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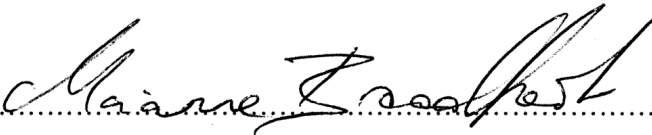
“A NEW MODE OF EXPRESSION”: KAROL SZYMANOWSKI’S
FIRST VIOLIN CONCERTO OP. 35 WITHIN A DIONYSIAN CONTEXT

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Karol Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto, op. 35 as a Dionysian work of music. Written in collaboration with Polish violinist Paweł Kochański, Szymanowski claimed this work heralded a 'new mode of expression' for the instrument. One of the primary sources of influence behind this 'new mode' can be attributed to the spirit of the ancient Greek god Dionysus, via his late nineteenth-century literary revival by Friedrich Nietzsche and Walter Pater. Tadeusz Miciński's poem *May Night* will be examined within the framework of literary movements at the *fin-de-siècle*. The violin idiom created with Kochański to express this new spirit is examined within the context of the violin concerto genre and late Romantic orchestral repertoire. Finally, Szymanowski and Kochański's collaborative legacy will be discussed in relation to Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto and the landscape of twentieth-century violin literature.

To Wanda,

With love and gratitude.

PREFACE

I first encountered Szymanowski's violin music in a concert given by Wanda Wiłkomirska in Melbourne around 1999. Her incredible performances of the *Mythes* and *Notturmo e Tarentella* inspired me to find and learn these pieces for myself.

In 2005 I was fortunate enough to be able to undertake my postgraduate studies with Wanda at the Sydney Conservatorium and the first piece I studied with her was Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto. It has been such a privilege to study this beautiful music with one of the greatest exponents of Szymanowski's music.

These lessons were so special, for in Wanda's presence you feel lit up by her radiant spirit and boundless energy. No matter how ordinary I felt going in to a lesson, I would always leave with a buoyant feeling of joy and excitement at the thought of practising the music we had just worked on.

This thesis was conceived in response to my wish to better understand this music, which seemed so unlike any other violin music I had previously studied. My time playing in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has also informed my understanding of Szymanowski's music within a wider context of the orchestral repertoire.

I hope that this thesis will be of interest to both performing musicians and audiences alike, and that the appreciation and understanding of Szymanowski and Kočański's music will continue to develop in years to come.

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Finally, special thanks to my parents for their love, support and encouragement through these years and to Wanda Wilkomirska for her friendship, generosity and all of the wonderful music. Most of all to Dan, whom I met at the beginning of this journey and have subsequently been engaged and am now married to, thank you for your love and patience.

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1.1 Introduction

Together Paweł and I created in the *Mythes* and [First] *Concerto* a new style, a new mode of expression for the violin, something in this respect completely epoch-making. All works by other composers related to this style (no matter how much creative genius they revealed) came later, that is, through direct influence of *Mythes* and the *Concerto*, or else with Paweł's direct collaboration.¹

As dithyramb to the spirit of Dionysus, Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto answered Nietzsche's musical question and in doing so transformed the landscape of twentieth-century violin literature. Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) composed three violin works during the First World War; the First Violin Concerto, op. 35 (1916), *Mythes*, op. 30 (1915) and *Notturmo and Tarantella*, op. 28 (1915). Written in collaboration with Polish violinist Paweł Kochański (1887-1934), Szymanowski claimed these works heralded a "new mode of expression"² for the instrument. One of the primary sources of influence behind this "new mode" can be attributed to the spirit of the ancient Greek god Dionysus, via his late nineteenth-century literary revival by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Walter Pater (1839–1894).

Although commonly considered an Impressionistic work, this thesis argues that Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto can more accurately be understood as the product of a Dionysian consciousness. This will be demonstrated through a hermeneutical examination of key literary and philosophical texts leading up to the composition of the Concerto, in addition to a contextual evaluation of current musical trends. Whilst Wagner and Nietzsche's influence has been explored in relation to much of Szymanowski's output, the importance of these figures, as well as the concepts of a Dionysian music, have been overlooked in regard to the First Violin Concerto, the understanding of which unlocks the true creative spirit behind the work.

The European *fin-de-siècle* was characterised by broad social upheaval and a sense of uneasiness, premonitions that were realised during the horror of World War I. In Poland, the

¹ Letter to Zofia Kochańska, Paweł's wife, 5 March 1930. As quoted in Alistair Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Work* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1999), 142.

² *Ibid.*

long history of partitioning and ongoing suppression of the nation and its peoples exacerbated this situation, impacting on the formation of cultural identities. Throughout much of the nineteenth century the organic evolution of artistic and cultural life in Poland was retarded by sentiments of nationalistic self-preservation—admittedly justified in light of the situation the nation faced. At the turn of the century progressive artistic movements, such as the Young Poland and Young Poland in Music groups, were met with hostility for their supposed ‘decadent’ tendencies, in essence an attempt to modernise the Polish artistic sphere in line with leading European centres.

Theories of decadence in European artistic movements, with their implications of degeneration, anxiety, decay, hedonism and nihilism are crucial to understanding the musical and artistic output of these years. Nietzsche’s first novel, *The Birth of Tragedy*, was published in 1872. His argument for regeneration and renewal of German culture through the spirit of music and tragedy, as typified by Attic tragedy, was indelibly intertwined with the music and ideologies of Richard Wagner and his music dramas. But it became evident to Nietzsche that these hopes were not to be realised by Wagner: one of the most spectacular fallings-out in cultural history. In the 1886 preface for a new edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche posed the question in his ‘Attempt at Self-Criticism’; “what would music have to be like to be no longer of Romantic origin, like German music – but *Dionysian*?...”³

Nietzsche’s view of the Dionysian spirit represented the affirmation of life in the face of suffering, and provided an attractive artistic alternative to the pessimism of Schopenhauer. His renewal of the Dionysian as a creative aesthetic had a profound influence on those receptive to his call, his “fellow infatuated enthusiasts,”⁴: artists, musicians, dancers, writers and intellectuals at the *fin-de-siècle*. Szymanowski can be counted amongst these, describing *The Birth of Tragedy*, alongside Goethe’s *Conversations with Eckermann*, as “the most beautiful books in the world,”⁵ one of the few which “imparted great truths to him about the essence of art.”⁶

Created in the twilight of Romanticism, the First Violin Concerto inhabits a wide range of musical and literary discourse from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the dominance of the German-speaking musical tradition beginning to falter, new

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ Stephen Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian: The Love Songs of Hafiz*, op. 24 (London: Garland Publishing, 1994), 18.

⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 82.

visionaries emerged from various countries across Europe. Szymanowski himself described this phenomenon, writing that

in the years immediately preceding the war, the conflict of differing opinions, along with increasingly vocal protests against the pre-eminence of Wagner, and, finally and characteristically, the awakening of interest in the musical modernism of other nations (chiefly France and Russia) led one to sense the threat of an approaching storm, with its relentless ideological crisis and the fundamental, internal reconstruction that would inevitably follow in its wake.⁷

In contrast to the ‘decadent’ demise of German opera, Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes* presented thrilling productions in which dancers, choreographers, set-designers and musicians all worked together, often revisiting Greek mythology and primitive folk sources for extra-musical inspiration. In this setting, the music of Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel proved scintillating for Szymanowski, shattering the illusion of an unbreachable German hegemony.

Szymanowski’s unique musical sensibilities and intellectual preoccupations also assimilated into his unique compositional voice which, metaphorically speaking, emerged from its chrysalis in 1914 after extensive travels to Italy, Sicily and North Africa. Comprehensive study of ancient Greek, Persian, Arabic and early Christian literature and mythology provided further reference material for his compositions during this time. Szymanowski’s compositions during this middle period, spanning from the beginning of the war in 1914 up until the completion of *King Roger*, op. 46 in 1926, are also characterised by this diverse cultural and aesthetic plurality.⁸

Similar to many young composers at the beginning of the century, the music of Wagner and Strauss was an overbearing and dominating force in Szymanowski’s early compositions. Whilst Szymanowski’s music in many ways is a product of these late-Romantic German composers, his voice initially formed through the imitation of their music; ultimately it was his rejection of their authority that led to his most creative period. He wrote in 1921 that it is “difficult to rid oneself of a valued foreign treasure [the German music from

⁷ Karol Szymanowski, ‘On the Work of Wagner, Strauss and Schoenberg’ in *Szymanowski on Music: Selected Writings of Karol Szymanowski*, trans. and ed. Alistair Wightman (London: Toccata Press, 1999), 219. Wightman notes that this text is the most substantial remnant of Szymanowski’s sketches for his proposed study of contemporary music. It was first published in 1958 under the title ‘Regarding “Contemporary Music”’ in *Z Pism (Selected Writings)*.

⁸ For ease of reference, Szymanowski’s work has been generally divided into three periods by authors such as Jim Samson, Alistair Wightman and Christopher Palmer. Despite the fact that many changes were beginning to occur in Szymanowski’s oeuvre immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, *King Roger* is generally classified as the end point for his middle period works.

Bach to Wagner], but one must do so if one is to discover one's own jewels. This rejection is the starting point from which contemporary French and Russian music has developed."⁹

New aesthetic movements emerged which embraced sensuousness, indulgence, ecstasy, sensation and excess. In this vein, the piano and orchestral music of Szymanowski's Russian contemporary, Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915), is of great relevance. One of these influential new artistic tendencies was a renewal of a Dionysian creative spirit, understood from the late nineteenth century studies of the god by Nietzsche and Pater. The origins of these movements will be traced from their inception in nineteenth century European literature and philosophy and their developments followed until the eve of the First World War.

