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PROCEEDINGS

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Rediscovering Music Universe of Claude Debussy's *Préludes*

Prof. Dr. Tijana Popović Mladenović,¹ Ph.D. Candidate and Junior Researcher Neda Kolić,² and Teaching Assistant Dr. Ivana Petković Lozo³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia*

¹tijana.popovic.mladjenovic@gmail.com,

²nedica.kolic@gmail.com,

³ivanarpetkovic@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper will offer a possible interpretation and understanding of the Claude Debussy's *Préludes* as a compendium of artistic (music and painting impressionism and symbolism), philosophical (phenomenology), psychological (gestalt), theoretical (synaesthesia) and aesthetic tendencies of *fin de siècle* (Popović Mladenović, 2009). Thus, in the first part of this paper, a musicological interpretation of Debussy's *Préludes* will be offered as a complete music-dramaturgic flow, as well as the imaginary paint art exhibition. Criteria for this interpretation were as follows: a function that each prelude has in a cycle as an integrative entirety, multiple network relationships between the preludes, Debussy's *signatures* at the end of each prelude, as well as dominant fundamental element (water, air, earth, fire, and human / the fifth element) that each prelude is connected with (Popović Mladenović, 2008). The second segment of the paper will point out to the theories of synaesthesia and artistic synaesthesia. Thus, the convergence of arts, especially music and painting, will be discussed in synesthetic terms, through their primary denominators – sound and color (Van Campen, 2010; Cytowic, 2018). Those ideas of 'seeing' music in pictorial terms and 'hearing' paintings according to musical laws, will be cross-checked with the results presented in the third part of this paper based on empirical qualitative research. Non/overlapping points will be pointed out by crosschecking survey results and musicological-theoretical conclusions (Popović Mladenović, Bogunović, Perković, 2014). The aim of this research is about artistic 'crisscrossing' – potential *correspondence* areas between music and paint art (Rubin, Mattis, 2018), by analyzing the music-dramaturgic flow of Debussy's *Preludes* which also has a *logic of pictorial*. The main contribution of the paper is to rediscover the musical universe of Debussy's *Préludes* through crisscrossing of disciplines: musicology, psychology (*Gestalt* and synaesthesia), and philosophy,

with a theoretical and empirical approach. Likewise, this symposium represents a unique contribution to overall literature on Debussy's *Préludes*, considering the diversity of approaches.

The Idea of Debussy's *Préludes* as a Cycle and Imaginary Paint Art "Exhibition"

The two separate 'livres' of *Préludes*, written between 1910 and 1913, represents the culmination of Claude Debussy's work in the field of piano music. In addition, these two 'livres' are the purest representation of the composer's whole music universe, as well as the possibility of its pictorial (and/or dreamlike imagery, fantasy-imaginative) *readout* in listener consciousness. Namely, the cycle of 24 preludes, mostly based on visual 'facts' or 'immediate data' of visual sense – but not as a mere sensation or impression of reality, instead of as feelings in response to the external world – which is indicated by their titles that appear at the end, in parentheses, witnessing of composer's intention that free visual associations that may emerge during the listening of these miniatures get their concrete definition in the end. In that sense, titles at the end of each prelude could be considered "a signature", something that inspires, make no statements and set no limits – "they lead... into an ambiguous world where there is no cause and no effect" (Nochlin, 1966: 194).

Nevertheless, *Préludes* are not isolated 'case' in the composer's opus. Debussy calls his compositions pictures, sketches, prints, arabesques,

masques, studies in black and white, and so on. Judging by his works, and by their titles, or better say signatures, Debussy became, or he is from the very beginning, “a painter and that is what he wants to be”, as René Peter, one of the composer’s closest friends of the 1890s, noticed. According to Peter’s words, “it is his [Debussy’s] delight to paint in music” (Roberts, 1996: 19–20). Before we get to that point, we shall focus on the *Préludes* as a cycle with a very specific musical dramaturgy.

Since each prelude represents a well-balanced entirety, it could be performed separately, which is the most common case. However, since each prelude has its place in the cycle, its integral performing presents the fulfillment of the composer’s global intention. The reason why we consider that the 24 miniatures together form the cycle lies in the fact that several integrative factors relate to different musical components and their elements throughout the whole work and affect the integral perception of *Préludes*. In other words, these integrative factors derive from Debussy’s uttermost specific compositional principles and compositional procedures, as well as compositional-technical solutions based on which a full musical-dramatic flow is being built, in terms of:

- *shaping the entire musical flow* on principles of *building* a structure out of fragments, with carefully measured and distributed contrasts;
- *textural organization* – mostly three-layered texture where one layer represents melody, often in short strokes, fragments; second is accompaniment given as ‘flat’/‘solid’ chords or as broken/arraggiated chords; the third layer appears as a pedal tone. Not so seldom, the three-layered texture is given as three staves (2^e Livre);
- *the specific type of melodic material* based on various scales and their potential mutual combinations; thus, it is possible to notice melodies based on diatonic scale/major and minor scale, chromatic scale, anhemitonic pentatonic scale, diatonic (Gregorian/church) modes or a whole-

tone scale, and on their most diverse ‘colored’ mixtures;

- *harmony solutions* – the parallel movement of consonant or dissonant chords, chromatic/mediant relationships (between chords a major/minor third apart), as well as, a saturated harmonic language with the use of more complex harmonies and chromatics, all in the function of color;
- dynamics, agogics, articulation and/or ‘character’ of color;
- the specified components of temporal organization, that is, the ‘breathing’/‘waves movement’ of the musical flow, such as tempo, the rate of the unfolding of musical time, decelerations and accelerations of ‘color’.

All aforementioned musical components, along with various modes of motivic and harmonic interconnectivity, are involved in the process of *Préludes* linking, their integration or disintegration, aggregation or segregation, convergence, or divergence in the figurative sense, that is, different ways of grouping individual preludes.

On macro-level of this particular cycle, there are entireties, i.e., phases in the unfolding of musical flow intensity that represent smaller parts/waves with its dramaturgy, which encompasses development, an increase of musical flow intensity, its decrease, anti-climax or episode, and at the end reaching climax or appearance of epilogue. The exciting thing is that the number of preludes, which group into waves, has regular growth.

Thus, the first ‘book’ is divided into three waves: first of which is comprised of first three preludes – 1. *Danseuses de Delphes*, 2. *Voiles*, 3. *Le vent dans la plaine*; second wave of next four – 4. *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l’air du soir*, 5. *Les collines d’Anacapri*, 6. *Des pas sur la neige* and 7. *Ce qu’à vu le vent d’ouest*; and the third of last five preludes – 8. *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, 9. *La sérénade interrompue*, 10. *La cathédrale engloutie*, 11. *La danse de Puck*, and 12. *Minstrels*.

