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978-1-107-02100-6 - Stravinsky and the Russian Period: Sound and Legacy of a Musical Idiom

Pieter C. van den Toorn and John McGinness

Excerpt

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Introduction

For the greater part of the twentieth century Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg stood at opposite ends of a musical divide. Although it was not entirely of their own making, two camps of followers emerged during the 1920s and 30s who were oriented toward one or the other of these two composers: their styles, pitch languages, and methods of composition. On an even broader scale, the two sides came to represent, on the one hand, alternatives to atonality and the Second Viennese School (consisting, as with neoclassicism, of extensions of the diatonic and tonal foundations of the past), and, on the other, the atonal and serial initiatives themselves. Tradition and the past played a role on both sides of this fence, even if they were angled quite differently.¹

The two sides were not equal. In the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, especially, the atonalists, serialists, and total serialists tended to hold sway. The accepted wisdom at the time seems to have been that theirs was indeed the music of the future. Pierre Boulez, Darmstadt, *Die Reihe*, and T. W. Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1949) come to mind in this regard, as do Milton Babbitt and the Princeton School. Following Schoenberg's death in 1951, Stravinsky's gradual adoption of serial methods had the effect of confirming the direction that had long been suspected. In the United States, the serial conversion of Aaron Copland and of several other composers took place at about the same time.²

¹ Among other qualifications to our bird's eye view of twentieth-century music (or a sizeable chunk thereof), the neoclassical dimension to Schoenberg's twelve-tone works has long been a focus of critical and historical attention; see, for example, J. Peter Burkholder, "Schoenberg the Reactionary," in Walter Frisch, ed., *Schoenberg and His World* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 162–94. For Stravinsky's own later reflections on the celebrated Stravinsky–Schoenberg split, see Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), 56–59. To judge from the recollections of Pierre Suvchinsky, a close friend of the composer's, the mood toward Schoenberg and his school was one of outright hostility during the 1920s and 30s. Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* was regularly dismissed by Stravinsky as "une musique boche," while Mahler was mispronounced as "Malheur"; anyone favorably disposed toward the Mahler–Schoenberg–Berg line was disowned as a "traitor." See Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Retrospectives and Conclusions* (New York: Knopf, 1969), 193. For a concise chronicle of the Stravinsky–Schoenberg divide, see Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (University of Rochester Press, 1996), 87–149. A brief personal history of the relationship appears in Robert Craft, *Down a Path of Wonder: Memoirs of Stravinsky, Schoenberg and other Cultural Figures* (London: Naxos, 2006), 3–12.

² Copland's Piano Quartet, a twelve-tone work, was begun in 1950. For an insightful account of the underlying musical dynamics of this era, see Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford University Press, 2005), vol. V: 103–73.

All this changed in the late 1960s and 70s, however. With the birth of a number of counter-currents, including American minimalism, the pendulum began to swing wildly in the opposite direction. Almost overnight, the musical processes that had been scorned at such length by the progressives acquired a new lease. In open revolt against the academies, serialism, and “difficult” music, composers such as Steve Reich and Philip Glass turned to the repetitive patterns, layered structures, and modal harmonies of Stravinsky’s Russian-period works as one of several options. The static, non-developmental, repetitive, ritualistic, and impersonal qualities of these processes proved antidotal; the key to a liberation of sorts.

Putting aside Reich’s early phase-shifting music, his *City Life* (1995) can come to mind in this connection, with its octatonic scale passages and syncopated, percussive use of the piano. So, too, his more recent *You are (Variations)* (2005) can remind the listener of the four pianos in the final version of *Les Noces* (1917–23), and of the vocal style, staccato and heavily syncopated, in Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), third movement. John Adams and Louis Andriessen have been drawn more persistently to the block and stratified textures in Stravinsky’s Russian-period works.³ Unmistakable in the opening pages of Adams’s *El Dorado* symphony (1991) are the superimposed strands of the first of Stravinsky’s *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1914), a veritable primer in the use of superimposed rhythmic pedals. Block structures are more conspicuous in Andriessen’s *De Staat* (1976), even if the pitch language, heavily chromatic and atonal at times, differs markedly from that of Reich or Adams.⁴

The politics of Stravinsky’s music can seem to have changed as well. The cosmopolitan of the previous half-century – austere formalist with a snooty

³ By block structure is meant a vertical *juxtaposition* of distinct units or *blocks* of material, one that is abrupt and lacking in transitions. When repeated, the individual blocks may be lengthened, shortened, or reshuffled, but their content is apt to remain fixed. Block structures have been compared to techniques of “cutting and pasting,” montage, collage, and Cubism in painting early in the twentieth century. In contrast, a layered structure is a horizontal *stratification* of two or more fragments. Fixed in register and often instrumentally as well, these superimposed fragments repeat according to varying cycles or spans. Illustrations of both approaches are examined in the ensuing chapters. For additional descriptions, see Pieter C. van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and “The Rite of Spring”: The Beginnings of a Musical Language* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 97–101. In this earlier study, block and layered structures were labeled “Type 1” and “Type 2,” respectively.