Despite the cultural supremacy which the German late-Romantic composers such as Wagner, Strauss, Bruckner and Mahler enjoyed, in the context of this thesis it is vital to recognise that their musical contributions seldom extended to the instrumental concerto. Therefore, in looking at an overview of the violin concerto as a genre, a wide chasm exists between the nineteenth-century Romantic and virtuoso violin concertos and the modernist offerings from twentieth-century composers such as Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Bartok. In the absence of any direct lineage or stylistic predecessors, not only did Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto forge a new voice in concerto writing for the instrument, it also provided a significant conceptual breakthrough in terms of re-imagining the genre in the context of the new century.

The poem *May Night*, written by the Polish poet and playwright Tadeusz Miciński's (1873-1918), provided the literary inspiration for the Concerto, a fact verified by Szymanowski's first biographer, Zdzisław Jachimecki.¹⁰ That Szymanowski did not explicitly name the poem is typical of the Dionysian ideals displayed within the work. Szymanowski's compositional style reflects the aims of a Dionysian spirit, returning the soloist to within the orchestra and expressing the ecstasy of song and dance. The resultant concertante-style writing was both innovative and highly influential, moving away from the nineteenth-century conception of the genre as either a vehicle for virtuosic display or as a Romantic three movement sonata-form structure with the soloist pitted dialectically against the orchestra.

The development of this new mode, or violin idiom, was the product of Kochański and Szymanowski's collaborative relationship. Kochański's role cannot be overlooked. Not

⁹ Donald A. Zent, 'The Harmonic Language of Karol Szymanowski's Metopes, Op. 29, and Masques, Op. 34' (University of Cincinnati, 1988), 24.

¹⁰ Teresa Chylinska, *Szymanowski* (Cracow: PWM-Edition, 1982), 78.

only did he provide expert technical advice, continually editing the bowings and fingerings to make passages more ‘violinistic’, but he also contributed a large measure of his own creative spirit to the concerto as well as writing a brilliant cadenza.¹¹ Together with Szymanowski, Kochański imagined new possibilities of colour, timbre, nuance, gesture and possibilities of characterisation for the instrument. Whilst many commentators have identified Kochański’s own playing style as the trigger which elicited this new idiom, this thesis argues that it was also Kochański’s “truly unusual ‘musicianship’”¹² which enabled him to work intuitively with so many of the leading composers of the day. Moreover, his musical development may well have been shaped by his position as concertmaster of the Warsaw Philharmonic, which he took on from the precocious age of fourteen years old.

With this in mind, the importance of *fin-de-siècle* orchestral music in Szymanowski and Kochański’s development will be closely examined, with particular scrutiny towards the solo concertmaster repertoire from this period. Aspects of the violin idiom created in the First Violin Concerto will be examined and addressed in the context of these orchestral works. The final section of the thesis will address Szymanowski and Kochański’s collaborative legacy within the landscape of twentieth-century violin literature. Specific focus will be given to Prokofiev’s First Violin Concerto, which was conceived in direct collaboration with Kochański. The importance of Szymanowski and Kochański’s music in relation to Prokofiev’s Concerto is not widely known and is an area that deserves more attention.

The main aims of this thesis can therefore be summarised as follows: to understand the social and cultural milieu in which Szymanowski spent his formative years, to gain a deeper insight into the “new mode” of the First Violin Concerto by recognizing the Dionysian context of both Miciński’s *May Night* and the broader literary movements around the *fin-de-siècle* as typified by Nietzsche and Pater, and finally to comprehend Kochański and Szymanowski’s violin idiom in light of contemporary orchestral music, and the violin writing found in the concertmaster solos of these works.

In light of current research available, the development of these last two areas can benefit further from a deeper understanding, the application of which may also assist in the performance of the Concerto. This thesis, therefore, will not focus on a formal analysis of the work, which has already been undertaken to a very high level by Alistair Wightman,

¹¹ Szymanowski, ‘In Memory of Paweł Kochański’ in *Szymanowski on Music*, 353-7. Wightman notes that this article was first published in *Wiadomości Literackie* on 4 February 1934.

¹² *Ibid*, 355.

following on from Jim Samson's initial enquiry into the area. This decision is not motivated by the same factors that Emery perceived when he wrote in 1928 that

no attempt will be made in this article to give an analysis of this concerto. It is tremendously difficult, both in execution and in interpretation. Changes of key, time and tempo are too numerous to mention. Consecutive fifths and consecutive sevenths are used. Occasionally one can find a note that is not an accidental. It hardly seems conceivable that the concerto will ever become a concert favourite either with violinists or the listening public.¹³

Nor is this decision motivated by the difficulty posed of undertaking such a task, which one record critic for *The Gramophone* conveniently circumvented by writing simply that it was "too original to describe in print."¹⁴ Rather, this decision is based upon the fact that thorough research has already been made in this area of formal analysis, whilst other topics relating to the Concerto have been almost entirely neglected and would benefit from closer textual and musical scrutiny.

In seeking to determine the validity of this approach, examining a wide range of historical, cultural, social, philosophical and artistic theories and movements, seemingly unrelated to the First Violin Concerto, Szymanowski's own thoughts are of use. During a speech in 1930, for the opening of the State Conservatorium High School in Warsaw, Szymanowski mused

Music history is not a subject closed off from all others – separate pages torn out of the great book of human spiritual progress. At every stage it indicates mutual influences, interdependencies and points of contact or difference, not only with the related areas of literature, the theatre and the fine arts, but also with the most general ideas which have directed man's spiritual evolution... Romanticism shows fully how dependent was modern music on abstract philosophical ideas, on the one hand, and social liberation currents on the other. On all sides there are broad and easy highways leading to other areas of knowledge; through generalisations on aesthetics towards the exalted heights of philosophy and metaphysics, or towards man's social and economic history, or towards the natural and dignified soil in which all primitive forms of life germinate and then rise and bloom into great works of the art of music

¹³ Frederick B. Emery, *The Violin Concerto*, Vol. 1 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 271. First published in 1928 by Violin Literature Publishing.

¹⁴ B. M. Maciejewski, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Music* (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1967), 56.

– from the deepest levels of the human soul, eternally a source of longing, yearning for a higher level of life.”¹⁵

I proceed therefore with the knowledge that Szymanowski at least would be in favour of this heterogeneous approach, which seeks to view and understand the First Violin Concerto in the context of his world; not as a “self-contained ‘organic’ whole – it is, rather, a ‘relational event’ whose meaning resides in its relationship to other texts.”¹⁶

¹⁵ As quoted in Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian: The Love Songs of Hafiz op. 24*, 35. Downes lists the original source and translation as Zdzisław Sierpiński, *Karol Szymanowski: An Anthology*, trans. E. Harris (Warsaw: Interpress, 1986).

¹⁶ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 28.

1.2 Literature Review

Szymanowski scholarship in the West has rapidly evolved in the past few decades. However in the years following the composer's death in 1937 a major obstacle for researchers was the lack of English language materials available. Important Polish texts, as well as translations of Szymanowski's letters and documents, were essentially unattainable for non-Polish researchers. This situation gradually improved from the 1960's with biographical studies by B. M. Maciejewski and then later Teresa Chylinska leading the way forward for more extensive and specific studies. Whilst much fine work has been conducted by Jim Samson, Alistair Wightman, Christopher Palmer and Stephen Downes, there is still scope to explore the First Violin Concerto in further detail.

When looking broadly across all available material pertaining to The First Violin Concerto, (theses, books and journal articles), no author seems to have addressed the connection with Tadeusz Miciński's *May Night* in a satisfying level of detail. These commentators, whilst touching on some relevant elements, have failed to connect the First Violin Concerto and *May Night* to a broader musical, literary and cultural context of *fin-de-siècle* preoccupations, missing the crucial element in understanding the poem and in unlocking its meaning and significance to Szymanowski's work; the Dionysian context and symbolism at play.

In defence of this situation, the almost non-existent biographical and analytical English material available on Miciński and his literary output has not aided matters. Most of the references found relate to Szymanowski's music. However, the aspect that has been most crucially absent is a broader perspective of the literary and cultural movements at the *fin de siècle*, and an attempt to understand Miciński's works within this context. If we view *May Night* in light of Nietzsche and Pater's ideas of the Dionysian, for example, then it begins to unlock the meaning of Miciński's poem. To date, musicologists have avoided tackling the context and content of this poem, instead referencing its fantastical mood and mixture of reference points to various exotic cultures.

One of the first books to make reference to Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto within a wider biographical study is B. M. Maciejewski's *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Music*, written in 1967. Whilst no mention is made of Miciński's poem in relation to the Concerto, Maciejewski does provide an interesting account of the Concerto by the Polish

music scholar, Arthur Hedley. The source of Hedley's account is not listed anywhere in the book, nevertheless it does provide a compelling account of the rhapsodic nature of the Concerto. Maciejewski also briefly notes the parallels drawn between Szymanowski's work and the violin concertos of Delius, Elgar, Berg and Walton.¹⁷

Thirteen years later, Samson tackles the subject matter of the 'Young Poland' poets, writing that of the entire group, Miciński was the poet to whom Szymanowski felt "most drawn."¹⁸ His information regarding the *Four Songs for Voice and Piano* op. 11 and the *Six Songs for Voice and Piano* op. 20 is particularly useful, in that he names the anthology from which the poems were selected, *In The Darkness of Stars*, which Miciński published in 1902.¹⁹ Surprisingly, Samson does not state the fact that *May Night* belongs to the same anthology, *In The Darkness of Stars*. Knowing this connection not only dates the creation of the poem, on or before 1902, but also demonstrates that Szymanowski knew of the poem as early as 1904-05 when his op. 11 songs were composed.