Musical flow of the first ‘book’ is followed by second ‘book’ that is divided into two larger

waves. First wave is comprised of first six preludes grouped into two smaller waves – first half-wave 1/13. *Brouillards*, 2/14. *Feuilles mortes*, 3/15. *La puerta del Vino*, and second half-wave 4/16. *Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses*, 5/17. *Bruyères*, 6/18. *Général Lavine – eccentric*. Second wave consists of last six miniatures – 7/19. *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*, 8/20. *Ondine*, 9/21. *Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq. P.P.M.P.C.*, 10/22. *Canope*, 11/23. *Les tierces alternées*, and 12/24. *Feux d'artifice*.

In that way, one could sense, musical flow *decomposition* is performed in ever-wider strokes, from the initial grouping of three miniatures until the final joining of six. If both 'books' are viewed as a whole, then the first 'book' and the first wave of the second 'book' could be interpreted as a constant musical-dramaturgic development with vacillations in its intensity (sort of 'ups' and 'downs' characterized by anti-climax, episode, epilogue). The last six preludes of the second 'book', also as a separate segment, form some sort of *Grand Finale* for the entire cycle.

From the perspective of more profound comprehension of Debussy's poetic and aesthetic but also his particular thinking through that music "by its very essence... consists of colors and rhythmicized time" (Botstein, 2001: 160), it could be understood to what extension pictorial element is a fundamental factor of composer's opus, that is the music of *Préludes* themselves. Namely, Debussy's comments on the nature of music return again and again to visual metaphors and analogies appropriated from the contemporary discourse on developments in modern art. In that sense, for example, Debussy 'resonates' with the aesthetics and practices of: Whistler (as the author of *mystery*), Turner (as the author who turned the temporal into fantasy and evoked a dreamlike act of the imagination), pre-Raphaelites, impressionist and post-impressionist painters, the symbolist painters, especially Redon (on whose canvases dreamlike imagery with arresting colors and a sense of the ethereal prevail in integrated, organic compositions in which the elements of color, line, tone, and image relate as unstable elements to one another), as well as the symbolist poets, among others, Mallarmé and Laforgue (according to

him painting becomes precisely musical in its role as the visual representation of the passage of time), etc. Aim and outcome of this part of *exposé*, based on the concept of *Préludes* as a cycle, that is, ways of how individual preludes are organized and mutually correspond forming climaxes and anti-climaxes of this unique musical unfolding in time, point out possibilities of their interpretation as a very explicitly conceived, unique paint art exhibition that would reveal resonating poetic characteristic as well as aesthetic points of view of artists mentioned above. Namely, taking into consideration Debussy's 'preludic' individual and group musical portraits, musical winds, water worlds, fragrances, musical fragments of history, time and landscapes, musical genre scenes, etc., which depend on their pictorial, associative features unequivocally take over real functions of different 'punctuation marks' in segmentation of cycle as an integrative entirety, we searched for one of the possible envisagement of *Préludes* as an imaginary paint art exhibition in gallery space that rises from the interpretation of this cycle as a complete music-dramaturgic flow because it is, one could say, in its crucial sense guided by the logic of pictorial. Criteria for arranging imaginary paint art exhibition in gallery space were as follows: a function that each prelude has in a cycle as an integrative entirety; multiple network relationships between the preludes; Debussy's *signatures* at the end of each prelude; as well as a dominant essential element that each prelude is connected with.¹

Debussy's *Préludes* in the Realm of Synaesthesia – "seeing music"/ "hearing painting"?

Préludes are "pregnant with synesthetic potentialities" (Cavallaro, 2013: 48). Thus, com-

¹ We identified groups of preludes that correspond to *Water*, *Air*, *Earth* and *Fire*, but we also included a group that overlaps basic *four elements*, and is 'pointed' toward *Human*, that is *the fifth element*. It is expressed through *singing* and *dancing* as parts of genre-scenes that include musical portraits of individual or group.

prehension of synaesthesia may help us to ‘see’ music through the *logic of pictorial*, to ‘hear’ paintings according to musical laws, and to find their hidden or not-so-obvious interconnections, those that we usually explain in terms of metaphor.

Term *synaesthesia* (which etymological root is in the ancient Greek synthesis of two terms – σύν [syn], “together”, and αἴσθησις [aisthesis], “sensation” – in literal meaning “to sense together”, which was scientifically defined at the end of the 19th century, designates a specific neurological state in which different stimulus activate two or more senses at the same time. One of the most prominent researchers in the domain of synaesthesia, Richard Cytowic, proposed a more comprehensive definition of this phenomenon, so according to him “synaesthesia is a hereditary condition in which a triggering stimulus evokes the automatic, involuntary, affect-laden, and conscious perception of a physical or conceptual property that differs from that of the trigger” (Cytowic & Eagleman, 2009: 112). Till today, scientists recognized a myriad kind of synaesthesia (that describes the phenomenon of combining color-taste, color-scent, audio-motor, sound-odor, temperature-color, taste-touch, touch-smell, vision-touch, etc.) However, one of the most usual and in our context the most important is *color-hearing* or *chromesthesia*, when sounds/music initiate specific colors/lights in the inner mind of a synaesthete, but there exists the reverse variant.

However, before all this precise definitions and categorization of synesthetic experiences, there were different researchings, experiments and writings throughout the history about color-sound connections and sensory correspondences (just to mention several: Isac Newton’s theory of 7 different colors connected to 7 tones of C-major scale (in his *Optics*, 1704), Johan W. von Goethe’s in *Theory of Colors (Fabernlehre*, 1810), Louis Bertrand Castel’s color harpsichord (*clavecin oculaire*), Alexander Wallace Rimington’s “Color-Organ”, etc. However, probably initiated by a significant change in music that took place at the end of the 19th century, when the earlier ‘primary’ tone components – pitch and

duration (rhythm), became ‘secondary’ – gave its place as a critical role in the articulation of a structure of composition to intensity (dynamics) and, especially, to color (instrumentation, articulation). This change, even more, encouraged the artist to experiment in color-sound synesthetic correspondences, that will be continued during 20th and 21st century, which, eventually initiated a shift in a synesthetic researchings in the second half of the 20th century, when neurologists and psychologist have started investigating artistic practices, individual poetics of those composers, painters, poets who integrated synesthetic experiences in their opuses. That is the reason why many contemporary scientists, in the domain of synaesthesia, tried to differentiate *neurological* or ‘real’ *synaesthesia* and *artistic synaesthesia*. D. Cavallaro explicitly argued that it is essential to distinguish between *actual synaesthesia* and *artistic synaesthesia* (Cavallaro: 2013). The former is involuntary and biological and is, therefore, an integral part of a person’s way of perceiving the world at all times and cannot be produced in non-synaesthetes. The latter consists of the deliberate construction of cross-sensory effects by artists who deploy perceptual blending as a means of communicating their vision. The keyword that is frequently used to differentiate artistic or cultural synaesthesia from neurological synaesthesia is a metaphor.

