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Connection between visual arts and music: The painting and music of I-Uen Wang Hwang

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Connection between Visual Arts and Music:
The Painting and Music of I-Uen Wang Hwang
Yining Jenny Jiang

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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This document explores the connection between the visual arts and music, particularly focusing on the similarity between visual and aural artistic expression by analyzing two sets of piano pieces composed by I-Uen Wang Hwang, a contemporary Taiwanese-American composer and artist. The piano pieces are *Dream Garden*, Series I and II (2000-2004) and *Preludes for Piano* (2016). Series I of *Dream Garden* contains two piano solo compositions based on a series of Hwang's own watercolor works. Each composition has an analogous painting: "*The Horn of the Plenty*" and "*Butterfly Orchid*". Series II includes two compositions written for two pianos: "*Red and White*" and "*Fireworks*", which are also based on her watercolor paintings of flowers. "Each piano part has its own individual character with different timbres and rhythms, as if each part represented a different color or texture of the painting."¹ *Preludes for Piano* is a new composition set that Hwang composed in 2016. There are three preludes, each prelude based on an abstract acrylic painting. My intention is to explore the connection between paintings and music by discussing the historical background of the two art forms, analyzing the selected music of Hwang in detail, and referring to other composers whose musical compositions were related and inspired by paintings.

¹ I-Uen Wang Hwang, "*Dream Garden*". Program notes for doctoral lecture recital. Yining Jiang. Harrisonburg: James Madison University Recital Hall, September 17, 2017.

Introduction

As a form of art, music can be influenced by other art forms, including visual arts, poetry, literature, architecture, dance, and theater. These art forms serve as the media to provoke emotional responses. The interaction between the different arts has existed throughout both art and music histories. The discoveries of Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, show the fundamental links between music and color. Baroque architecture during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries reflect the detailed embellishment and structural complexity also found in the style of Baroque music. During the nineteenth century, the Romantic composer Robert Schumann wrote, “For the painter a poem becomes a painting, the composer converts the painting into sound. The aesthetic process of the one art form is the same as that of the other; only the raw material differs.”² Composers and artists capture various types of sensory information and transfer it into their own creations. In addition, a few special artists are equally fluent in multiple art forms. One such “duo artist” would be the eighteenth century Lithuanian painter, composer and writer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis,

By the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, composers such as Claude Debussy and Olivier Messiaen brought image and color together in their musical compositions. Debussy’s music rises above the piano’s limitations to create its pictures, images, and illusions.³ The French impressionist composers fused image and sound into novel compositions. Other twentieth century composers, such as Alexander Scriabin,

² Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy* (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

Arnold Schoenberg, George Crumb, and John Cage followed a similar path and found their own way of connecting these two art forms, which created a strong precedent for later composers.

Twentieth century scholars have also drawn their attention to this topic. Paul Roberts, in his book *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*, discusses Debussy's interests in visual arts and how the concepts of *impressionism* and *symbolism* influence his compositions. The composer Arnold Schoenberg and the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky admired each other's works, and letters exchanged between them reveal their understanding of the connections between painting and music. In the book *Schoenberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter (Contemporary Music Studies)*, authors discuss the experiments and interactions in composition and painting techniques, as well as the aesthetic value of Schoenberg and Kandinsky's works.

At the "Opusfest Music Festival" in the Philippines, 2010, my advisor, Dr. Eric Ruple heard and was impressed by a set of piano compositions written by I-Uen Wang Hwang. This piece is based on the composer's own paintings of flowers. Dr. Ruple introduced this contemporary Taiwanese-American composer and her music to me during my doctoral studies. I soon began researching Hwang's paintings and musical compositions. Because I found the topic to be so interesting, it became the focus of this study.

My intention is to explore the connection between music and painting by analyzing and discussing the analogous compositional techniques in selected piano works

and paintings by Hwang. In my interview with Hwang on January 10 and 11, 2017, she showed me her paintings and other orchestral compositions.

The first chapter will provide a brief discussion of the two art forms and review the arts and music from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century. The second chapter will discuss some other musicians' and artists' approach to composing and painting, including Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Frantisek Kupka and Josef Matthias Hauer. The last chapter will introduce Hwang's compositional techniques, painting techniques, and aesthetic philosophy, as seen and heard through her paintings and musical compositions, as well as discuss her thoughts on the similarities between music and painting in her own work. Hwang identifies six areas of similarity: musical line and painting line, interval and color, volume and dynamic, and foreground/background, gesture and texture. Through analysis of Hwang's musical and artistic compositions, this study will provide a clear picture of the connection between these two art forms.

The Historical Background of the Connection between Music and Art

For the painter a poem becomes a painting. The composer converts the painting into sound. The aesthetic process of the one art form is the same as that of the other; only the raw material differs.⁴

-- Robert Schumann

Comparing the resources of totally different arts, one art learning from another, can only be successful and victorious if not merely the externals, but also the principles are learned.⁵

-- Wassily Kandinsky

Ancient Greek

The English word “music” is derived from the Greek words “mousike”, “mousa” and “muse,” which refer to music plus poetry, song, dance, and sciences such as astronomy. Similarly, the word “art” refers to drawing, painting, engraving, or sculpture only after the eighteenth century; before that, “art” included all visual works, music, dance and theatre.

Plato classified painting and music as luxuries which could rise above this material world to provide benefits to the soul.⁶ Plato believed that only certain types of music or musical modes were acceptable or beneficial to the soul, and therefore appropriate for teaching to students. This music alone was suitable for encouraging higher sense of morality.⁷ There are seven different musical modes: Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Lochrian. For instance, *Ionian* promoted

⁴ Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy* (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 3.

⁵ Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible deeds of music: art and music from Wagner to Cage*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2

“lascivam petulantiam” (frolicsome or wanton behavior), and was considered appropriate only for secular music.⁸ There was also a link made between beauty and morality, which stated that “ugliness of form and bad rhythm and disharmony are akin to poor quality expression and character, and their opposites are akin to and represent the good character and discipline.”⁹ In the medieval period, 400 A.D to 1400, education included seven liberal arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. However, beginning in the fifteenth century, art and science evolved into two distinct subjects. According to Leonardo da Vinci, “art” referred to something akin to skill, while “science” referred to something akin to knowledge.¹⁰ This characterization of art and music in the medieval period sheds further light on how these two art forms were connected.

The Greek Philosopher, Aristotle determined a “Seven-Color” scale based on a whole number ratio method. In *De Sensu*, he stated that black and white refers to two extremes of light, while other colors were found in the range between them, and he determined there were five colors.¹¹ This was similar to the way that Pythagoras¹² determined musical intervals:

⁸ Stanley Sadie, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. Vol. 9 (London: Macmillan, 1980), 290.

⁹ Plato, *Republic* 3.3.401, trans. D. Lee (Harmondsworth, 1955; reprint, Harmondsworth, 1979), 162. (as cited in Shaw-Miller, 2002)

¹⁰ Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible deeds of music: art and music from Wagner to Cage*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 3

¹¹ Richard Sorabji, "Aristotle, Mathematics, and Colour." *The Classical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1972): 300. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/638210>.

¹² Pythagoras discovered the relationship between the concords (consonance) and whole number ratios by hearing the concords in the sounds of the hammers striking an anvil. According to Pythagoras' understanding and discovery, the ratio for the octave is (2:1), the 5th is (3:2) and the 4th is (4:3).

“... colours intermediate between the darkest (black) and the lightest (white) consist of a mixture of black with white. And the most pleasant colours are produced by ratios of black to white which are uncomplicated,' and (439b32) expressible in numbers easy to calculate with. They are thus parallel to consonant combinations in music. The other colours are not logoi, or uncomplicated ratios (439b29-30; 440aI4-I5). Indeed, they are not expressible in (rational) numbers at all (440a2-3; 440b20; 442aI15-17), but stand in an incommensurable (439b30) relation of predominance and sub-ordination only.”¹³

This observation reveals a connection between sound and color -- both can be analyzed or divided based on a mathematical approach. What is more, the same number of notes and colors can be observed in both the musical scale and the color spectrum.

Renaissance and Baroque

Venice was a major cultural center for music and painting in the Renaissance and Baroque eras. Music became a part of a Venetian painter's palette with musical content frequently being presented in the paintings. Two art works that feature a musical event are *The Concert* (an oil painting on canvas by Pietro Longhi, 1741, Figure. 1) and *Interrupted Concert* by Titian (1511–12). (Figure. 2) In Longhi's painting, three violinists are playing while three people on the left side of the picture are playing cards. A small white dog appears in the lower right corner of the painting. Sheet music is lying on the floor, dropped from the music stand. The painting is quite entertaining and projects a joyful and relaxing atmosphere. Everybody in the picture seems happy and enjoying themselves with music or cards.

¹³ Richard Sorabji, "Aristotle, Mathematics, and Colour." *The Classical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1972): 295-296. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/638210>.

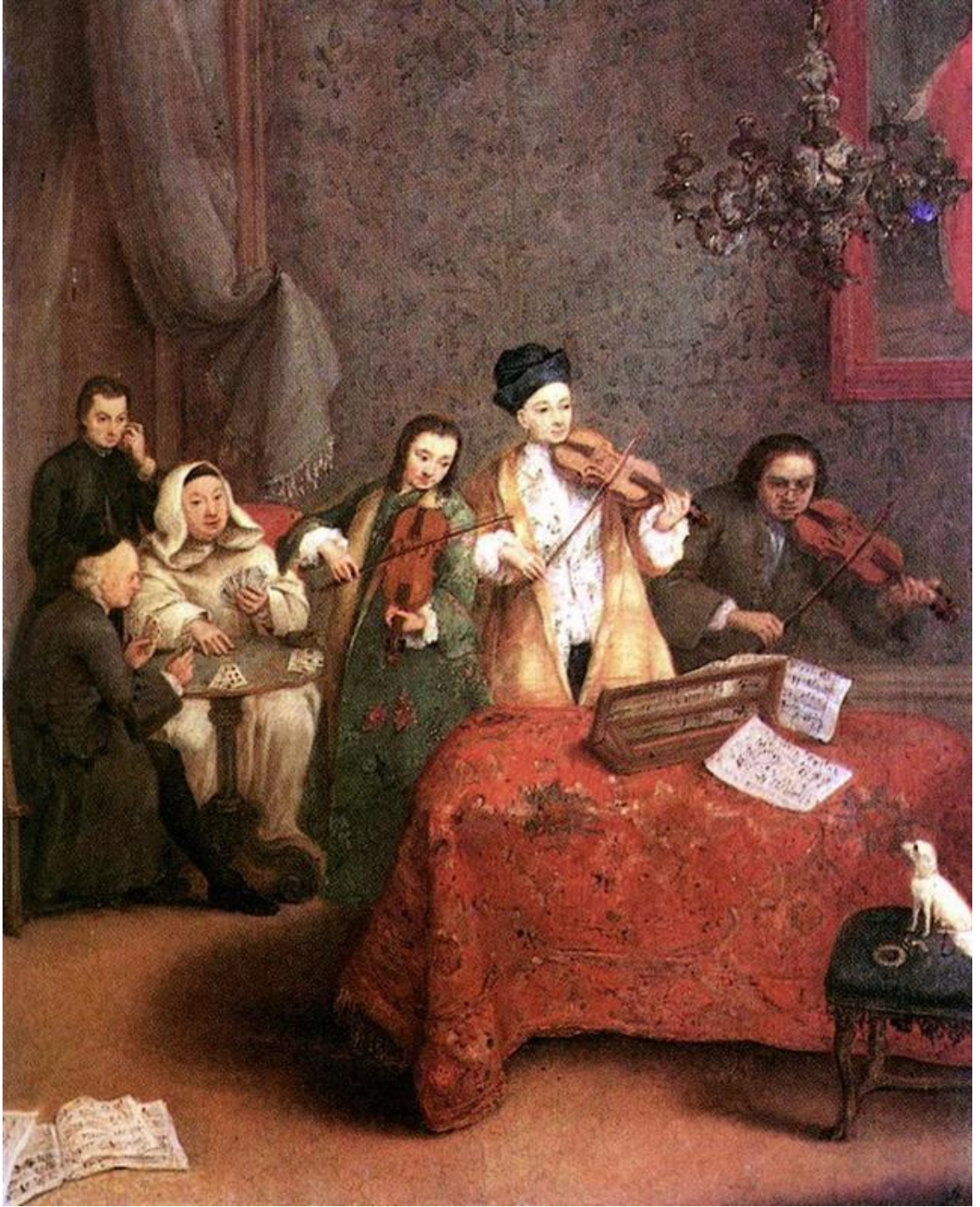


Figure 1. Longhi, *The Concert* (1741)



Figure. 2 Titian, *Interrupted Concert* (1511–12)

Titian's painting *Interrupted Concert*, appears to depict a more formal performance, as everyone in the painting is in formal attire, and the background is dark, which brings more focus to the subjects. There is a young woman on the left, a harpsichordist in the middle and a violist on the right. The violist has his hand on the harpsichordist's shoulder, as if he is trying to say something, while the harpsichordist seems to do the same thing but looking in the other direction. Titian has created a perfect sense of interruption - tension can be seen in the harpsichordist's hands and the violist has stopped playing completely. Who interrupted the concert? Perhaps the only clue given is the young woman on the left who is facing forward. Have we, the observers,

interrupted the concert?¹⁴ Music brought great entertainment and enjoyment to social life. Painters wanted to participate and capture the joyful moments through their paintings. Therefore, paintings depicting musical scenes were prominent in the Renaissance and Baroque eras.

In 2013, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Venice exhibited 120 art works, music manuscripts, and musical instruments as a means of exploring the connection of music and art between 1488 and 1797.¹⁵ Dr. Hilliard T. Goldfarb, senior curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Canada, included a large number of pictures and materials in his book *Art and Music in Venice from the Renaissance to the Baroque*. Dr. Goldfarb quoted the Italian writer Gabriele D'Annunzio's novel: "When one is in Venice, one cannot feel except through music or think except through images. They come from everywhere in such profusion, endlessly, they are more real and alive than the people who jostle us in a narrow street".¹⁶ As one visits the museum, it is likewise impossible to see without hearing, to listen without seeing.¹⁷ By including both music and painting, this exhibition contributed to the interdisciplinary study of these two fields.

Similarly, composers of the Baroque and Classical periods used art as an inspiration to compose. J.S. Bach was inspired by painting and architecture. The term

¹⁴ Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *Art and music in Venice: from the Renaissance to Baroque*. (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2013), 118.

¹⁵ <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/2287#.WVQcndMrIQE>, accessed on June 28, 2017

¹⁶ Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Le Feu* (Paris: Editions des Syrtes, 2000), 16, (English trans.: *The Flame* [Great Britain: Quartet Books, 1991], 9).

¹⁷ Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *Art and music in Venice: from the Renaissance to Baroque*.(Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2013), 16.

Arabesque was first applied to architecture and painting to describe an ornamental frieze or border, which has complex figurations and curlicues.¹⁸ (Figure. 3)



Figure. 3 *Arabesque* Pattern

Bach applied this design in his music with: the contrapuntal decoration of a basic theme; an elaboration by *gruppetti* and scale figures; a rapidly changing series of harmonies which decorate.¹⁹ An example of musical *Arabesque* can be found in Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV147.²⁰ (Ex. 1) In the score, a trumpet doubles the soprano line, and add a trill in measure 16 as an ornament for the basic theme. Three string parts are decorating the theme with different rhythmic patterns that create different layers of sound. This music texture is similar to what we see in *Arabesque* (Figure 3) – different types of curvy patterns are added onto the plain surface, which creates a three-dimensional effect.

¹⁸ Stanley Sadie, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. Vol. 1. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 512.

¹⁹ Stanley Sadie, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. Vol. 1. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 512.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 512.

The image displays a musical score for Johann Sebastian Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV 14, specifically the chorale 'Jesus bleibet meine Freude'. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains the instrumental parts: C Tpt (C Trumpet), Vln. I (Violin I), Vln. II (Violin II), and Vla. (Viola). The second system contains the vocal parts: S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), B (Bass), and BC (Bassoon). The lyrics for the vocal parts are: 'mei - nes Her - zens Trost und'. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. The number '6' is written below the BC staff at the end of the excerpt.