Samson elaborates on the similarities shared by the composer and poet, such as their fascination with "the culture and religions of the East" and "esoteric mystical beliefs."²⁰ When Samson's discussion reaches the Violin Concerto he acknowledges the significance of the poem, writing: "like most of his music from this period the concerto is programmatic, based on the poem 'May Night' by Miciński."²¹ He also proffers that

much insight into its (the concerto's) particular musical world can be gained from the programme. Miciński's lengthy poem introduces us to an extraordinary world of fantasy where nature is interpreted through a blend of classical, oriental and Nordic mythologies."²²

Samson's instincts are correct when he correlates the Concerto's "atmosphere of fantasy and its evocative shimmering sonority, to this scenario"²³ of the poem, but eventually concludes that "it is unlikely that Szymanowski borrowed much more than the atmosphere of Miciński's *May Night*."²⁴ This conclusion suggests that Samson has not fully realised the Dionysian content of the poem and its implications to the First Violin Concerto.

¹⁷ Maciejewski, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Music*, 56.

¹⁸ Jim Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1980), 43.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 43 and 66.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 43.

²¹ *Ibid*, 82.

²² *Ibid*, 114.

²³ *Ibid*.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 119.

Christopher Palmer is the first musicologist to discuss the relevance of Nietzsche and the Dionysian spirit to the creative spirit of Szymanowski's middle period works. His book, *Szymanowski*, was first published in 1983 and made significant gains in the three years since Samson's previous work. It appeared under the umbrella of the BBC Music Guides, and as such is written in a more informal style with few references. Palmer acknowledges in the *Preface* to his own book, that "Alistair Wightman's still unpublished doctoral thesis of 1972 has yielded a number of valuable articles in musical periodicals, and he is currently at work on a full-scale critical biography."²⁵

In actuality the work to which Palmer was referring, Wightman's seminal text *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Work*, would not be published until 1999. Knowing that Palmer had access to his thesis and articles, it is interesting to speculate how much bearing and input this had on his own book. It seems unlikely that Palmer, in researching for the BBC Music Guides series, could have unearthed more development in Szymanowski research than Samson's attempt only three years before. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Palmer's work was almost certainly informed by the other areas of his research, such as Impressionism, Prokofiev, Britten, Delius, Howells and Bliss.

In Palmer's guide we find a general discussion of the

pronouncedly 'Dionysian' impulse which activates so many works of the middle period. Dionysus was the god of wine, fertility and the art of music, and largely through Nietzsche – a writer Szymanowski adored, considering *The Birth of Tragedy* 'one of the most beautiful books in the world' – Szymanowski became an ardent disciple.²⁶

Palmer also identifies the importance of the Nietzschean sentiment of "'joyful wisdom' (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*) which cannot be expressed in arguments, only in the ecstasy of song and dance."²⁷ But, he fails to make the distinction between the gods Dionysus and Pan, writing that "Dionysus (or Pan) is a recurrent figure in Szymanowski's work of this period... in the Miciński poem on which the First Violin Concerto is based ('Pan plays on his pipes in the oak-grove')."²⁸

²⁵ Christopher Palmer, *BBC Music Guides: Szymanowski* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1983), 7.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 25-26.

This lack of demarcation between the two figures leads the reader away from a truer understanding of the poem, and toward a confused understanding of the two gods. Pan, whilst closely associated with Dionysus, was a separate figure in Greek mythology. In some myths Pan is thought to be the son of Dionysus, although there are dozens of possibilities concerning the paternity of the shepherd god in the various legends. Walter Pater's *A Study of Dionysus*, for example states that "quite different from them in origin and intent, but confused with them in form, are those other companions of Dionysus, Pan and his children."²⁹

Palmer has provided a cogent, fascinating and eminently 'readable' text that cleverly draws from his own views and the available material to entice the audience into Szymanowski's musical sphere. However, it is to Wightman that we must turn to for deep scholarly insight and research. Considering that it was almost 20 years in the making, Wightman's 490 page biography, *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Work*, is a treasure of information, providing the most complete picture to date of the composer, his life and the historical framework around the creation of his works. Perhaps due to the factual style of the book, Wightman steers away from any less concrete interpretations of the works and avoids drawing overt correlations between various artistic movements and areas of cross-fertilization. Wightman also uses Szymanowski's correspondence, letters and writings, mostly in Polish, providing valuable translations of many passages from these documents. This thesis is certainly indebted to his book, especially in relation to the English translations of his letters quoted throughout the book.

Wightman's approach to the First Violin Concerto reveals the clear-eyed perspective of a musical historian, gathering, analysing and presenting the various pieces of evidence. Moreover, Wightman offers us the first complete English language translation of *May Night*. Building on Samson's structural and thematic analysis,³⁰ Wightman also provides an invaluable and comprehensive abstract analysis of the Concerto in the form of a table outlining the work's structure, with correlating musical examples of the motivic cells.³¹

Wightman perceptively observes Szymanowski's double quotation in reference to the figure of Sheherazade. A harmonic figure from the first piece in his op. 34 *Masques* triptych for solo piano *Sheherazade* is heard again in the First Violin Concerto,

²⁹ Walter Pater, *Greek Studies* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 15.

³⁰ Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski*, 115-19.

³¹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 181-88.

a rare self-quotation no doubt suggested by lines from the poem which provided the underlying programme for the concert... 'I wandered through the colonnades that Abderrahman built for his beloved, in the amethyst Sheherazadian night with talismans burning in the sky...'³²

Aside from highlighting this link, Wightman avoids any further attempt at a literary analysis of the poem, noting that aside from the quotation, "the concerto works as 'pure music'."³³

There is one reference to the Dionysian in relation to the First Violin Concerto. In describing the middle period works, Wightman writes that "after months of silence, the newly expanded style erupted in an almost Dionysian manner, taking on new, freely evolving forms in *Metopes, Mythes, Masques* and First Violin Concerto."³⁴ Wightman goes into much more detail regarding the Dionysian in his discussion of Szymanowski's opera *King Roger*. Here Wightman recognises that "another significant 'modern' layer derives from Nietzsche," with "Dionysian manifestations related closely to those of mythology and *The Bacchae*."³⁵ He discusses these concepts in association with specific characters from the opera, quoting a passage from Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Also of relevance to the First Violin Concerto is Wightman's translation of Szymanowski's writings.³⁶ This provides an important resource for a general perspective of Szymanowski's personal beliefs to English speaking researchers. Szymanowski's opinions relating to his contemporary composers are particularly fascinating. Within this collection, Szymanowski's tribute to violinist and dear friend Kochański, written shortly after his death, gives us much insight into Kochański's methods and creative processes, as well as a measure of his significance within twentieth-century violin literature.

In more recent times, another eminent Szymanowski scholar, Stephen Downes, has contributed two books and several articles and chapters to this field. His 2003 monograph *Szymanowski, Eroticism and the Voices of Mythology*, provides a highly detailed and thought-provoking study for those already familiar to Szymanowski's music and comfortable with an academic style of writing. Downes tackles Szymanowski's quest for his authorial voice,

³² Ibid, 165.

³³ Ibid, 179.

³⁴ Ibid, 134

³⁵ Ibid, 275.

³⁶ Szymanowski, *Szymanowski on Music: Selected Writings of Karol Szymanowski*, trans. and ed. Alistair Wightman (London: Toccata Press, 1999). Hereafter referred to as *Szymanowski on Music*.

which he discusses and demonstrates through the reading of myth and erotic tendencies, as well as relating this to *fin-de-siècle* philosophy, literature and musical sources.

It must be noted that Downes' intention is to tackle a complex subject and to delve into new territory of understanding; as such the writing is heavily interspersed with extra-musical references. Whilst Downes' discussion addresses many of Szymanowski's works that incorporate Miciński's poems and translations, unfortunately he does not include the First Violin Concerto or *May Night* in the scope of his study. Several insights can be gained however from his analysis into Szymanowski's authorial voices and other works, particularly his opera *King Roger*.

Shifting focus to doctoral studies on Szymanowski's violin music, currently there are two theses that encompass the First Violin Concerto, although neither of these focus exclusively on the Concerto. The first is Lisa Elizabeth Lantz's DMA thesis from 1994, 'The Violin Music of Karol Szymanowski: A review of the repertoire and stylistic features.' The second is Frank Kwantat Ho's DMA thesis 'The Violin Music of Karol Szymanowski,' written in 2000. As evinced by the titles, both authors canvas Szymanowski's entire violin oeuvre; two Violin Concertos, *Mythes*, Sonata op. 9, as well as several smaller pieces and transcriptions. The almost inevitable byproduct of such a broad scope is a lack of depth on individual works.

Szymanowski's *Mythes* have received more attention in recent years, being the subject of Hyojin Ahn's 2008 DMA dissertation, 'Karol Szymanowski's musical language in 'Myths' for violin and piano, op. 30,'³⁷ as well as Wojciech Kardewicz's DMA thesis entitled 'Impressionism in Polish music; Karol Szymanowski's 'Myths' for Violin and Piano op. 30,' from 2010.³⁸ Of these four theses concerning Szymanowski's violin music, including his middle period works, none of the authors discuss Szymanowski's work in a Dionysian context or explore the connection to influential literary figures such as Nietzsche and Pater.

What all of these dissertations take for granted, is that Szymanowski's violin compositions written during his middle period can be accurately described as Impressionistic. This thesis argues that many of the traits in Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto which have been attributed to the influence of Debussy and the Impressionist school are in fact born out

³⁷ Hyojin Ahn, 'Karol Szymanowski's Musical Language in "Myths" for Violin and Piano, Op. 30.' (Rice University, 2008).