And music in general, as the most abstract art form, as a nonverbal but formally complex ‘object’ is hard to write about, usually needs a metaphor for its verbalization. However, the metaphor shouldn’t be understood merely as a rhetorical device. Simon Shaw-Miller (2014) mentioned that “metaphor is not just a matter of language, that is, of mere words... On the contrary, human thought processes are largely metaphorical” (Simon Shaw-Miller, 2014: 13). Cytowic (2018) makes a difference between synaesthesia used in the art world and real or developmental synaesthesia, by putting conventional metaphor at a low end of the multidimensional spectrum (syntagma for synaesthesia), experiences like imagery inspired by music in the intermediate levels, and the upper-end prototypes are perceptual synesthesias. Van Campen

(2010) in *The Hidden Sense* explains that “synaesthesia does not really fit into this description of metaphors” (Van Campen, 2010: 91) and as a link between metaphor and synaesthesia he proposed a syntagma *synesthetic metaphors* for the particular category of metaphors – figures of speech in which meanings are transferred from one sensory domain to another, that matches a feeling for a nonsynesthete, and that might be an accurate perception for a synesthete (Van Campen, 2010).

In this context, the writings of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his classic book, *The Phenomenology of Perception (Phénoménologie de la perception, 1945)*, are worth mentioning. According to him, synaesthesia and synesthetic metaphors have a common ground in the unified preconscious perception. However, to talk about synesthetic perceptions, people use language and metaphors that reflect the current theory of the five senses, and it separates the formerly complete experience into multiple sensory perceptions according to the distinct sensory domains of hearing, vision, touch, and so on (Corrêa, 2015).

The Austrian-American psychoanalyst Paul Schilder wrote in 1935: “But we should not forget that every sensation is generally synesthetic. This means that there is no primary isolation between the different senses. The isolated sensation is the product of analysis. Perception is synaesthetic” (Schilder, 1935, as cited in Shaw-Miller, 2013: 15).

And indeed, sound-sight synaesthesia is about more than just color. Similarly, music interaction with visual arts is attested to by their use of shared concepts and terminology. Besides color, there are tone, harmony, rhythm, contrast, dynamics, gradation, polyphony, scale, texture, structure, form, etc. All those terms can be related to synesthetic color-hearing perception. Acoustic and musical properties to which synesthetes usually respond are pitch, musical key, timbre, chords, melody, and volume.

By manipulation of pitch, the composer can alter the intensity and contrast of the synesthetic experience – higher tones are usually recognized as lighter than low ones (thanks to the

anatomical organization of the brain’s primary hearing cortex which is tonotopic; Cytowic, 2018), melodic intervals may also have bright-dark values – ascending melodic intervals usually evoke lighter stimuli, and darker incentives go with descending ones. The wider the melodic interval, the more gradations of light and dark might be precepted, as well as musical keys. Instrument timbre can have a significant impact on perception – it is not strange that no matter how different pitches are, all may fall under a single (instrument) color (Shaw-Miller, 2014). Hence, different instrumentation initiates different color phantasies – when there are more instruments, a more colorful image we can create, and vice versa, and comparison might be made with density levels of texture. Agogics, dynamics, rhythm characteristics can evoke different perception “activity” and vibrance of the potentially corresponding picture.

On the other hand, the orchestration of picture ingredients – rising and falling lines, alternately strengthened or mellowed by their combination with varied chromatic combinations, provides a highly adaptable means of constructing a painting’s internal pattern of motion, or a specific rhythm. In observing a painting, we can also talk in terms of “tonality”, more precisely, of tonality of colors, as well as of color and shape combinations in terms of dynamics, that can produce “loud” or “quiet” effects, or in terms of their harmonic or disharmonic compositions, or rhythmic structures. We can talk in terms of polyphonic and homophonic textures of both music and paintings. Finally, and very important to synesthetic perception, it is a role of emotion and an atmosphere activated by sounds/music or color/painting compositions, their structures, and forms.

As Van Campen emphasized, “music-induced images can change not only according to movements in the music itself but also according to where the attention of the synaesthete is directed. Thus, it makes a big difference if we listen to the whole composition accompanied by a whole visual experience, or we selectively choose parts of the music or wandering course of a bass line and focus on its corresponding images. The

same can be said for painting-induced music compositions” (Van Campen, 2010).

Synaesthesia offers us a peep into a different world – not that of fantasies but rather in the sense that it points to a different way of *experiencing* and *thinking about* the world and artworks. Even though artworks do not necessarily elicit synaesthesia as such, many of them hold power to widen people’s imagination and creativity. In the context of Debussy’s poetic and aesthetic, we believe that understanding the phenomenon of synaesthesia, and more important, of artistic synaesthesia, can help us in widening the perspective of a more profound comprehension of his music, and of *synaesthetic metaphors* which one can find in *Préludes* themselves.

On Possible Immediacy of Correspondence between Ear and Eye in Claude Debussy’s *Préludes* – Empirical Research

To explore all the synesthetic correspondences in *Préludes*, we have designed and conducted empirical research. The results confirm the thesis that each of us can synthetically contemplate the world, including works of art. Van Campen (2010) concludes his study with the statement that each of us can become aware of synaesthesia through a long time and a lot of concentration, because synaesthesia is hidden in our senses, we just have to explore and go looking for it to experience it consciously.

And, related to that, those synesthetic wonderings speak to the essence of who one is and celebrate the singularity of the subjective self, as Cytowic used to say (2018). Cytowic and Eagleman emphasized that “the reality is much more subjective than most people suppose insofar as it is not fixed ‘out there’ in the physical world and passively received by the brain, but rather constructed by individual brains that uniquely filter what hits the external senses” (Cytowic & Eagleman, 2009: 21). There is no single, unproblematically correct way of experiencing the world. Each process information and creates a personal map of his/her environment, in ac-

cordance with an own coding system. Thus, it could be argued that not only synesthetes, but *all* people experience the world around them in fundamentally unique ways. However, the results of the research testify to the existence of collective synaesthesia thinking, that is, *common synaesthesia*.

Aim of the research was to examine if there are *correspondences* between ear and eye, that is, between the music of Debussy’s *Préludes* and selected paintings that belong to the same spiritual space (impressionism, post-impressionism, symbolism, etc.) In that sense, research analyses perception of specified components of a temporal organization, i.e., the ‘breathing’/‘waves’ movement of musical flow (rhythm/meter, tempo), color (melody, harmony), texture, structure (fragment/integral whole), atmosphere (dynamics, agogics, articulation). These parameters are included in the research as a default for the assessment of music (Debussy’s *Préludes*) and visual examples (*fin de siècle’s* paintings). Without the intention to offer universal conclusions, the results of the research are interpreted concerning the proposed analysis of Debussy’s *Préludes* as an integral musical-dramaturgical flow and imaginary paint-art “exhibition”.