⁴ Connections between Stravinsky’s block structures and minimalist or post-minimalist repertoires are discussed in Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 170–89. Not all critics have viewed early minimalism as a complete negation of the serial methods that preceded it. Stressed in Keith Potter, *Four Musical Minimalists* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10–11, is the commitment, on the part of both integral serialism and minimalism, “to the consequences of rigorous application of processes independent, to a significant degree, of the composer’s note-to-note control.” See, too, Arnold Whittall, *Serialism* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 142–44.

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sense of entitlement, as one critic would have it⁵ – has been replaced by something more down-to-earth and even democratic. To follow Andriessen on this, Russian-period works such as *Les Noces* and *Renard* (1916), founded in popular verse, custom, and even vocal and instrumental sonority, are to some degree populist.⁶ The marches, waltzes, and ragtimes of *The Soldier's Tale* (1918) are common, garden-variety adaptations, full of clichés and stretched out instrumentally to the bone. They resemble street music in this, the antithesis of elite concert music, in any case as measured against nineteenth- and twentieth-century standards. Even today, as a form of caricature, they can seem fresh and provocative.

The composer's image has also undergone something of an adjustment, mostly from the grim to the fundamentally happy. The private world of composition he inhabited may have shielded him somewhat from the political and personal upheaval that accompanied his relocations from St. Petersburg to Switzerland (1914–19), and from there to France (1919–39) and the United States (1939–71). The description of him in Robert Craft's most recent book of recollection is that of a happy man, a “divertimento composer.”⁷ What kept him going, evidently, were strict rules capable of inspiring as well as circumscribing (something concrete to compose against),⁸ an abstract sense of order or construction, and aesthetic bliss.

These and other developments in recent years have led us to want to revisit the music of Stravinsky's Russian period, and by way of a number of underlying processes. Chief among these are the following:

⁵ See Richard Taruskin, “Stravinsky and Us,” in Jonathan Cross, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 282–83.

⁶ See Louis Andriessen and Jonathan Cross, “Composing with Stravinsky,” in Cross, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, 254–59. On Andriessen's own methods of fusing art music with contemporary popular idioms, see Yayoi Uno Everett, *The Music of Louis Andriessen* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 61–76.

⁷ See Craft, *Down A Path of Wonder*.

⁸ Stravinsky acknowledged his need for strict compositional guidelines on several occasions; see, in particular, Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 68: “My freedom . . . consists in my moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned to myself for each one of my undertakings. I shall go even further: my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles. Whatever diminishes constraint, diminishes strength.” Some of the wording here may have been borrowed from a 1904 lecture-essay of André Gide's, “The Evolution of the Theater”; see André Gide, *My Theater: Five Plays and an Essay*, trans. Jackson Matthews (New York: Knopf, 1952). “Art is born of constraint,” Gide writes, “lives by struggle, and dies of freedom” (263). The convergence of a number of artistic and aesthetic ideals shared in one way or another by Gide, Paul Valéry, and Stravinsky is pursued in Maureen A. Carr, *Multiple Masks: Neoclassicism in Stravinsky's Works on Greek Subjects* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 5–8. Underscored by Carr are the “amazing coincidences of chronology.” Although it is not known if Stravinsky heard or read Gide's early lecture-essay, a version thereof reappeared in a critical edition in 1939, the year in which Stravinsky's own lectures, subsequently published in the form of his *Poetics of Music*, were formulated.

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1. Metrical displacement (*rhythm*).
2. Block and layered (or stratified) textures (“*form*”).
3. A modal diatonicism that is subject to specific forms of octatonic intervention (*pitch*).