³⁸ Wojciech Kardewicz, 'Impressionism in Polish Music; Karol Szymanowski's "Myths" for violin and piano op. 30' (University of California, 2010).

of a Dionysian consciousness. Whilst these similarities do exist aurally, Szymanowski arrived at this analogous point of colour-oriented writing via a completely different approach. Of Impressionist trends in literature, Verlaine states in his *Art Poétique*, “grandiosity and emotional rhetoric are utterly alien to this new world of poetry.”³⁹ If this were applied to music, it is obvious that Szymanowski’s First Violin Concerto would be excluded. Despite containing moments of the utmost delicacy, this type of chamber music writing is contrasted with overblown orchestration verging on brutality, delivering powerful climaxes on a grand-scale and rightly earning Szymanowski his ‘Post-Wagnerian’ moniker.⁴⁰

All four theses use this ‘Impressionist’ labeling throughout with varying degrees of regard to the inherent complexities of using such a title. Lantz states that descriptions of Szymanowski have often included the label ‘Polish-Impressionist’ and that his music “can be divided into three distinct stylistic periods: Post-Romanticism; Impressionism; Nationalism.”⁴¹ Meanwhile, Ho writes of Szymanowski’s “three journeys abroad (to Italy in 1909, Sicily in 1910, and North Africa in 1914) [which] were influential in the formation of his “Impressionist” style.”⁴² Whilst these terms are useful in demarcating periods of time for the sake of clarity, they run the risk of grouping people and their histories together superficially, at the expense of a more detailed and complex truth.

Among these violin-specific studies however, there are instances where the term ‘Impressionistic’ is called into question. Ho, for example, debates whether the works are completely Impressionistic, or in fact a blend of Impressionism and German Neo-Romanticism, or Impressionism and German Expressionism. He conjectures that

the term ‘impressionist’ does not adequately describe Szymanowski’s music from this period, for vestiges of Romanticism remain... If anything, the ‘Impressionist’ works are characterised by a heightened sense of expression, as can be heard, for example, in the climactic section of the First Violin Concerto; the passage is closer in style to a late Romantic symphonic work than to, say, Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* (1892-94).⁴³

³⁹ Palmer, *Impressionism in Music*, 17.

⁴⁰ The title of Downes’ book, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian: The Love Songs of Hafiz op. 24*.

⁴¹ Lisa Elizabeth Lantz, ‘The Violin Music of Karol Szymanowski: A Review of the Repertoire and Stylistic Features’ (Ohio State University, 1994), 2.

⁴² Frank Kwantat Ho, ‘The Violin Music of Karol Szymanowski’ (University of Alberta, 2000), 5.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 11.

What Ho can perhaps sense here is that the label of 'Impressionism' does not adequately describe Szymanowski's middle period music, despite the many similarities in texture, colour and sonorities to the music of the French Impressionists.

Some of Ho's observations appear too simplistic however, such as his statement that Szymanowski's "former foundation in German Romanticism gave way to French Impressionism as represented by Debussy and Ravel."⁴⁴ Ho has committed a similar misdemeanour as the Polish music critic Rytel whom Szymanowski attacked in his article 'My Splendid Isolation', writing that

As far as Rytel is concerned, the content of my music... may be described in its entirety in terms of influences which every so often change as it were mechanically from one composer to another. In other words, Strauss, Reger, and even – just imagine it! – Schoenberg, whose music I detest. Subsequently we have the 'new phase': Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, etc., etc. He does not see my real face behind these masks, which, one after another, he would have me wear, and asserts that I really do not have a face of my own at all.⁴⁵

Whilst Ho mentions Debussy and Ravel as Impressionistic musical influences, he fails to mention Scriabin at all. It could be argued that Szymanowski's and Scriabin's similar philosophical and literary interests, shared reverence of Chopin and Wagner, as well as their highly developed pianistic skills were of more relevance than either Ravel or Debussy. Certainly Szymanowski studied his music in great detail and incorporated many of Scriabin's lush harmonic combinations such as ninths, elevenths, thirteenths and unresolved dissonances. Scriabin's penchant for ecstatic and languorous moods is perhaps the most important connection here in relation to Szymanowski's middle period works. Palmer, for example, notes that of the Post-Impressionists in Russia, vestiges of Scriabin's unique musical language can be found in the work of only two composers: Szymanowski and the English composer William Baines.⁴⁶

Lantz's study represents the first attempt in the postgraduate sphere to catalogue Szymanowski's violin compositions. As such, it provides a warmly written overview of his work, from the point of view of an admiring violinist-performer. Lantz can be applauded for signifying the importance of Paweł Kochoński to Szymanowski's works as well as providing

⁴⁴ Ibid, 37.

⁴⁵ Szymanowski, 'My Splendid Isolation' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 98-9. Wightman notes that this article was first published in *Kurier Polski* on 26 November 1922.

⁴⁶ Christopher Palmer, *Impressionism in Music* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 216.

a basic but clear account of historical events, punctuated with interesting quotations. On the positive side, Lantz describes Szymanowski's focus on "the study of ancient Greek and Arabic cultures and to early Christian art"⁴⁷ during the period between 1912 to 1914, as well as mentioning in passing that "the influences of Ravel, Debussy and Skryabin are evident in the new textural and colouristic devices for both the violin and piano,"⁴⁸ but does not explore the works of these composers in any further detail.

Much confusion about any 'Impressionistic' labeling of Szymanowski's middle period stems from the similarity of preoccupations between various artistic movements of the time; Impressionism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Neo-Romanticism, Post-Romanticism and Decadence. All of these movements contain overlapping elements and similar traits. Most of these labels were first used by critics to deride original work which they were unfamiliar with, before entering the vocabulary as imprecise terms which were often refuted by the artists whose work they described. In his academic writings Szymanowski was known to disapprove of the many 'isms' which artists were subjected to and was in particular reproachful of the decision by critics to group Ravel and Debussy together under the heading of 'French Impressionism in Music', writing in 1925

I believe that this is fundamentally a 'cliché', created *ad hoc* by music critics (on the basis of some superficial analogies with the contemporaneous movement in painting). As so often happens, these critics did not know in which already prepared pigeonhole to place a living, impulsive eruption of truly French music.⁴⁹

When referencing contemporaneous Impressionistic violin music, it is specious to argue that the violin works of Ravel and Debussy provided the genesis for Szymanowski's own violin compositions. Szymanowski had an enormous amount of respect for both Debussy and Ravel and was no doubt aware of, and influenced by, the string writing and musical language in their orchestral works. He described, for example, the effect that Debussy's music had as, "suddenly opening eyes in stifling, fetid concert halls to the existence of enchanted gardens and a boundless landscape of mountains, seas and clouds."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Lantz, 'The Violin Music of Karol Szymanowski', 32.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

⁴⁹ Szymanowski, 'Maurice Ravel on the Occasion of his Fiftieth Birthday' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 239. Wightman notes that this article was first published in *Muzyka*, March 1925.

⁵⁰ Szymanowski, 'Karol Szymanowski on Contemporary Music' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 201. Wightman notes that this is the text of an interview given to Jerzy Rytard, first published on 12 November 1922 in the Warsaw journal *Kurier Polski*.

If we examine the timeframe of violin works, however, Debussy's Violin Sonata in G minor was conceived in 1916 and completed in 1917, shortly after Szymanowski composed the *Mythes* and First Violin Concerto. During the war, Szymanowski divided his time between the Tymoszwowka estate, the Ukrainian capital Kiev and a country manor house at Zarudie, which rules out the possibility that Szymanowski was aware of Debussy's Violin Sonata at the time. Ravel's Violin Sonata in G major, on the other hand, was written much later between 1923-27.

Finally, of great relevance to my thesis is an article in the *Polish Musical Journal* entitled 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection.'⁵¹ The author, Tyrone Greive, is a violin professor in the United States who has specialized in studying Polish violin repertoire. This article addresses Kochański's work as a violinist, collaborator and composer. It is divided into two sections plus a bibliography. Part one deals with Kochański's life and manuscripts and part two focuses on Kochański's manuscript collection.

Greive includes an extremely valuable list of all of the compositions that Kochański assisted in collaborating on, enabling an examination of the common elements in these compositions, which range from Prokofiev to Bloch, Stravinsky and Bax. Part two also contains an examination of violin techniques employed by Szymanowski and Kochański in the *Mythes*. This article is of great importance, providing the first research into Kochański's collaborative work and cataloguing the music from his manuscript collection.

⁵¹ Tyrone Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection' *Polish Music Journal*, vol. 1, (1998).

1.3 Biographical Information

i) Karol Szymanowski

Szymanowski (1882-1937) was born into an aristocratic Polish land-owning family in the Tymoszwka village, situated in the Kiev province of the Ukraine. Although they were members of the landed gentry, the family was not particularly wealthy despite a property in the neighbouring town of Elisavetgrad. They lived a comfortable existence without want for any of life's necessities and Karol, his brother Feliks, and his sisters, Anna, Zofia and Stanisława experienced a childhood rich largely in cultural experience and privilege. The family genealogies on both sides reveal a depth of artistic relatives: professional pianists, singers, composers and writers.⁵² Both parents encouraged their children to make full use of their imaginative potential and to study a broad range of academic fields including music, literature, languages and the sciences.

Szymanowski's father, Stanisław Korwin-Szymanowski, was a man of vast intellect, which he applied particularly to the fields of science and music, playing both the piano and cello with proficiency. Stanisław's own family home, the Orlowka estate, had hosted recitals by Tausig and Liszt, and it was this exceptionally high standard of cultural excellence that Stanisław sought to replicate at Tymoszwka. There were many impromptu concert recitals given by Karol and his siblings. Often an entire musical production would be staged, with the texts and libretto, sets, musical accompaniment and performances all contributed by family members. Szymanowski's mother, Baroness Anna Taube, was also of noble ancestry, with a mixture of Swedish and Polish heritage. She was a proficient amateur pianist as well as a keen linguist.

Szymanowski's uncle, Gustav Neuhaus, was a well-regarded pianist and ran a successful music school in the nearby town of Elisavetgrad. When he was ten years old, Karol moved there to continue his musical education, taking piano lessons and studying musical theory. Neuhaus saw the potential in his young nephew and encouraged him to study the music of German masters such as Bach, Brahms and Beethoven. Importantly, he also introduced Karol to the literature, poetry and philosophy of the day, avidly reading Tetmajer, Mickiewicz, Kasproicz, Byron, Goethe, Nietzsche, Musset, Verlaine and Pushkin.⁵³ Aside from his native tongue, Szymanowski was fluent in German, French and Russian. We know,

⁵² See Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian: The Love Songs of Hafiz op. 24*, 25-6.