Ex.1 Bach, cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV14, Chorale: 'Jesus bleibet meine Freude', mm. 13- 16

19th and 20th century

Throughout the history of art, both music and painting developed in similar ways: from strict sacred religious works to secular topical works; from realistic (or programmatic works) to the abstract (or conceptual). Many Western musical terms are related to periods found in art, such as Romanticism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Minimalism, and Modernism.

Romanticism (in the 19th century) turned painters' and musicians' attention to nature, landscapes, and individuality, as opposed to the Enlightenment goals of seeking mankind's destiny through the power of reason. While paintings of landscapes became a favored genre, musical compositions featured the beauty of nature and imitated sounds of water, wind, and the ocean. Major painters of this style include: J. M. W. Turner, Caspar

David Friedrich and John Constable. Major composers include Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann.

One painting that represents the spirit of Romanticism is Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Mist*, 1818 (Figure 4). The purpose of this painting is to convey a feeling, rather than depicting the objects, themselves. In this painting, a young man is standing on a mountain top holding a walking stick, looking at the sea mist in front of him. Neither the sea nor the mountains have been painted in detail. The dense sea mist possibly disrupts the wanderer's view, which heightens the already problematic relationship between the limits of a human point of view and natural vastness being confronted.²¹

²¹ Julian Jason Haladyn, "Friedrich's 'Wanderer': Paradox of the Modern Subject." *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 41, no. 1, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43855855>, 2016), 47.



Figure 4. Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Mist* (1818)

Similarly, Franz Liszt's work *Vallée d'Obermann* (Obermann's Valley) is inspired by the concept of a hero,²² and describes a hero overwhelmed and confused by nature, suffering from ennui and longing.²³ This piece is cast in the key of E minor, marked *Lento assai*, which conveys sadness and uncertainty. The opening melody (mm. 1-8) in the left hand is constructed with two descending scalar gestures which are connected by a diminished fourth interval. The line conveys a lament like quality and the feeling of loneliness. (Ex. 2)

²²Franz Liszt's work *Vallée d'Obermann* (Obermann's Valley) from *Première année: Suisse* was inspired by Senancour's novel of the same title.

²³ Kenneth Hamilton, "Liszt's early and Weimar piano works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005), 68.

Lento assai

L.H. melody

sotto voce
p

Ex. 2 Liszt, *Vallée d'Obermann*, mm. 1-14

Liszt's composition *Sposalizio* (Marriage) from the second volume of *Années de pèlerinage* was inspired by Raphael's oil painting *the Marriage of the Virgin* (1504).

(Figure 5)



Figure 5. Raphael, *Marriage of the Virgin* (1504)

This painting depicts the marriage ceremony between Mary and Joseph in front of a temple. The facial expressions of people in the painting are peaceful. The temple is in the center of the picture, which creates a solemn atmosphere.

Sposalizio not only refers to the title of the painting, but also represents the subject of the painting.²⁴ “Liszt apparently felt that Raphael’s intimate betrothal scene, leaving impressions, say, of tenderness and ardor, suggested feelings similar to those he thought his composition would convey.”²⁵ For example, in the *Più lento* section (Ex. 3), the *ppp* dynamic and static harmonic progression creates a mood of serenity.

Ex. 3 Liszt, *Sposalizio*, mm. 38 - 47

A later piece by Liszt, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* (The Fountains of the Villa d'Este), from the third volume of *Années de pèlerinage* was inspired by a water fountain that was located in the terraced hillside Italian Renaissance garden in Tivoli, near Rome (Figure 6). At the beginning of the piece, the repeated ascending figure in the upper register imitates the sound of water. (Ex. 4)

²⁴Joan Backus, "Liszt's "Sposalizio": A Study in Musical Perspective." *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 2 (doi:10.2307/746740, 1988), 173.

²⁵ Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York, 1984), 188.



Figure 6. *Villa d'Este*

Ex. 4 Liszt, *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, mm. 1 – 5

Both Friedrich's painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* and Franz Liszt's music from *Années de pèlerinage* represent the style of Romanticism, in which the natural world is realized, and the individual is elevated to the role of hero.

Impressionism primarily refers to painting. After Monet's *Impression: soleil levant* exhibited in Paris in 1874, critic Le charivari called him an *impressionist* painter.²⁶ The intention of so-called *impressionist* painters is to present the effects of light and color in such a way that sharp outlines were avoided.²⁷ Similarly, musicians such as Claude Debussy were inspired by this painting trend. In Debussy's music, the ambiguity of harmonic function and subject derived from nature made him known as an *impressionistic* composer.²⁸

²⁶ Stanley Sadie, *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. Vol. 9. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁸ Debussy personally did not agree with this label. Debussy claimed to identify more strongly with the symbolist movement associated with literature of the period.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, composers in Paris began to look for new ways of composing, and collaborating with artists. The social life in Paris was enjoyable and the arts flourished. Composers such as Claude Debussy brought image and color together in their musical compositions. Debussy's music transcends the piano's limitations to create pictures, images, and illusions.²⁹ His piano work *L'isle joyeuse* was inspired by Antoine Watteau's painting *L'embarquement pour Cythère* (The Embarkation for Cythera) (Figure 7). According to Paul Roberts, "The publisher's small print tucked away inside identifies the painting as Watteau's *L'embarquement pour Cythère* – 'the source of Debussy's inspiration for '*L'isle joyeuse*'".³⁰



Figure 7. Watteau, *L'embarquement pour Cythère* (1717)

²⁹ Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*. (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

In the painting, the flying Jupiter and the boat indicate that the couples in the painting are about to travel to a happy island. Debussy also describes the excitement and happiness of a trip to the joyful island with his lover. In the beginning of his piece, a trill crescendos into a group of fast running thirty-second notes. This pattern repeats five times in measures 1-5 in different registers, which provides the exciting mood as if he and his lover see the boat approaching and cannot wait to get on board. (Ex. 5)

The image shows a musical score for the first seven measures of Debussy's 'L'isle joyeuse'. The score is written for piano and is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It begins with a piano introduction marked 'PIANO' and 'p'. The first measure features a trill in the right hand, which then transitions into a series of fast thirty-second notes. This pattern repeats in different registers. The tempo is marked 'Tempo: Modéré et très souple'. Dynamics include 'p', 'f', 'sfz', and 'pp'. The score is divided into three systems, with the first system containing measures 1-2, the second system containing measures 3-4, and the third system containing measures 5-7.

Ex. 5 Debussy, *L'isle joyeuse*, mm. 1-7

Debussy's prelude *Feux d'artifice* (Fireworks) from the second book of Preludes depicts the annual mid-July celebrations on Bastille Day, and was partially inspired by an 1875 painting by James Abbott McNeil Whistler entitled *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* that Debussy saw in London. (Figure 8)



Figure 8. Whistler, *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1875)

Whistler himself was interested in crossing the boundaries between visual art and music. He socialized with musicians including Debussy and Arthur Sullivan, and used musical titles such as *Nocturne*, *Symphony*, *Variations*, *Harmony*, *Arrangement*, *Note*, *Scherzo*, *Bravura* and *Caprice* for his paintings.³¹

Expressionism, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was a movement initiated in the world of poetry and painting. The style focused on expressing subjective emotions and inner feelings rather than depicting objective reality. Painters would present

³¹ Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey, "Whistler's Nocturnes: A Case Study in Musical Modelling." *Music in Art* 35, no. 1/2 (2010), 72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41818607>.

an emotional experience in its most compelling form,³² through bold colors, distorted images and exaggerated objects. Similarly, in music, composers broke with conventional harmonic structure in favor of dissonance and atonality. In Arnold Schoenberg's song cycle *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), *Sprechstimme* was introduced as a new tool for increasing the intensity of the expression.³³

Other twentieth century composers, such as Alexander Scriabin and Olivier Messiaen claimed that they had a synesthetic sense, which gave them the ability to see or smell something specific when they hear particular sounds or keys. Later avant-garde composers such as John Cage and George Crumb explored new ways to connect music to visual arts, multi-media, computer programs and more. The next chapter will focus on Kandinsky, Schoenberg, Paul Klee, Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis and some other artists and composers, and their perspectives on connecting painting and music.

³² "Expressionism." *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia* (2017): 1p. 1. *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 7, 2017).

³³ *Pierrot Lunaire*, a landmark of Schoenberg's atonal piece. *Sprechstimme* is a term used by Schoenberg, which indicates that voice between singing and speaking, related to the operatic recitative.

Other Composers' Works in Perspective

“Colour is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer. The soul is the piano, with its many strings.”

– Wassily Kandinsky³⁴

Arnold Schoenberg and Wassily Kandinsky

For artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), color was directly translatable to sound, and this conviction grew through his friendship with the composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), whose mutual admiration is confirmed in their many letters to each other.

Schoenberg, the leader of the Second Viennese School, is known for his use of atonality and for inventing the twelve-tone compositional technique. His statements on the “emancipation” (and understanding) of dissonance in music were well-received by Kandinsky. In the first letter that Kandinsky wrote to Schoenberg in January 1911, he writes:

“I am certain that our own modern harmony is not to be found in the ‘geometric’ way, but rather in the anti-geometric, anti-logical way. And this way is that of ‘dissonances in art’, in painting, therefore, just as much as in music. And ‘today’s’ dissonance in painting and music is merely the consonance of ‘tomorrow’.”³⁵

Kandinsky and Schoenberg believed in the beauty of dissonance in art and expressed this understanding in their individual art forms. The atonality of Schoenberg’s *Three Piano*

³⁴ Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible deeds of music: art and music from Wagner to Cage*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 136.

³⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Jelena Hahl-Koch, and John C. Crawford, *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: letters, pictures, and documents*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 21.

Pieces, Op. 11, and Kandinsky's untitled first abstract watercolor and his essay "On the Spiritual in Art"³⁶ proved their appreciation of dissonance and abstraction.

During the second decade of the century, many of Schoenberg's works were not well-received by audiences. At the premier of *Chamber Symphony No. 1*, the audience clapped violently and jangled their keys during the performance. While Schoenberg may have been disappointed, he never reverted back to a traditional way of composition. In the same January letter, Kandinsky writes to express his support and admiration: "I have just heard your concert here and it has given me real pleasure . . . in your works, you have realized what I, albeit in uncertain form, have so greatly longed for in music."³⁷ Through an artist's perspective, Kandinsky understood Schoenberg's music and how these two art forms complemented each other.

Like Kandinsky, Schoenberg also painted. He presented his first exhibition of pictures in Vienna in 1910.³⁸ He invested more time in painting between 1906 and 1912, than he had previously. He produced numerous oil paintings, watercolors, and works for pen, pencil, crayon, graphite and charcoal.³⁹ Kandinsky categorized Schoenberg's paintings into two groups: the ones that represent nature (people, landscapes) and the ones that were intuitively felt or nonrepresentational. These included various portraits that Schoenberg entitled 'visions', the most well-known of which is probably *The Red*

³⁶ "On the Spiritual in Art" was Kandinsky's significant treatise about defending and promoting abstract art.

³⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Jelena Hahl-Koch, and John C. Crawford, *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: letters, pictures, and documents*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁹ Courtney S. Adams, "Artistic Parallels between Arnold Schoenberg's Music and Painting (1908-1912)." *College Music Symposium* 35 (1995): 5-21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40374266>.

Gaze (1910) (Figure 9). He likened the former to a five-finger exercise with no special importance and described the latter as an expression in non-musical form.⁴⁰

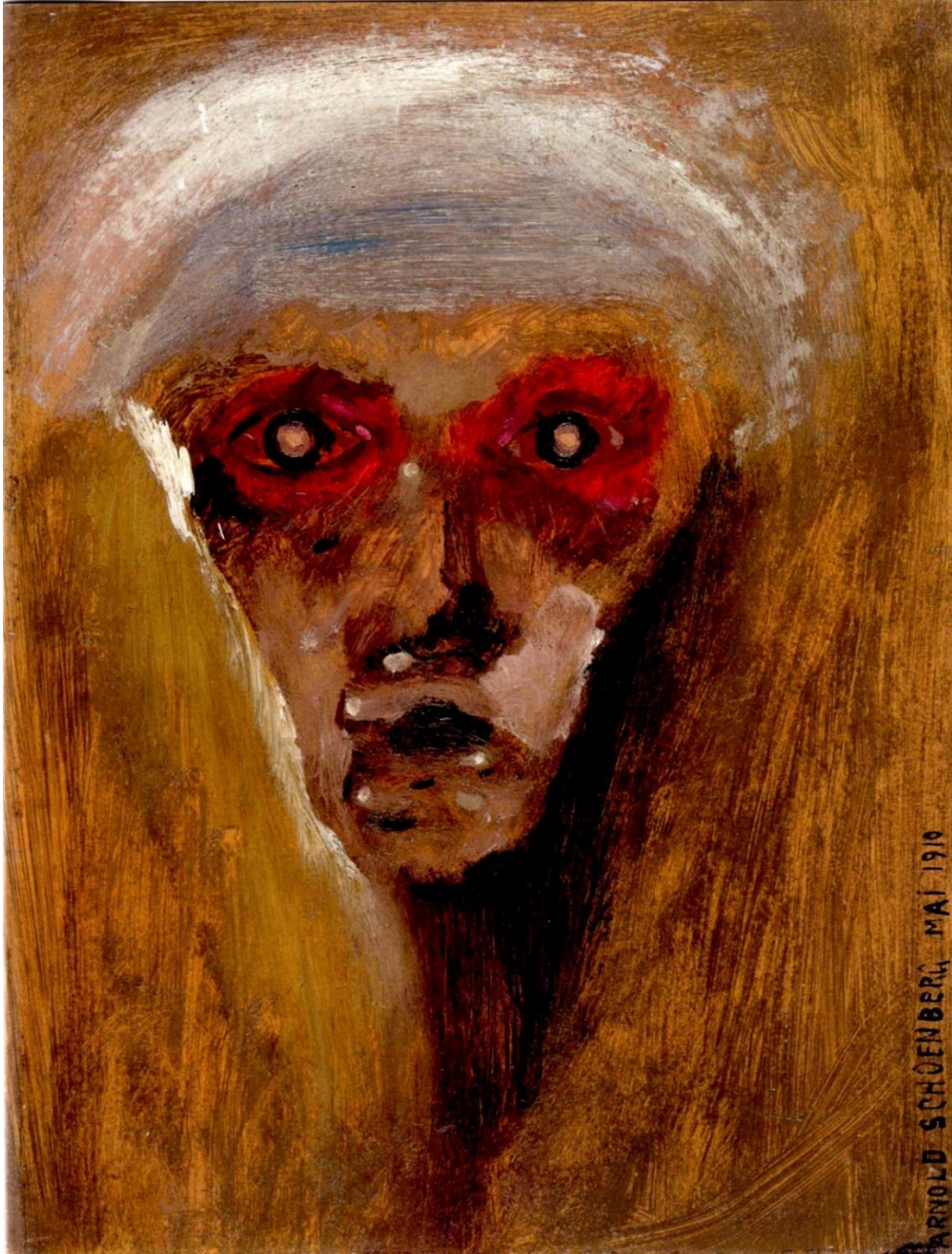


Figure 9. Schoenberg, *The Red Gaze* (1910)

⁴⁰ Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Jelena Hahl-Koch, and John C. Crawford, *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: letters, pictures, and documents*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 125.