Readers familiar with the critical and analytical-theoretical literature surrounding Stravinsky’s music will doubtless already have encountered some of these terms, although with meanings not always equivalent to the ones we will be adopting here. Introduced in Edward T. Cone’s essay, “Stravinsky: the Progress of a Method,”⁹ the term *stratification* (along with *stratified* and *strata*) was applied broadly at first to both the *vertical* juxtaposition of distinct blocks of material and the *horizontal* layering of distinct patterns of repetition. In keeping with more recent studies, however, we will be applying *stratification* and *layering* only to the second of these two modes of construction, the horizontal mode.¹⁰ Narrowing the scope of these terms will allow us to deal a bit more effectively with the individual detail in moving from one context to the next.

Yet the bulk of our analytical-theoretical energies will be directed toward the first of the processes listed above, the metrical displacement of repeated motives, themes, and chords. This, too, is a subject that has been dealt with previously, although differently from the way we intend to be approaching it here. Seeking a fuller account of this process of displacement, we will be focusing on meter, alignment, and psychological effect, the nature of the conflict that is triggered by this phenomenon.¹¹ Our interests rest as well with the extent and variety of the uses of displacement in music of the Russian era.

The interaction between these various factors will also concern us. With pitch relations generally, the nature of the interplay is loose and informal. The modal and octatonic structures mentioned above can exist independently of

⁹ In Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone, eds., *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 155–64.

¹⁰ See, for example, Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy*. Similar distinctions in terminology, drawn between Stravinsky’s vertical juxtapositions and horizontal layerings, are applied in van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and “The Rite of Spring.”*

¹¹ Our point of departure on issues of metrical displacement in Stravinsky’s music generally is Pieter C. van den Toorn, “Stravinsky, Adorno, and the Art of Displacement,” *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (2004): 468–509. Excerpts from this essay, revised, are reproduced here in Chapters 1 and 10. Included in Chapter 9 are passages from Pieter C. van den Toorn, “Stravinsky, *Les Noces* (*Svadebka*), and The Prohibition Against Expressive Timing,” *Journal of Musicology* 20, no. 2 (2003): 285–304. The present volume is in many ways an attempt to extend and amplify ideas introduced in these earlier studies. Essential, too, as a departure point in matters of periodic repetition and alignment in Stravinsky’s stratifications, is Gretchen Horlacher, “The Rhythms of Reiteration: Formal Development in Stravinsky’s Ostinati,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 14, no. 2 (1992): 171–87. See, too, Gretchen Horlacher, *Building Blocks: Repetition and Continuity in the Music of Stravinsky* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

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the processes of displacement, juxtaposition, and stratification as well as vice versa. On the other hand, relations between these three processes are intimate. Stratification actually implies a form of displacement. If the super-imposed fragments of a layered structure repeat according to varying spans, then their alignment will shift (be displaced). And it will shift not only between the fragments themselves but also in relation to the meter. And to the extent that, in passages exhibiting a form of juxtaposition, individual blocks are lengthened, shortened, and/or reordered, they, too, will shift (be displaced) in relation to an established meter.

In this way, metrical displacement surfaces as the most basic of the various processes cited above, operating in works of the Russian period as a kind of stylistic common denominator. Nearly always present (and abundantly so) in these works, displacement can account for many of the more informal features we tend readily to identify with Stravinsky's music. As we shall see in Chapters 1–5, it can account for the literal nature of the repetition, the lack of variation or development along traditional lines. And it can account for much of the articulation as well, the beams, staccato, and non-*espressivo* markings in his scores.

Even the strict performance style on which the composer placed such emphasis can be traced to the displacement process. The tendency among Stravinsky's critics has been to look to the outside, of course, to attribute this and other features of Stravinsky's idiom to extraneous forces. Modernist fashion in the world of conducting has been cited in connection with the strict performance style,¹² as has the notorious bluntness of the composer's formalist convictions. The specter of an anti-humanistic, autocratic personality has been raised. Yet there is a better way of explaining the strict style and its rationale, and it consists of starting with the music and fanning out from there, as it were, allowing the materials themselves to stand as the catalyst that set (and that continues to set) this and many other ideas, traits, and practices in motion. From such a perspective, neither the composer's insistence on a strict approach to the performance of his music nor the bare-knuckled character of his formalism can reliably be regarded as a starting point. Far more readily, both the strict style and the formalist aesthetics fall into place as effects and consequences of the musical processes alluded to above.