⁵³ Zent, 'The harmonic language of Szymanowski's 'Metopes,' Op. 29 and 'Masques,' Op. 34', 19.

for example, that Karol set the words of Tetmajer, Verlaine and Nietzsche to music during his time in Elisavetgrad. Unfortunately these pieces were most likely destroyed during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 when the Tymoszwowka estate was ransacked and destroyed.⁵⁴

In 1901, Szymanowski moved to Warsaw to study composition and counterpoint with Zygmunt Noskowski, “acquainting himself with the technique of every instrument in the orchestra, studying scores by Wagner, R. Strauss and Scriabin.”⁵⁵ Much criticism of Szymanowski’s early output focuses on charges of epigonism and his heavy debt to the late German Romantics. Admittedly, these were charges that most young composers of the day faced.

Both Scriabin and Szymanowski’s musical personalities, and certainly their pianistic writing, can be linked to Chopin, the one true Polish figure of inspiration for Szymanowski, albeit a figure from a distant past. A fellow student in Warsaw, Ludomir Różycki, recalled Szymanowski’s compositional process during this period; “when he was working on his Piano Sonata (the first), I often found him at the piano studying meticulously the structure of Chopin’s and Scriabin’s piano passages. He knew how to discern in their music the secrets of piano style.”⁵⁶

Szymanowski’s first foray into violin compositions came in 1904 with his Sonata for Violin and Piano in D minor, op. 9. This early work somewhat unsubtly bears the imprint of Cesar Franck’s Violin Sonata in A major, featuring a cyclic form over the three movements. A beautiful Romance for violin and piano, op. 23 was also composed in 1910 and dedicated to Kochański. Both of these pieces are well written, however there is nothing startling or unexpected in their conception that suggests the future advancements Szymanowski would make in writing for the violin.

Like virtually all other European composers living at the turn of the century, Szymanowski was familiar with Richard Wagner’s music dramas. Throughout his compositional ‘apprenticeship’, the music of both Wagner and Strauss had a significant impact, and their presence is easily detected in his early works. Szymanowski’s introduction to Wagner’s music came in 1894 when he was travelling back from Switzerland with his family through Vienna, affording them the opportunity to attend a production of *Lohengrin*

⁵⁴ Wightman, ‘Introduction’ to Szymanowski, *Szymanowski on Music*, 18.

⁵⁵ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

there.⁵⁷ The impact of Wagner's music on the fourteen year-old student was immediate. He wrote later in 1909,

What is interesting is that at that time I also got to know other operas (Gounod's *Faust*, *Carmen*, *Traviata* etc.). But they made no impression on me – not even *Carmen* which I only came to value later. The shock which disturbed my equilibrium was *Lohengrin* – and it was precisely that which shaped my future life. Henceforth Wagner became the *sole* object of my dreams. And I came to know all his works from piano reductions.⁵⁸

In 1905 Szymanowski became acquainted with Gregorz Fitelberg, a composer and conductor who would play an important role in his career, not only championing his works but also helping him to secure a prestigious publishing contract in 1912 with Universal Edition in Vienna. Both Szymanowski and Fitelberg were members of the Young Poland in Music group, which existed from 1905 until around 1911. Toward the end of 1908, after a time living abroad and travelling in Italy, Szymanowski returned to Warsaw. Fitelberg was invited to conduct a series of twelve concerts with the Warsaw Philharmonic, in essence a position similar to that of an assistant to the chief conductor Emil Řezníček.

Fitelberg's programming was daring and bold considering the close-minded attitude of many 'Varsovians' – he even abandoned the format, popular to this day, of enticing a crowd with a high profile soloist on the bill in favour of more financially risky concert programs of purely orchestral music. Some of the new works that Fitelberg premiered with the Warsaw Philharmonic during this period included Szymanowski's Polish contemporary Mieczysław Karłowicz's *Eternal Songs*, *Stanisław and Anna Oswiecim* and *Lithuanian Rhapsody* as well Debussy's *La Mer* and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole*, Sibelius's *En Saga* and Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead*.⁵⁹

Two of Szymanowski's other closest friends, Kochański and the Polish pianist Arthur Rubinstein, were also invited to perform concertos during this time; Brahms's Violin Concerto and Second Piano Concerto respectively. It seems Szymanowski, Kochański, Rubinstein and Fitelberg were all residing at the Victoria Hotel which was situated in the vicinity of the Philharmonic Hall, and they had a splendid time together. In what was to be the beginning of a rather hedonistic pattern, the group's *joie de vivre* often spilled over into

⁵⁷ Ibid, 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 67.

late night endeavours - animated musical discussions which would last throughout the entire evening accompanied by copious amounts of alcohol and leading to considerable hotel debts.⁶⁰

Prior to the war, further travel followed, with Kochański dividing his time between Tymoszwka, Vienna and Berlin, with journeys further afield to Italy, Sicily and North Africa. Szymanowski's unsustainable approach to financial matters seems to have frustrated his many debtors across Europe, whether they were landlords, hotel managers or tailors. Palmer notes that Szymanowski seemed undecided as to whether he wanted to apply himself diligently to music or "to criss-cross Europe as if on some everlasting aristocratic grand tour."⁶¹ This behaviour was to become a pattern for Szymanowski, eventually leading to desolation and financial ruin.

In 1934 Szymanowski described his troubles to his sister Stasia, writing "I have absolutely nothing. Every day I borrow a few zloty from friends."⁶² He was at least aware of his downfalls in this area, remarking to Smeterlin in 1926 of the deteriorating state of affairs for artists in Poland, "especially fools like me who have no idea of practical life."⁶³

The outbreak of war across Europe in 1914 forced this pattern of a travelling life to a close, with Szymanowski catching the last peace-time train service back to Tymoszwka. During the next three years, when Szymanowski's freedoms were curtailed by the war, he had little choice but to stay and work at Tymoszwka with travel restricted to places only in the near vicinity. Szymanowski's physical confinement forced him to draw from the deep wells of his own imagination, finding inspiration in his study of antiquity and the exotic east coupled with personal memories from recent travels and the works of his literary idols. This period was to be his most creative. In addition to the violin works, masterpieces such as the *Symphony no. 3 Song of the Night op. 27*, *Metopes op. 29*, *Songs of a Fairy-Tale Princess op. 31* and *Masques op. 34* were all conceived during this time.

After the war, Szymanowski's existence proved to be even more precarious. The house at Tymoszwka was lost forever and Szymanowski found himself living in the cramped family townhouse at Elisavetgrad. This property was eventually auctioned to raise much needed funds, and Szymanowski was forced to live in rented accommodation and forgo

⁶⁰ Ibid, 68.

⁶¹ Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 12.

⁶² Ibid, 19.

⁶³ Wightman, 306.

the luxury of owning his own piano for the remainder of his life. Around 1918 his thoughts also turned to literary writing, most likely as a coping mechanism both for his current financial situation and his repressed homoerotic tendencies, resulting in a novel entitled *Epebos*.

During this time, Szymanowski's professional decisions were increasingly influenced by his need to provide for his mother and sisters, leaving less time to focus on composing. Changes in his compositional style reflect the harsh reality of life that Szymanowski now faced. For example, if we look at his First String Quartet, one would imagine that it would continue in a similar idiom to the First Violin Concerto and *Mythes*.

The quartet, in fact, illustrates the dramatic schism that occurred in Szymanowski's life during the years after World War I. The first movement opens with the familiar high tessitura, shimmering string sonorities and languorous melodic lines. By the final movement, Szymanowski's compositional style has become functional and emotionally detached, the rather academic polytonal fugue being more akin to the neoclassical style of Stravinsky. Even his reversion back to the highly separated three movement form is telling of the changes that were rapidly occurring in his life and reflected in his music.

Samson writes that Szymanowski's work on the First String Quartet and two cantatas, *Demeter* and *Agave*, was "dramatically interrupted by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in October 1917, an event which apparently took Szymanowski completely by surprise."⁶⁴ The radiant scores of the middle period, composed during the First World War were behind him. There was of course one last masterpiece to be written in the dying embers of this style, his opera *King Roger* which reflected many of the themes present in his semi-autobiographical novel *Epebos*. After the completion of *King Roger* this aesthetic was never to be revisited, Szymanowski's interest in composition was increasingly turned to the folk-music of his own country, particularly the mountainous Podhale and Tatra regions.

In the early 1920's Szymanowski travelled alongside Kochański and Rubinstein to New York and London, although his reserved attitude amongst strangers meant that this was largely unenjoyable for him. Rubinstein's recollections, despite moments that display Szymanowski's humour and warmth, also depict a sensitivity within his character. He noted that around this time "Karol was not easy to handle. He suffered from agoraphobia and was exceedingly reserved with strangers. He also had an aversion to showing his works to

⁶⁴ Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski*, 83.

musicians who had not already heard of him. He would say, ‘I hate to pass exams at my age!’”⁶⁵

In 1927 Szymanowski accepted the post of Director of the Warsaw Conservatorium. Despite his attempts to channel much energy into positive reforms, Szymanowski was perhaps less practised in the political skills necessary to succeed in such a bureaucratic environment. The stress of this environment no doubt exacerbated Szymanowski’s health problems, which Wightman notes were pulmonary tuberculosis and alcoholism, and he eventually resigned from the position in 1929.⁶⁶ In the aftermath of this, and another unsuccessful institutional role, Szymanowski directed much of his creative energy toward writing about the role of music in education and society. Many of these essays bear testimony to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer’s concepts regarding the universality of music and its privileged place within the artistic disciplines. After a period of ill-health, Szymanowski passed away in March 1937 in Lausanne.

