up with something far more indistinct and monotonous, not only from the standpoint of the libretto/plot, but also from the musical point of view. The middle would be lacking, the whole kernel of the Andersen story (the contest of the artificial nightingale with the authentic one). There would be a notable lack of contrast in the music as well.

Therefore I propose to write more scenes for the sake of greater completeness.  

Though Stravinsky wrote the final two acts in order to round off the Andersen story from the standpoint of the music and the libretto, a glaring incongruity remained between the first act (begun in 1908) and the two post-*Rite* acts (begun in 1913). Benois once claimed that “Diaghilev tried to persuade Igor of the necessity to revise the first act as well so that the opera would take on a single general character, but the composer insisted on his way, and a certain disharmony of style remained.”\(^\text{22}\) Stravinsky, in fact, saw the disharmony mitigated by the interesting contrast between the lyrical mood of the first act and the courtly pomp of the second and third acts. The composer also felt that an emphasis on reprises and reoccurring motives (such as the Fisherman’s song, the tweeting of a bird, or the return of the Chamberlain’s octatonic motif as the Death fanfare) would help to keep all three acts together as a cohesive whole.\(^\text{24}\)

The overt changes in Stravinsky’s musical style that manifest themselves in the latter two acts of *The Nightingale* are also reflected in his compositional process. After examining the sketches for Stravinsky’s opera, it is clear that the composer made great strides in his compositional process between the years of 1908 and 1913 (when works such as *The Firebird* and *Rite of Spring* were premiered). In the Paul Sacher Stiftung, many more of Stravinsky’s rough sketches are available that relate to the second and third acts than for the first. These sketches reveal many aspects of the composer’s newly

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\(^{22}\) Ibid., 2:1079.  
\(^{24}\) Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 2:1091.
redefined compositional process. As mentioned previously, the paradigms that Stravinsky explored and utilized in the first act, are not seen in the sketches for the second and third acts. He also began to orchestrate his music directly onto his piano reductions or even sometimes onto a set of skeletal notes for a passage. Stravinsky also utilized much thinner instrumentations at this time while relying on less triadic sonorities. Lastly, he became engrossed in seeing exactly how a melodic figure could fit perfectly into an already established musical texture. The composer, however, continued to show that he preferred to have one aspect of his compositions “fixed,” and to cultivate the rest of the work around that compositional cornerstone.

_Act II/III: Musical Fragments Primarily from Sketchbook I_

When beginning the discussion of Stravinsky’s compositional process of the last two acts (written around 1913) and how it differed from the process used in creating the first act (1908), it is best to start by exploring the early stages of the process. The most apparent difference between processes examining sketches from this period is the use of a sketchbook to jot down musical fragments that would later be used to construct the completed composition. When composing the first act, Stravinsky did not seem to have a dedicated sketchbook, and instead used loose pieces of paper to scrawl out his musical ideas. Stravinsky would then use these musical ideas to build his compositions. Sometimes the musical fragments are simply melodic, while other times they are textural. The fragments are sometimes even a simple musical gesture that Stravinsky happened to like, which would then be inserted it into the musical score. In the following section I will display some of Stravinsky’s earliest sketches for these two acts, and discern where these sometimes quite ambiguous sketches remain in the finalized score.

The first sketch to be discussed is a melodic fragment written for the harp, and is displayed below in example 3.26.
In this example, Stravinsky provides evidence that suggests that he preferred to use his sketchbook for jotting down short musical ideas. This musical fragment actually is found isolated on a single page of the sketchbook. The fragment actually remains in the final score almost exactly the way it appears in the sketch. This fragment can be found beginning in measure 4 of rehearsal 51, which is the first rehearsal number of the second act (see example 3.27 to compare to the final score). In the final score, Stravinsky changed only one note, for the E that concludes the fragment is in a different octave. Though this fragment may seem rather frivolous, Stravinsky apparently thought it important enough that he scrawled it in his sketchbook in order to not forget it. This melodic gesture in the harp actually is a very musically interesting part of this section of the score, for it adds a unique color to the music that introduces the first entrance of the chorus in the second act.
Example 3.27: *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 51
The next few sketches to be discussed will pertain to the music that the Real Nightingale performs and the music surrounding the authentic avian. The sketch shown in example 3.28 is one that does not seem to have made it into the final score in the way it appears in this sketch, but instead remains as more of an example of the texture Stravinsky envisioned for this section of the music.

