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DENIAL AND ACCEPTANCE IN THE EARLY PIANO WORKS OF HENRI DUTILLEUX:
AU GRÉ DES ONDES AND THE PIANO SONATA OP. 1

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ABSTRACT

This document will provide a history of Henri Dutilleux's life with regards to two piano works; the suite for piano *Au gré des ondes* and the Piano Sonata Op. 1. It will create a list of the leading scholars for further research into the life of Dutilleux and will provide a performance guide to the two pieces. Additionally, this paper will provide details and insights into why the composer would deny this earlier work, which is unlike the conservatory exam pieces composed soon after Dutilleux's *Conservatoire* years. The biography stops shortly after the 1959 premiere of the second symphony known as *Le Double* to give insight into the self-designated mature compositions of this composer.

The music of Henri Dutilleux is a rather small body of work (forty-six works in total), yet one that is well-respected and highly sought after by many musicians. He has been commissioned to compose works for some of the most well accomplished performers of the twentieth and twenty-first century, including Renée Fleming, Mstislav Rostropovich, and The Boston Symphony. Most of the works composed prior to the piano sonata of 1947-8 have been rejected by the composer, due to his feeling that they lack a mature compositional voice. Before the Piano Sonata Op. 1, Dutilleux felt his works did not contain his mature compositional style. The early piano works of Dutilleux piano works are the focus of this document. These two works are *Au gré des ondes* and Piano Sonata Op. 1, the latter of which was self-designated as his Opus 1. The composer has denied *Au gré des ondes* as well as many other monumental works for solo instruments and piano by not including them in his musical catalogue.

CHAPTER 1: GUIDE TO RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

The life and music of Henri Dutilleux has been studied in great length and detail by the English music scholar Caroline Potter. Potter's book *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works* (1997) is the first English-language resource that contains details of Dutilleux's life and his music. Potter also wrote an article on Dutilleux entitled "Dutilleux at 90" for the *Musical Times*, which details the past works of the composer and plans for Dutilleux's future compositions before his death in 2013. In 2016, during Dutilleux's centenary celebrations, Potter was an active lecturer in many of the broadcasts given by the BBC. She gave lectures in Paris for these celebrations as well. She links the influence of Dutilleux to the music of contemporary composers in France and England such as Eric Tanguy and Julian Anderson.¹ She reports that her love for French culture is what initially led her to being captivated with Dutilleux.² Potter also notes that Dutilleux's works are largely influenced by other art forms citing artists, poets, and writers.³

The theoretical elements in this document are provided in order to gain insight into performance and interpretive decisions. Four main sources were used to create an accurate theoretical guide to Dutilleux's early works. These sources include the Carol Potter's book *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, Rosemarie Suniga's DMA dissertation entitled "The Solo Piano Works of Henri Dutilleux: A Stylistic Analysis," Hae Ri Suh's DMA dissertation entitled "Henri Dutilleux's Piano Sonata Op. 1: An Examination of Compositional Style and Performance

¹ Kingston University, "Kingston University Music Expert Leads Tributes to Commemorate Renowned French Composer Henri Dutilleux's 100th Anniversary," Kingston University London, <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/news/article/1619/02-mar-2016-kingston-university-music-expert-leads-tributes-to-commemorate-renowned-french-composer-henri-dutilleuxs-100th-anniversary/> (accessed April 20, 2020).

² Kingston University, "Kingston University Music Expert Leads Tributes to Commemorate Renowned French Composer Henri Dutilleux's 100th Anniversary," (accessed April 20, 2020).

³ Kingston University, "Kingston University Music Expert Leads Tributes to Commemorate Renowned French Composer Henri Dutilleux's 100th Anniversary," (accessed April 20, 2020).

Guide,” and my own insight into this repertoire as a theorist and performer. These two dissertations are of considerable value to those interested in the piano works of Dutilleux since most available research focuses on his orchestral works. The analytical elements of this document will be used in the last section to demonstrate if structural and harmonic elements are a factor in the legitimacy of these compositions.

Limitations

This document is limited to two piano works; *Au gré des ondes* and Piano Sonata Op. 1. The theoretical and technical work in this document is used to support discussions about the harmonic language and difficulty of the repertoire and are not intended to provide a full analysis of the repertoire. For such a guide please reference the dissertations of Rosemarie Suniga and Hae Ri Suh. This paper explores technical considerations from the standpoint of the semi-professional/professional player, which would assume the player has a substantial technical command over the instrument. This technical guide will aide in the preparation of the repertoire’s more demanding sections; however, it is not meant to serve as a pedagogical tool.

CHAPTER 2: BIOGRAPHY

Composer Henri Dutilleux was born on January 22, 1916 in Angers, France and died on May 22, 2013 in Paris. Dutilleux was the youngest of four siblings. As World War I began, his family fled from Angers, a major city in western France, to the small city of Douai in northern France. Paul Dutilleux, Henri Dutilleux's father, was a printer by trade and an amateur violinist. Dutilleux's mother, Thérèse Koszul, was an amateur pianist, a skill that allowed the couple to give chamber music concerts in their home.⁴ Dutilleux's parents were supportive of their son's musical achievements and he had access to numerous musical resources. At age twelve, his parents gifted him a score to Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Incidentally, this gift paralleled the gift Olivier Messiaen received on his tenth birthday.⁵ Dutilleux composed his first original composition at the age of thirteen, entitled *La fleur*, based on the poem by Charles-Hubert Millevoye (1929). During his studies at the *Conservatoire de Paris*, Dutilleux was able to attend rehearsals of the works of Maurice Ravel, who had a significant impact on his compositions.⁶

Dutilleux and his three siblings attended the *Conservatoire* in Douai, France. At the *Conservatoire*, Henri Dutilleux was trained in harmony and counterpoint. Dutilleux was also trained as a pianist and percussionist at the insistence of the *Conservatoire's* director, Victor Gallois.⁷ Dutilleux's role as a percussionist allowed him to join the orchestra.⁸ These early musical experiences might explain the orchestral considerations in his compositions as

⁴ Caroline Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works* (Aldershot, Hampshire, UK: Ashgate 1997), 2.

⁵ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 3.

⁶ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 4.

⁷ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 2.

⁸ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 2.

demonstrated by his early hands-on exposure to this medium. In 1933, he left Douai to enroll in the *Conservatoire de Paris*.