Another experimental piece by Schoenberg is *Die glückliche Hand*, Op. 18 (*The Lucky Hand*), a drama with music. It has been argued that this work is in the spirit of Wagner's 'Gesamtkunstwerk', in that it combines and integrates music with text, visual effects, and art – all created by Schoenberg. The characters in this drama include a "MAN" (a baritone), two mimes (one woman and one man), and a chorus in *Sprechstimme* (six women and six men). Schoenberg began the libretto in 1907 and finished towards the end of June 1910. The music was written between September 1910 and November 1913. Non-musical elements are marked in the score as a part of the composition. He includes detailed stage directions, precisely indicating various lighting effects for certain acts. For instance, in the instruction of scene III, he writes:

"At first a gray-green light falls across the stage (only from behind). Later, when the grottos are illuminated, yellow-green light is cast from the front on to the rocks, and blue-violet light on to the ravine. As soon as the scene grows bright, the MAN is seen climbing out of the ravine. . . Just before the MAN has completely emerged from the ravine, one of the two grottos slowly grows bright, changing rather quickly from dark-violet to brown, red, blue and green. . ." ⁴¹

Schoenberg describes the intent of *Die glückliche Hand* as "making music with the media of the stage."⁴² All elements are to be used in a synchronized manner similar to the way a composer combines notes to achieve certain harmonies and impressions. In scene III, measures 125-153 He notates: "gleichzeitig mit diesem crescendo des windes geht ein crescendo der beleuchtung"⁴³ (simultaneously crescendo with both wind and lighting). This effect is often described as a "color crescendo" or "crescendo of light." While the scene begins with a dim red light, the colors change at indicated moments, passing from

⁴¹ Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Jelena Hahl-Koch, and John C. Crawford, *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: letters, pictures, and documents*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 95.

⁴² Joseph Henry Auner, *A Schoenberg reader: documents of a life*. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 82.

⁴³ Arnold Schoenberg, *Die glückliche Hand, Drama mit Musik. Op. 18*. Auszug mit Text für zwei Klaviere zu vier Händen von Eduard Steuermann, 1874-1951. (Wien, New York: Universal Edition, 1923), 21.

blood red to bright yellow. Much like the “text painting” in German lieder extending all the way back to Schubert or Schumann, this “crescendo of light” represents the progress of the MAN’s pain.⁴⁴ It is obvious that color as a non-musical factor plays a significant role in Schoenberg’s musical work.

In *Die glückliche Hand*, much attention has been given to the influence of color (lighting), text within the musical score, and *Leitmotif*. In the article *Die glückliche hand: Schoenberg’s Gesamtkunstwerk*, John Crawford creates a comparison table of “Color versus Psychical Effect /Instrumental Equivalent” based on the same table found in Kandinsky’s essay *On the Spiritual in Art*. (Figure 10)

Color	BASED ON KANDINSKY, <i>ÜBER DAS GEISTIGE IN DER KUNST</i> , pp. 76 ff.		BASED ON SCHOENBERG, <i>DIE GLÜCKLICHE HAND</i> , mm. 125-153	
	Psychical Effect	Instrumental Equivalent	Color	Instrumental Equivalent
black	“eternal silence without future or hope”	“a completely final rest”	black	
gray	“motionlessness which is hopeless”	none	reddish	

⁴⁴John Palmer, *Arnold Schoenberg Die glückliche Hand, 1-act drama, Op. 18*.

<http://www.allmusic.com/composition/die-gl%C3%BCckliche-hand-1-act-drama-op-18-mc0002416738>
Accessed on July 9, 2017.

TABLE II (Continued)				
brown	"inhibition"	none	brown	
green	"apathy and peace"	"peaceful, extended, medium range tones of the violin"	dirty green	Tempo slows; solo violin enters in a high range, marked "gedehnt" ("extended").
			blue-gray	
violet	"morbid . . . extinguished . . . sad"	"like the sound of the English horn, the oboe, and in the bass the deep tones of the woodwinds" (e. g., bassoon)	violet	Oboes, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon make H entries.
dark blue	Blue in general is "the typical heavenly color." Dark blue: "peaceful." Very dark blue: "non-human sadness."	"cello." As shade gets deeper, "the wonderful sounds of the double-bass, in deep, solemn form," like "the deep organ."		
light blue	"Becoming lighter . . . it takes on a more indifferent character."	"flute"		
"cold red" (turkey red), dark	"expectancy of a new energetic flaring-up, like something lying in wait" ready to make a "wild spring"	"middle and deeper tones of the cello, carrying an element of passion"		
"cold red," light	"youthful, pure joy, like a fresh young, completely pure image of a girl"	"higher, clear, singing tones of the violin," "little bells"		
vermillion	"Like an evenly glowing passion, a self-reliant strength."	"Like a tuba." "Can be compared with loud drum beats."	dark red	Accented ostinato figure in timpani and harp.

Schoenberg's Gesamtkunstwerk

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Figure 10. Comparison table of "Color versus Psychological Effect / Instrumental Equivalent"

Kandinsky believed the color 'black' to be akin to 'eternal silence without future or hope / a completely final rest'; the color 'violet' relates to 'morbid...extinguished...sad / like the sound of the English horn, the oboe, and in the bass the deep tones of the woodwinds'; the color 'light blue' corresponds to 'becoming lighter . . . it takes on a more indifferent character / flute' and so on.⁴⁵ As noted in *Die Glückliche Hand*, Schoenberg followed some of Kandinsky's rules regarding color/instrumental arrangements in that he orchestrated 'violet' to oboes, clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon and 'yellow' to trumpets and horns.⁴⁶

In the 1911 letter to Schoenberg, it was clear that atonal music shed light on Kandinsky's idea of abstraction. He writes: "I am certain that our own modern harmony

⁴⁵ John C. Crawford, "'Die Glückliche Hand': Schoenberg's 'Gesamtkunstwerk'." (*The Musical Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (1974): 583-601. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741766>), 586-587. Accessed on July 6, 2017.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 587.

is not to be found in the ‘geometric’ way, but rather in the anti-geometric, antilogical way, and this way is that of ‘dissonances in art’, in painting.”⁴⁷ Kandinsky was deeply inspired by a concert played by Schoenberg in Munich in 1911. He painted *Impression 3* soon after attending that concert. According to Klaus Kropfing, a Schoenberg and Kandinsky scholar, “the genuinely artistic repercussion of the Schoenberg concert is Kandinsky’s painting *Impression 3*.” In the picture, the oval spots of color at the bottom may suggest an audience sitting or standing by the wall; the large black form in the upper part of the painting a grand piano (Figure 11).⁴⁸



Figure 11. Kandinsky, *Impression 3* (1911)

⁴⁷Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky, Jelena Hahl-Koch, and John C. Crawford, *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: letters, pictures, and documents*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 21.

⁴⁸Konrad Boehmer, *Schönberg and Kandinsky: An Historic Encounter*. (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1997), 21.

In 1896, Kandinsky studied under Anton Azbe in Munich, and in 1900 went to the Munich Academy of Art to study with Franz von Stuck. From 1896 to 1909, landscapes were the primary subject of Kandinsky's paintings. His early painting styles include impressionism, pointillism, and fauvism,⁴⁹ however, the first painting that revealed his tendency towards abstraction was *The Blue Mountain* (1909) (Figure 12). Kandinsky uses color blocks to represent different objects: horses, faces, saddles, trees, mountains, and so on. Although the brush stroke technique (using dots to create the background) seems like a feature of impressionism, there are still clear outlines of each subject. This painting is somewhat more abstract than his earlier works; nothing is painted in detail and only shapes of color are presented in the picture. It is not surprising that this artwork by Kandinsky surfaced during the time that Schoenberg was exploring atonal composition. *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11 (1909) was composed in the same year as *The Blue Mountain*.

⁴⁹ Fauvism is the style of les Fauves (French for "the wild beasts"), a loose group of early twentieth-century modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism. While Fauvism as a style began around 1900 and continued beyond 1910, the movement as such lasted only a few years, 1904–1908, and had three exhibitions. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fauvism>. Accessed on July 9, 2017.

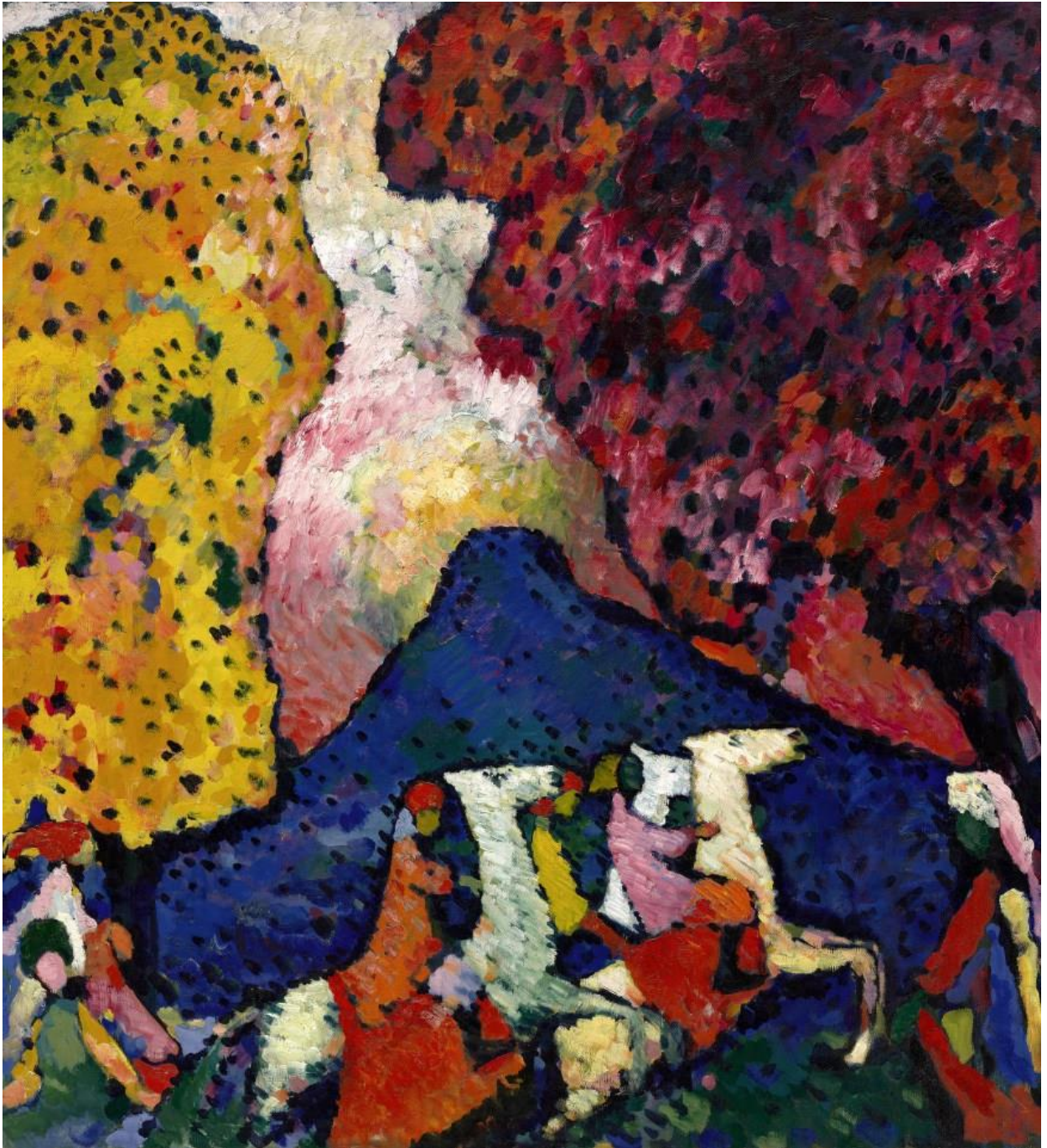


Figure 12. Kandinsky, *The Blue Mountain* (1908-1909)

Though many scholars have offered detailed analyses for the three movements of *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11 (Mässig, Mässig, and Bewegt), these analyses are hard to understand for listeners who are non-musicians. Knowing that the first movement is in ABA form and that the first and second movements use pedal tones in the bass line do

not encourage listener appreciation for Schoenberg's ideas. By contrast, linking paintings to this music might help create a better understanding of its meaning. The famous expressionist paintings *The Scream* by Edvard Munch (Figure 13) or *Composition VII* by Kandinsky could be seen as closely related to the mood of the third movement of Op. 11. In *The Scream*, the unrealistic color of the sky, the distorted background, and the shocked facial expression of the figure convey extremely intense expression.

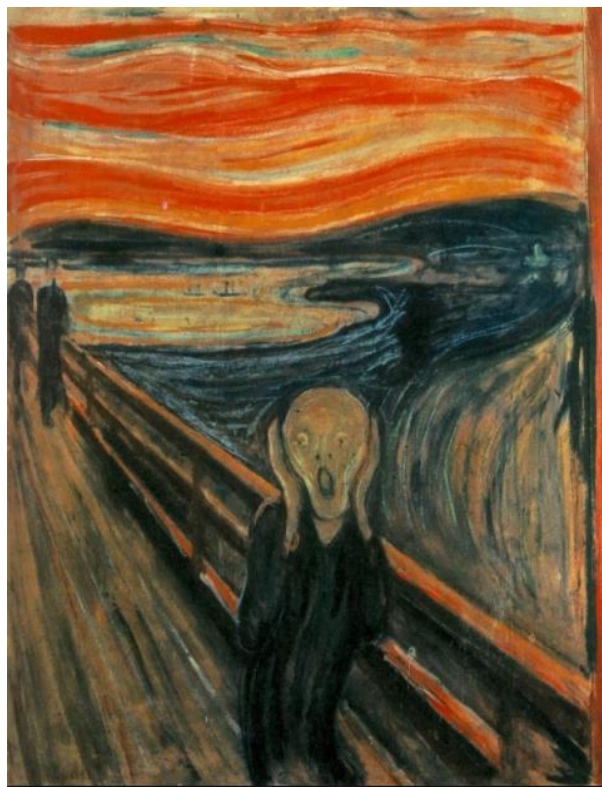


Figure 13. Munch, *The Scream* (1893)

The image displays a musical score for Schoenberg's 'Bewegte' from 'Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11, No. 3'. The score is in 8/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a 'Bewegte' tempo marking. The music is characterized by dense, dissonant chords and complex rhythmic patterns. Dynamics include 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'f' (forte). The second system continues the piece with similar complexity, featuring 'ff' and 'fff' (fortississimo) dynamics. The score is written for piano with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Ex. 6 Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces, III–Bewegte*, Op. 11, mm. 1 -3

In Schoenberg's *Bewegte*, the music starts off with *ff* dynamic and dissonant chords, evoking violence and anxiety. (Ex. 6) This musical mood matches the distorted facial expression in *The Scream*. What is more, the rhythmic complexity in the music is similar to the busy and abstract pattern in Kandinsky's *Composition VII*. (Figure 14)



Figure 14. Kandinsky, *Composition VII* (1913)

For the first two movements of Schoenberg's Op. 11, Picasso's *The Blue Room* (Figure 15) and Kandinsky's *Several Circle*, 1926 (Figure 16) would seem to present similar parallels. In *The Blue Room*, the picture depicts a private scene of a young woman bathing in her bedroom. The cool hue of blue suggests a quiet and cold feeling. Similarly, in the first movement of Schoenberg's Op. 11, a descending single melody line stands out with limited accompaniment, as if describing the woman standing in the center of the room. (Ex. 7) The texture of the music is lighter compared to the third movement. Likewise, *The Blue Room* is less complicated than Kandinsky's *Composition VII*.



Ex. 7 Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces, I – Mässig*, Op. 11, mm. 1-4



Figure 15. Picasso, *The Blue Room* (1901)

Kandinsky's *Several Circle* presents an abstract painting with colorful circles on a black background. These circles can be compared to musical notes playing over an

ostinato bass line, which can be found in Schoenberg's second movement of Op. 11. (Ex.

8)

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Mässig' from Schoenberg's 'Three Piano Pieces, II', Op. 11, measures 1-3. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The time signature is 12/8. The tempo is marked 'Mässig' with a musical note icon. The dynamics are marked 'pp' (pianissimo) in the first measure and 'pp' in the second measure. The tempo is marked 'rit.' (ritardando) in the third measure. The bass line is an ostinato pattern of eighth notes, starting on G2 and moving up stepwise to D3. The treble line is mostly silent in the first measure, then enters in the second measure with a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G3 and moving up stepwise to D4. The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines.