Example 3.28: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 83.

This sketch cannot be found note-for-note in the final score. However, the triplet motive in the accompaniment to the nightingale’s song in rehearsal 83 does seem to possibly coincide with this sketch (see example 3.29 to compare to the final score). The other evidence that this may relate to the music of the Real Nightingale is that it is on the same page as three other sketches pertaining to the Real Nightingale’s music. Due to the rough and primitive nature of this sketch, it appears that instead of trying to write down an exact musical idea, he was experimenting with a texture that he thought may be appropriate for this part of the work (entitled “Chanson de Rossignol”). This sketch of the intended texture is simply one piece of the puzzle that Stravinsky had to put together in order to create the second and third acts of his opera.

The next example from that page containing a few sketches pertaining to the authentic nightingale’s music can be related to the Real Nightingale’s own song (Example 3.30).

Example 30: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 88.

The music in this sketch does not appear note for note in the music, and instead seems to be Stravinsky simply trying to work out a motive for the Real Nightingale. The downward chromatic gesture and approximate rhythm (starting on a longer value note, descending with shorter value notes, and concluding the phrase with a triplet figure followed by a note or two) of this sketched motive does occur when the nightingale sings throughout the two acts. Perhaps Stravinsky was attempting to have the motives of each character set in his mind before he composed. This would mean that the motivic design of the work could act as the “fixed” element of the composition that Stravinsky can work everything else around. For comparison, one of the closest matches to this sketch that is found in the final score can be seen in measure 5 of rehearsal 88 (Example 3.31), which is part of the “Chanson de Rossignol.” Here, much is changed, but the overall gesture and intervallic content is comparable.
The last item on this sketch page that will be discussed is another motivic fragment that would later be expanded upon to create the nightingale’s cadenza (Example 3.32).

Example 3.32: The Nightingale, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 82.

This sketch continues the trend showed by the previous sketches where Stravinsky used his sketchbook to jot down musical fragments that would not materialize note-for-note in the final score, but does portray the musical gesture that remains in the published score. This particular gesture is one that can be seen reflected in the cadenza that the Real Nightingale sings at the opening to the section of the score entitled “Chanson de Rossignol” at rehearsal 82 (see example 3.33 to compare to the final score). All of the sketches from sketchbook I continue to provide evidence that Stravinsky preferred to approach composition like a puzzle, creating the pieces by composing small melodic fragments, then putting them together to create his final piece.
Though the next example is not present in the sketchbook, it was composed in the same spirit of the musical fragments in the sketchbook, for it is a musical idea that is not reflected note-for-note in the final score (Example 3.34).

Example 3.34: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch and Stravinsky’s annotations relating to orchestration.

As shown in this sketch, Stravinsky was attempting to plan the instrumentation of a passage. It appears that he was using skeletal notes to remind himself of which notes each instrument would play. For instance, the violins ("vno" in the sketch) would play the notes around the F. This method of orchestration shows how Stravinsky broke out of the
mold that was imposed on him by Rimsky-Korsakov. Here, we can see Stravinsky becoming more of an individual.

**Act II: Chanson de Rossignol**

Since many of the sketches in the sketchbook pertained to the music of the Real Nightingale, it is only fitting that the next section discussed should be the performance of the Real Nightingale that occurs in the second act. The sketches to follow will build upon the already described foundation that was in place from the sketches in the sketchbook.

One of the most memorable sections of the Real Nightingale’s song is the lengthy and virtuosic cadenza that begins the performance. However, the earliest sketches for the “Chanson de rossignol” were written without a cadenza. In fact, the first sketch shown in example 3.35 does not contain any intro or cadenza (Example 3.35).

Example 3.35: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsals 82-83.
This early sketch for the performance of the nightingale has much to say about Stravinsky’s compositional process in his post-\textit{Rite} period. First of all, it is evident that Stravinsky did not change in his method of composing from a piano reduction first, then subsequently orchestrating. He did, however, apparently begin to manipulate his sketches a bit more at this time. As shown in the example, Stravinsky began sketching the skeletal notes for this passage in normal lead pencil. Once that was done, however, he added more notes to the composition by adding in more notes in purple pencil (notes in purple pencil are marked with a white “P” in the middle of the note).