While Dutilleux was training at the *Conservatoire de Paris*, he was unfamiliar with the Second Viennese School and its compositional techniques.⁹ After World War II however, Dutilleux and his contemporaries were introduced to the music of Arnold Schönberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern. Academically, Dutilleux and his contemporaries were not exposed to *avant-garde* music, as this was in part due to the lack of regard for this style in the curriculum and teaching at the *Conservatoire de Paris*. Even outside of the *Conservatoire*, external resources, such as Radio France, only played French and German national music during the German occupation (1940-1944).

Dutilleux gained a reputation for destroying his own works. None of his student compositions exist today, other than those entered for the *Prix de Rome*.¹⁰ He entered the *Prix de Rome* competition three times, first in 1936 when he received the *Deuxième Grand Prix* for his cantata *Gisèle*. In 1937, he made another attempt at the *Prix de Rome* with his cantata, *La belle et la bête*, and in 1938 he finally won the *Première Grand Prix* with *L'anneau du roi*, another cantata.¹¹

Dutilleux left for Rome after he won the *Première Grand Prix* (1938) and stayed in the winner's house, the Villa Medici. Dutilleux's time in Rome was cut short as political matters began to grow tense at the start of WWII, forcing Dutilleux to return to France. On developing

⁹ Roger Nichols, *Henri Dutilleux: Music, Mystery, and Memory* (Ashgate 2003), 20.

¹⁰ The *Prix de Rome* was an important competition for French artists that encompassed visual arts as well as musical arts. Composers would enter a cantata to the competition and, if selected, would spend time studying in Rome. This competition was started during the reign of Louis XVI and expunged in 1968.

¹¹ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 4.

his style during the occupation years, Dutilleux has said, “I developed it through meditation. I could have meditated in Rome, but a page had been turned. In occupied Paris, as I’ve said, I gave lessons and wrote arrangements for café orchestras. I also stood in at the Opéra, where I was provisionally appointed as chorus accompanist.”¹² Having the time and the freedom to develop his compositional voice was the prize of which he was unable to take advantage.

As the war years continued, able people were asked to act in situations outside of their normal fields. Many artists were drafted to aide in the war efforts while others joined French resistance movements during the German occupation. Dutilleux acted as a stretcher bearer in Paris to aide in the war effort until he was demobilized in 1940. Dutilleux sympathized with the sufferings of his Jewish colleagues in Paris and those who were held in Prisoner of War camps. Dutilleux composed a piece for baritone and piano that had text by Jean Cassou, who published this text under a pseudonym while he was held prisoner by the Vichy government. The piece was titled *La geôle*, and was dedicated to Dutilleux’s brother who was a POW held near Sagan, Germany.¹³ This work is one of few that was left intact from before 1947.¹⁴ He and a group of fellow composers become involved with the French National Radio, often composing music for transitions between broadcasts and becoming involved in the general operations. In the winter of 1941, he was forced to leave Paris for Cimiez, France. The committee from the *Prix De Rome* arranged a residency in Cimiez to compensate for the lost time in Rome. After a month in Cimiez, he returned to Paris and there he reviewed his works, destroying all of them excluding *L’anneau du roi* and the *Suite en concert*.¹⁵ Although he did not win, in 1942 Dutilleux entered a

¹² Nichols, *Henri Dutilleux: Music, Mystery, and Memory*, 19.

¹³ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 5.

¹⁴ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 5.

¹⁵ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 6.

competition with a piece entitled *Symphonie de danses*, which is now housed in *chez Durand*.¹⁶ *Symphonie de danses* is the first piece that gives a foretaste of his mature style.¹⁷

In 1942, Dutilleux met a pianist by the name of Geneviève Joy. The two were married in 1946 and Dutilleux dedicated many of his piano compositions to her. Geneviève finished studies at the *Conservatoire de Paris* where she won first prizes in chamber music, harmony, counterpoint, and piano accompaniment.¹⁸ As a musician, Geneviève possessed many skills that made her a top choice for composers and musicians and led her to be the pianist requested to play orchestral compositions for juries. About his wife's musicianship Dutilleux has been quoted as saying

Like me, she had studied at the Conservatoire, among others with Yves Nat, a great artist and a great teacher. I'm sure it is to him that she owes her very beautiful touch and her feeling for color, phrasing and punctuation. She had gone through the technical disciplines of harmony, counterpoint, and fugue, and so had all the necessary skills that normally would lead on to composition, although she has never in fact composed. She also attended the class in piano accompaniment and she won prizes in each of these disciplines. She has always had the reputation of being able to sight-read new scores amazingly well and, wherever a composers' competition was being held, she would be invited to join the jury to play the orchestral works on the piano.¹⁹

Joy's musical prowess can be easily identified by the technique required by Dutilleux to perform the pieces and movements that are dedicated to her.²⁰

During 1942-1943 the *Conservatoire de Paris* helped Dutilleux by commissioning him to orchestrate his work, *Mélodies* (1943), which he composed for baritone Charles Panzéra and his

¹⁶ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 6.

¹⁷ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 6.

¹⁸ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 7.

¹⁹ Nichols, 23.

²⁰ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 8.

pianist-wife Magdeleine Panzéra.²¹ This new orchestration was premiered at the *Société des Consorts du Conservatoire* on December 14, 1943.²² After the premiere, Dutilleux added two of the four *mélodies*, *Fantasio* and *Pour une amie perdue*, to his catalogue. After the premiere of this newly orchestrated song cycle, the *Conservatoire* requested Dutilleux to compose exam pieces for the woodwind department, which gave him the opportunity to explore the technical resources of each instrument. Of these works, *Sarabande et Cortège* for bassoon and piano (1942), *Sonatine* for flute and piano (1943), *Oboe Sonata* (1947), and *Choral, cadence et fugeto* for trombone and piano (1950), were all considered to be unplayable at the time of their respective composition.²³ Despite his strong relationship to the *Conservatoire*, and the influence of French composers like Fauré in his *mélodies*, he was determined to transcend French national music and to find his own unique voice.

In 1943, Dutilleux was appointed *chef de chant* with Radio France, where he remained employed until 1963. He composed music for radio plays, which were dramas performed and broadcasted by radio stations as a form of entertainment. In 1946, he developed a new artistic form where words and music would combine to produce a play that had a radiophonic character. This differed from the usual play broadcasts, as the music and words worked together to create the story as opposed to the music being simply incidental. He demonstrated his support of new music by commissioning works from his colleagues such as Maurice Ohanan, Betsy Jolas, Ivo

²¹ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 7.

²² Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 7.

²³ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 7.

Malec, and Claude Prey while working at Radio France.²⁴ Dutilleux managed to remain a relevant composer while he worked for Radio France.