To condense but one small segment of this line of reasoning: if the metrical displacement of a fragment, configuration or block of material is to have its effect, then (1) the repetition must be kept fairly literal, and (2) the beat must

¹² See, for example, Robert Fink, "Rigorous (♩ =126): *The Rite of Spring* and the Forging of a Modernist Performing Style," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (1999): 299–350.

be maintained fairly strictly. This sounds innocent enough (the specifics of Stravinsky's performance practice are worked out in Chapter 9), yet the implications are far reaching. While a steady beat will lack much in the way of expressive timing and nuance, it will make up for this by its ability to project a clear sense of metrical placement and displacement. And the latter is essential in a performance of Stravinsky's music. Without it, much of the point of the invention is lost. And so there is little reason why listeners and performers should feel themselves put out by a beat of this kind, unable to come to grips with an underlying rationale, and at the mercy therefore of a conductor's or composer's "ethic of scrupulous submission," as one critic has charged.¹³ On the contrary, a relatively strict beat is likely to leave that much more of the rhythmic play exposed to the ear. Timing and the element of surprise are apt to be felt that much more keenly.

Whether any of these Stravinskian features – metrical displacement, literal repetition, or the need for a strictly maintained beat – is not ultimately reflective of something base and sinister (as Adorno and several others have argued), is a matter to which we will be turning in Chapter 10. The point here is that an explanation can be sought in musical terms. A logic may be inferred: one which, sensed by the listener, is capable of endowing these features with a certain integrity. The anti-expressive in Stravinsky's music can be expressive, in other words, as can the ritualistic and the near-absence of expressive nuance. The meaning and significance of these features are not etched in stone, but can vary subtly from one setting to the next. (The role played by unity and even "organic unity" in an approach of this kind has come under attack, and primarily because of the restrictions that would seem to be placed on the analytical process. Analysis would seem to be confined to a determination of the unity of this or that part in relation to an assumed whole.¹⁴ By *organic*, however, we mean to underscore the natural rather than artificial character of these phenomena, the sense of their being integral rather than forced or arbitrary. And while an overreaching purpose or train of thought is undoubtedly implied by this reasoning [a unity of sorts], it is so dynamically rather than passively. As this larger whole has

¹³ Taruskin, "Stravinsky and Us," 283.

¹⁴ See Joseph Kerman "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," in Joseph Kerman, *Write All These Down* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 12–32. To follow Kerman, the emphasis on unity or "organic unity" in contemporary analysis (and especially in Schenkerian analysis), has had the effect of slighting "salient" and expressive features, along with issues of contrast and critical value. More recently, arguments directed at the teleological bias of much analysis have sought to promote aspects of non-linearity and intertextuality. See, in this connection, Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

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generally been understood, it works both ways. In the process of defining the various features alluded to above, the whole is defined by them as well.)

But the content of this new expression of Stravinsky's – what his “musical manners” can be said to be expressive of – must remain somewhat in the shadows.¹⁵ In the case of *Les Noces*, no doubt, we can point to a great many descriptive factors, grace notes that can imitate a gasp or a sob, octatonic scale patterns that, coloring the diatonic, can mimic the sound of a peasant band. Often enough, too, the repetition in Stravinsky's music can seem unrelenting, to project an air of rigidity, stasis, and intractability. Beyond these metaphorical descriptions and analogies, however, the expressive qualities of his music and the ability of these qualities to stir emotionally (passionately) are matters not readily open to verbal translation. We are moved synthetically and essentially by what a piece of music is, evidently, not by what it could or might possibly represent. And the aesthetic rapture that can take hold can do so regardless of a piece's character, be it one of sadness, joy, exhilaration, longing, or intractability. Whatever the character, the source of our delight would seem to lie elsewhere.

The expressive qualities associated with Stravinsky's music are not something external to the music, in other words, impulses which, lying to the outside, have obtained a form of portrayal within. They are inherent. They defy scrutiny not because they are too definite or too indefinite for words, but because their definiteness is entirely musical. They are feelings at all only by virtue of their expression in music.¹⁶

This is part and parcel of a formalist approach, no doubt, an aesthetics of the “specifically musical,” as Eduard Hanslick characterized it in 1854,¹⁷

¹⁵ See Stravinsky and Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary*, 10.