Ex. 8 Schoenberg, *Three Piano Pieces, II – Mässig*, Op. 11, mm. 1-3



Figure 16. Kandinsky, *Several Circle* (1926)

The years 1911-1914 are known as the “Blue Rider” period for Kandinsky.⁵⁰ The “Blue Rider” was a union of artists, founded by Wassily Kandinsky, Alexej von Jawlensky, Marianne von Werefkin, Franz Marc, and others. They believed in the promotion of modern art and the connection between visual art and music. Their movement is associated with the birth of abstraction.⁵¹ During this period, Kandinsky’s paintings became more fully abstract, using large colored blocks, and expressive,

⁵⁰ The Blue Rider (Der Blaue Reiter) was a group of artists joined with a number of Russian emigrants, including Wassily Kandinsky, Alexej von Jawlensky, Marianne von Werefkin, and native German artists, such as Franz Marc, August Macke and Gabriele Münter.

⁵¹ Hilton Kramer, 2003. "The 'Blue Rider' imbroglio." *New Criterion* no. 4: 68. *Literature Resource Center*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 9, 2017).

geometric patterns and lines. As Kandinsky was inspired by music, he has his own three distinctive titles for paintings –*Impression*, *Improvisation*, and *Composition*. For instance, the painting *Composition VIII* includes contrasting colors and shapes similar to musical symbols and instruments (Figure 17). The similar artistic concepts found in the works of both Schoenberg and Kandinsky, it is hard to deny the strong connections between music and painting.

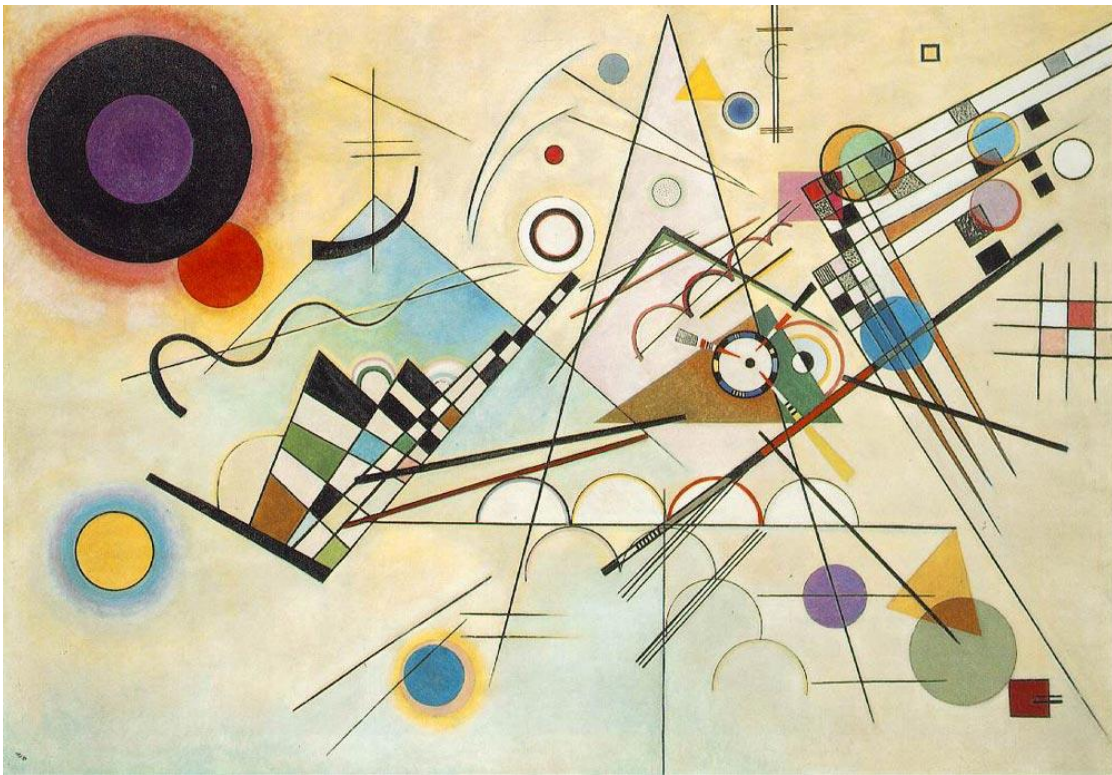


Figure 17. Kandinsky, *Composition VIII* (1923)

Paul Klee as an artist

Paul Klee (1879-1940), another visual artist, was a contemporary of Kandinsky and Schoenberg. He was born into a musical family - his father was a German music teacher and his mother a Swiss singer. Klee began violin lessons at the age of seven. He was so talented and adept at playing the violin that he, extraordinarily, became a member

of the Bern Music Association at the age of eleven, following his father's path to becoming a musician. However, after a few years of music study, he realized that although he loved music, his primary passion lay in visual art. In 1900, Klee went to the Art Academy in Munich to study with Franz Stuck, Kandinsky's teacher. Between 1902 and 1906, Klee worked in Bern as a graphic artist and musician. He taught pupils in both painting and violin, he wrote music and penned occasional articles as a theatre critic for local newspapers. Klee continued his musical career as a violinist in the Bern Symphony and other Swiss musical organizations in his spare time.⁵² His deep artistic roots in painting and music make him a prime example of musical and artistic creativity within one person. His career as a painter always overlapped with his career as a musician. Rainer Maria Rilke, the Bohemian-Austrian poet and novelist, writes about Klee in 1921, "Even if you hadn't told me he plays the violin, I would have guessed that on many occasions his drawings were transcriptions of music."⁵³

It should be noted that Klee himself, early on, was against drawing analogies between the arts, especially between music and painting.⁵⁴ Andrew Kagan, a Klee scholar, believes: "His [Klee] musical heritage was virtually sacred to him, something in which he believed almost unreservedly."⁵⁵ It could be for this reason that he wanted to avoid or deny the link between music and painting, however, it was not easy for him to completely separate the two. As a first year student in Munich, Klee lamented the fact that he had to say "goodbye to literature and music . . . to love music above everything means to be

⁵² Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 15.

⁵³ Enric Jardí, *Paul Klee*. (London: Academic Editions, 1991), 8.

⁵⁴ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 21.

⁵⁵ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 21.

unhappy”.⁵⁶ Since he had an equal passion and love for music and visual art, becoming a painter was not at first an easy or certain choice. Later Klee stated: “During the third winter [in Munich] I even realized that I probably never would learn to paint. . . I have always been on good terms only with music.”⁵⁷ Music was a major source of solace for him. It was only in 1905 that he was willing to acknowledge the link between painting and music. He states: “More and more parallels between music and graphic art force themselves upon my consciousness. Yet no analysis is successful. Certainly both arts are temporal; this could be proved easily.”⁵⁸ After 1905, Klee’s works increasingly used musical terminology to describe and even title his paintings, such as “bass notes” (dark tones), and “improvising freely on the chromatic keyboard of the rows of watercolor cups.”⁵⁹ In 1911 he met Kandinsky, who gradually brightened his outlook on art, and his painting career subsequently became more successful. Klee finally declared in 1914 “Color and I are one. I am a painter. . . One deserts the realm of the here and now to transfer one’s activity into a realm beyond where total affirmation is possible.”⁶⁰

In Klee’s art, a clear example of a rhythmic sense is his 1920 oil painting *Camel* (in *Rhythmic Landscape with Trees*) (Figure 18). In it, there is a combination of colorful and graphical elements similar to musical content; circles and lines indicate trees, which at the same time can be seen as musical notes; the horizontal lines are similar to staves; and, the different sizes of the circles suggest the layers of trees or the duration of the

⁵⁶ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

musical note.⁶¹ Because of this play with perceptions (a piece of visual art similar to a music score), this painting can almost be “heard.”



Figure 18. Klee, *Camel* (1920)

Another example of this type of “synchronized” painting is *Three-part Time/Quartered* from 1930 (Figure 19), which Klee painted ten years after *Camel*. In it, the musical content is also about rhythm. His solid music theory background provided the idea of using black, grey, and white to present a triple meter rhythmic pattern. The beat

⁶¹ Paul Klee: Painting "Camel in Rhythmic Landscape with Trees" (1920)

<http://www.artmundi.com/en/artwork/bild-kamel-in-rhythmischer-baumlandschaft-1920-847108.html>
accessed on July 16, 2017.

value of the “one-two-three” pattern is clearly demonstrated by the “dark-medium-light” pattern, in that the downbeats are dark (a strong and definitive color) and the softest beats are lighter in color. Overall, the content of this painting is more conceptual than *Camel*, with a strong link between the pictorial figure and an implied musical idea.

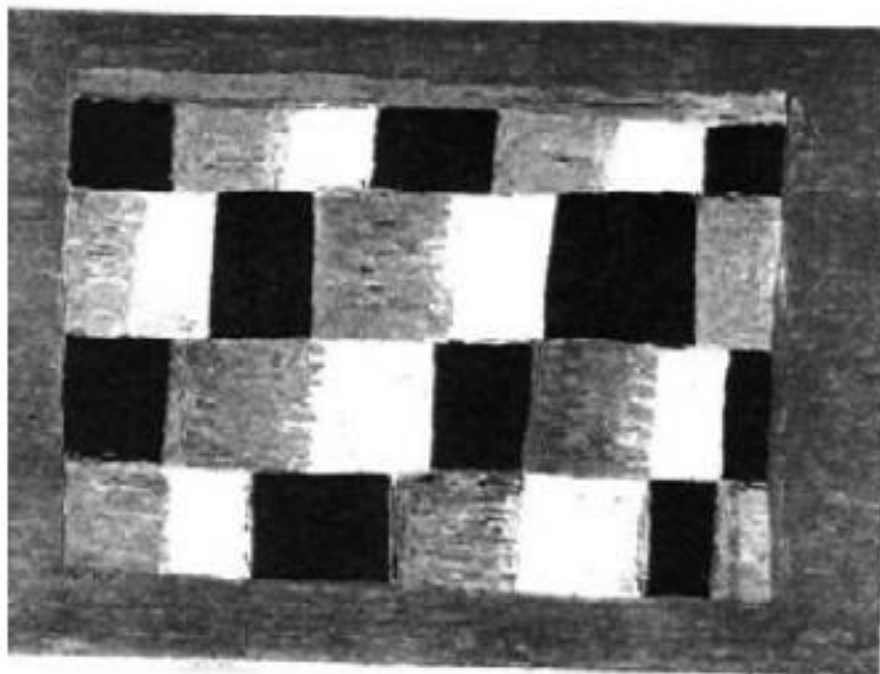


Figure 19. Klee, *Three-part Time/Quartered* (1930)

These two conceptual paintings show the strong musical thinking of Klee, albeit portrayed through colors and lines. Music for him was “a love bewitched”, and he was more interested in music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than in contemporary music.⁶² Two of his painting styles, “polyphonic” and “operatic”, are influenced by and derived from two of his favorite composers, Bach and Mozart.

Klee’s approach to his “polyphonic” painting style is guided by his knowledge of canon and counterpoint. Colored rectangles are one of the patterns that frequently appear

⁶² Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 22.

in his paintings from 1914 to 1920. He believed that those rectangular units were similar to musical notes: “a basic building block that itself has no special meaning” until the artist puts them in order.⁶³ Examples of this technique appear in *Mount Niesen – Egyptian Night* (1915), *Once Emerged from the Gray of Night* (1918), and *With the Green Rectangle* (1919) (Figure 20). In fact, in the painting *With the Green Rectangle*, there are only blocks of color units, making “color” the theme of the work.

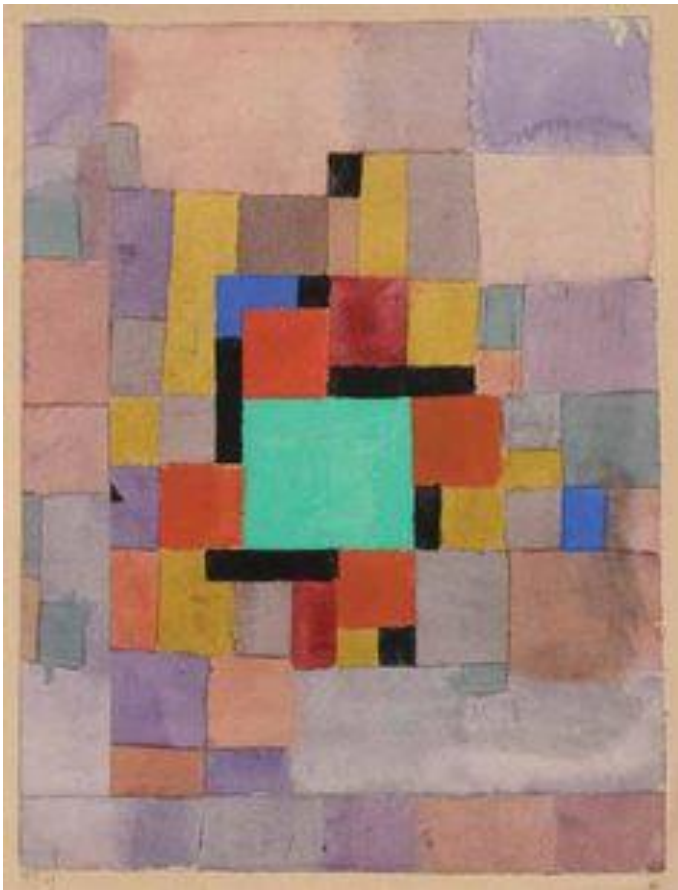


Figure 20. Klee, *With the Green Rectangle* (1919)

Klee’s polyphonic painting concept developed from this idea of a “color theme,” using color units as basic patterns to convey a musical message.⁶⁴ He also overlapped

⁶³ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁴ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 58-77

colors and intersected rectilinear color planes. *Fugue in Red* (1921) demonstrates the idea of overlapping color shapes (Figure 21). In the painting, different shapes can be interpreted to mean different voices, and the colors fading and overlapping create a movement of two-dimensional floating similar to the way time passes in music.



Figure 21. Klee, *Fugue in Red* (1921)

Klee believed that the concept of overlapping, transparent, or rectilinear planes presented the definition of pictorial polyphony.⁶⁵ The *Three-Part Polyphony* (Figure 22) and *Five-Part Polyphony* (Figure 23) from his notebooks illustrate his understanding about polyphony in painting. If one compares the two pictures, the main difference lies in

⁶⁵ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 80.

the number and layering of patterns (with the number of layers representing the number of voices). In *Three-Part Polyphony*, there are three patterns: thin horizontal lines, thin vertical lines, and grey shadows:

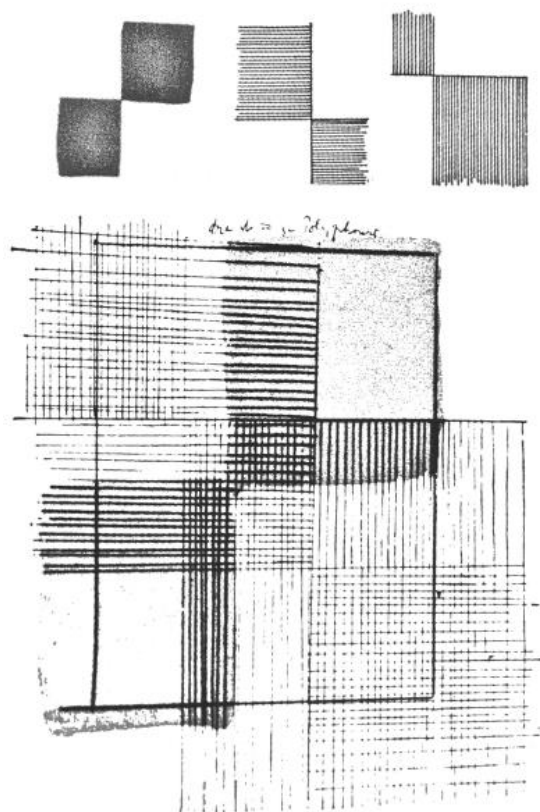


Figure 22. Klee, *Three-Part Polyphony* (1921-1922)

Five-Part Polyphony includes overlapping squares, thin horizontal lines, thin vertical lines, bold cross lines, and blank space.