If I compose slowly it is not, I have to say, that I don't work, but that I find it hard to guard my working hours, even though I am now a freelance composer. I had less time when I was working for the radio. But it's extremely difficult to organize your work and at the same time keep your relationships going and be available for certain tasks which, as I see it, you have a duty to fulfill.²⁵

He managed to compose for films and theatre along with his other duties. Dutilleux found composing for films to be useful because of the immediacy of the deadlines and was quoted in an interview with Thierry Geffrotin as stating "écrire vite, c'est une gymnastique terrible."²⁶

During his lifetime, Dutilleux was labeled as a French nationalist composer, which he did not feel was appropriate due to his interest in fusing international styles into his compositions.²⁷

As a composer Dutilleux had a desire to compose larger structured works, which was not traditional in the French national style.²⁸ The Piano Sonata of 1947-1948 was what he considered to be his first successful attempt at a larger form. As a composer Dutilleux had a desire to compose larger structure works less commonly found in the French National Style. He avoided divertissements,²⁹ preludes, and arabesques, instead giving his greatest energy to larger forms traditional to the Germanic tradition.

²⁴ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 7.

²⁵ Nichols, 38.

²⁶ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 8. "Écrire vite, c'est une gymnastique terrible" translates to "writing quickly is a terrible exercise."

²⁷ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 56.

²⁸ Nichols, 29.

²⁹ This style became popular during the rise of French Grand Opera. Pieces were performed between acts of the opera which were often related to the plot, but this was not a requirement. Later this became a term for suite of dances linked together that were composed for a ballet. Generally speaking, it is a collection of short pieces composed for a small ensemble generally a collection of dances.

The First Symphony was composed without commission and was premiered soon after completion by Roger Désormière and the *Orchestra de l'Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française*. It was well-received by the audience and garnered Dutilleux much publicity after its selection by the *Composer's Tribune*.³⁰ Today, the First Symphony is considered a masterpiece.³¹ In an interview with journalist Claude Glayman, Dutilleux commented on his first symphony:

I wanted it to be of a certain breadth, with a definite aim, and one that didn't follow the traditional formal structures. I wanted each of the movements to build on a single theme... There's a kind of symmetry, in the sense that the first movement leads directly into the second, and the third likewise directly into the fourth. Added to which, there's a symmetry in reverse, because at the beginning of the work the music emerges from silence and makes a long crescendo to a huge forte, whereas in the second half the process is reversed and the music returns to silence.³²

Le Loup was the second major commissioned work by Dutilleux. This work, like the First Symphony, had immediate success for the composer.³³ The ballet has since been performed at La Scala, The Copenhagen Opera, the Paris Opera, and in cities such as Zurich and Hanover. The ballet is important in his catalogue because it shows his ability and prowess to compose quickly, and even orchestrate a work in three months, even though he preferred to work slowly. Dutilleux's expanded language was immediately successful with audiences in both his commissioned and non-commissioned works.³⁴

³⁰ Nichols, 34.

³¹ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 9.

³² Nichols, 34-35.

³³ Nichols, 46.

³⁴ Nichols, 44.

Dutilleux began work on his Second Symphony in 1955, which was commissioned by the Koussevinsky Foundation for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The Second Symphony expands the instrumentation from his First Symphony to the extreme and breaks the orchestra apart in such a way that it creates a smaller orchestra inside the larger body of instruments.

This [the taking of risks] was the case here because of the orchestral layout, which was rather different from that of the normal orchestra, with twelve players from the main orchestra in a group around the conductor and the rest of the orchestra behind them... Inevitably with such a disposition of instruments, people think of the concerto grosso. But I saw things differently, as two orchestras in one, one being as it were the reflection of the other, hence the subtitle 'Le Double.'³⁵

While Dutilleux was not redefining music and musical forms, he was creating change amongst them.

Compositional style in the mid-twentieth century was evolving in France and beyond, Dutilleux chose not to turn away from tonal composition. His resistance to the ideals of serialism, or the lack of emphasis on any of the twelve tones of the chromatic scale, is clear in his works as he favored tonal and modal centers.³⁶

³⁵ Nichols, 50.

³⁶ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 13-14.

CHAPTER 3: AU GRÉ DES ONDES (AT THE WHIM OF THE WAVES)

Au gré des ondes contains a bit of musical humor, as the term “ondes” can mean either radio waves or waves from a body of water. This piece, written in the form of a suite, is a compilation of works written for the radio. Each movement is dedicated to a different person who has some connection to the radio, except one movement which was dedicated to his wife, Geneviève Joy.³⁷ Though much music from the twentieth century tests the limits of traditional forms, Dutilleux’s suite shows a clear relationship with the traditional Baroque form. The suite includes six distinct movements written in either a ternary or a freer prelude form. The innovation in this suite comes from the movements themselves. While each is conceived in a musical form that has strong ties to traditional Baroque forms, the movements are named after modern ideas. The names included a style of dance, *claquettes*,³⁸ an *Hommage à Bach*, and the inclusion of a movement entitled “*étude*.” The chromatic tones and the presence of the tritones are examples of influences of such composers as Bartók.³⁹ It is important to remember that Dutilleux is not an serialist composer and his works were not conceived as such. In these ways the suite was innovative, but in such a way that the concept of this traditional form is still present.

I. *Prélude en berceuse (Lullaby Prelude)*

The overall structure of this movement is a da Capo al coda form. The A section of this movement spans mm. 1-26. This section is tranquil, and yet a child-like playfulness can be felt

³⁷ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 8.

³⁸ *Claquettes* translates to Tap dance

³⁹ The use of the tritone is relatable to the music of Bartók due to the structural replacement of the dominant-tonic relationship. This relationship is used in transitional material especially in the *Allegro con moto* of the Piano Sonata Op.1.

because of the modal shifts that are present in the melodic and harmonic structure of this movement. Transitional material (mm. 26-32) leads to the B section spanning mm. 33-59. Through the transitional material Dutilleux makes use of the tritone in a melodic fashion, even highlighting it as the interval that leads the listener into the first full b-locrian scale (m. 31). Once in the B section, the left hand uses the tritone to replace the tonic-dominant function. From here the da capo leads to a repeat of the A section. As the transitional material begins it then leads to the coda. From the opening measures of the suite the interplay between minor mode and locrian mode is apparent. In the first measure of this piece (example 4.1), the composer has indicated an F-natural in the melody. With the lack of a C-sharp or C-natural, one is unable to feel a stable modal center from this opening material alone.