¹⁶ For an excellent, brief explanation of the formalist approach to music and music appreciation, see Carl Dahlhaus, “Fragments of a Musical Hermeneutics,” trans. Karen Painter, *Current Musicology* 50: 8–10. No less relevant here is the historical perspective outlined in Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago University Press, 1989), and in Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 148–75. In Nicholas Cook, “Theorizing Musical Meaning,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 23 (2001): 170–95, formalists are dubbed “neo-Hanslickians” who stand in opposition to “neo-Adornians.” Ideas about an “enhanced formalism” are pursued in Peter Kivy, *Music, Language, and Cognition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 199–201, and at greater length in Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 124–223. To follow Kivy, even were expressive properties such as “sadness” and “mournfulness” to be judged a part of the fabric of absolute music (“music alone,” as he calls it), such music would still ultimately be devoid of semantic or representational content. In his view, listeners moved by this literature are moved by something other than these expressive properties. Our opinion here is that much music other than absolute is quite capable of drawing attention to itself as music (of being listened to for its own sake, as it were), music that would include (at times) works with extra-musical content (opera, lieder, ballet, and so forth), and music irrespective of its genre, style, idiom, age, or national (or ethnic) origin.

¹⁷ Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, trans. Gustav Cohen (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 47. The “beautiful in music” depends not on “the accurate expression of feelings,”

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and the sort of understanding to which Stravinsky himself subscribed with stubborn insistence for nearly half a century. We should note in caution, however, that the listening experience (or, more generally, our ability to summon the presence of a musical context) is not hereby abandoned for the sake of analysis and theory. Even between immediate experience and reflection, there is no wall of separation, in actuality, only a form of interplay that, as it happens, is there from the start. Limited time-wise in our ability to focus or attend, we are forced to give way at some point. Seeking to capture something of what is felt in immediacy, we construct an image thereof, doing so by moving back and forth, alternating between states of attunement (rapturous, self-forgetting immersion) and analytical reflection. The interaction can prompt a “second immediacy.” (Immediacy in the raw “knows nothing of itself,” as Carl Dahlhaus remarked some time ago.)¹⁸ And it is in this way that analysis and theory are able to emerge as formal extensions of what may transpire informally at the earliest point of contact.

Overview

Stravinsky and the Russian Period begins with *Les Noces* and the complicated history of its conception. Extending through much of the Russian era, the story of this ballet seemed appropriate as a point of departure. We then move on to parts of *Renard*, *The Soldier's Tale* (very briefly), and the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920). Other Stravinsky works are cited in the course of our inquiry, yet, for the purposes at hand, these four works seemed ideal as a means of illustration.¹⁹

Turning first to rhythm and then to pitch, Chapters 1 and 2 set the analytic-theoretical stage for the inquiry as a whole. Metrical displacement hinges on meter, obviously, meter as a “mental construct” (understood psychologically or cognitively, in other words, as a form of motor

Hanslick argued, but rather on “sounds artistically combined,” on processes specific to music. See the account of Hanslick's formalism (as his ideas came to be known) in Carl Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music*, trans. William W. Austin (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 52–57.

¹⁸ Dahlhaus, *Aesthetics of Music*, 72–73, 85. Suspicious of aesthetic immediacy, Dahlhaus stresses the analytical and historical assumptions that underlie a subsequent, “second immediacy,” one informed by reflection.

¹⁹ Alternatively, *The Rite of Spring* could have served as our starting point, as could, quite possibly, an even earlier work. The subject of three monographs in recent years, however, *The Rite* has been covered exhaustively: see Allen Forte, *The Harmonic Organization of “The Rite of Spring”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), van den Toorn, *Stravinsky and “The Rite of Spring”*, and Peter Hill, *Stravinsky: “The Rite of Spring”* (Cambridge University Press, 2000). It seemed advantageous not only to begin with a work other than *The Rite*, but to do so with *Les Noces*, in fact, something that was a bit more centrally located from the standpoint of the Russian era as a whole. *The Rite* is discussed at length in Chapter 5, however, and primarily as a means of comparison in matters of pitch relations.

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behavior),²⁰ as well as a form of notation. A working definition seemed in order, therefore, one that could lay the groundwork for much of our discussion in the coming chapters. Chapter 1 starts with a short section on meter and then proceeds to a theory of metrical displacement in Stravinsky's music. Several types of listener responses to displacement are discussed, along with a method of classification according to metrical location. A few earlier examples of displacement are introduced for the purpose of further highlighting the particulars of Stravinsky's approach.

The octatonic scale seemed likewise in need of a few preliminary remarks. In Chapter 2 we structure the scale in such a way as to reflect not only its particular emphasis in Stravinsky's Russian-period works, but also, in the same works, the specific ways in which the octatonic aligns itself with the diatonic.