⁶⁵ Arthur Rubinstein, *My Many Years* (London: Hamilton, 1987), 112.

⁶⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 333.

ii) Paweł Kochański

The Kochański family were living in Orel, a town approximately 350 kilometres south of Moscow, when baby Paweł arrived into the world on September 14, 1887. Little is known about his family life, however we do know his first violin teacher was his father, prior to formal lessons in the city of Odessa which began from the age of seven. Kochański's violin teacher in Odessa, that great breeding ground of concert violinists, was Emil Młynarski, a Polish violinist who had studied with the legendary pedagogue Leopold Auer.⁶⁷

When Młynarski was offered the inaugural role of principal conductor and musical director of the newly founded Warsaw Philharmonic in 1901, he offered the role of concertmaster to his most exceptional student, the fourteen-year-old Kochański.⁶⁸ One can only speculate as to the reaction, whether it disgruntled the experienced orchestral players in Warsaw at the time, or whether they supported the appointment of the young prodigy. In any case Kochański, from the records available, appears to have held the position of concertmaster for two years before moving to Belgium to pursue further studies with Cesar Thomson at the Brussels Conservatoire in 1903. After only four months of study with Thomson he was awarded the *premier prix 'avec la plus grande distinction.'*⁶⁹

We are indebted to Arthur Rubinstein for providing a vivid description of Kochański's person. On this matter, Rubinstein wrote

Paul was slim and short; thin, slightly bowed legs; a tremendous core of vitality in him. He had one of the most fascinating and attractive heads I have ever seen – his face square and strong, his chin pointed, and his nose delicately shaped and faintly curved. But his eyes were his most striking feature – coal black, formed like oblique almonds, with a velvety deep expression which could be very moving, especially while he was playing. A black, wavy, unruly shock of hair covered his head.⁷⁰

Rubinstein also affords us a rare description of Kochański's family, after meeting them in 1912 during a visit to Leipzig.

⁶⁷ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 1.

⁶⁸ Edmund Straeten, *The History of the Violin: Its Ancestors and Collateral Instruments from Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 1 (Da Capo Press, New York, 1968), 404.

⁶⁹ Wightman, 23.

⁷⁰ Henry Roth, 'Refined Colourist' *The Strad*, vol. 98, (1987), 688.

I dined the next evening at Paul's parents' apartment, where I met his whole family. Right away I liked his mother, who had the same black velvet eyes and some of the vitality of her son. His father was less interesting; he struck me as a typical Russian Orthodox Jew except that he was uncommunicative and taciturn. The two sisters were lively and hospitable, though not attractive, but a younger brother, a pianist who had just graduated from the Conservatory, displeased me by his manners and lack of sincerity.⁷¹

Throughout his life, Kochański was an active soloist and chamber musician and a dedicated teacher. His popularity with audiences and critics was attained through "sterling musical qualities and [the] absence of sensationalist methods."⁷² He held teaching positions in Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Kiev and New York. The Paul Kochański Manuscript Collection, housed in the archives of the Music Department in the National Library of Warsaw, is an important primary source, cataloguing the compositions which were created with Kochański's facilitation and advice.

Many of these scores and manuscripts are covered with Kochański's handwritten revisions and notes. Works which resulted from direct collaboration with Kochański are listed in **Table 1**,⁷³ and includes Prokofiev's Violin Concerto no. 1 and *Five Melodies op. 35*, Ernest Bloch's First Sonata and Igor Stravinsky's *Suite for Violin and Piano after themes, fragments and pieces by Giambattista Pergolesi*.

⁷¹ Arthur Rubinstein, *My Young Years*, (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1973), 373.

⁷² "Paul Kochański Appears," *The New York Times*, February 15, 1921, p. 9, col. 4.

⁷³ Greive, 'Kochoński's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 5.

Table 1. Works Resulting from Collaboration with Paul Kochański

COMPOSER	WORK	YEAR	DEDICATION
Karol Szymanowski	<i>Nocturne and Tarantella</i> , op. 28	1915	Auguste Iwański
Karol Szymanowski	<i>Mythes</i> , op. 30	1915	Sophie Kochańska
Karol Szymanowski	Concerto no. 1	1916	Paul Kochański
Serge Prokofiev	Concerto no. 1 in D major	1917	
Arnold Bax	First Sonata (revised)	1920	Paul Kochański
Ernest Bloch	First Sonata	1921	Paul Rosenfeld
Serge Prokofiev	Five Melodies, op. 35-bis	1925	Nos. 1, 3, 4: Paul Kochański, no. 2: Cecilia Hansen, No. 5: Joseph Szigeti
Igor Stravinsky	Suite for violin and piano, after themes, fragments and pieces by Giambattista Pergolesi	1925	Paul Kochański
Karol Szymanowski	Three Paganini Caprices, op. 40	1926	No. 20, 21: Paul Kochański no. 24: Jozef Oziminski
Karol Szymanowski	Concerto no. 2	1932-33	Paul Kochański

Szymanowski's tribute written after the death of Kochański reveals his deep love and admiration for his friend. It allows us to begin to glean the rare attributes he possessed as a musician and to understand the depth of his contribution to modern violin playing.

He is usually described as 'a splendid, brilliant virtuoso violinist', but just how many really splendid virtuoso violinists are there today?! It is really only possible to differentiate the so very rare, truly artistic performer from the rest when one can discern a superstructure, towering above the technical excellence which today is both inevitable and obligatory, a superstructure in which is lodged the mysterious phenomenon of the artist's creative individuality.⁷⁴

As a collaborating violinist, he assisted many composers with their violin works, as well as making many transcriptions and composing himself. **Table 2**⁷⁵ lists Kochański's compositions and arrangements. These aspects of Kochański's professional life will be discussed in further detail in part three of this thesis. After the Russian Revolution he emigrated with his wife Zofia to America in 1921, where they settled in New York. Official tributes recognising his work include the Polish Officer Cross and a membership in the *Legion d'Honneur*.⁷⁶

Szymanowski intended for Kochański to perform the premiere of the First Violin Concerto in a concert organized to take place on the 4th February 1917 in St. Petersburg under the baton of Ziloti. However due to the revolutionary uprisings between 1916-17 the performances had to be abandoned. Several years passed until another opportunity for the premiere arose, this time in Warsaw on the 1st November 1922 with Jozef Oziminski receiving the honours of public debutante. By this time Kochański was living in America. Nevertheless, Kochański gave the American premiere of the Concerto in 1924 to New York and Philadelphia audiences with Leopold Stokowski conducting.

⁷⁴ Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 355.

⁷⁵ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 3.

⁷⁶ Mieczysława Hanuszewska. 'Kochański, Paweł' *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Oxford Music Online.
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15236>.

Table 2. Paul Kochański's Compositions and Transcriptions

COMPOSER	TITLE	PUBLISHER	YEAR
Nicolo Paganini	<i>Campanella</i>	Carl Fischer	1922
Alexander Glazunov	<i>Melodie Arabe</i>	Carl Fischer	1923
Fryderyk Chopin	Mazurka, op. 6, no. 3	Carl Fischer	1923
Paul Kochański (vln.) Karol Szymanowski (pno.)	<i>Danse sauvage</i> [Wild Dance]	Carl Fischer	1925
Paul Kochański (vln.) Karol Szymanowski (pno.)	<i>L'Aube</i> [The Dawn]	Carl Fischer	1925
Manuel de Falla	<i>Suite populaire espagnole</i>	Max Eschig	1925
Joaquin Nin	<i>Chants d'Espagnole</i>	Max Eschig	1926
Karol Szymanowski	<i>Roxana's Song</i> from <i>King Roger</i>	Universal Edition	1926
Maurice Ravel	<i>Pavane pour une infante défunte</i>	Max Eschig	1927
Paul Kochański	<i>Flight</i> (Caprice)	Carl Fischer	1928
Manuel de Falla	<i>Danse rituelle du feu</i> [Ritual Fire Dance] <i>tirée de El amor brujo</i>	Max Eschig	c. 1930
Franz Schubert	Impromptu, op. 90, no. 4	Carl Fischer	1930
Karol Szymanowski	Dance from <i>Harnasie</i>	Universal Edition	1931
Karol Szymanowski	<i>Kurpie Song</i>	Universal Edition	1931
Fryderyk Chopin	Nocturne in C # minor, op. 62, no. 1	Carl Fischer	1922
Manuel de Falla	<i>Pantomime (El amor brujo)</i>	Chester	1931
Aleksander Scriabin	Etude, op. 42, no. 4	G. Schirmer	1933
Manuel de Falla	<i>Danza del Terre</i>	Chester	1934
Paul Kochański	<i>Souvenir d'un lieu cher</i> , op. 42, no. 3	Published – n/a	n/a

Szymanowski and Kochański first met in Warsaw in 1901. When Szymanowski arrived in Warsaw he was seeking a suitable teacher and institution to continue his compositional studies. His first meeting was with Młynarski, who was the director of the Warsaw Opera and Kochański's violin teacher. Młynarski would go on to conduct various premieres of Szymanowski's works, but at the time saw little future for the student and advised him to enrol in a business school "since he did not augur any future for him in the musical field, stating that he was not possessed of any great talent at all."⁷⁷ Szymanowski went on to seek further advice, thankfully, and enrolled instead with Noskowski.