Example 4.1: *Au gré des ondes: Prélude en berceuse*, mm. 1-9

The image shows a musical score for the first nine measures of 'Prélude en berceuse' from 'Au gré des ondes'. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The top system shows measures 1-4, and the bottom system shows measures 5-9. The right hand plays a melodic line with a tritone interval (F-natural to C-natural) in the first measure. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The tempo is marked 'Andantino (♩ = 66)'. The dynamics are 'p très égal'. The score is attributed to 'à Claude Pascal'.

Another place of significance for this modal ambiguity is on page two, mm. 28-30. In this section there are multiple occurrences of b-minor chords arpeggiated downward followed by the locrian scale which spans two octaves from mm. 31-32. Before key cadence points of the piece, such as in mm. 15-16, the leading tone is present, either spelled traditionally as A-sharp or

enharmonically as B-flat. The presence of a leading tone does not allow for a true locrian mode, as there is no leading tone present in that mode (example 4.2).

Example 4.2: *Au gré des ondes: Prélude en berceuse*, mm. 15-24



The prelude's technical demands are easy to anticipate for a twentieth-century French character piece. Independence of the fingers is a notable challenge due to the varied articulation and the delicate balancing of multiple voices. While the pedaling is left up to the performer, the modal ambiguity creates a need for careful use of the sustain pedal. It would be easy to have blurred harmonies due the chromatic alterations required for the modal centers in this piece. It is important to lead the listener to the rather shocking melodic choices such as the chromatic alterations of the key in order to appreciate the locrian mode and presence of harmonies such as minor seventh chords. There must be an emphasis placed on a thumb-conscious technique, one in which the hand adjusts to accommodate the natural weight and muscular make-up of this finger. In order to make this happen, the hand must shift slightly more inward than feels natural for the hand to maintain a closer relationship with the key. As the texture begins to thicken the ear needs

to actively listen in order to separate the melody from the accompaniment. The melody will later appear in the same range as the accompaniment and needs to be clearly heard.

II. *Claquettes (Tap Dance)*

Claquettes has a lively and jaunty atmosphere. The composer marks “joyeux,”⁴⁰ and gives a tempo indication of quarter note equals 120, as shown in Example 4.3. Here, again, the overall form of the piece is a ternary form with 6 measures of transitional material leading to a *Da Capo al fine*. Much like a tap dance routine there is an emphatic pulse of sixteenth notes throughout the movement. The left hand plays steady eighth-notes that allude to a tap dance class and presents an eighth-note rhythm.

Example 4.3: *Au gré des ondes: Claquettes*, mm. 1-7

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Claquettes" by Jacqueline Bonneau. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of music. The first system is labeled "Joyeux (♩ = 120)" and "à Jacqueline Bonneau". It features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody in the right hand is characterized by a steady pulse of sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note rhythm. The second system continues the piece, maintaining the same rhythmic and melodic patterns. The score is presented in a clear, black-and-white format, typical of a printed musical score.

⁴⁰ *Joyeux* translates to Joyously.

The A section of this piece, mm. 1-18, is given in regular four bar phases until m. 9, which feels like an extended seven-measure phrase followed by a three-measure phrase (m. 16-18). Due to the rhythmic drive of the left hand the transitional material at m. 37 becomes single measure phrases. The B section begins at m. 19, layering in polyphony until the appearance of four complete voices beginning in m. 27 (example 4.4).

Example 4.4: *Au gré des ondes: Claquettes*, mm. 27-30



After m. 31, the texture reduces to two voices. At m. 37, there is a fermata which leads to a transitional section that takes the movement back to the first measure and ending at a final indication, “2e fois FIN.”⁴¹ This writing mimics the patterns of the Baroque suite.

This movement is in the key of F major, but following Dutilleux’s fondness for modal ambiguity, it opens with a non-tonic chord. The movement opens with a D-flat seventh chord in second inversion, which provides the listener with the root and fifth of the presented key of F major while remaining tonally ambiguous. Throughout the A section of the piece the chromatic tones lead the ear toward F major as the resolutions to these chromatic tones are notes which also belong to the tonic. The delay of an F major key center is an effect that is unique and memorable to the listener.

⁴¹ “2e fois FIN” translates to second time, end.

The challenge that may arise in this piece is good treatment of polyphonic texture when the four-voice texture begins in section B at m. 27. With constant sixteenth notes in the right hand, maintaining a strong bridge-centered hand position can become an issue for the young player, especially at the indicated tempo marking. In the A section, this “stride” left hand can be riddled with inaccuracy due to the constant leaps while also trying to maintain the continuous *non-legato* sixteenth notes, (example 4.5).

Example 4.5: *Au gré des ondes: Claquettes*, mm. 8-15

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system shows the right hand playing a continuous stream of sixteenth notes in the treble clef, while the left hand plays a series of dyads (two-note chords) in the bass clef. The second system continues this pattern, with the right hand's sixteenth-note line and the left hand's dyadic accompaniment. The music is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 3/4 time signature. A dashed line above the first system indicates a specific tempo or performance instruction.

To accomplish this stride, the second eighth note in every group should be treated as a “home-base” for the left hand and should be practiced in such a way that the lower bass note is lighter and faster than marked in the score. This will create a sense of security in the dyads that proceed each main beat in the measure. The harmonic implications that come along with the dyads place an importance on off beats in each measure.

III. Improvisation

Improvisation opens with a key signature of D major, a tempo marking of quarter note equals 120, and a stylistic marking *un peu en dehors*.⁴² In m. 1 there is an appearance of both F-sharp and F-natural, shown in Example 4.6, which leaves one to wonder about the modality. In this opening, there is a shift between D major and d-dorian due to added C-natural and F-natural.

Example 4.6: *Au gré des ondes: Improvisation*, mm. 1-12

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Improvisation' from 'Au gré des ondes'. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, and the second system covers measures 7 through 12. The key signature is D major (two sharps) for the first 11 measures, and it changes to D minor (no sharps or flats) in measure 12. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 120 beats per minute. A stylistic marking '(un peu en dehors)' is present. The dynamic is marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The music features a complex harmonic structure with a mix of major and minor chords and intervals, creating a sense of modal ambiguity.

Throughout, the presence of an A-natural and the superimposed harmonies create modal ambiguity. On the downbeat of m.1 there is a G major chord below an F-sharp minor chord. Beat two then follows with a transition to A minor. The first real confirmation of D major does not occur until the end of the fourth phrase, m. 16. Even at this arrival, Dutilleux still blurs the tonic triad through the inclusion of neighbor tones (example 4.7).

⁴² *Un peu en dehors* translates to bring out a little; a little on the outside (literally).