A few aspects of this sketch point to its primitive origins. First off all, the original skeletal notes were nowhere near what would appear in the final score. Also, this sketch was composed without a key signature, while the final score has three sharps. Lastly, as mentioned before, the cadenza and introduction are both missing. However, Stravinsky was apparently not satisfied with the passage the way it was, because he started the notation for an introduction underneath the passage (see the bottom of example 3.35). Stravinsky also left out many of the ornaments that would give this passage so much of
its flair in places such as measure 1 (for comparison see the final score shown in example 3.36). In this entry, Stravinsky was laying the foundation for this passage.

Example 3.36: The Nightingale, Act II, rehearsals 82-83, vocal score.
In the margins of this sketch page, Stravinsky etched in two small musical fragments (Example 3.37).

Example 3.37: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsals 82-84.

a.

b.

These two musical fragments seem to serve different functions. Fragment A appears to be Stravinsky’s attempt to see how a new accompaniment would fit with the already established melody seen in the second measure of the sketch shown in example 3.35. This fragment was written in regular pencil, which suggests that this was written early on in the process before Stravinsky began his manipulations. Fragment B, appears to be Stravinsky working out the accompaniment to the second measure of rehearsal 84 and was written in purple pencil (see example 3.38 for comparison).
Example 3.38: *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 84, vocal score.

The evidence from the sketchbook, the lengthy sketch, and these small musical fragments seem to suggest that Stravinsky, at this time, preferred to start at the micro level of composition. He would then write out much more than one rehearsal number (the size of the passages he would sketch at one time before this), and then revise it again at the macro level. This suggests a shift in his compositional process from 1908 to when he completed this passage in late 1913.

The next logical step in the compositional process was to add the introduction that was sketched at the bottom of example 3.35. The next example illustrates this process (Example 3.39).
Example 3.39: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsals 82-83.

When compared with the final score shown in example 3.36, this sketch appears to be much closer to the final score than previous sketches. In fact, the entire introduction is almost exactly the same as the printed score (except for a few minor engraving changes). Also, though the cadenza is still missing, Stravinsky seems to have been thinking about
adding one since he added the introductory note (an A) for the soprano. This sustained note would later begin the nightingale’s florid cadenza. Stravinsky also incorporated into this sketch many of the changes he made to his previous sketch in purple pencil, while still working from a piano score.

With regard to his compositional process, it is interesting to note that Stravinsky began thinking about instrumentation while still working from the piano part. In the third measure of the sketch, Stravinsky wrote in that he wanted clarinets to play part of the accompaniment. It is also significant that the chords are not yet in their final “inversion.” This means that the chords have the same notes that would remain in the final score, but they are not yet in the correct order. Stravinsky, in his typical fashion, also had not yet finalized the rhythms for the nightingale and the accompaniment.

The next sketch page displays how Stravinsky went about composing the nightingale’s cadenza at rehearsal 86 that ends the nightingale’s song (Example 3.40).

Example 3.40: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 86.
As shown in this example, Stravinsky began composing by first creating a basic musical fragment, then set about elaborating it. The first rendition of the cadenza, seen at the top of the page, is a combination of three repetitive musical figures that concludes in a tremolo. These three musical fragments provide the structural basis for the almost finalized cadenza that appears in the sketch at the bottom of the page (see example 3.41 to compare to the final score). The tremolo would also survive in the final score. In the upper portion of the sketch, Stravinsky was working out an accompaniment so that it fit around the cadenza of the nightingale. This sketch shows that Stravinsky used the cadenza as his “fixed point” and then composed the accompaniment around it. Another thing to point out in this sketch is the lack of instrumentation. The accompaniment was written as a single musical line that could be orchestrated at a later time.

Example 3.41: *The Nightingale*, Act II, rehearsal 86, vocal score.
Act III: The Music of the Real Nightingale

The Real Nightingale also makes an appearance in the third act when saving the Emperor from Death. Stravinsky wrote the following two sketches in the margins of a typewritten libretto (Example 3.42).

Example 3.42:

a. *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 124bis.

```
Pechal'nye veshchomu e się
```

[The mournful moon is shining]

b. *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 122.