The research included four groups of respondents (47 total), which comprised the first-year students of several departments: Solfeggio and Music Pedagogy (15), Jazz and Popular Music (10), Piano Department (15), as well as PhD students of Faculty of Music (2 students), Faculty of Fine Arts (3 students), Faculty of Applied Arts (1 student) and University of Arts – PhD program Theory of Arts and Media (2 students).

The format of the research is a survey, which consists of three parts, and each has several segments.

In the first part of the survey – **correspondence between music and painting** – respondents needed to determine the relationship between the segment of musical flow and three provided paintings, and to select criteria from given parameters – musical/painting components on which he/she based his/her reasoning, after hearing/seeing the examples two times.

As the first example of this part of the survey we choose to play Debussy’s prelude No. 7

from the *First Book – Ce qu'à vu le vent d'ouest* and to show three paintings – *Effet de vent, serie des peupliers* (1891) by Claude Monet, *Snow Storm – Steam Boat off a Harbor's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water* (1842) by J. M. W. Turner and *Taches soleil sur terrasse* (1890) by Maurice Denis (Figure 1). In imaginary paint art exhibition, Debussy's virtuously prelude in Liszt manner, with its eruptive sound picture that represents culmination point of the second wave of the *First Book* found its pair in *Snow Storm – Steam Boat off a Harbor's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water* by J. M. W. Turner. In other words, an element of eruptive, stormy, furious nature, and man's powerlessness, as well as three-layered texture characterized by the melody in short strokes, virtuosic accompaniment and pedal tones, rich harmony and sort of harmony saturation of Debussy's prelude *correspond* (in our musicological interpretation) to Turner's visual spectacle of enormous intensity and kinetic energy (Botstein, 2001), to one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light, that has ever been put on canvas, according to art critic of the Victorian era, John Ruskin. Turner's tints and shades of colors are painted in different layers of color, the brushstrokes adding texture to the painting. The colors are monochromatic, only a few shades of grey, green and brown are present, having the same tone of colors. The pale silvery light that surrounds the boat creates a focal point, drawing the viewer into the painting. The smoke from the steamboat spreads out over the sky, creating abstract shapes of the same quality as the waves (Bockemühl, 2015). In that sense, one might say that Turner's use of paint and color is *musical* because of his sense of motion and that might be a reason why respondents choose the same painting as *correspondent* to Debussy's prelude; in other words, the painting has been seen as sounded music visually represented. Survey shows that 23 respondents (48.9%) stated that Turner's *Steam Boat off a Harbor's Mouth* completely *corresponds* to Debussy's *Ce qu'à vu le vent d'ouest*, 13 respondents (27.7%) decided that they pretty much *correspond*, eight respondents (17%) decided there is a half *corre-*

spondence between those two works of art, three respondents (6.4%) decided that there is a small degree of *correspondence* and no one answers negatively.

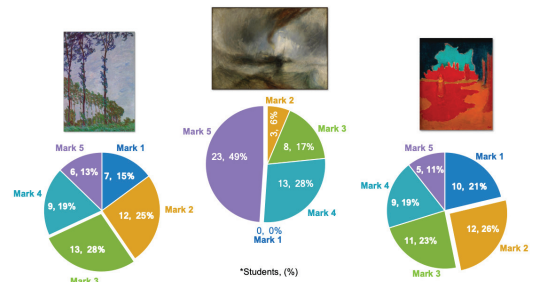


Figure 1. Correspondence between music and painting: Example 1.

As main criteria for basing such decisions, respondents emphasized **color** – melody/harmony (27 of them, that is 57.4%) and texture (18 of them, that is 38.3%), as well as **atmosphere** – dynamics (30 of them, that is 63.8%) and articulation/agogics (27 of them, that is 57.4%) (Figure 2).

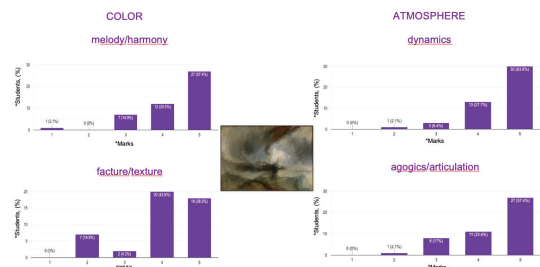


Figure 2. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony, facture/texture) and atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 1.

The second example in this part of the survey was the twelfth prelude from the *Second Book* of Debussy's miniatures – *Feux d'artifice* and other three paintings – *Nocturne in Black and Gold* (1875) by J. A. M. Whistler, *Célébration du 14 Juillet à Paris* (1886) by Vincent Van Gogh and *Ondine* (1889) by Paul Gauguin (Figure 3). In the proposed imaginary paint art exhibition, *Feux d'artifice* has two *correspondents* who, each on its own way and by its own *logic of pictorial*, match to Debussy's prelude. *Feux d'artifice* (in honor of the French national holi-

day – July 14) is masterfully evoked by the true fireworks of sound, virtuously, in the manner of Liszt's piano technique, with fast passages, tremolos, *glissandos*, complex chords. In the final part of the musical flow, in the last nine bars, when the bursting fireworks flash slowly extinguishes, from somewhere from afar appears a recognizable *Marseilles* fanfare motif, whose sound the composer adjusts beyond tonality; in other words, Debussy builds the bitonality by positioning fifth d-flat – a-flat in the deepest register (suggesting that way D-flat major) and registry distant fanfare motif of *Marseilles* on the decomposed C-major chord, which gives the impression of the spatial distance of the dying sound in the foreground and the segment of the hymn reaching from afar (Поповић Млађеновић, 2008, p. 78). In the same way, in his *Nocturne in Black and Gold* Whistler opposed a predominantly gold-colored pattern against a black background; that is a remarkable *tour de force* of virtuoso technique that serves not the subject of the painting, which is only a pretext, but the act of painting itself – that are colors and lines arranged on a flat canvas. Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold* reminds us that the drama of a fireworks display has an essential lyrical and poetic dimension (notice all the *p* and *pp* markings in the prelude, and such instruction as *doux et harmonieux* – gentle and harmonious). The painting also provides a visual equivalent for that ineffable *joie de vivre* that is so potent in the music, that expression of spontaneity and easy freedom, as if everything is happening without forethought (Roberts, 1996, pp. 186–188). At Van Gogh's painting, we recognized pure, expressive color value and reflection immerse in the essence and function of color. That is the basic theme and subject of Van Gogh's painting, its independent reality, the deciding element. The color is applied roughly, directly from the tube, and put into the rough relationship and intrusive contrasts. It serves as a drawing, to define form, as well as to arrange the composition and determine ideas.