Example 4.7: *Au gré des ondes: Improvisation*, mm. 13-18

After a movement marked by tonal ambiguity, the music closes in the minor mode with an F-natural and D-natural in octaves one full beat apart.

Example 4.8: *Au gré des ondes: Improvisation*, mm. 50-63

The melody would be the real clue to lead one to the Aeolian mode, as the melody is in D-aeolian (example 4.6).

Presenting a clear and controlled melody is the challenge in this movement. Melodic phrases are regularly grouped in four measures. The tessitura of this movement makes it difficult to effectively voice the melody. Though there is a smaller range of motion for the hands, the texture becomes thicker with the presence of all the voices in a limited two-octave range. The melody, marked with *tenuti*, is on the downbeat of the measure and must soar above four other

voices which most often are less than an octave below the melodic note. To combat this, one must first work hands separately, playing the lower voices of the right hand as if they were marked with *staccati* while treating the melodic note as if it is unmetred and with significant length, at least the value of a half note. One should listen for a clear melodic note that will resonate in the piano for as long as possible. This approach will allow the natural weight of the hand and body to shift into the pinky without adding unnecessary tension to the hand.

IV. *Mouvement perpetuel (Perpetual Movement)*

Mouvement perpetuel is in the key of G major, has a tempo indication of *vif*,⁴³ and a metronome marking of quarter note equals 160. For the first time in this suite there are clear harmonic reinforcements to confirm the key signature. This movement sits in the tonal center longer than the other movements. As the title suggest, there is perpetual movement created by the constant eighth notes. This movement is also composed in a *Da Capo al Coda* format, like the previous movements. Extended tertian harmonies are found throughout this movement, with added 7ths, 9ths, and 13ths which can be seen as early as the first measure of the work. As the transitional section at m. 51 begins (example 4.9), Dutilleux makes use of chordal planing to create chromatic voice leading in the uppermost voice. The harmonies in these measures alternate between major and minor.

⁴³ *Vif* translates to fast.

Example 4.9: *Au gré des ondes: Mouvement perpetuel*, mm. 48-59

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system features a treble and bass staff with a slur over the first measure of the treble staff. The second system also has two staves, with a piano (p) dynamic marking in the second measure of the lower staff. The notation includes various rhythmic values and chordal structures.

Throughout this piece, the eighth-note motion is constant until the music comes to a halt at m. 115 (example 4.10). At this point, use of the pedal is indicated by the composer to allow for these slurs to be heard. This movement contrasts many of the others tonally and rhythmically with its lack of ambiguity in both aspects. *Mouvement perpetuel* closely resembles the “Toccata” from *Le tombeau de Couperin* by Ravel. These similarities start from the opening measure of both pieces in melodic and rhythmic elements.

Example 4.10: *Au gré des ondes: Mouvement perpétuel*, mm. 99-118

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is marked 'CODA' and shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. The second system shows a continuation of this pattern with a dashed line above the staff indicating a measure rest. The third system shows the piece concluding with a 'pp' dynamic marking and a 'Ped.' instruction.

Use of the pedal is rather strict and its employment is indicated by the composer. This piece is marked “*sans Péd.*,”⁴⁴ which creates the marked *staccato* or *non-legato* sound. Unlike previous movements of this suite, the player must make technical and musical decisions without the use of the pedal for large amounts of time. At mm. 67-86, slurs appear sporadically,

⁴⁴ *Sans Péd.* translates to without pedal.

Example 4.11: *Au gré des ondes: Mouvement perpétuel*, mm. 66-86

The image displays four systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system begins with a *ppp* dynamic marking. The second system continues the piece. The third system includes a *poco cresc.* marking. The fourth system starts with a *mf* dynamic marking. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and frequent key signature changes, indicated by sharp and flat symbols on the notes.

and again at mm. 115-118 (example 4.12) which closes this movement. The slurs suddenly allow one to hear the larger pulse of two instead of the emphatic eighth note rhythms. In these areas, use of the pedal would be appropriate, as indicated by the composer. The pedal will help create the sustaining effect indicated in the left hand and later, both hands. One must pedal with the left hand to highlight the pattern of four ascending notes. This would require pedaling two

full measures at a time. Due to the tessitura of the right hand there is not a need to worry about over-pedaling the right hand.

Repeated notes are one of the most difficult aspects of playing the piano, and Dutilleux uses them throughout the movement. Attention to finger position and timing of key stroke is of the utmost importance in this movement to execute the repeated notes. Repeated single-notes, that is notes that appear without any additional harmony, will be made easier by focusing on a plucking stroke. This allows the hand to accurately execute the *staccati* and play the lower voices with ease (example 4.12).

Example 4.12: *Au gré des ondes: Mouvement Perpetuel*, mm. 1-11

à Léon Kartun

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is marked 'Vif (♩=160)' and 'sans Péd.' with a piano 'p' dynamic. It features a right hand with repeated eighth-note patterns and a left hand with repeated chords. The second system continues the piece with repeated chords and notes. The notation is in G major and 2/4 time.

Repeated chords require a supple wrist and firm fingers. These passages occur in m. 59 (example 4.9), at m. 66 (example 4.11), and various places throughout the piece. To check for wrist tension in this passage, strike a chord and hold while moving the wrist left-right and down, imitating a clock pendulum. As one increases the tempo the motion must be reduced to micro movements in order to execute such passages.

V. *Hommage à Bach (Homage to Bach)*

As indicated by the title, the fifth movement of this suite is one that brings Baroque composition to mind. It is written in the key of D minor, like many of Bach's most prominent works. The style indication is *Calme et recueilli*,⁴⁵ with a metronome marking of quarter note equals 72.

Example 4.13: *Au gré des ondes: Hommage à Bach*, mm. 1-6

à Claude Arrieu

Calme et recueilli (♩ = 72)

Standard part-writing rules apply strongly in this movement, meaning that tendency tones resolve in the correct stylistic manner (“ti” goes to “do” and so forth). The limitation of register in this movement is also a way in which Dutilleux continues to adhere to Baroque tradition as the instruments of these times would have a much more limited range than the modern piano.

Dutilleux even opens this movement on an offbeat, which is common in the writing of Bach.

The most challenging part of this piece appears in the two over three patterns (example 4.14).

⁴⁵ *Calme et recueilli* translates to calm and collected.

