

Triads and Text in *Ariettes Oubliées*

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KEY: Green=Key Signature, Purple=Dominant (V) Material, Orange=Tonic (I) Material, Blue=Triadic Melody, Red=Distraction from the Tonal Center

Points of Interest

1. Claude Debussy attended the Paris Conservatoire, which had very strict rules on composing music "correctly".
2. He decided that he would not "ever be able to cast [his] music in a rigid mould."
3. He kept the basic structure of tonality, but essentially rubbed their noses in the fact that he broke the rules.

PAUL VERLAINE
1 2 3 4 5
Voix: L'ext et caressant
C'est l'exte . te . se . les . que . ro . se .
Piano: L'ext et caressant
pp

C'est l'Extase, mm. 1-11.

The key signature suggests the key E Major, but that is not always the case. The dominant material in mm. 2-8 going to the tonic material in mm. 10-11 proves the E Major key. Debussy toys, however, with the B#'s in mm. 7-8. The melody in mm. 6-7 is blatantly triadic.

Un peu d'extase
C'est l'exte . te . se . les . que . ro . se .
pp

Green, mm. 42-45.

The text here means "On your young breast, let my head roll." Debussy was also very interested in writing music to sexually provocative texts. In this case, the text is even about Paul Verlaine (the poet) and his gay lover.

42 caressant 43
Sur vo . tre . jeu . no sein . lais .
pp

44 (p) 45
mes rouler . ma tête . te .
pp

Spleen, mm. 22-30.

The descent from major to minor emphasizes the emotional text. Mm. 23-24 is a B-flat Major chord and the text says "and of the shiny boxwood, I am weary." Then, in mm. 27-29, we have a b-flat minor chord. It says, "and of everything [I am weary], except of you." It means defeat.

22 poco a poco animato 23 24 25
box à la feuille verte Et du joli bois je suis
26 27 28 29 30
Et de la compagnie Et de
31
pp