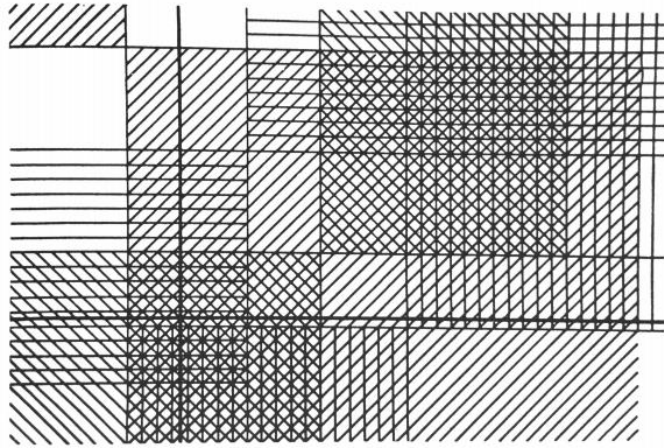


Figure 23. Klee, *Five-Part Polyphony* (1929-1930) ⁶⁶

Polyphonic Setting for White (1930) is a watercolor painting that demonstrates many of Klee's polyphony painting techniques (Figure 24). It combines rectangle color units, overlapping layers of color, and rectilinear color planes all together in one work.

⁶⁶ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 80-81.

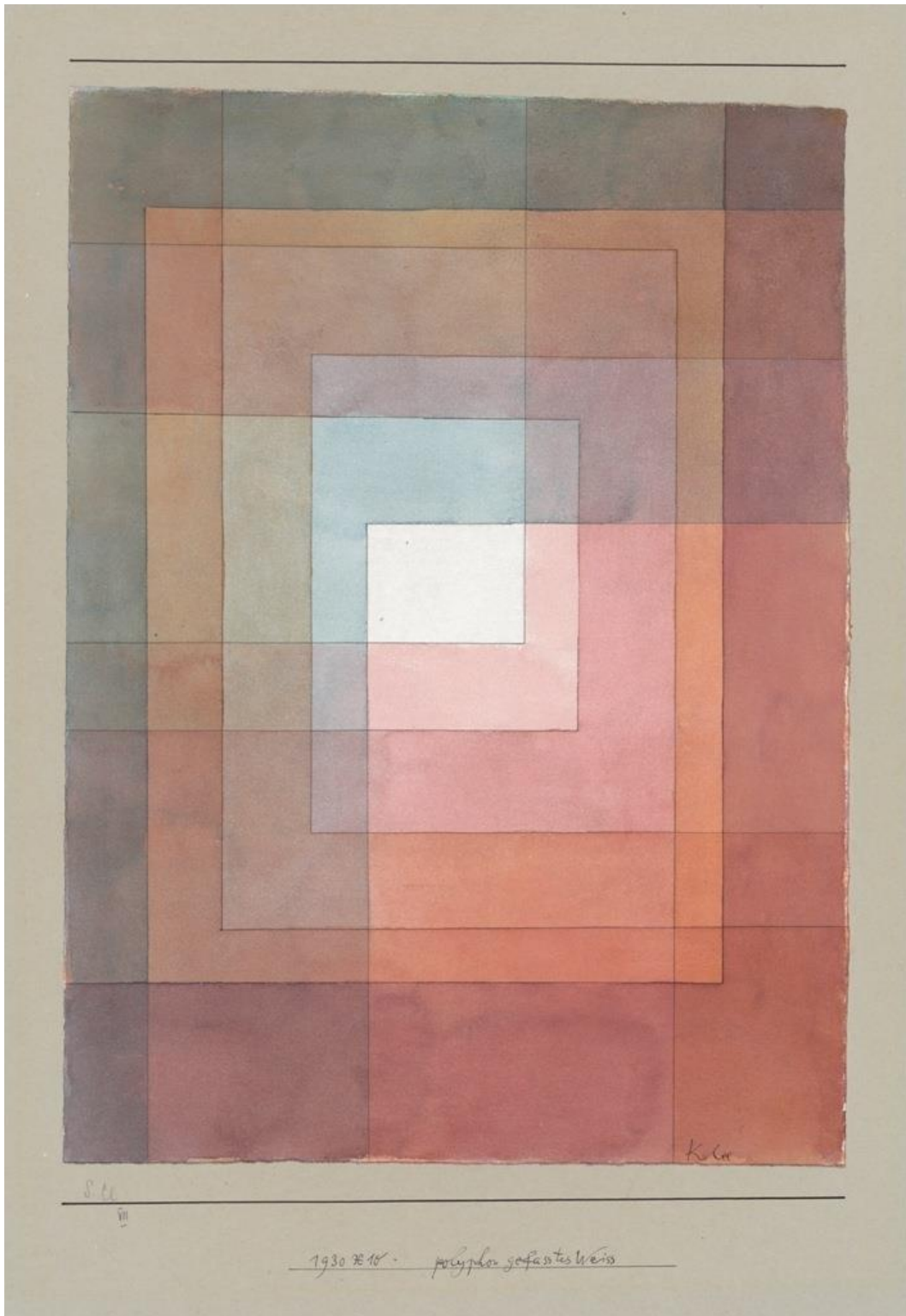


Figure 24. Klee, *Polyphonic Setting for White* (1930)

Another of Klee's musical painting genres is operatic painting. This type of painting is conceptual and abstract, with the subject of the painting somehow reflecting the scene of an opera. One of his most famous operatic paintings is *The Bavarian Don Giovanni* (1919) (Figure 25), which is based on the story of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, Klee's favorite opera (and one which he knew well).⁶⁷ In the painting, a figure climbs the ladder in the middle (which may represent Klee himself) surrounded by five color units, each containing the name of a woman. This is "an allusion to the operatic scene in which Don Giovanni's servant Leporello recites a list of his master's 2,065 love affairs."⁶⁸ Some of the names have been identified; Emma and Theres refer to Emma Carelli and Therese Rothauser, women with whom he had liaisons during his time in Munich.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 98.

⁶⁸ Nancy Spector, *Paul Klee-The Bavarian Don Giovanni*, <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2131>, accessed on July 17, 2017.

⁶⁹ *Ibd*, accessed on July 17, 2017.



Figure 25. Klee, *The Bavarian Don Giovanni* (1919)

Klee was a prolific artist who produced over nine thousand pictorial works and over three thousand pages of published and unpublished writings.⁷⁰ The paintings and genres previously mentioned are only a small sample of his style. Some of his paintings look like musical scores and convey sound, while others convey a musical concept such as rhythm. Gunther Schuller, Hans Werner Henze, Sandor Veresz, David Diamond,

⁷⁰ Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee/art & music*. (n.p.: Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1983), 19.

Giselher Klebe, and Peter Maxwell Davies, among others, composed musical works based on Klee's paintings. For instance, *Five Klee Pictures, per orchestra op. 12* by Davies, and *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee* by Schuller, are based on Klee's *Twittering Machine* (1922). Because of his background as a painter, musician, poet, and theorist, Klee is one of the most significant contributors to any discussion of the intersection of the worlds of music and art. In his approach to abstract polyphonic and operatic paintings, he contributed further to the development of connecting music, text, and painting.

Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis

Although Klee's works illustrate a strong connection between painting and music, he did not compose musical works alongside his own paintings. However, the late nineteenth century Lithuanian painter, composer, and writer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) was equally proficient at painting and musical composition. He regularly used a single idea for both a painting and a piece of music. Although not well known by many scholars, Čiurlionis painted and composed no less than three hundred paintings and an equal number of musical compositions. His "sonata paintings" are a characteristic genre of his, connecting his musical works to his paintings. This connection can be seen clearly in his painting *Sonatas of the Sea* (1908), which corresponds to his three-movement musical composition *The Sea* for solo piano.

Sonatas of the Sea is made up of three panels: "Allegro", "Andante", and "Finale." The texture and melodic lines of the music reflect the images and moods of these nearly abstract paintings. In the first painting, we can see many waves, and the outline of a seagull on the left side of the picture. (Figure 26) These objects are mirrored in the music

that Čiurlionis composed in the same year (1908). In the opening of the first movement, the very low bass line suggests the depth of the ocean; the interval of a fourth and octaves, the broadness of the ocean. The dotted rhythms and the thirty-second notes in the right hand portray the waves. Later, octaves in the right hand in a higher register might imply a seagull flying over the water. (Ex. 9)



Figure 26. Čiurlionis, *Sonatas of the Sea –Allegro* (1908)

МОРЕ
Цикл пейзажей

ЯЧ op. 28, №№ 1-3
ВЛ № 317

I

Moderato

The musical score consists of five systems of music. The first system is marked 'Moderato' and 'pp'. The second system is marked 'p' and includes dynamic markings 'Red.', '* Red.', and 'dim.'. The third system is marked 'mp' and includes 'Red.' and 'Red. sim.'. The fourth system is marked 'mp' and includes 'Red.'. The fifth system is marked 'mp' and includes 'Red.'. A green box highlights a passage in the right hand of the third system.

Ex. 9 Čiurlionis, *The Sea – Allegro*, Op. 28, mm. 1-8

In the second painting, *Andante*, a hand is holding a boat and there is a hint that there are people in the foreground of the picture. In the background two light streams cast over the sea from a distance. (Figure 27) Likewise, the music is very mysterious. The “pp” descending line in the higher register mimics the light cast over the sea, and the left hand repeated chords marked “tenuto” convey a sense of steadiness, which depicts the foreground of the hand holding the boat. (Ex. 10)



Figure 27. Čiurlionis, *Sonatas of the Sea – Andante* (1908)

II

Andante

Ex. 10 Čiurlionis, *The Sea* – Andante, Op. 28, mm. 1- 9

In the third painting, *Finale*, huge waves are ready to overtake small boats. It is very dramatic, with turbulence overwhelming the boats in the painting. (Figure 28)

Similarly, the music is quite intense, with many syncopated rhythms between the hands and fast descending lines, recreating the stormy scene of the painting. (Ex. 11)

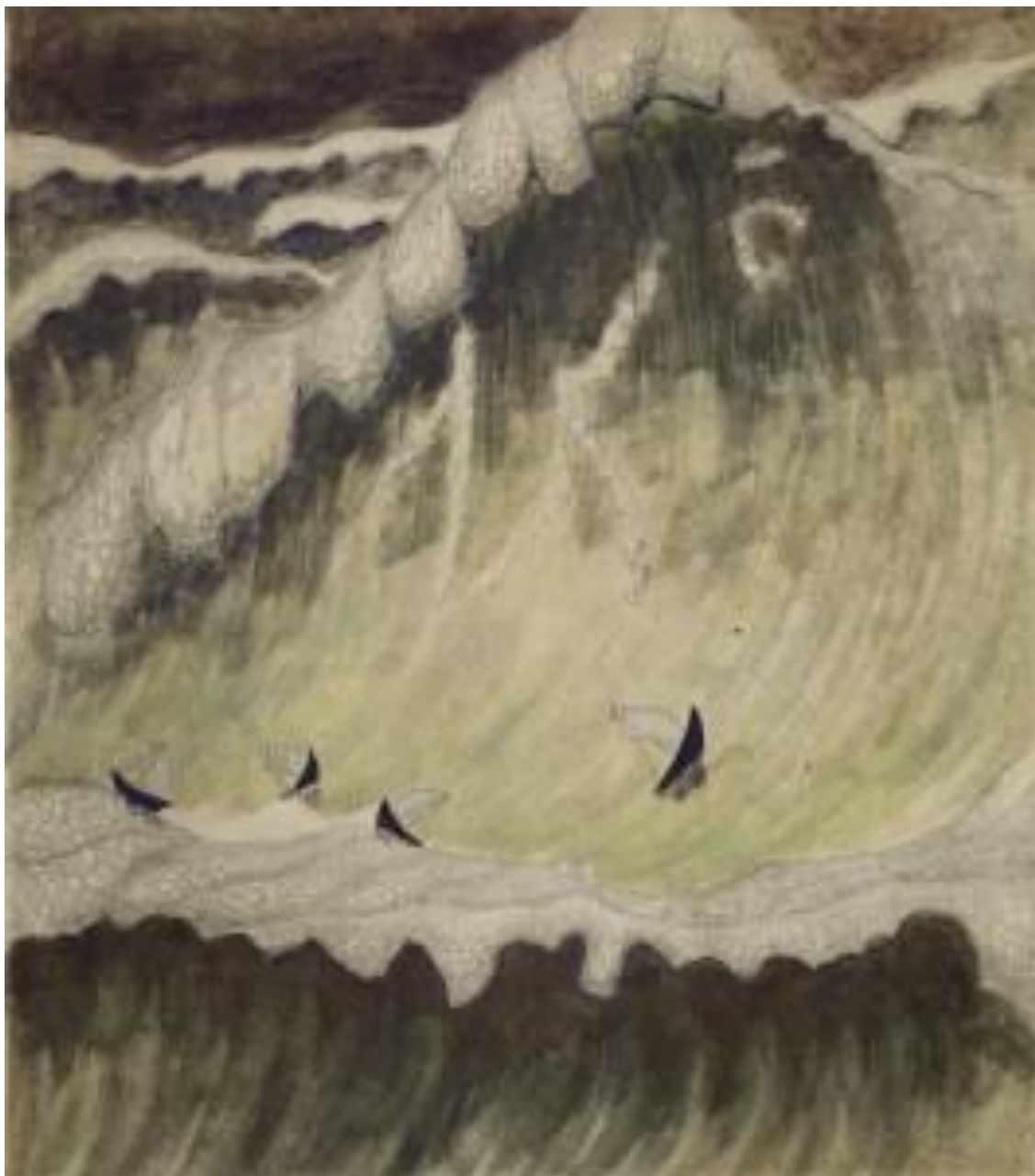


Figure 28. Čiurlionis, *Sonatas of the Sea – Finale* (1908)

III

Allegro impetuoso

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system is in 4/4 time, starting with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The second system includes a ritardando sul basso (red. sul basso) marking and a blue box highlighting a passage in the right hand. The third system features a diminuendo (dim.) marking and a blue box highlighting a passage in the right hand. The score concludes with a Fine (Fin.) marking.