Example 4.14: *Au gré des ondes: Hommage à Bach*, mm. 34-39



Music instructors do not often equip their students with the tools to have complete independence with polyrhythms. The solution to this problem is to spend time playing the rhythms on the first pitch of the group. For this purpose, using the fourth beat of m. 34 as a reference, the student would begin on the pitches D-natural and F-natural. Begin the process by playing the rhythm of one hand while only playing the downbeat in the opposite hand. Once this is completely comfortable, alternate between playing the rhythm as written in both hands and playing as mentioned in the previous sentence. Once complete independence is mastered, add the intended pitches.

VI. *Étude (Study)*

This etude is composed in a toccata style using continuous rapid note values that span the width of the keyboard. The form is less strict as it relies often on harmonic implications for the phrase length. It is in 2/4 time, with an indication of Presto, and a metronome marking of quarter note equals 144. Like the etudes of the nineteenth-century, this etude is in ABA form with a

small bridge which leads smoothly back into the closing A section (mm. 9-73). This movement is permeated by sixteenth notes, which is a trend with Dutilleux's repertoire. The opening marking is *léger*,⁴⁶ which becomes a challenge while having to maintain the constant sixteenth notes in the accompanying voices. This movement is centered around C-natural and ends and closes around a C tonality but many chromatic explorations appear in the B section.

Example 4.15: *Au gré des ondes: Étude*, mm. 1-8

à Geneviève Joy

The image shows the first eight measures of the piano piece 'Au gré des ondes: Étude' by Maurice Ravel. The score is written for piano and is in 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Presto' with a metronome marking of 144. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The right hand plays a continuous sixteenth-note pattern, and the left hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The marking 'p (léger)' is present in the first measure. The score is dedicated to Geneviève Joy.

In mm. 47-68 balancing voices and maintaining a natural-sounding technique is difficult. The right hand must balance both a long melodic line and sixteenth notes while the left hand plays continuous *staccato* eighth notes. Technical issues in this movement include polyrhythms, varied articulation, and melodic treatment in rapid polyphonic textures.

⁴⁶ *Léger* translates to light.

Example 4.16: *Au gré des ondes: Étude*, mm. 49-56

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system is a single system with a long slur over the top staff. The second system is also a single system with a long slur over the top staff. The second system includes the markings 'poco' and 'a' above the top staff.

To overcome this challenge, one must work hands separately, spending time playing the sixteenth notes blocked and *staccato* in the right hand while playing the soprano voice as long as possible to allow for the natural weight to shift to the soprano voice. Overall, the tempo and smooth change of patterns become the main technical issue in this piece. Slow, patient work with a metronome, which must be done with any etude, will allow for a successful performance of this piece.

Au gré des ondes is a piece that is simple in conception and lacks true innovation compared to the later works of Dutilleux. However, throughout the piece there are significant style traits that never leave his compositional language. These include the use of modal ambiguity, expansion and transformation of a preexisting forms, and in many places the technical demands made of the player. This set provides a vast number of pianists the opportunity to understand the compositional style and harmonic language of Dutilleux.

CHAPTER 4: PIANO SONATA OP. 1

The compositional trends used by French nationalist composers were broken by Dutilleux throughout this sonata. Modal ambiguity is a trend in the music of Dutilleux and it permeates this sonata. The modal ambiguity noted in the first movement of the piano suite *Au gré des ondes* is employed here, reaffirming Dutilleux's compositional language.⁴⁷ One is unsure about the modal center due to chromatic alterations early in his music. Though Dutilleux does not consider himself to be a serialist composer, he makes use of such elements as completion of the aggregate to signal transitions in his sonata. These completions of the aggregate add to the structural ambiguity of the overall piece as it makes it difficult to perceive what will come next.

I. Allegro con moto

In the first movement of his piano sonata, Henri Dutilleux employs a commonly used orchestration in which the melodic line is clearly in the soprano voice and the left hand adds harmonic support. He wanted to compose large-format works, which was not the trend in France. The first movement of this piece adheres strictly to Sonata-allegro form. The overall layout compositionally leaves the right hand with the task of playing the melody while also providing the rhythmic drive of constant eighth notes. The pattern of the right hand disappears when the composer employs faster divisions of the beat in the transitional sections of the piece.

⁴⁷ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 8.

Example 5.1: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Allegro con moto*, mm. 1-7

Allegro con moto ($\text{♩} = 108$)

PIANO

p

In general, this piece can be easily broken into four- and eight-bar phrases. This movement is centered around F-sharp, but due to the fast transitions between A-sharp and A-natural in the melodic material, the listener and pianist are left without confirmation of the key. The post-tonal elements are the most adventurous in this first movement.⁴⁸ Modal elements are not innovative for a composer of this era; the expansion of the form is the innovation here.

The first movement features a wide range of technical demands. Technically, Dutilleux uses extended techniques for the piano that include silently depressing notes to create a resonance effect in the piano while one is playing (example 5.2). In the opening theme, Dutilleux writes extended seventh chords.

⁴⁸ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 49.

Example 5.2: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Allegro con moto*, mm. 109-113

posez sans frapper les notes entre parentheses

Reprenez le mouvt

pp un poco rubato

These chords can become an issue due to the span of the interval under the hand. It is easy to miss this interval especially when presented in succession. Combatting this element requires slow practice with double-dotted rhythms to easily transition between major sevenths.

Example 5.3: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Allegro con moto*, mm. 21-26

Reprenez le mouvt

pp un poco rubato

Voicing is a challenge in this movement and something for which the dedicatee, Genevieve Joy, was known. Dutilleux and many other musicians noted Joy's ability to see and make voicing decisions quickly in full orchestra scores. In order to balance voices correctly, one must spend time playing the accompanying voices staccato and playing the melodic note longer and louder. This will allow for a healthy and safe shift of natural arm and hand weight to the melody. Playing sections that contain many repeated notes and rhythms is often a challenge that is overlooked. Often pianists become fixated on the sound or the technique and sacrifice one for the other. In mm. 52-64 the challenge is placing the grace notes at the indicated tempo and the independence of the hands. Solving this requires dotted rhythm practice as well as breaking the pattern into every type of group imaginable (groups of two notes, three notes, etc.).

Example 5.4: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Allegro con moto*, mm. 52-59

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system covers measures 52-55 and includes the lyrics "scen - do". The second system covers measures 56-59 and includes the lyrics "f subito cre - scen - do". The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with many repeated notes and grace notes.

In the French fashion, this movement requires complete control and subtlety of the fingers.⁴⁹ The fast shifts in character happen from the very beginning of this movement. There is contrast between the legato nature of the first page (mm. 1-14) and the transitional material that has a more unusual meter and staccato articulation. The development (mm. 113-133) makes use of the tritone, quartal, and quintal harmonies in contrast to the exposition and the recapitulation, which make use of these intervals melodically. The awkward feeling of these major sevenths, the speed of the movement, and the articulation require firm fingers and a supple wrist throughout.