What survey shows is that respondents almost equally reacted to Whistler and Van Gogh's painting. In essence, 12 of them (25.5%) decided

that *Nocturne in Black and Gold* completely *corresponds* to Debussy's prelude, while 13 respondents (27.7%) agreed that it's the case with *Célébration du 14 Juillet à Paris*; 14 (29.8%) decided Whistler's painting *corresponds* pretty much to prelude, while 12 (25.5%) decided it's the case of Van Gogh's painting; 6 respondents (12.8%) decided there is half *correspondence* between *Nocturne in Black and Gold* and *Feux d'artifice*, while 11 (23.4%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between *Célébration du 14 Juillet à Paris* and *Feux d'artifice*; 10 respondents (21.3%) decided there is a small degree of *correspondence* between Whistler and Debussy's work of art, while eight respondents (17%) agreed that there is a small degree of *correspondence* between Van Gogh's painting and Debussy's prelude. Five respondents (10.6%) decided there is no *correspondence* between *Nocturne in Black and Gold* and *Feux d'artifice*. In contrast, 3 (6.4%) decided there is no *correspondence* between *Célébration du 14 Juillet à Paris* and *Feux d'artifice*.

In case of *Nocturne in Black and Gold* and *Feux d'artifice*, respondents choose as a primary criteria **movement** – rhythm/meter (29.8%), tempo (31.9%), **color** – melody/harmony (44.7%), texture (34%), **atmosphere** – dynamics (46.8%), articulation/agogics (40.4%) (Figure 4). In case of *Célébration du 14 Juillet à Paris* and *Feux d'artifice*, respondents choose as the main criteria **movement** – rhythm/meter (36.2%), tempo (38.3%), **color** – melody/harmony (40.4%), **atmosphere** – dynamics (46.8%), articulation/agogics (31.9%) (Figures 6 and 7). When it comes to *Ondine* by Paul Gauguin, answers were placed in *between*, which is displayed on the chart (Figure 3).

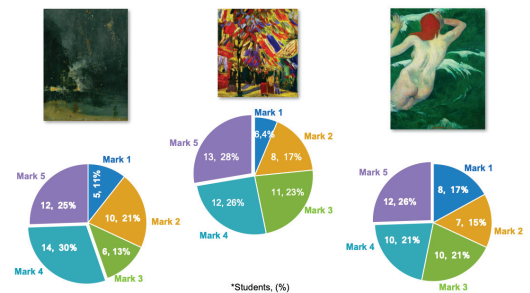


Figure 3. Correspondence between music and painting: Example 2.

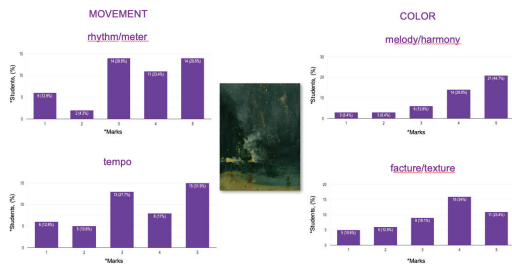


Figure 4. Reasoning criteria – movement (rhythm/meter, tempo) and color (melody/harmony, facture/texture): Example 2.

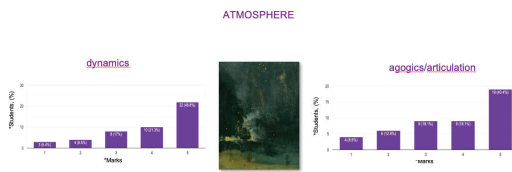


Figure 5. Reasoning criteria – atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 3.

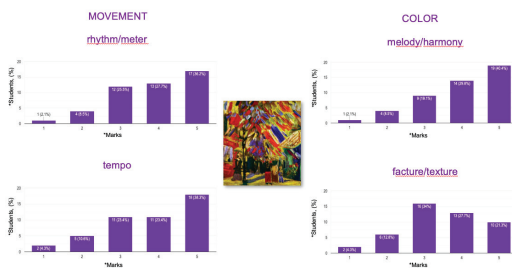


Figure 6. Reasoning criteria – movement (rhythm/meter, tempo) and color (melody/harmony, facture/texture): Example 4.

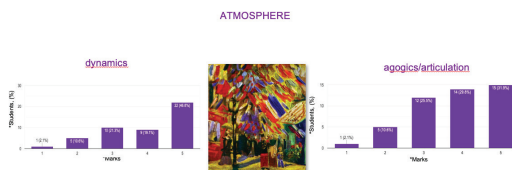


Figure 7. Reasoning criteria – atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 5.

As the third example of this part of the survey, we played the third prelude from the *Second Book* of Debussy's miniatures – *La puerta del vino* and displayed three paintings: *Taches de soleil sur la terrasse* (1890) by Maurice Denis, *Harmony in Blue – The Duet* (1878) by J. M. W. Turner and *Le Pont Japonais* (1918-1924) by

Claude Monet. Debussy wrote *La puerta del vino* under the inspiration of the Alhambra, the thirteenth-century Moorish palace close to Granada in southern Spain. This prelude, genre-scene, rests on the ostinato repetition of the *Habanera* rhythm (*in D-flat 'field'*), over which, in some sort of bitonal relationship, develops melody colored by ornaments, oriental adulterants, with characteristic augmented second, elements of chromatic-scale, with base *in E* as a specific center with the prominent second step of Phrygian mode and Andalusian fifth whereby instead of using the traditional tempo mark, Debussy refers to *movement*, *Habanera movement*, a dance, and adds: *with a sudden opposition to extreme fierceness of ferocity, and passionate softness, tenderness, gentleness* (Поповић Млађеновић, 2008: 76–77). In our musicological interpretation and proposed paint art exhibition, this prelude by Debussy 'is' *Taches de soleil sur la terrasse* by Maurice Denis – a colored surface, in which various tones and various degrees of light are placed with a particular choice; in Hypolyte Taine's words, it could be considered that sufficiency of those colors and lines is by itself a profoundness of our emotion – an *intimate being*. That was the only thing that made the connection between Denis' painting and Debussy's miniature according to respondents: **color** – melody/harmony (34%) and **atmosphere** – dynamics (42.6%) (Figure 8).

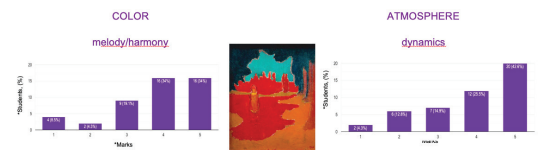


Figure 8. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony) and atmosphere (dynamics): Example 6.

Almost the same answer appears when it comes to *correspondence* between *Harmony in Blue – The Duet* by Turner and Debussy's *La puerta del vino*: **color** – melody/harmony (42.6%) and **atmosphere** – dynamics (36.2%) and articulation/agogics (34%) (Figure 9).