Ex. 11 Čiurlionis, *The Sea* – *Allegro impetuoso*, Op. 28, mm. 1-5

Others

Other artist-musicians worth mentioning include Czech painter and graphic artist Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957) and Austrian composer Josef Matthias Hauer (1883-1959). Kupka played an important role in the abstract art movement and in Cubism. His oil painting, *Nocturne* (1911) and *Piano Keys—Lake* (1909), are demonstrative examples of the artistic link between music and painting. In *Piano Keys – Lake* (Figure 29), a piano keyboard appears at the bottom of the picture while a crowd of people, a boat, and water occupy the rest of the painting. Kupka uses rectangular color blocks to represent the

piano keys and the reflection of the trees on water, which naturally mingles with the keyboard. Upon closer inspection, one can identify a hand playing an A major chord on the right side of the keyboard, as if creating sound to accompany the activities on the lakeshore. This picture evokes the simultaneous relationships between musical and visual elements, with different perceptions corresponding in a single moment.⁷¹

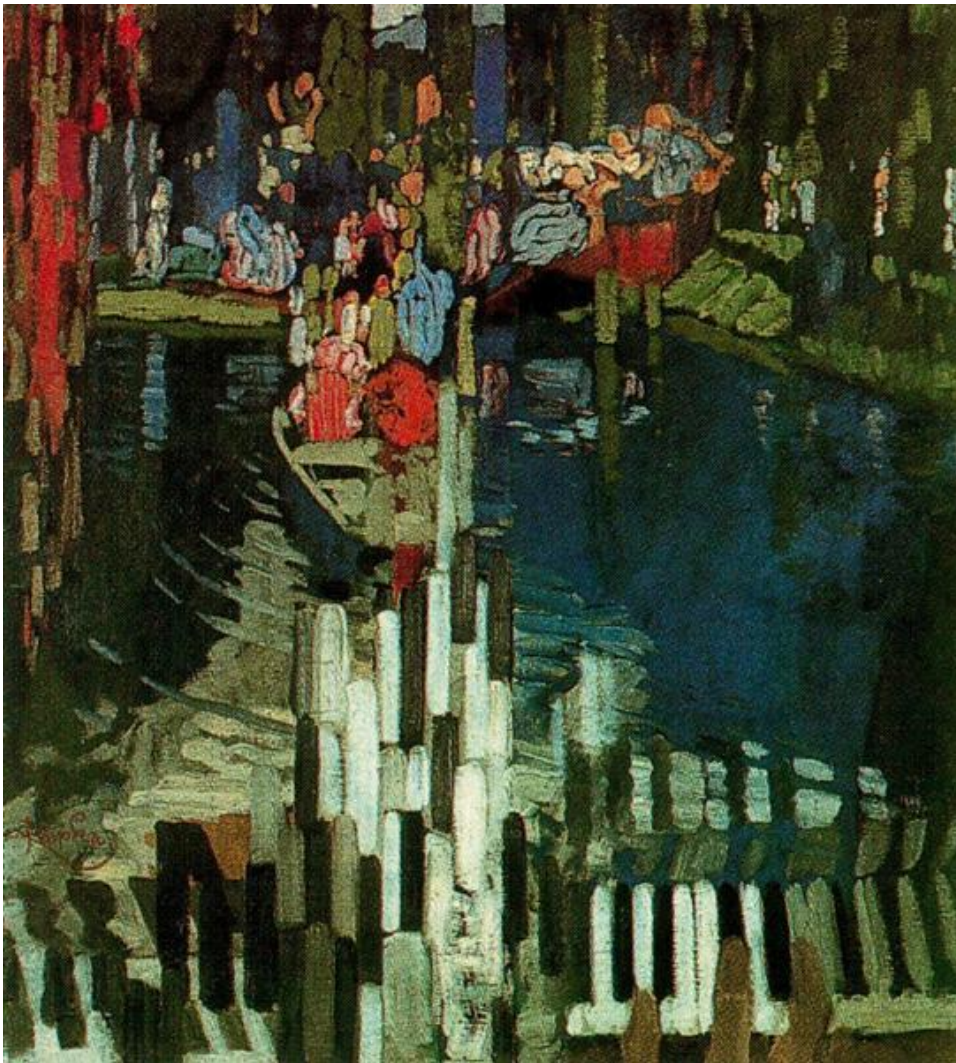


Figure 29. Kupka, *Piano Keys—Lake* (1909)

⁷¹ Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible deeds of music: art and music from Wagner to Cage*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 139.

Josef Matthias Hauer, best-known for his early development of twelve-tone theory, also created the concept of color-interval. For Hauer, every interval carries an association of color. This color-sound connection is similar to contemporary artist and musician I-Uen Wang Hwang's approach, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Hauer provides a guide to his color-interval circle:

C-C'=white C-G= yellow C-D= Orange C-A= Vermilion C-Db=Blue-violet C-Ab= Ultramarine blue C-Eb= Turquoise blue C-E= Carmine C-Bb= Blue-green C-B= Purple-red C-F= Vermilion-green C-F#= Purple-violet C-Gb= Black⁷²

Hauer is not suggesting synesthesia, which refers to a condition that one sees or smells something specific when they hear particular sounds or keys. Instead, he believes that the character colors of intervals are intuitively perceived.⁷³ He also believes that the equal-tempered pitch class (twelve tones) corresponds to the color spectrum.⁷⁴

In addition to his color-interval theories, Hauer found a similarity between art and what later would be called minimalist music.⁷⁵ The purpose of minimalist music is more to convey certain conceptual ideas than to entertain. For instance, Reich's *Piano Phase* (1976) requests that two pianists play the same ostinato at slightly different tempi. The idea of maintaining the exact same tempo throughout the live performance is challenging - perhaps a computer or a machine would be better suited to perform this task. Similar to Reich, artists in the twentieth century were experimenting within minimalist works. Two pieces of particular note are *Six Mile Bottom* (1960) by Frank Stella (Figure 30) and *Equivalent VII* (1966) by Carl Andre (Figure 31). In *Six Mile Bottom*, Stella eliminates

⁷² Simon Shaw-Miller, *Visible deeds of music: art and music from Wagner to Cage*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 181-182.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁷⁵ Minimalist music features limited or minimal musical materials. This style developed around 1960s. Minimalist composers including Steve Reich, Terry Riley and so on.

distracting elements; in this case, color. In his own words: “My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there. All I want anyone to get out of my paintings and all I ever get out of them is the fact that you can see the whole idea without any confusion. What you see is what you see.”⁷⁶

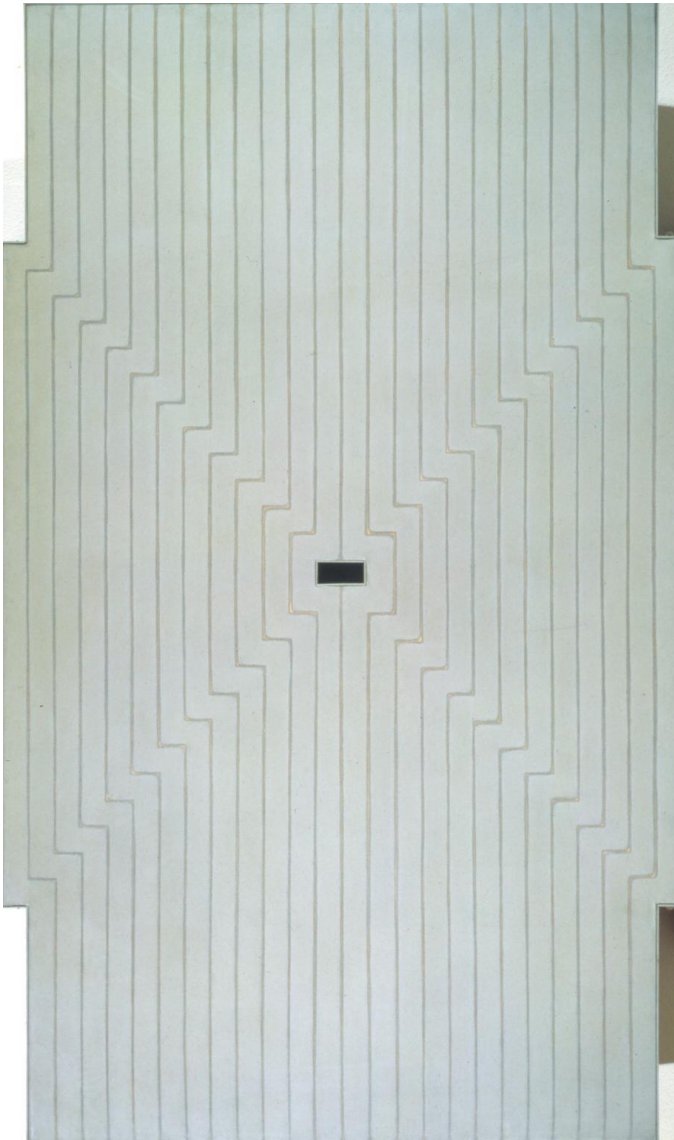


Figure 30. Stella, *Six Mile Bottom* (1960)

⁷⁶ <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/stella-six-mile-bottom-t01552>, accessed on July 23, 2017.



Figure 31. Andre, *Equivalent VII* (1966)

Throughout the histories of both art and music, perhaps the twentieth and twenty-first centuries will be known as exceptionally active periods of interaction and collaboration between musicians and artists. From abstract art and atonal music to multimedia art and minimalism, artists and musicians are exploring the possibility of interdisciplinary collaboration as never before. The next chapter will focus on the

painting and musical works, as well as the artistic approach, of Taiwanese-American composer and artist I-Uen Wang Hwang.

I-Uen Wang Hwang's Piano Music

About I-Uen Wang Hwang

I-Uen Wang Hwang is a Taiwanese American composer and painter. She was born in Tainan, Taiwan and moved to the United States in 1994. She obtained her bachelor's degree in music composition from the Taiwan National Normal University (1987-1991) and doctoral degree from the University of Pennsylvania (1994-1998, Ph.D.). Her teachers included George Crumb, James Primosch, Jay Reise, and Richard Wernick. At the University of Pennsylvania, Hwang was awarded the Halstead Prize (1996, 1998) and the Nietzsche Prize (1997).

Her compositions have been performed at the Asian Composer's League Music Festivals in Malaysia in 1997 and in Korea in 2002. As the winner of the Bohemians New York Musicians Club piano composition competition, she performed her piano work, *Dream Garden*, at the New York Kosciuszko Foundation House in 2004. The Taiwan Philharmonic, Taiwan's National Symphony Orchestra, also commissioned and performed three of her compositions: *Timeless Reflections* in 2006; *Lily Pond* in 2008; and *Diptych of Taiwan* in 2010. The orchestra performed *Diptych of Taiwan* in Taipei, Taiwan for the premiere performance of the Music Director, Maestro Shao-Chia Lü, in Guangzhou, China for the Canton Asian Music Festival in 2010. In 2008, the Long Duo performed her composition for two pianos, *Dream Garden II*, at the National Convention of the National Association of Composers in Texas and in Shanghai, China. In 2011, I-Uen Hwang was awarded a grant from the National Art and Culture Foundation of Taiwan for *Watercolor Sketches*, a composition for guzheng (Chinese zither), cello, and

violin. A violin concerto commissioned by The Egret Cultural and Educational Foundation of Taiwan was performed in 2014. In the same year, the Carpe Diem String Quartet premiered her String Quartet No. 2.⁷⁷

During 2015 to 2016, I-Uen Wang Hwang completed *Garden Scenes*, an orchestral piece with five movements, and associated acrylic paintings depicting various botanical gardens. A commissioned work, *Puyuma Celebration*, was based on a Taiwanese native tribal melody and was premiered in September 2017.⁷⁸ At the same time, three Preludes for Piano: *Meandering*, *Blooming*, and *Melancholic Violet* was premiered at James Madison University in a lecture-recital by the author.

Hwang is a dedicated composer, painter and a fine artist. She was deeply influenced by her father, Tsan-Tien Wang (1938-1990), who was also a painter. She recalled: “I spent a lot of time in his studio during summer breaks. My father was always listening to classical music when he was painting, he was my painting teacher.” Thus, the connection between her music and art developed naturally. In addition to composing music, Hwang has been a watercolor and acrylic artist with several exhibitions in the Philadelphia area.⁷⁹ Hwang’s family is full of artists; her father is a painter; her sister is an architect; her brother is a graphic designer; however, she is the only musician in her family.

A private person by nature, Hwang believes in the spirit of Buddhism. She enjoys a simple life style and usually starts working around five o’clock in the morning. She

⁷⁷ <https://www.toricollections.com/i-uenwang>, accessed on 10/9/2017.

⁷⁸ <https://www.toricollections.com/i-uenwang>, accessed on 10/9/2017.

⁷⁹ Also, in 2012, she helped judge the United Nations Art for Peace Contest for children. <https://www.toricollections.com/i-uenwang>, accessed on 10/9/2017.

describes her working life: “I have the eagerness to do my work, and have the peace and quiet space to focus on my work. I have to work in two occupations, painter and musician. I don't want to only go half-way in two fields. If I decide to do it, each one has to be professional. It is not like my music is not good enough, so I go to art. Music is the passion of my life and I also love art. I paint and compose because I enjoy doing it, never trying to become well-known through my work.”

Vincent van Gogh is one of her favorite artists. “I love Van Gogh as a painter, because his brush stroke is really deep inside, full of emotions. When you look at his painting, through these details, you already feel the power inside. Sometimes I feel like I am possessed by the art or music, the power to pull you into the whole. Music is really challenging, what you planned and what comes out at the end [is different sometimes]... I have a plan or a structure in my mind, but when you keep writing, you find you have to make some changes along the way. My watercolor [painting] is the same thing, which is a water media. You don't control water, it flows, and that is the water nature. So you need the good technique, like *wet on wet*, or *glazing* [to paint]. All the art forms will speak for themselves”.⁸⁰

I-Uen Wang Hwang's piano works

This chapter will discuss three sets of works by I-Uen Wang Hwang: *Dream Garden I & II* (2000-2004) and *Preludes for Piano* (2016). Series I of *Dream Garden* contains two piano solo compositions, which are based on a series of her own

⁸⁰ I-Uen Wang Hwang, “*Painting Analogy in the Music of I-Uen Wang Hwang*”. Interviewed by Yining Jiang at Germantown, TN, January 10, 2017.

watercolors. Each composition shares a title with one of her paintings: *The Horn of the Plenty* (Figure 32) and *Butterfly Orchid*. (Figure 33)



Figure 32. Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty* (2000)

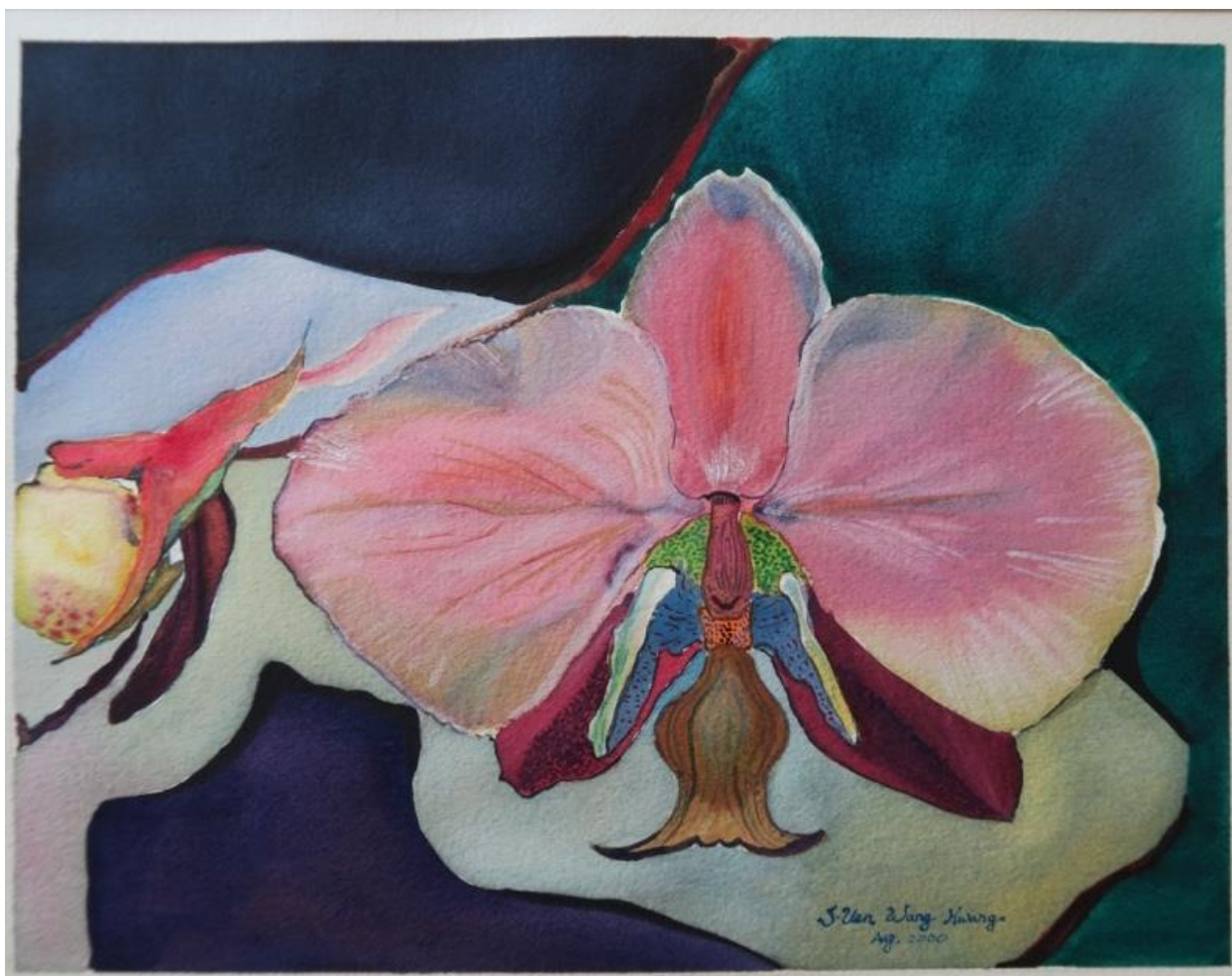


Figure 33. Hwang, *Butterfly Orchid* (2000)

Series II includes two compositions for two pianos: *Red and White* (Figure 34) and *Fireworks* (Figure 35), which are also based on her watercolors of flowers.