The opening quotation of this thesis testifies to Kochański's importance in Szymanowski's violin compositions, as well as to his historical significance: "all works by other composers related to this style."⁷⁸ Szymanowski reinforced these sentiments in another letter to Paweł's wife Zofia in January 1929, writing

it is a strange thing that all that is best and finest in my life is in some strange way indissolubly connected with you in music, because, it is no use talking, I feel with every nerve, every emotion that e.g. my [First] concerto, where so much is Paweł's, is up to now, my best and favourite composition.⁷⁹

Kochański and Szymanowski's friendship spanned the next thirty-three years until the violinist's death of liver cancer in January 1934, just months after performing the premiere of Szymanowski's recently completed Second Violin Concerto. Again Kochański had advised Szymanowski on the solo part and written the cadenza, conceding to Rubinstein, "I am exhausted... Karol is writing a beautiful second concerto for the violin and needed my help for the solo part. We spent hours and hours working at it but I feel happy to be of any use to him."⁸⁰ Kochański and Rubinstein were also very close friends, playing concert recitals together throughout their careers. Rubinstein described Kochański as his "only and best friend," and that musically they played as though they had been "made for each other."⁸¹ Rubinstein recalled the premiere of Szymanowski's Second Concerto, writing that

the night of the concert my poor dear Paul was so weak that he had to play seated. For quite some time we had begun to fear the worst. Now, when I saw him, I

⁷⁷ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 21.

⁷⁸ Alistair Wightman, 'Szymanowski, Bartok and the Violin.' *The Musical Times*, vol. 122, (1981), 159.

⁷⁹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 177.

⁸⁰ Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 274.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 109.

received a terrible shock. He had lost weight, his face had a strange grayish colour, and his beautiful almond eyes had lost their shine and their spirit. His pathetic effort to appear cheerful made me want to cry.⁸²

Szymanowski would forevermore associate his Second Violin Concerto with Paweł's death. He wrote in 1934 that "I doubt whether this work, which has become the symbol of such terrible memories, will ever shake off the black bands of mourning with which it is shrouded in my mind."⁸³

⁸² Ibid, 342.

⁸³ Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 357.

1.4 *Fin-de-siècle* Poland

i) Young Poland in Music

One of the formative influences on the young Szymanowski was his participation in the collective known as Young Poland in Music. Founded in 1905, the main purpose of the group of emerging composers was to establish the means to independently publish and distribute their works within the continent. But, it was also born out of frustration toward the insular, backward and controlling approach of the established Polish musical authority. The group's aim was to create a contemporary Polish body of work that would disseminate and circulate current trends of modernism that were relevant in European artistic circles at the time.

The founding members included Gregorz Fitelberg, Ludomir Różycki, Apolinary Szeluto, Szymanowski and Prince Władysław Lubomirski. As Young Poland in Music gained momentum it attracted various artists to its folds. Mieczysław Karłowicz was associated with the group for a period, however his Violin Concerto in D minor was written just prior to this time in 1902.⁸⁴ The group received funding from their primary patron and member, Prince Lubomirski, a man of valuable political and social connections who dabbled in composition himself. They found a German publisher in Leipzig and based the group's offices in Berlin, an act which is telling of their wish to be viewed as 'European' rather than provincially Polish.⁸⁵

The inspiration behind the creation of Young Poland in Music was the cultural movement Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*). In this sense the music arm of the movement can be understood as a natural progression that flowed on from the literary and artistic disciplines. This joining of artistic spheres connected many of the leading young Polish artists, writers, poets and musicians of the day, which led to a sharing of philosophical ideas and the creation of many collaborative projects. Tadeusz Miciński, who wrote the poem *May Night*, was considered to be one of the leading poets and dramatists of the group. Other writers and poets

⁸⁴ Alistair Wightman, *Karłowicz, Young Poland and the Musical Fin-de-siècle* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 12.

⁸⁵ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 42-43.

included Kazimierz Tetmajer, Jan Kasprowicz, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Jan Augustyn Kisielewski, Jan Lemanski and Leopold Staff.⁸⁶

In *fin-de-siècle* Poland a group of independent artists began the circulation of little magazines or literary journals that serviced Poland's two major capitals. In Krakow a pamphlet entitled *Life (Życie)* was published between 1897 and 1900. Warsaw followed shortly after with a publication entitled *Chimera*, that ran from 1900 until 1907. The term 'Young Poland' was coined in an article by *Life's* editor Artur Górski in 1899, although it certainly shares many similarities with other movements from the nineteenth century such as Young Germany, Young Belgium and Young Scandinavia.⁸⁷ Much of the content promoted Symbolist and Decadent trends in literature and art that had become *de rigueur* in the fashionable artistic centres of Paris and London. The editors of both of these magazines sought to promote Polish artists, in particular writers, poets and visual artists, as "integral participants of an international art world,"⁸⁸ through their presentation of a modernist polemic and visual program.

As Justyna Drozdek elaborates in the introduction to her thesis '*Life and Chimera: Framing Modernism in Poland*':

Both periodicals were published during a period in which Poland, having been partitioned among Russia, Prussia, and Austria in the late eighteenth century, did not exist. These partitions fuelled a nationalist discourse in which art functioned as a tool for patriotic expression. However, the members of the artistic and literary movement of Young Poland challenged the notion of an instructive art. They strove instead to redefine national art by arguing that patriotism should be internalised rather than didactically conveyed and, furthermore, insisted that Polish art had to become modern to thrive internationally. *Life* and *Chimera* reinforced these goals through a deliberate visual and rhetorical program that underscored the supremacy of modernism.⁸⁹

Through their Polish translations of major foreign writers, poets and playwrights, they introduced their readership to artists such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Henrik Ibsen, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Maurice Maeterlinck. Downes notes that under

⁸⁶ Justyna Drozdek, '*Life and Chimera: Framing Modernism in Poland*' (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 2008), 165.

⁸⁷ Wightman, *Karłowicz, Young Poland and the Musical Fin-de-siècle*, 19.

⁸⁸ Drozdek, '*Life and Chimera: Framing Modernism in Poland*', 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Przesmycki's editorial reign at *Chimera*, "several translations of Nietzsche appeared between 1901 and 1907."⁹⁰

The inclusion of woodblock prints by Japanese artists was very much in vogue with the growing interest in Eastern and Oriental artwork in Europe. Alongside high-quality reproductions of works by Gustav Moreau and Gustav Klimt the journals also incorporated the art of Hiroshige, Hokusai, Kuniyoshi, Yosai, Utamaro, and Shunsho.⁹¹ The front cover of the first edition of Claude Debussy's *La Mer*, published in 1905, famously has a cropped image from Hokusai's woodblock print, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*.

As Drozdek observes, Przesmycki focused on foreign artists whose works "represented 'true' art, and, by juxtaposing them with works by particular Polish artists, he made the very strong, if implicit, statement that these Poles were integral members of an international modernist, artistic community."⁹² The periodicals, *Life* and *Chimera*, are of utmost value therefore when considering Young Poland in Music as they provide historical documentation of the literary and visual content as well as polemic essays articulating the aspirations and preoccupations of these self-proclaimed 'avant-garde' artists.

In addition to *The Birth of Tragedy* these journals may have exposed Szymanowski to more of Nietzsche's writings. Polish translations of the well known Danish critic, Georges Brandes', reviews of Nietzsche's texts began to appear in the 1890's.⁹³ Miłosz then notes that it was Przybyszewski who "spread the word about Nietzsche as early as 1892."⁹⁴ In the time preceding the First Violin Concerto the only direct reference to Nietzsche's other works is found in a letter dated January 1914. Szymanowski describes the overtly 'intellectual' and stultifying atmosphere of Zakopane that had been inundated with many of the "Polish elite" whom were all staying there together at the same time. Quoting a passage from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, Szymanowski wryly noted "*von allen diesen höheren Menschen wird schwer die Luft*."⁹⁵ Szymanowski's writings from 1922-23 reveal explicit references to other works of Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Twilight of the Idols* and *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, suggesting that it is highly likely that Szymanowski was familiar with these works, and perhaps others as well, during the Young Poland years.

⁹⁰ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian: The Love Songs of Hafiz op. 24*, 15.

⁹¹ Drozdek, 'Life and Chimera: Framing Modernism in Poland', 166.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 325.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 124. Letter to Stefan Spiess, 20 January 1914. My rough translation is, "the presence of these superior people makes the air difficult to breathe."

ii) Polish National Identity

Young Poland can be viewed as more a movement of like-minded artists rather than a formal group or club, of relevance in Polish artistic circles from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the end of World War I. As Wightman notes, “the authors grouped together in Young Poland naturally did not write with a common aim, a single credo, or indeed with any credo at all.”⁹⁶ What was common to all of these artists however, was the circumstances they faced as Polish citizens. During this time, and including World War I when Szymanowski composed his First Violin Concerto and *Mythes*, Poland did not physically exist on the map of Europe. It had been partitioned several times during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most recently in 1795 when it was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria.

This partitioning of the land and its invasion by occupying forces threatened the very notion of a Polish nation state. The reaction during the nineteenth century of Polish artists and musicians alike was to try desperately to keep the old-school Polish traditions intact in order to protect their heritage from extinction. Historian Norman Davies notes that in the nineteenth century when Poland was an ‘idea’, not a ‘reality’, its “source of history must be sought in culture, literature and religion rather than in the social and political.”⁹⁷

Modernist ideas and techniques experimented with in other countries were shunned as pressure from the states and universities was applied to artists to recreate and uphold the vision of Polish national identity. This self-defence mechanism, or act of self-preservation, had the unfortunate effect of stultifying any natural progression, blocking the incorporation of new trends that artists were experimenting with in other major European centres. Prokofiev eloquently summed up Szymanowski’s situation, writing, “this is a cultured gentleman from a god-forsaken place.”⁹⁸ In effect, the Young Poland movement was trying to resurrect a progressive Polish art scene by rejecting its traditionalist core, a reaction against the trend whereby art served a utilitarian purpose to promulgate and expound a nationalistic viewpoint.

In the art world, critics disparaged the attempts of Young Poland, labelling their work as ‘degenerate’ and ‘decadent’. Particularly in the context of Max Nordau’s seminal study

⁹⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 29.

⁹⁷ Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 159.