Chapter 3 offers a brief account of the historical background of the Russian period. We turn first to the Russian wedding play that underlies *Les Noces*, and then to the libretto and a number of musical sources. *Renard* and *The Soldier's Tale* are treated in much the same fashion, although on a smaller scale.

Whether the music of Stravinsky's Swiss years (1914–19) is “Turanian” in conception (a product of Eurasianist ideas and ideals, as Richard Taruskin has claimed)²¹ is a matter about which we remain uncertain. Difficult to prove or disprove, the question of the composer's ties to the Eurasianists is no less difficult to weigh in its musical consequences. (The Eurasianist movement of the 1920s and 30s, consisting in large part of Russian émigrés, espoused the eventual establishment of a Slavic homeland called “Turania.”) An entry in the diary of Romain Rolland, dated March 1914, would seem to identify the composer with ideas central to the Eurasianist cause,²² and some of Stravinsky's closest friends at the time were Eurasianists. Yet the evidence of a compositional or artistic commitment in this direction is slim. There are no references to the Eurasianists in Stravinsky's writings or in the correspondence surrounding the composition and early performances of works such as *Les Noces*, *Renard*, and *The Soldier's Tale*. And the Eurasianist vision of an idyllic “symphonic society” can seem at odds not only with the abstract qualities of the fourth and final version of *Les Noces* (at which point Stravinsky had long adopted constructivist and formalist methods), but

²⁰ Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 18. See, too, Justin London, *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Meter* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 3–14.

²¹ See Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton University Press, 1997), 393–460.

²² Romain Rolland, *Journal des années de guerre 1914–1919* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1952), 59. Cited in Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 411–12.

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with the more ethnically driven features of the earlier versions as well.²³ We shall be returning to this issue a bit more closely in Chapter 10.

Discussed at the outset in Chapter 4 are features of ritual in the text and music of *Les Noces*. Several patterns of displacement in the first tableau are given a preliminary review. Of primary concern, however, are the block and layered structures of *Les Noces*, the means by which a larger sense of form is established.

The role of the “folk element” in Stravinsky’s melodic style is discussed in Chapter 5, “Melody and Harmony in *Les Noces*.” Issues of direct borrowing and the composer’s technique of simulation are also addressed. The whole of *Les Noces* is viewed from the perspective of a comprehensive model of octatonic–diatonic relations, sketched along the lines of a *Tonnetz* and featuring intersecting cycles of perfect fifths, minor thirds, and major seconds. Unlike the neo-Riemannian tables that have been designed to accommodate some of the triadic yet non-tonal passages in the music of composers such as Wagner and Liszt, however, the unit of vocabulary traversing these interval cycles is the (0 2 3 5) Dorian tetrachord and its (0 2 5) trichordal subset. The (0 2 3 5) tetrachord and its embedded subset are of particular relevance to *Les Noces* and other works of the Russian period.

Our more detailed analysis of pitch relations in the opening tableaux of *Les Noces* elaborates on a number of passages of transition and stratification. This includes the lengthy stratified texture at Rehearsal Nos. 68–72 in the third tableau, a remarkable network of reiterating fragments and chords, all superimposed over a basso ostinato that is no less remarkable for its intricacy. Interactions between the diatonic and octatonic sets, relatively straightforward at the beginning of *Les Noces*, grow more novel as the piece unfolds. At the outset of the fourth tableau, the results on the octatonic side of this referential interaction are a tour de force,²⁴ as we suggest, the climactic point of a kind of “octatonic fever.” With an explicit octatonic hand exposed early on in *Les Noces*, the temptation on Stravinsky’s part seems to have been to push the envelope in later sections. The octatonicism is as lively and inventive here as it is anywhere in twentieth-century music.²⁵

²³ Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, 404.

²⁴ The term *reference* or *referential* is applied to pitch-class sets or collections which, like the octatonic and the diatonic and their orderings as scales in Stravinsky’s music, play a dominant role in sections, pieces, and even stylistic periods; the subsets of these sets acquire the status of a *vocabulary*. In contrast, superset and subset are the more general, all-encompassing terms. See the earlier discussion of this terminology in Pieter C. van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 49. Or see Benjamin Boretz, *Meta-Variations: Studies in the Foundations of Musical Thought* (Red Hook, NY: Open Space, 1995), 174–89.

²⁵ The octatonic or octatonic-diatonic approach to pitch relations in Stravinsky’s music, introduced earlier in van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, is thus extended in this present volume.