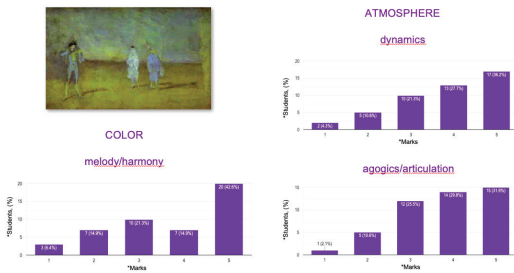


Figure 9. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony) and atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 7.

It is painting *Le Pont Japonais* by Claude Monet that, according to respondents, *corresponds* the most to Debussy’s prelude *La puerta del vino*; survey shows that 12 respondents (25.5%) decided that *Le Pont Japonais* completely *corresponds* to Debussy’s miniature, 14 respondents (29.8%) agreed that they pretty much *correspond*, eight respondents (17%) decided there is 50% *correspondence* between those two works of art, 11 respondents (23.4%) agreed that there is a small degree of *correspondence* and two respondents (4.3%) answered there is no *correspondence* between the two (Figure 10).

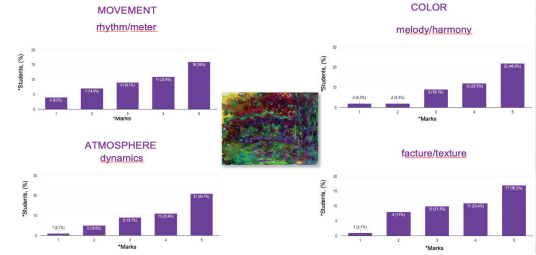


Figure 11. Reasoning criteria – movement (rhythm/meter), atmosphere (dynamics) and color (melody/harmony, facture/texture): Example 8.

In the second part of the survey – *correspondence between painting and music* – respondent needs to decide which of given segments of three different musical flows (first one from *La cathédrale engloutie*, second one from *Des pas sur la neige* and third one from *Ondine*) *corresponds* to a painting *La Cathedrale de Rouen. Le Portail, effet du matin* (1893) by Claude Monet, and then select criteria from given parameters on which he/she based his/her reasoning, after hearing/seeing the examples two times. Let me remind you that in our musicological interpretation, it was prelude *La cathédrale engloutie* that *corresponds* to Monet’s painting *La Cathedrale de Rouen. Le Portail, effet du matin* for how, despite its soft, enveloping blur, it represents not only mass but a line, as well. The visual analogy is inescapable, whether it is with paintings of Monet or with an imaginary cathedral arising from the sunken city of Ys on the Brittany coast; it looks and sounds like we are invited to make such associations, both by the title and by Debussy’s instructions on the score. The first, *dans une brume doucement sonore* (in a gently resonant mist), at the head of the score, characteristically fuses sound and sight; the second *peu à peu sortant de la brume* (gradually coming out of the mist), dispenses with sound altogether.

Besides this apparent *correspondence* we previously showed, in this part of the survey, we decided to play more *watery* preludes: *Des pas sur la neige*, prelude with distant, unfathomable atmosphere, at the very edge of silence (in the acoustic frames of *pp* and *p* dynamic) and of icy desolation of nature and soul; *Ondine*, the watery spirit of ancient mythology, mermaid whose beauty and siren songs lead many a mor-

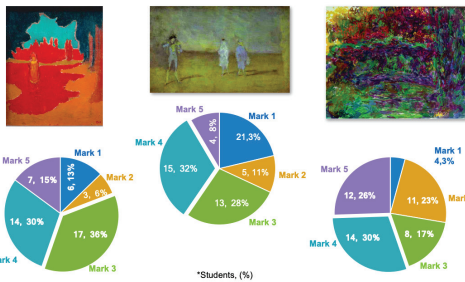


Figure 10. Correspondence between music and painting: Example 3.

As main criteria for basing such decisions, respondents emphasized: **movement** – rhythm/meter (16 of them – 34%), **color** – melody/harmony (22 of them, that is 46.8%) and texture (17 of them, that is 36.2%), as well as **atmosphere** – dynamics – 21 of them, that is 44.7% (Figure 11).

Indeed, at Monet’s painting emerge the impressionistic radiance and brilliant color and the effect of colored light, and that *corresponds* as well to the fullness of fantastic color suggestions of Debussy’s prelude.

tal to a watery grave. The imaginative conception of the piece is a fusion of the two different images of Undine. In the one, she is pixie-like, whimsical, temperamental (bizarre), while in the other, she is sensual, mysterious, and, being underwater, forever unattainable.

It seems like, according to the results of the survey, respondents, although they haven't been told what pieces they were listening (or painting they were seeing), recognized this *watery quality* of Debussy's music. This can be seen based on answers respondents gave for the first musical miniature – that is *La cathédrale engloutie*, and the second one – that is *Des pas sur la neige*.

Thirteen respondents (27.7%) said there is an absolute *correspondence* between Monet's painting and *La cathédrale engloutie*, while 18 of them (38.3%) decided in favor of *Des pas sur la neige*! Eighteen respondents (38.3%) said there is pretty much *correspondence* between painting and *La cathédrale engloutie*, while 13 (27.7%) of them said that for *Des pas sur la neige*! Twelve respondents (25.5%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between painting and *La cathédrale engloutie*, while 8 (17%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between Monet's canvas and Debussy's *Des pas*; 3 respondents (6.4%) decided there was a small degree of *correspondence* when they were asked for *La cathédrale engloutie*, while six respondents (12.8%) concluded the same when they were asked for *Des pas sur la neige*. One respondent (2.1%) perceived no *correspondence* between painting and Debussy's tenth prelude, while two respondents (4.3%) decided there is no *correspondence* between Monet's painting and Debussy's sixth prelude. In the case of *Ondine*, respondents answered as follows: 6 (12.8%) no *correspondence*, 5 (10.6%) small degree of *correspondence*, 21 (44.7%) a half *correspondence*, 8 (17%) pretty much *correspond*, 7 (14.9%) absolutely *correspond* (Figure 12).