Figure 34. Hwang, *Red and White* (2004)

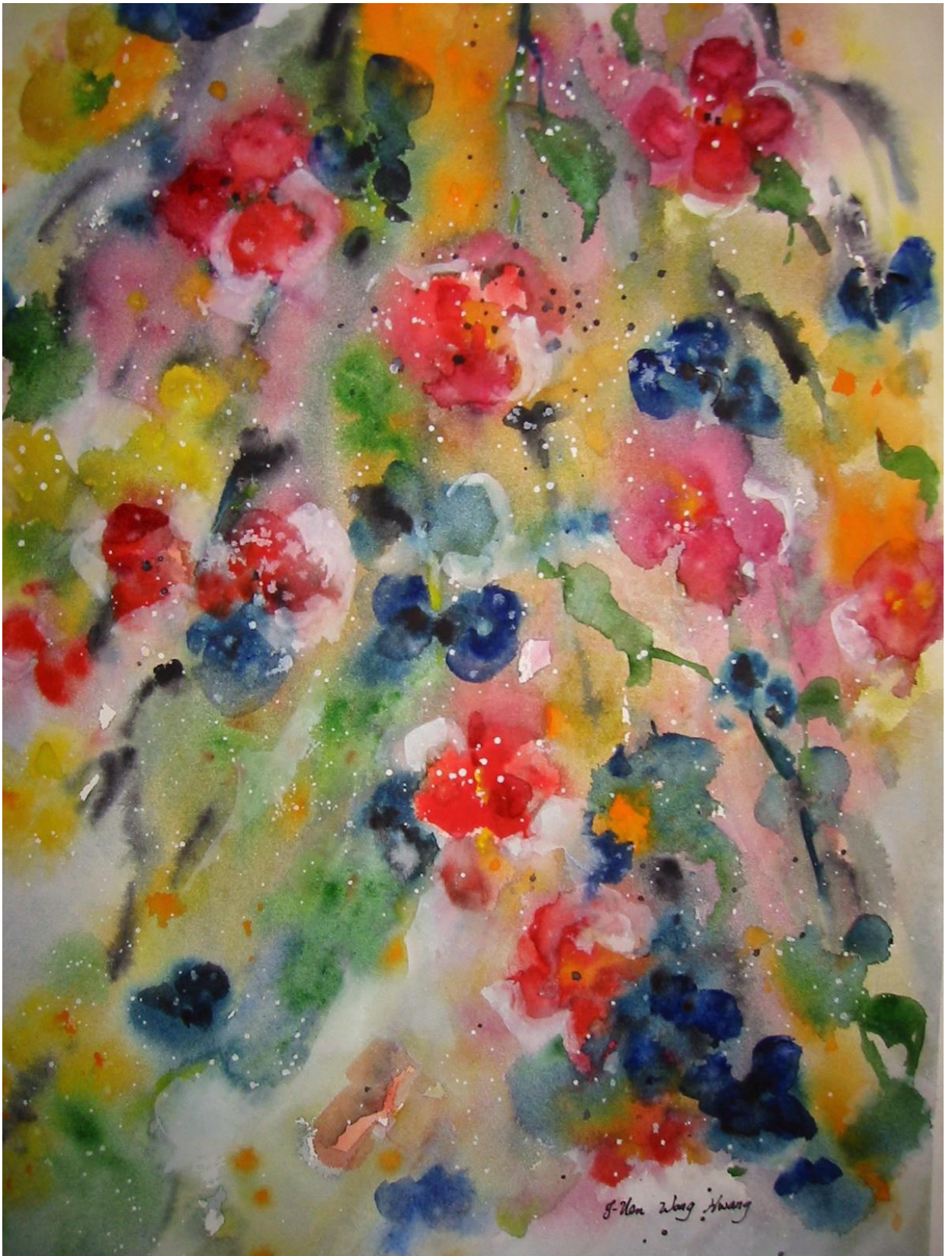


Figure 35. Hwang, *Fireworks* (2004)

Preludes for Piano is a new composition that I-Uen Hwang completed in December 2016, and includes three preludes: *Meandering* (Figure 36), *Blooming* (Figure 37) and *Melancholic Violet* (Figure 38). Each prelude is based on an abstract acrylic painting.



Figure 36. Hwang, *Meandering* (2016)



Figure 37. Hwang, *Blooming* (2016)



Figure 38. Hwang, *Melancholic Violet* (2016)

Dream Garden Series I

The *Dream Garden* series was composed between 2000 and 2004, just after Hwang completed her PhD and moved to New York. During that time, she developed the idea to become a full-time artist as well as a full-time musician. *Dream Garden* series was one of her first music/painting combinations. Hwang paints before she composes. Painting helps her to think clearly and generate structure and ideas for the music. *Dream Garden I* contains two solo works for piano: *The Horn of Plenty* and *Butterfly Orchid*. Hwang painted the two pictures of orchid flowers a year before she composed the music.

The Horn of Plenty

The Horn of Plenty describes the bold colors of the orchid from the viewpoint of a drop of dew rolling within the chamber of the flower.⁸¹ The movement is playful and marked *Allegretto grazioso*. It starts with a twelve-tone row in the right hand, organized in four trichords: D-E-G, C-Eb-F, F#-A-B, and C#-A#-G#. Each group uses the same prime form (0, 2, 5). (Ex. 12)

The image shows a musical score for the piano piece 'The Horn of Plenty' by Hwang, measures 1-2. The score is written for piano and features a twelve-tone row in the right hand. The row is divided into four trichords: D-E-G, C-Eb-F, F#-A-B, and C#-A#-G#. The first trichord is marked '5th', the second '7th', and the third '2nd'. The score includes dynamics like *mf* and *mp*, and a triplet of eighth notes. The bass line has a 'Ped.' marking and a '*' symbol.

Ex.12 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm. 1-2

⁸¹ I-Uen Wang Hwang, “*Dream Garden*”. Program notes for doctoral lecture recital. Yining Jiang. Harrisonburg: James Madison University Recital Hall, September 17, 2017.

Later, begin from measure 13, many third intervals appear in the music, and in measures 15-16, the B major chord suggests a sense of tonality. (Ex. 13)

Ex.13 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm.15-16

The music begins with a twelve-tone row and gradually melts into more tonal aspects. According to Hwang, abstraction relates to tonality. In the painting, the realistic shape of the horn orchid is set against an abstract dark blue background without tangible shape. This relationship is reflected in the music: from measures 1-12 (atonal section), the music represents the dark blue background of the painting, and from measure 13 (more tonal) the music depicts the different parts of the orchid flower.

In the opening of *The Horn of Plenty*, after the right hand introduces a twelve-tone row, the D-C-A motive in the lower register stands out, apart from other voices, as if it is a thicker-drawn line that draws our attention. (Ex.14)

Ex. 14 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm. 1-2

Hwang marks double bar lines to indicate different sections of the music (mm.13, 26,49, 57). Each section starts with the same set class (0, 2, 5) except the last section, which starts with (0, 2, 6): measure 1 (DEG), measures 13 and 26 (CGA), measure 49 (CDF), and in measure 57 (B^bCE). (Ex. 15) Hwang says that our ears often cannot pick up and process all sounds at once, so structure and defined sections are helpful guides for listening.

The image displays five musical excerpts from Hwang's 'The Horn of Plenty', each marked with a double bar line to indicate a section. The excerpts are as follows:

- m.1:** Treble and bass clefs, 6/8 time signature. Dynamics: *mf*.
- m.13*:** Treble and bass clefs, 6/8 time signature. Performance markings: *a tempo*, *ppp*, *con giovalita*.
- m.26:** Treble and bass clefs, 6/8 time signature. Tempo marking: $\bullet = 108$. Dynamics: *mf*. Performance marking: *cantabile*.
- m.49:** Treble and bass clefs, 6/4 time signature. Tempo marking: $\bullet = 96$. Dynamics: *mp*. Performance marking: *expressivo*.
- m.57:** Treble and bass clefs, 6/8 time signature. Dynamics: *mf*. Performance marking: *con grazio*.

Ex. 15 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm. 1, 13, 26, 49, 57

The form of this piece is close to a continuous variation. The opening theme returns twice, (in m. 41 and m. 57) and retains the same rhythmic pattern except for a few altered notes. (Ex.16-18)



Ex. 16 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, Opening theme



Ex. 17 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m.41



Ex. 18 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m. 57

Different sections of music describe the different portions of the painting. Also, there is a correspondence between intervals and colors. According to Hwang, “a perfect fourth or fifth is the most bright and most clear color. When you hear them, you just

know that it is a perfect fourth or perfect fifth, because the color is just so bright. The minor second or major seventh, of course it is sharp, and kind of violent, because the color is kind of dark, deep, and mysterious. The interval of a third is more like an orange or yellow. It is a little bit outstanding, not so strong, but it is warm.”

In measures 19-20 Hwang uses third and fifth intervals to represent the white orchid flower, since the color of the third and fifth intervals are bright and vivid, and the *agitato* and accents also make this phrase vibrant and playful, as if the orchid is standing out from the background of the painting. (Ex. 19) The pianist should play almost detached chords in this phrase.

Ex. 19 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm. 19-20

In measure 26, Hwang uses third, fourth and fifth intervals to depict the chamber of the horn orchid, with *legato* and *cantabile* in a lower register. The pianist should strive for a very warm sound. (Ex. 20)

Ex. 20 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m.26

Gestural passages such as descending arpeggios, scales or glissandos describe a certain motion, image or emotion. In measure 35, the descending fast running sixty-fourth notes depict the falling dew from the chamber of the horn orchid; (Ex.21) and in measure 27, the group of notes in the higher register of the piano represents the light cast through the orchid chamber, which makes the chamber look translucent. (Ex. 22)

Ex. 21 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m. 35

Ex. 22 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m. 27

Hwang uses the term *volume* to describe the contrast of light and dark in painting, which correlates to the term *dynamic* (loud and soft) in music. Both terms indicate the contrasting elements in musical and painted works.

In *The Horn of Plenty*, the opening section (mm. 1 – 12) depicts the dark blue background, while the dynamic markings in the score are mainly *p*, *mp*, *mf*, with only one

f in measure 7. Starting from measure 13, the focus of the music is changing from the dark background to the white orchid flower. The dynamics progress from *ppp* (m. 13) to *ff*, *sfz*, and *zf* (m. 23). (Ex. 23)

The image displays two excerpts of a piano score. The first excerpt, starting at measure 11, features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a melodic line in 5/16 time, marked *And.* Below the bass staff, there are three *And.* markings. The music transitions to 3/8 time, marked *3 poco rit.* and *a tempo*. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is circled in red, followed by the instruction *con gioivialita*. The second excerpt starts at measure 23, also in 3/8 time. It features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a bass line. Dynamic markings *ff*, *sfz*, and *mf* are present. A *sfz* marking is circled in red. The piece concludes in 3/16 and 4/8 time signatures.

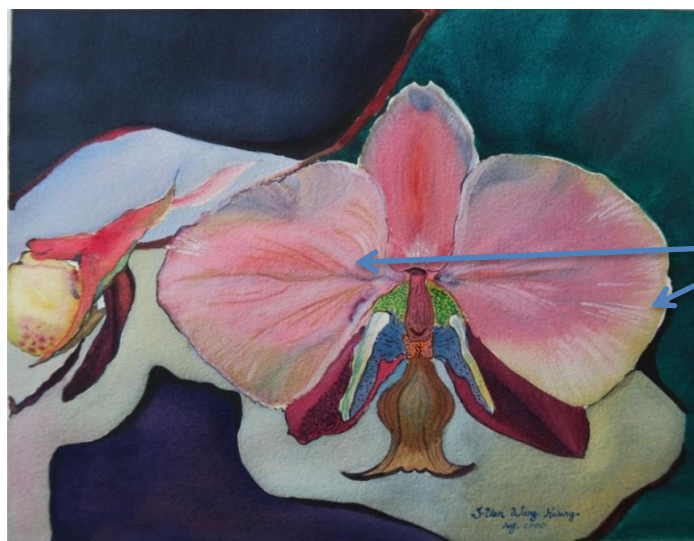
Ex. 23 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, mm. 11-13, m. 23

Towards the end of the piece, the *ppp* dynamics imply the music turns to describe the darker background, and the light gradually fades out. (Ex. 24)

Ex. 24 Hwang, *The Horn of Plenty*, m. 63-64

Butterfly Orchid

By contrast, the second piece from *Dream Garden I*, *Butterfly Orchid* has a slower tempo, and focuses on subtle changes of the harmonic progression. The music starts with a combination of major/minor triads (B major and D# minor). Both chords are in root position to create more color: the A sharp is right next to the B in the right hand, adding to a striking dissonance. The melodic line, in measures 4-5, together with the subtle change of harmony in the left hand depicts the color nuances of the orchid petals as they reflect light in the painting. (Ex. 25 and Figure 39)



change of color nuances

Figure 39. Hwang, *Butterfly Orchid* (2016), change of color nuances

Ex. 25 Hwang, *Butterfly Orchid*, mm. 1-5

Various watercolor techniques, such as “glazing” and “wet-on-wet” are presented in this piece. Glazing refers to the multi-layer coloring technique, which is the process of putting different layers of color on the same area of canvas to create the multi-color look. An important step in this process is to wait for the first layer of color to dry and then add the second layer of color. In this way, different layers of colors will not become a mixed color, and every single layer of color will show through. Measures 20 – 24 are a musical manifestation of this glazing technique. Different layers of color are presented separately through measures 20 – 24. For instance, measure 20 depicts the first layer, and finally the multiple layers of color are presented in measure 24. The first beat of each measure describes putting one layer of color on the paper, and the rest of the beats (same sextuplet pattern) describe the color drying. After a few layers, the color becomes richer, as reflected in the denser texture and more contrasting dynamics in the music in measures 22-24. (Ex. 26)

1st Layer

20 *ppp* *Paint 1st color* *Wait for it to dry*

2nd Layer

21 *ppp* *pp*

3rd Layer

22 *mp* *p* *mf* *Richer colors*

4th Layer

23 *pp* *p* *f* *mf* *mp*

Colors Mingle

24 *p* *ppp* *mf*

Ex. 26 Hwang, *Butterfly Orchid*, mm. 20-24

The next section of music presents the *Wet-on-wet* technique, which refers to putting different layers of colors over each other while they are wet on the canvas to create the mixed color effect. In measure 26, the first chord represents the base layer of color, and the chords in the higher register represent adding layers of color. Both damper pedal and soft pedal are applied to create this sound effect. (Ex. 27)

Base layer of color adding layers of color

Ex. 27 Hwang, *Butterfly Orchid*, mm. 26

Hwang says: “you don't control water, it flows, and that is the water nature. So you need the good technique, like *wet on wet*, or *glazing* [to paint]. Same in the music, the tempi in these sections are freer and not strict.”⁸²

Butterfly Orchid is in a three-part form. The opening theme comes back in the last section of the piece. “. . . it is hard to control the color as exactly as you want while painting a watercolor, and there is no sharp edge on the painting. Therefore the form of my music is freer than a traditional sonata form.”

⁸² I-Uen Wang Hwang, “Painting Analogy in the Music of I-Uen Wang Hwang”. Interviewed by Yining Jiang at Germantown, TN, January 10, 2017.