II. *Lied*

Lied is the least innovative movement of this sonata. One can easily hear the influence of French composers before Dutilleux. Like most second movements it creates a contrast between the more active lively tempos of the first and third movements. *Lied* is composed in ternary form, section A (mm. 1-41), section B (mm. 42-73) and A' (mm. 74-97). The second movement contains tonal ambiguity between the hands. The second movement is comprised of a lyric melody and polyphonic accompaniment. There are three thematic areas present in section A which are as follows: theme 1 (mm. 1-10), theme 2 (mm. 10-20), the first theme 1', which is the inversion of theme 1 (mm.21-29). After theme 1' is a transition area (mm. 30-33), and then to complete this section is a Codetta (mm. 34-41). Section B is comprised of a contrasting theme are to the previous section. The third thematic area is in mm. 43-47. Measures 48-63 are made up of contrapuntal devices imposed on the material from theme area 3. There is a transition section from mm. 64-73 that leads to section A'. Section A' is comprised of a second repetition of theme

⁴⁹ The French School of Piano comes down from the writings of Couperin. This puts an emphasis on finger work and subtleties created with the finger alone. In the 19th century pianists such as Chopin helped to create an overall flexibility in the wrist while still focusing on the use of the fingers.

area 2 but this time centered in D-flat, mm. 74-79, and then closes with a repetition of theme area 1 centered on C-sharp (enharmonically D-flat). The previous details demonstrate that Dutilleux's compositional style was firm but expanded from *Au gré des ondes*. The transitional material in this movement features abundant use of the tri-tone. The tonic-dominant relationship changes here until the next formal area is reached and then the harmonic implications and intervallic relationships become more standard. It is important to notice that influences from such composers as Fauré or Debussy can be seen in this movement despite the German title. Through the third thematic area Dutilleux employs canonic writing and highlights quartal harmonies. Fauré's Theme in Variations (1895) is the inspiration for this movement that also has a slow-moving melody and tonal ambiguity.

A huge challenge in this movement comes in the third theme. This section is highly chromatic and contains contrapuntal areas that are both demanding and require a completely soft and equal character (example 5.5).

Example 5.5: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Lied*, mm. 40-50

Un poco più mosso

sempre *dim.* *ppp d'une sonorité très égale*

ppp

sempre ppp *ppp*

Starting in m. 66 (example 5.6) the challenge comes with creating the correct polyrhythm which is five over two. To address this polyrhythm, one must begin on the first written pitch of the left hand and the right hand. In this case it would be a *e*-natural in the right hand and a *d*-sharp in the left hand. Then play a five rhythm and a downbeat in the left hand. After this, alternate playing the polyrhythm in both hands and playing the five-pattern in the right hand and only a downbeat in the left hand. Once this is comfortable, add the written pitches to this pattern.

Example 5.6: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Lied*, mm. 66-67

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of three staves each. The first system (measures 66-67) features a treble clef staff with a melodic line of eighth notes, a middle staff with a bass clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. Dynamics include 'poco' and 'cresc.'. The second system (measures 68-70) continues the melodic line in the treble staff, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and dynamics. The bottom staff continues the bass line with similar accidentals.

Another element of complexity comes from the added staff in the score. This makes score study very simple for the performer but adds the challenge of open-score reading at the piano.

III. *Choral et Variations*

This movement is made up of a chorale and four variations with a tempo marking of *Large* and a metronome marking of half note equals 50. The opening is visually striking as one can see that the score begins not with two or three staves, but four. The interesting aspect of this movement is that Dutilleux refers to this four-variation movement as a sonata in a sonata.⁵⁰ This is due to the shifts in tempo. After the slow theme, there is a fast variation, a scherzo-like variation, a slow variation, and then a fast variation again.

⁵⁰ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 53.

Example 5.7: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Choral et Variations*, mm. 1-4

CHORAL
 Large (♩ = 50)

PIANO

ff molto marcato

ff molto marcato

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the 'CHORAL' section of a piano sonata. The tempo is marked 'Large (♩ = 50)'. The piano part is marked 'ff molto marcato' and features a series of chords and single notes with various articulations. The vocal line is marked with 'p.v.' and 'v.v.' and features a series of notes with various articulations. The score is written for piano and includes a vocal line. The piano part is marked 'ff molto marcato' and features a series of chords and single notes with various articulations. The vocal line is marked with 'p.v.' and 'v.v.' and features a series of notes with various articulations. The score is written for piano and includes a vocal line.

As the first variation begins the tempo is already noticeably contrasting as Dutilleux marks the tempo as “*vivace*” at this moment. The articulation in this variation is contrasting as the opening material was marked with very sustained sections. The opening material of the first variation is marked with accents and *staccati* (mm. 28-58). Beginning at m. 58 there is a sense of calm caused by a drop in dynamic and a change of articulation to *molto legato* followed by a return of the A material of this variation at m. 107. Measure 151 marks the beginning of variation two. There is a tempo change in this variation which increases the speed from the previous variation. *Bravura* octaves are implanted in this variation and create a contrast between *toccata* style playing and *léger* playing. The alteration between rhythms and articulation in the hands demonstrates this *toccata* style. The transition to the third variation is made with a progression that starts in m. 348 and gradually becomes longer and more sustained to allow for a smooth transition into this slower third variation. Potter writes, “The slow third variation, which features

the chorale theme as a *cantus firmus* in the middle of the texture, is also weaker being reminiscent of Franck.”⁵¹ This movement and the chorale in general have roots in French tradition but again the form is expanded. The variations are virtuosic and demonstrate Dutilleux’s knowledge of the instrument.

Throughout this movement exploration of articulation must be done. While many *staccato* passages are manageable, challenges can be found in Variation 4 at m. 509.

Example 5.8: Piano Sonata Op. 1: Choral et Variations, mm. 508-517



It is important to employ the wrist to help with the *staccato* articulation because of the chords in the left hand. The hand should be firm in order to strike the notes at the same time, but the wrist itself must be loose in order to bounce back from the downward motion of the initial strike with ease. Repeated notes, especially those that must be kept light and *staccato*, are some of the most difficult passages for a pianist. The technique must be in a stage where one is not fighting the instrument and can maintain consistency.

⁵¹ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 54.

In the second variation, there are large sections of polyrhythms (example 5.9). This time the rhythms are four against six, again the player should play the six rhythm in the left hand starting on the first pitch of the measure and a downbeat on the first pitch of the right hand. Alternate adding the written rhythm and the previously described rhythm. Once comfortable add the written pitches.