When it comes to the criteria, the survey showed exciting results, as well. What we noticed is that in the case of *La cathédrale engloutie* and *Des pas sur la neige* parameter of **color (melody/harmony)** was the most important one. In the case of *La cathédrale engloutie* 25 respondents (53.2%) answered that there is complete *correspondence* with Monet's painting,

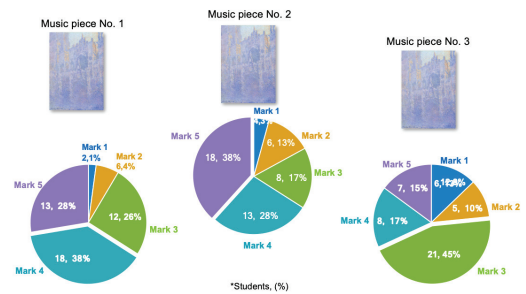


Figure 12. Correspondence between painting and music.

while in the case of *Des pas sur la neige* there were 26 of them (that is 55.3%). The category of the **atmosphere (dynamics and articulation/agogics)** was significant, too. Twenty-six respondents (55.3%) decided that the dynamic of *La cathédrale engloutie* completely *corresponds* to the same criteria in Monet's painting, and 18 of them (38.8%) answered that for articulation/agogics. In the case of *Des pas sur la neige*, 21 respondents decided that dynamics of this prelude completely *correspond* to proposed canvas, while 13 (27.7%) it was articulation/agogics. So, according to the results of this part of the survey, both, *La cathédrale engloutie* and *Des pas sur la neige* could be seen as *correspondent* to Monet's *La Cathedrale de Rouen. Le Portail, effet du matin*. In the case of *Ondine* same parameters were crucial. To be precise, respondents emphasized: **color** – melody/harmony (14 of them, that is 29.8%) and **atmosphere** – dynamics (17 of them, that is 36.2%), articulation/agogics (15 of them, that is 31.9%) (Figures 13, 14 and 15).

It seems that respondents subconsciously recognize the *element of water* in these three Debussy's preludes (which derives from a particular way of building a musical flow of each prelude), and their almost equal *correspondence* with Monet's painting. Maybe, the subtle interweaving of colors in each prelude led respondents subconsciously to a "conclusion" that *La cathédrale engloutie* for a nuance represents absolute *correspondent* *La Cathedrale de Rouen*. However, it might be, as well, *Des pas sur la neige* and *Ondine*.

The third part of the survey – **correspondence between a group of paintings and music** – examines the relationship between three

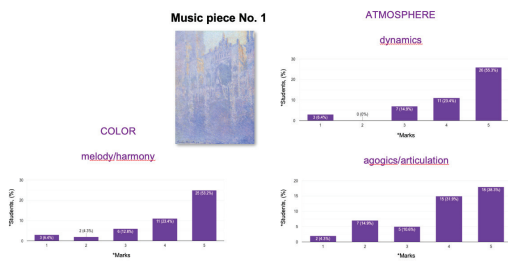


Figure 13. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony) and atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 9.

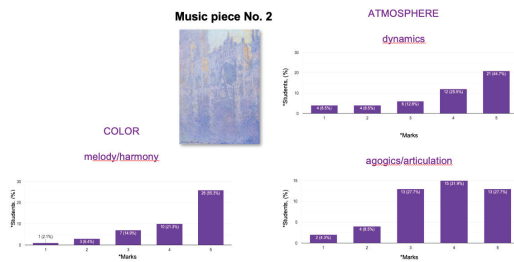


Figure 14. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony) and atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 10.

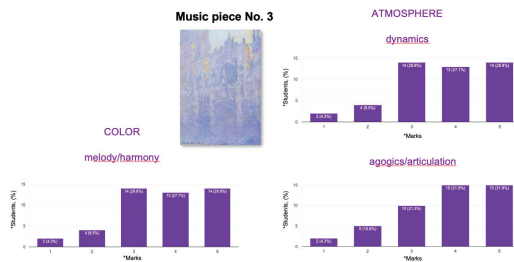


Figure 15. Reasoning criteria – color (melody/harmony) and atmosphere (dynamics, agogics/articulation): Example 11.

groups/“exhibitions”, each formed from three paintings (I group/“exhibition”: Edgar Degas – *Trois danseuses* /1890/, Edgar Degas – *Au bord de la mer, sur une plage, trois voiliers au loin* /1869/, Claude Monet – *La Plaine de Gennévilliers* /1877/; II group/“exhibition”: Odilon Redon – *The Black Torches* /1889/, J. M. W. Turner – *Grey Sea: A Boat Running Ashore, c. 1840*, Georges Pierre Seurat – *Coucher de Soleil* /1881/; III group/“exhibition”: Edgar Degas – *Trois danseuses en tutu violet* /c. 1896/, J. A. M. Whistler – *Sailboats in Blue Water Fogg* /1900/, Claude Monet – *Effet de vent, serie des peupliers*

/1891/), and segments from preludes that form the first wave in the *First Book* (three preludes: 1. *Danseuses de Delphes*, 2. *Voiles*, 3. *Le vent dans la plaine*), and criteria for basing such relationship, after hearing/seeing the examples two times. In other words, what respondents heard were the segments from preludes that form the first wave of the cycle and noticed, according to our interpretation, three *correspondent* groups of paintings. It is essential to mention that only the second group/“exhibition” (Odilon Redon – *The Black Torches*, J. M. W. Turner – *Grey Sea: A Boat Running Ashore, c. 1840*, Georges Pierre Seurat – *Coucher de Soleil*) didn't find a place in the final version of an imaginary paint art exhibition of Debussy's *Préludes*. It was composed later, during the process of preparing the survey, we recognized possible immediacy of *correspondence* between ear and eye, that is, *correspondence* between the *logic of a pictorial* of that group of paintings to the *logic of a musical flow* of Debussy's first wave.

According to musicological argumentation and interpretation, the first wave of the cycle represents the most coherent group of the entire cycle.

If we immerse into the *logic of pictorial*, it could be said that *Danseuses de Delphes* represents a *group portrait* of a sort, prelude that evokes antique age and serious, solemn dance of religious nature, a part of Apollo's temple in Delphi ritual, based on figures depicted on Greek antique vases. Also, this prelude embodied Debussy's impressions of caryatid in the Louvre – a support column sculpted in the form of the female figure. That's the reason why, according to Paul Roberts, an interpretation needs to concentrate on the sculptural and statuesque, and on the “paradox of immobility suggesting movement and weight suggesting weightlessness – all central concerns of sculpture and architecture” (Roberts, 1996: 243). In that sense, we found a parallel between *Danseuses de Delphes* and fantastic figures that belong to Redon's artistic universe, and those are *sculpturness, architecturness*, as well as, mystery and evocativeness.

As opposed to the first prelude, *Voiles* – with an element of water, sea, prelude based on

consistent whole-tone material of musical flow, which decomposes all relevant factors of tonality and is used coloristic in terms of its distinctively fluid, *watery* sonority – is sort of study of motionlessness, even monotony – *grey tones lightly tinged with white* (Roberts: 1996, p. 244). It shouldn't be too colorful, according to pianist Marguerite Long. Its counterpart in the painting can be found in the later paintings of Turner (such as *Gray Sea: A Boat Running Ashore*), late miniature seascapes of Whistler (such as *Sail Boats in Blue Water Fogg*), or, perhaps, the little-known pastel seascapes of Degas (especially *Au bord de la mer, sur une plage, trois voiliers au loin*). Possible interpretation relates the prelude to some eastern or archaic ritual, the continuing ambiance of *Danseuses of Delphes*. An eastern context would suggest that the sonorities and whole-tone scales are to be associated with the music of the Javanese gamelan. In this case, an interpretation would concentrate on clarity and line, with brighter, more gong-like textures than a Degas seascape would suggest.