Both of these sketches are melodic fragments of the Real Nightingale’s song from this section of the opera. The sketch labeled A can be related to the music from rehearsal 124bis, while the sketch labeled B can be related to the music from rehearsal 122 (see examples 3.43a and 3.43b to compare to the final score). Both fragments suggest that Stravinsky preferred to work with short musical ideas and to build from them in the composition of his post-*Rite* acts from *The Nightingale*. They also seem to suggest that Stravinsky gained much of his inspiration for his operatic music from the text itself (hence why he wrote music in the margins of the libretto). He may also have been trying to create various *leitmotifs* associated with each character.
Example 3.43:


```
124bis

Fl. gr. I

Cl. II in Bb

Celesta

Mand. (ad lib.)

Chitarra (ad lib.)

Nightingale

moon___ is shin__ ing sad__ ly on

grave__ yards lost in si__ lence.
```


```
122

Give_al_so back the pre-cious sword and__ stan-dard,
```
Stravinsky continued developing the music of the Real Nightingale in the next sketch (Example 3.44).

Example 3.44: The Nightingale, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 124bis with Stravinsky’s annotations.

In this sketch, Stravinsky was attempting to write out the accompaniment that goes with the melody shown in example 3.42a (see example 3.43 to compare to the final score). This sketch shows how Stravinsky utilized an interesting and unique method of composition. The notes are all comparable to the final score, but the instrumentation is still a bit limited. Therefore, this sketch is probably an early attempt at orchestration. It can be assumed that Stravinsky wrote out the music on two staves for the piano reduction then labeled each melodic line with instrumentation, because the piano reduction of this passage is identical to this sketch (with a few enharmonic shifts).

Another interesting aspect of this sketch is that Stravinsky showed that his repletion in the bass line is entirely pre-determined since he labeled three of the melodic figures A, B, and C. Then he simply wrote in the corresponding letter in subsequent measures so that he would not have to write out each repetition. This is the only time in the sketches for The Nightingale that this compositional tool is used.
Act II: The Performance of the Mechanical Nightingale

The antagonism between the real and mechanical nightingales lies at the heart of Stravinsky’s opera *The Nightingale* and also Andersen’s fairy tale. The following sketches detail the music of the Mechanical Nightingale’s development from sketch to score. This evolution epitomizes Stravinsky’s compositional style during this period. Example 3.45 shows what appears to be one of the earliest sketches for the Mechanical Nightingale’s music.

Example 3.45: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 92.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Example 3.45: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsal 92.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In this sketch, Stravinsky was working on a reduction of the Mechanical Nightingale’s melody. This sketch consists of an antecedent and consequent phrase. The first phrase is reflected in the fourth measure of rehearsal 92, and the consequent phrase is reflected in the material in measure 8 of rehearsal 92 (see example 3.47 to compare to the final score). In subsequent revisions of this melody, Stravinsky would simply elaborate on this fragment.

In the next sketch, shown in example 3.46, Stravinsky wrote out an ostinato then tried to fit the elaborated melody from the last sketch over that repeating bass. As shown by the repeat signs in the accompaniment and cross-outs in the melody, it seems Stravinsky was attempting to fit the melody into the already fixed accompaniment (see example 3.47 to compare to the final score). Except for the introduction for this passage, which is not present, this sketch appears to be very close to the final score. The ostinato in this sketch served as the cornerstone that Stravinsky used to compose this passage. In this sketch the composer wanted to see how this melody could fit perfectly over the accompaniment. The accompanying ostinato gives this passage the mechanical characteristic that is appropriate for the Mechanical Nightingale’s performance. The cross-outs reveal much about how Stravinsky would alter the melody in order to make it fit above a fixed ostinato.
Example 3.46: *The Nightingale*, transcription of sketch that corresponds to rehearsals 92-93.

**Jeu du rossignol mechanique**
Conclusion

The chapters in this thesis reveal many of the dualities inherently present in both the libretto and the music for Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale* and the process of their creation. Due to the years separating the completion of Act one and Acts two and three, Stravinsky’s evolving compositional style and process are manifested in *The Nightingale*. This thesis has examined *The Nightingale* from various angles in order to illuminate many dualities present in Stravinsky’s opera. In so doing, this thesis shows how Stravinsky moved away from his Russian heritage and the influences of his composition teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, during his formative years between 1908 and 1914, and how he developed his own musical style and compositional approach that would define him in the years following *The Nightingale*’s completion.


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