Example 5.9: *Piano Sonata Op. 1: Choral et Variations*, mm. 354-359



Due to the formal structure of the sonata, there is less variation in material and technical challenges. The comfort that Dutilleux had with the piano can be seen throughout this sonata.

CHAPTER 5: DUTILLEUX AND HIS WORKS

The early piano works of Henri Dutilleux are an important part of his repertoire as a composer because of their place in his catalogue. *Au gré des ondes* was written between the years of 1946 and 1947. The Piano Sonata, which is considered and designated by the composer as his Opus 1, was only composed one year later, and yet the significant differences in the writing are enough for the composer to make this designation. The similarities between these works are endless and it leaves one to wonder about the cause of this strict designation. The influence of Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, and Poulenc cannot be missed as is noted further in the writing of Suniga and Suh. Due to these significantly French influences, many scholars and performers of his works make the argument that Dutilleux's compositional voice is particularly French.

Dutilleux does not consider his works to be typically French, and for him the recognition of international influence makes his music less traditional. Dutilleux scholar Caroline Potter makes a note of these foreign elements in his works, which make him an original French composer. International influences, coupled with his desire to compose larger-format works such as sonatas and symphonies, contradict what was happening in French music in the 1940s.⁵² In his works, the fondness for symmetry that Bartók had as a composer is reflected in both the large-scale form and in the smaller details of the music, such as harmonic and melodic content.⁵³ In 1945, just after the war and before he composed either of these mentioned piano works, there was a flood of music that Dutilleux claims was unfamiliar to most of the French classical music

⁵² Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 56. During an interview Dutilleux makes a point to say that foreign influences often stimulate and nourish preexisting traditions. Here he also mentions André Gide and his belief that national artistic tradition requires the transforming influences of foreign cultures.

⁵³ Caroline Potter. "Dutilleux at 90." *The Musical Times* 147, No. 1894 (2006), 54.

world.⁵⁴ Dutilleux comments on the appearance of this music in France saying, “ It was both too late and too much all at once. The risk, for young composers like us, was that we might take the most striking elements from this composer and that, and effectively turn into eclectics.”⁵⁵ The Piano Sonata Op. 1 is still considered by the composer to be a transitional work into his mature style and lacks many elements that please him.⁵⁶

Like many of the great composers who came before him, Dutilleux was a harsh critic of his own works and destroyed many of them. These early pieces are often regarded today as great works for the instruments for which they were composed. However, in many cases Dutilleux tried to prevent the glorification of these works.⁵⁷ The early works were composed as exam pieces at the *Conservatoire de Paris*, an important reason why he deemed these works insubstantial. *Au gré des ondes* was compiled over his years with Radio France and was composed as transitional pieces for radio broadcasts. The publication of this work was not at the wish of the composer and so he disapproved of this work as well. When performers tried to perform these works Dutilleux often either expressed his disapproval or asked for movements to be cut.⁵⁸

As a composer, Dutilleux’s perfectionist nature can be easily seen through his biographies. He was striving for perfection and originality in all of his compositions. Even in discussions about his sonata, which he considered to be his first mature work, he discusses the

⁵⁴ Nichols, 21.

⁵⁵ Nichols, 21.

⁵⁶ Nichols, 29. Dutilleux notes his strong writing at the end of the first movement and the opening variation in the last movement being to his liking.

⁵⁷ Nichols, 21.

⁵⁸ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 40.

idea of going back to the score to add markings for nuance and changing the incorrect notes that appear in the score.⁵⁹ Dutilleux's reaction to other composers' works foreshadows his response to this own early works. Dutilleux was unhappy about the publication of Ravel's violin sonata which was rejected by the composer. Many have scored, completed, and staged the unfinished operas of Debussy, music Dutilleux feels the composers would not have wanted to share.⁶⁰

The pace at which Dutilleux liked to work is another issue with many of these pieces. As he admitted, he was a rather slow worker and so many of his early commissioned works, such as the early exam pieces, were done faster than he would have liked. Variation of harmony is a major part of his language, and many of his exam pieces lack this to some extent. It is important to mention the fact that many of the compositions he considered strong, are works for which he did not received a commission with a specific time limit. Examples of these works are the Piano Sonata Op. 1 and the first Symphony, which was written without a specific orchestra in mind but was premiered the year of its completion (1951).

Through harmonic exploration it is easy to see there was already a well-defined compositional language. Dutilleux stated he was always a modal composer. In both *Au gré des ondes* and the Piano Sonata Op. 1 this is a featured element. The only exceptions are in the fifth movement of the suite, *Hommage à Bach*, where he spends time creating an atmosphere that is reminiscent of J.S. Bach and limits the modal movement that is expected in his works. However, *Au gré des ondes* lacks true originality in style.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Nichols, 31.

⁶⁰ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 55.

⁶¹ Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 47. Potter makes the statement that Dubussy, Ravel, Roussel, and Poulenc are easily seen in this suite. She also mentions a lack of originality because of these influences in both melodic content and overall formal structure.

The major difference in these two works is the lack of commission and the larger form. As a composer, Dutilleux was striving to write larger-format works such as Piano Sonata Op. 1. The dedication of the sonata to his wife, Geneviève Joy, is important as it demonstrates the lack of commission which creates a unique distinction with the suite. The speed at which Dutilleux liked to compose plays the main role in his rejection of the work, as he was required to compose *Au gré des ondes* within a strict timeframe. His first symphony, which Dutilleux claims contains his complete mature style, shares a similar story to the Piano Sonata Op. 1 wherein there is a lack of commission. The first performance of the sonata was long after its initial conception.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

As a student and a composer Dutilleux was a rather nervous person and said, “I would have been a poor advocate of my music.”⁶² The character of Dutilleux is shown in this quote and his lack of self-advocacy adds to the reason his works are less known today. The included technical, harmonic, and biographical information contained in this document explains the designation of Dutilleux works, *Au gré des ondes* and the Piano Sonata Op. 1. Through the harmonic language alone it is clear to see there is a language that is very true to Dutilleux even in his rejected work. However, his hunger for large scale works and his desire to spend the time he required to perfect a piece was not given to him until the Piano Sonata Op. 1. The programmatic nature of *Au gré des ondes* can distinguish it from the Piano Sonata Op. 1. While many have commented on the lack of originality in Dutilleux’s early works, there is a general character that would remain in his music throughout the rest of his output.

⁶² Potter, *Henri Dutilleux: His Life and Works*, 3.

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