

Meter as a Formal Delineator in Two Debussy *Préludes*

Michael Oravitz

Abstract

The essay discusses the manner in which metric events contribute to formal designs in two of Debussy's Book I *Préludes*, "Danseuses de Delphes," and "Le vent dans la plaine." Given Debussy's progressive metric palette, the metric events over a given span of music can be compositionally specific. In moments where the series of metric events creates a span, which is clearly heard as a formal unit in both the initial span and ensuing ones, the author refers to the span's identifying characteristics as a "metric profile." Such profiles may be the result of metric activity, hypermetric activity, or a blend of both. The essay also uses these profiles, in part, to illustrate the broader role meter can play in contributing to the extramusical narratives implied in the works' titles.