Dream Garden Series II

Dream Garden series II contains two pieces written for two pianos: *Red and White*; *Fireworks*. In the painting *Fireworks*, Hwang also uses both the glazing and the wet on wet techniques. Besides these, Hwang mentions that: “For the finishing touch I hold the brush and gently tap the handle, splattering the white paint on top.” This final touch creates another layer of color and dimension, which makes the painting more vivid, as if seeing the sparkles in the sky.

The interaction between the two pianists creates the different timbres and layers of sound. In *Red and White*, piano I and II each represent the white flowers and the red flowers painted in the picture. The piece starts with piano II playing quarter and half notes in the mid-low register (Ex. 28), using the major second and minor third intervals to present the red flowers. Among all colors, red is a strong color that human eyes can easily see. Major second and third intervals provide the red sound effect – outstanding, a little bit on the edge yet warm. Compared to piano II, piano I uses open fourth and fifth intervals in the higher register to create a brighter, lighter and more transparent sound to represent the white flowers.

White flower

Red flower theme

Piano 1

Piano 2

Ex. 28 Hwang, *Red and White*, mm. 1-4

The red flower theme only appears four times in the piano II; in measures 1, 16, 39 and 49, which represents the four big red flowers in the painting. (see Figure 34)

The two pianos have different characters, timbres, textures and dynamics, which create the three dimensions of the music. *Red and White* is a slow movement, so the pianist should convey a relaxed and transparent sound effect. The thirty-second note motive in measures 4, 6, 12 and 15 is not fast but elegant. (Ex. 29)

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Ex. 29 Hwang, *Red and White*, mm. 15-16

There are many interactions between the two pianos. In measures 13-14, the repeated F appears in both piano parts one after another, as if taking over the leading role. (Ex. 30) The switching of melody between the two pianos imitates the change of light effect in painting.

Ex. 30 Hwang, *Red and White*, mm. 13-14

Similar arrangements appear in measures 23-25: the E-flat in the left hand of piano I is marked “fp”, which is later taken over by piano II. In measures 24-25, G is the interacting note between the two pianos. (Ex. 31) Overall, this movement uses the red flower theme, white flower theme, and interactions between the two pianos to convey its musical and picturesque content.

The image displays a musical score for two pianos, Pno. 1 and Pno. 2, covering measures 22 to 26. The score is written in treble and bass clefs. Pno. 1 starts at measure 22 with a *mp* dynamic, featuring a sextuplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand. A red circle highlights a *fp* dynamic marking in the left hand at measure 23. Pno. 2 enters at measure 22 with a *mf* dynamic, playing a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, which is circled in red. A blue arrow points from the *fp* marking in Pno. 1 to this triplet. In measure 24, Pno. 1 has a sextuplet in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand, with a *mf* dynamic. Pno. 2 continues with a sextuplet in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand, with a *mf* dynamic. In measure 25, Pno. 1 has a triplet in the right hand and a sextuplet in the left hand, with a *f* dynamic. Pno. 2 has a triplet in the right hand and a sextuplet in the left hand, with a *mp* dynamic. A blue arrow points from the sextuplet in Pno. 1 to the sextuplet in Pno. 2. The score concludes in measure 26 with a *mp* dynamic in Pno. 2.

Ex. 31 Hwang, *Red and White*, mm. 22-26

The second movement of *Dream Garden II* is *Fireworks*. This movement is structured in a three-part, ABA' form. The A section is measures 1-53, B section is measures 54-122, and A' section is measures 123-165. There are two main motives in the A and A' sections: sextuplets, and syncopated rhythm. These two motives derive from the same set class (0, 1, 4). (Ex. 32)

Piano 1

$\bullet = 112$

ff

6

6

29

mp

Ex. 32 Hwang, *Fireworks*, sextuplets (m. 1), and syncopated rhythm (m. 29-30)

Section B introduces a new motive based on major/minor triads, which represents the sound of fireworks exploding in the sky. (Ex. 33) It at first sounds like new material, however, major/minor triads contain minor second and major/minor thirds, which can be considered as a subset of (0, 1, 4). Therefore, the entire movement is based on the (0, 1, 4) set class.

Pno. 1

79

M3

m3

mf

Ex. 33 Hwang, *Fireworks*, mm. 79-80

The A and A' sections are energetic and virtuosic, depicting the sparkles in the sky and the excitement of the crowd, while the contrasting B section has a slower tempo. The tempo in the B section starts with quarter note equals 72 in measure 54, changing to

quarter note equals 96 in measure 74, and back to *a tempo* in measure 122 (the beginning of A' section). The fast/slow/fast tempo imitates the zoom-in and zoom-out effect when you look at a painting. The fast sections provide the big picture and the atmosphere, while the slow section provides more details.

The challenge of this movement is the collaboration between the two pianists. Each pianist has a virtuosic part. In order to create an exciting, yet not chaotic movement, Hwang says that both pianists have to be extremely accurate with dynamics and rhythms, while using no rubato in fast sections.

Preludes for Piano

Preludes for Piano contains three miniature works: *Meandering*, *Blooming* and *Melancholic Violet*. *Meandering* is an organic piece based on one musical idea – the chromatic figure. The up-and-down shape of the melody line mirrors the spiral shape of the painting. Initially, the left hand presents the motive (mm. 1- 10), then the right hand takes over the motive in measures 11 – 25, and finally both hands play the motive towards the end in measures 31-37. (Ex. 34)

The image displays three segments of a piano score for the piece 'Meandering' by Hwang. The first segment, measures 1-4, features a 'Piano' section with a *pp* dynamic and an *aspress.* marking, and a 'Pno.' section with a *p* dynamic. The second segment, measures 11-12, shows a 'Pno.' section with a *p* dynamic and a *n* marking. The third segment, measures 35-36, shows a 'Pno.' section with a *f* dynamic. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with various musical notations including slurs, dynamics, and articulation marks.

mm. 1-4

mm. 11-12

mm. 35-36

Ex. 34 Hwang, *Meandering*, mm. 1-4, 11-12, 35-36

In measures 35 – 37 (Ex. 35), the lowest three chromatic notes E-F-F# in the bass line repeat six times and stand out as a voice-leading line, which is symbolized by the big musical notations in the painting (circled in the box). (Figure 40) These noticeable musical notations in the painting can pair up with the E-F-F# motive in music.⁸³ The

⁸³ According to Hwang, voicing the E-F-F# in the piano part is important. It is correspondent to the notations in the painting, but she hesitates to indicate which musical note pairs with which painting notation.

notations in the painting are hidden within these spiral figures, which is similar to the voice leading line hidden within the running sixteenth notes in the music.

The image displays a musical score for piano, specifically measures 35-37 of Hwang's piece 'Meandering'. The score is written for two staves: the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The upper staff features a complex melodic line with numerous accidentals and slurs. The lower staff contains a bass line with several notes circled in blue. The music is marked with 'Pno.', '35', '37', 'accel.', and 'ff'.

Ex. 35 Hwang, *Meandering*, mm. 35-37



Figure 40. Hwang, *Meandering*, with circles (2016)

The second prelude, *Blooming*, is a complex and elegant piece. The dense musical texture is reflected in the painting texture. Hwang mixes complementary colors, such as red and green, to create the intense yet vivid gray colors. Also, the brush strokes, in layers of complementary colors represent the radiating effects of the flowers.⁸⁴ In the music, Hwang uses the clustered melodic lines to represent the layers of brush strokes. Each hand has its individual rhythms within a close register.⁸⁵ (Ex. 36) Hwang suggests that the pianists bring out the leading voice line in these complex textures and clustered chords, to create a beautiful sound effect. Voicing and legato playing are the keys to playing this prelude.



Ex. 36 Hwang, *Blooming*, mm. 5-7

Measures 34-35 contain four voices; inner voices represent the complex gestures of flowers; the outer voices are the contour of the flowers. (Ex. 37) Two measures later, in measure 38, the texture of the music becomes simpler – it contains only two voices, one melody line (in the RH) with one accompaniment line (in the LH). (Ex. 38) This passage represents the gray and white area in the background of the painting. (Figure 41)

⁸⁴ I-Uen Wang Hwang, “Preludes for Piano”. Program notes for Doctoral Lecture recital. Yining Jiang. Harrisonburg: James Madison University Recital Hall, September 17, 2017.

⁸⁵ I-Uen Wang Hwang, “Preludes for Piano”. Program notes for Doctoral Lecture recital. Yining Jiang. Harrisonburg: James Madison University Recital Hall, September 17, 2017.

Musical score for piano, measures 31-35. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef). Measure 31 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piece is in 4/4 time. The dynamics are marked *p* (piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) and slurs. A blue bracket highlights a section from measure 31 to the end of measure 34. Measure 35 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The dynamics are marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf*. The score continues with triplet markings and slurs. A blue bracket highlights a section from measure 35 to the end of measure 38.

Ex. 37 Hwang, *Blooming*, mm. 34-35

Musical score for piano, measure 38. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef). The piece is in 4/4 time. The dynamics are marked *pp* (pianissimo). The score features sixteenth-note runs in the treble clef, each marked with a '6' (sixteenth notes) and slurs. The bass clef features triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) and slurs.

Ex. 38 Hwang, *Blooming*, m. 38

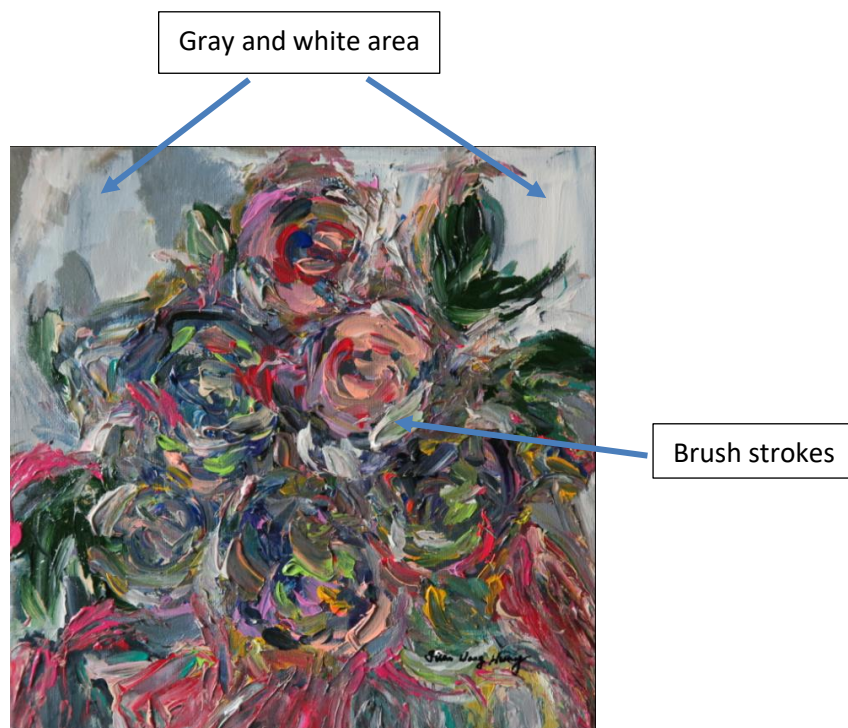


Figure 41. Hwang, *Blooming* (2016)

The third prelude *Melancholic Violet* is reminiscent of one of Chopin's preludes. According to Hwang, the color purple is melancholic and elegant; the violet flowers reminded her of the Chopin's prelude Op. 28, No. 4 in E minor.⁸⁶ Both preludes have a similar harmonic progression and texture: the steady eighth note accompaniment in the left hand with the melody line in the right hand. (Ex. 39)

Ex. 39 Hwang, *Melancholic Violet*, mm. 1-4

The right hand melody represents the purple flowers in the foreground of the painting, and the left hand accompaniment represents the dark background. The entire

⁸⁶ I-Uen Wang Hwang, "Preludes for Piano". Program notes for doctoral lecture recital. Yining Jiang. Harrisonburg: James Madison University Recital Hall, September 17, 2017.

piece keeps this texture until measure 32, approximately two-thirds of the way through the piece, which is the so-called *golden section*⁸⁷. The texture changes to a thirty-second note pattern, which represents the ambiguous white flowers in the painting. (Ex. 40)



Figure 38. Hwang, *Melancholic Violet* (2016)

Ex. 40 Hwang, *Melancholic Violet*, mm. 32-34

⁸⁷ Also called golden ratio, which refers to two quantities' ratio is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger of the two quantities.

Hwang eventually intends to include these three preludes as part of a longer set of twelve preludes. She switched her painting media from watercolor to acrylic, and her musical style changes from the *Dream Garden* series to *Preludes for Piano*.

Summary of Hwang's analogous compositional techniques

Six points of similarities can be found between Hwang's music and painting: musical lines and painting line; interval and color; volume and dynamic; foreground/background; texture and gesture.

Primary lines in music shows the interaction of voices with one another, while in painting, lines are the guide for our eyes. When we look at a painting, our eyes first see lines and follow the contour of the lines, which is similar to music. When we listen to a four part SATB score, our ears always pick up the voice that stands out, usually the soprano, and sometimes the bass. Voice leading and line draw our attention in both art forms. Specific examples can be seen in *The Horn of Plenty* and *Meandering*.

Many composers have related and applied *color* as a term in their music, in terms of harmony, expressive markings, keys, intervals and so on. But some composers take this idea of color a step further and mean literal color. For example, in Messiaen's *The Technique of My Musical Language*, he remarked "the gentle cascade of blue-orange chords" in the piano part of the second movement of his *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*.⁸⁸ Messiaen often used cluster chords for their color in place of function. Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsakov believed that the color relates to the key of the music: Scriabin

⁸⁸ Jonathan Bernard, W. "Messiaen's Synaesthesia: The Correspondence between Color and Sound Structure in His Music." *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4, no. 1 (1986): 41. doi:10.2307/40285351.

believed that the key of D major was golden-brown, and Rimsky-Korsakov believed that the key of C major was white, and B major was a gloomy dark blue with a steel shine.⁸⁹ In a similar way, Hwang relates color to intervals. According to her theory, intervals create a context for notes. For example, the color of B major is a little bit dark if you compare it to C major. The half step distance from B to C makes all the difference. The distance between notes and keys creates the most noticeable color changes. In *The Horn of Plenty*, Hwang relates fifth and third intervals to the orchid flower. In addition, Hwang claims that the interval colors will change with different registers and instrument timbres. So orchestration is also a color palette for the composer.

Both musical and painted works use contrasting elements to create expression and intensity. Volume and dynamic each stands for the contrasting elements in painting and music. *The Horn of Plenty* provides a clear example of this comparison.

In a painting, the main subject is usually presented in the foreground and the rest as background. Similarly, in music, the melodic line will be the foreground, and the inner voices and harmonic accompaniment belong to the background. In *The Horn of Plenty*, Hwang also associates the tonality with abstraction. The background (abstract) pairs up with atonal music and the foreground (realistic) can be associated with more tonal music.

Gestural passages in music depict certain motion, image, or emotion, and can frequently be found in the music of impressionist composers such as Debussy and Liszt. Hwang also uses gestural passages to describe certain motion in her painting, such as the “falling dew” passage in *The Horn of Plenty*.

⁸⁹ B. M. Galejev, and I. L. Vanechkina, "Was Scriabin a Synesthete?" *Leonardo* 34, no. 4 (2001): 359. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1577166>.

Texture in music refers to the type of accompaniment or how the different voices interact with each other. For instance, a plainchant has a thin texture, while Brahms Piano Sonata No.3 has a dense texture. Texture in painting usually refers to the brush strokes or other painting techniques that create different layers of color, light, and dimension. Hwang's piano preludes *Meandering*, *Blooming*, and *Melancholic Violet* illustrate this analogy from different angles.

Taken as a whole, I-Uen Wang Hwang infuses the different aspects of painting elements and techniques into a hermetical composition. Working two occupations as both composer and painter, her works fuse together these two distinct art forms in new and creative ways. In this way she follows and adds to the great tradition of Scriabin, Messiaen, Schoenberg, Kandinsky, Crumb, Klee and M. K. Čiurlionis. Although her paintings and musical compositions can each stand as individual art works, she has given us a wonderful new opportunity to experience and make a connection between the fine arts of music and painting.

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