Le vent dans la plaine could be a *sound image* of elementary force power, but it also could be considered, metaphorically speaking, *the wind in the plane which is holding its breath*. Its rhythmic manner might better be described as driven, though the music is feather-light in its dynamics, the force of nature it is depicting seeming more a gentle breeze than a robust wind. Yet there is a sense of anxiety in the mood here. Every breath of wind is alive. It's a piece of air that once lived, and it's an airy cloth that will wear off some soul. *There is something or someone in that wind...* and Debussy has experienced it. As a master of realistic effects, he renders what he has heard – precisely as a painter renders what he has seen on canvas: Claude Monet on *La Plaine de Gennevilliers* or *Effet de vent, serie des peupliers*, or maybe Georges Pierre Seurat on *Coucher de Soleil*.

All three paintings, as well as Debussy's *sound picture* that evokes a landscape, suggest a continuation of the story, in which the breath is exhaled in a thunderous outburst that presages the violence of gale in the *Ce qu'a vu le Vent d'Ouest*.

What survey shows is that respondents almost equally reacted to the first two groups of paintings: 8 of them (17%) decided that the first group/"exhibition" completely *corresponds* to Debussy's *first wave*, while seven respondents (14.9%) agreed that it's the case with the second group/"exhibition"; 13 (27.7%) decided the first group of paintings *corresponds* pretty much to the *first wave*, while 12 (25.5%) decided it's the case of the second group of painting; 15 respondents (31.9%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between *first exhibition* and *first wave*, while 18 (38.3%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between second group/"exhibition" and music from Debussy's first three preludes; 7 respondents (14.9%) decided there is a small degree of *correspondence* between the first group/"exhibition" and Debussy's miniatures, while nine respondents (19.1%) agreed that there is a small degree of *correspondence* between the second group of paintings and Debussy's *first wave*. Four respondents (8.5%) decided there is no *correspondence* between the first group of paintings and Debussy's music. In contrast, one respondent (2.1%) perceived no *correspondence* between the second group/"exhibition" and the *first wave* of Debussy's cycle (Figure 16).

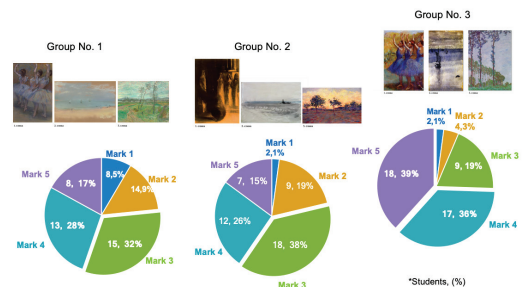


Figure 16. Correspondence between a group of paintings and music.

So, it is painting the third group/"exhibition" (Edgar Degas – *Trois danseuses en tutu violet*, J. A. M. Whistler – *Sail Boats in Blue Water Fogg*, Claude Monet – *Effet de vent, serie des peupliers*) that, according to respondents, *corresponds* the most to Debussy's *first wave* formed by first three preludes; survey shows that 18 respondents (38.4%) decided it completely *corresponds* to Debussy's miniatures, 17 respondents (36.2%)

decided that they, pretty much *correspond*, nine respondents (19.1%) decided there is a half *correspondence* between those two paint/music “exhibitions”, two respondents (4.3%) decided that there is a small degree of *correspondence* and one respondent (2.1%) answered there is no *correspondence* between the two. As the main criteria for basing such decisions, respondents emphasized **movement, color, structure, and atmosphere** – these are all four criteria. In the category movement respondents accentuated as altogether *correspondent* rhythm/meter (19 of them and that is 40.4%); in the category of color it was melody/harmony (21 of them and that is 44.7%) that completely *correspond*, while texture pretty much *corresponds* (according to 14 of them and that is 29.8%); category **structure** shows that main criteria is entire whole – 15 respondents (31.9%) answered there is the highest *correspondence* between the third group of paintings and Debussy’s *first wave* of the cycle. In the category **atmosphere**, respondents emphasized dynamics – 23 of them (48.9%) answered there is the absolute *correspondence* between those two paint/music “exhibitions” – and articulation/agogics – 21 of them (44.7%) agreed there is, also, an absolute *correspondence* between the two.

Conclusion

In the available writings on Debussy’s opus, it is possible to find various perspectives and approaches in focusing on the *Préludes*. However, none of them focuses on the *Préludes* as a cycle with a very specific musical dramaturgy, and it is an idea, which was musicologically elaborated through the first part of this paper. In other words, it was pointed out to the integrative factors which derive from Debussy’s compositional principles, compositional procedures, and compositional-technical solutions, which affect the integral perception of *Préludes*, i.e., a complete musical-dramatic flow – a cycle of 24 miniatures (Поповић Млађеновић: 2008, p. 73). Also, based on the concept of *Préludes* as a cycle, this paper offered their possible interpretation as a very explicitly conceived unique paint art exhibition that would reveal resonat-

ing with the aesthetics and practices of Whistler, Turner, pre-Raphaelites, impressionist and post-impressionist painters, the symbolist painters, as well as the symbolist poets (Botstein, 2001; Rubin, Mattis: 2018). The main contribution of the first part of the paper lies in the musicological interpretation of Debussy’s *Préludes* as a cycle, as well as an imaginary paint art exhibition in gallery space guided by the *logic of pictorial*.

What helped us to ‘see’ music through the *logic of pictorial*, to ‘hear’ paintings according to musical laws and to find their hidden or not-so-obvious interconnections, those that we usually explain in terms of metaphor, was comprehension of synaesthesia. Concerning that, the second segment of this paper opened psycho-musicological discussion on how can we differentiate ‘synesthetic perceptions’ from ‘synesthetic metaphors’, and how an understanding of the experience of a synesthete helps ‘synchronesthetic’ experience of non-synaesthete. That led us further to ‘inter-sense’ comprehension of the musical world of Claude Debussy’s *Préludes*. Those ideas of ‘seeing’ music (in pictorial terms) and ‘hearing’ paintings (according to musical laws) were cross-checked with the results presented in the third part of this paper. The empirical research had the intention to examine potential *correspondence* areas between music and paint art. It was driven by the proposed musicological interpretation of Debussy’s *Préludes* and theoretical analysis of the mentioned relationship in the field of synaesthesia. Non/overlapping points were pointed out by crosschecking survey results and musicological-theoretical conclusions.

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