⁹⁸ David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935* (New Havens: Yale University Press, 2003), 208.

Entartung, written in 1892, these labels were a severe insult to *fin-de-siècle* audiences. Nordau articulated the uneasy sense of decline and social upheaval that accompanies such historical periods, writing

Here is the concept that lies at the base of the word “*fin de siècle*”: the renunciation in practice of a traditional discipline that – at least in theory – is still in power. To the libertine, this means unbridled obscenity and the unchaining of the beast in man... To the believer, it means the repudiation of dogma, the denial of the supersensory realm, and the absorption into a shallow phenomenism. To the sensitive, who seek an aesthetic frisson of the nerves, it means the vanishing of ideals in art, along with art’s inability to draw forth emotions through the traditional forms. To all, however, it means the end of a world order which for thousands of years satisfied logic, fettered depravity, and produced beauty in all the arts.⁹⁹

In addition to these artistic movements, the industrial revolution had swiftly advanced through Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The growth of the coal industry and the development of the rail network, as well as technological advancements in the applications of electricity and the creation of large-scale factories, all led to the rapid urbanization of the major European cities and the creation of a new bourgeoisie class. The hurtling pace at which change was occurring and the dissolution of long-held traditions and the foundations upon which society was built made this a frightening time for some, heightening the *fin-de-siècle* sense of uneasiness and anxiety.

Such feelings as Heinrichs observes are symptomatic of any period of transition, as “the crossing of thresholds in intellectual history is often accompanied by an intense sense of crisis or loss.”¹⁰⁰ Nordau’s criticism of what he saw as the dangerous progression of European civilization must be understood from his traditionalist standpoint. However he was not alone in lamenting the rise of the bourgeoisie and its perceived dulling of artistic standards, a view common in intellectual circles at the time.

In Poland, any sense of cogent nationalistic development was complicated further by the separation imposed by the partition. Russia, Austria and Prussia had agreed to the virtual annihilation of the Polish nation state in 1795, pledging, “never to include in their titles the name or designation of the Kingdom of Poland, which shall remain suppressed as from the

⁹⁹ Karen Painter, ‘The Sensuality of Timbre: Responses to Mahler and Modernity at the Fin de siècle’ *19th-Century Music*, vol. 18, (1995), 236.

¹⁰⁰ Albert Heinrichs, ‘Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard’ *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 88, (1984), 205.

present and for ever.”¹⁰¹ On top of this direct threat to the nation as a whole, there were also regional difficulties posed by the various occupying forces. The Russian sector, that encompassed Warsaw as well as the Ukrainian territory in which the Szymanowski’s estate lay, was marked by a “war on dilettantism,”¹⁰² after the attempted uprising in 1830.

The north-western Prussian-ruled area including Poznan became “unmusical, in general ‘terre a terre’ and uncultured,”¹⁰³ whilst the Austrian-held south-western sector, including Krakow, lived in the shadow of Vienna and struggled to find its own voice, merely mimicking the German musical mother tongue. After another unsuccessful insurrection in 1863, the Russian authorities overtook the secondary schools, threatening the survival of the Polish language as literacy rates declined sharply. Many Poles faced harsh punitive measures and, in what was to become known as the Great Emigration, hundreds of artists, poets, writers and noblemen decided to flee, seeking refuge in neighbouring European countries where they could spread their messages of freedom and liberation for the Polish people.

In musical terms this nationalistic discourse is reflected in the compositions of Stanisław Moniuszko (1819-1872), Aleksander Zarzycki (1834-1895), Władysław Żeleński (1837-1921) and Zygmunt Noskowski (1846-1909), who were the pre-eminent Polish composers after Chopin and held various official posts and teaching positions. The latter was Szymanowski’s compositional teacher for a time in Warsaw, and despite any admiration Szymanowski may have felt for the man who referred to his pupil as his spiritual son, he later dismissed Noskowski’s compositions, writing that they “came and went, vanishing from our stages and concert platforms, like a sleepy dream, perishing slowly in the mists of time.”¹⁰⁴

In their bid to preserve the traditions of Chopin and uphold nationalistic sentiment, these composers relied overtly on forms such as the mazurka, nocturne and polonaise. The natural forward-moving progression that was occurring in other European centres was shunned for fear of abandoning the cause of the Polish people. As Palmer writes, “musically the clock had stopped with Chopin and Moniuszko... whose music embodied a nostalgic patriotism that was as much political as aesthetic in origin.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vol. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1: 542.

¹⁰² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 17.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 10.

Later in life, Szymanowski wrote of the rather sad and neglected state of musical affairs during his student years in Warsaw, recollecting that

in Poland it was all hopelessly mundane – music wearing a tragic mask with empty eye-sockets which see nothing living in the world, only the coagulated commonplace of ‘national creativity’... Willy-nilly I was compelled to rove abroad in the huge, abundantly blooming fields of foreign music... so as to be able to fashion the necessary, marvellous precision tools which could afford me the possibility of acquiring in its entirety the magic of music as it sprang into being before living, ‘contemporary’ eyes.¹⁰⁶

Wightman makes reference to the “Cinderella-like aspect” of Polish music and quotes the critic Kazimierz Laskownicki in 1900 bemoaning the fact that Polish music was “always waiting its turn in the corner.”¹⁰⁷ A deeper acquaintance with Szymanowski’s First Violin Concerto, *Mythes* and his other luminous works written around the time of World War I, may well suggest that Sleeping Beauty is indeed a more apt metaphor for the state of Polish music at the turn of the century.

¹⁰⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 18.

iii) Positivism

Matters were further complicated by the popularity of positivist philosophy, which had a keen following in the 1860's and 1870's. The ideology of positivism was first developed by the French philosopher Auguste Comte in his six-volume work entitled *Cours de philosophie positive* which espoused scientific thought over primitive religious beliefs and the positive, rational and reformist progression of society. This new focus on measurable outcomes and scientific argument was in opposition to the mystique that many artists cultivated in order for their work to thrive.

On one hand the research of “contemporary science of Darwin, the social theories of Mill and Spencer, and the positivism of Comte,”¹⁰⁸ were thriving. On the other hand, Wagner and Nietzsche were cultivating a new ideology in reaction to this. Downes notes Bujic's view of “the ‘ironic coincidence’ of the virtually simultaneous publication of Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871) and Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), books that search for ‘roots’ and ‘origins’ from widely differing ideological standpoints.”¹⁰⁹

Many of the Polish artistic intelligentsia also felt that ideals of positivism were responsible for creating a capitalist marketplace and that obsession with wealth directly correlated with a decline in artistic sensibility and refinement. Alongside this, the newly created bourgeoisie class was steadily becoming wealthier and more powerful, fuelled by the industrial revolution and the rise of urbanisation, contributing further to the demise of the class system.

Chimera's editor, Przesmycki, was one such person who saw a direct correlation between the lowering of artistic, literary and societal standards and the creation of the new bourgeoisie class. He was also highly critical of Poland's positivist trends, which he felt dulled receptivity to artistic feeling, lambasting

all who think and feel basely, dully, prosaically, for whom ‘laeva in parte mamillae nil salit’ (Juvenal), who renounce all ideal longing and desires or submit them to ‘practical’ and ‘real’ things, who mock any [who] ascend... who do not understand [the meaning of] ‘life elevating itself above life.’¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 13-4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 14

¹¹⁰ Drozdek, ‘Life and Chimera: Framing Modernism in Poland’, 21.

As such, *Life* and *Chimera* were among the first mouthpieces for anti-positivist sentiment. Arthur Górski also recorded his disillusionment with the progress of modern society and its inevitable by-product – “the modern philistine.”¹¹¹ Górski “protested against the banality and soulless existence of the masses, and called upon the artist to create durable values where the philistines had failed.”¹¹² The modernists felt that art had become a commodity, serving religious, moral or societal functions and that to express true art it must transcend these limitations and serve only itself. This new ideology touted the artist as high priest, channelling the concept of art for art’s sake alone.

The source of this idea was in fact drawn from the sphere of music, or more specifically, Wagner’s music. According to Wagner’s ideology, the composer acted as channel to some a higher force, a musical ‘poet-priest’ whose music spiritually nourished and guided his congregation or audience in a world where religion was becoming increasingly viewed as a futile faith. Wagner’s music was to have a profound effect on the overall culture of the time, impacting all of the arts, not only music. As Dahlhaus noted, “we could, with only a tinge of exaggeration, speak of the ‘cultural re-evaluation’ of the end of the century as being born from the spirit of music – Wagner’s music.”¹¹³ Moreover, Wagner’s polemical writings reinforced this notion. In *Religion and Art*, he writes

Well for us if then, in conscience of pure living, we keep our senses open to the mediator of the crushingly sublime, and let ourselves be gently led to reconciliation with this mortal life by the *artistic teller* of the great World-tragedy. This Poet priest, the only one who never lied, was ever sent to mankind, at epochs of its direst error, as mediating friend: us, too, will he lead over to that reborn life.¹¹⁴

The ties between Polish and German intellectual circles were further strengthened as Young Poland composers and artists struggled to rid their art of the residues of Positivist thought and emerge from the decades of nationalistic parochialism that had dominated the atmosphere in Poland at the end of the nineteenth century. It was not uncommon in these Polish circles for the work of the nineteenth-century German writers and philosophers to be commonly discussed and the ideas disseminated. Downes writes that the ‘broad impact’ of German thought, and particularly the philosophies of German Idealism, was due to the

¹¹¹ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 327.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. Mary Wittall (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), 5.

¹¹⁴ Richard Wagner, *Religion and Art*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 1994), 247.

“intimate ties between Polish intellectuals and German universities.”¹¹⁵ The young Szymanowski, like so many artists who were searching for their own voice, “turned to the new Austro-German art and philosophy... they embraced the new ‘religion’ proclaimed by the Wagner-Schopenhauer-Nietzsche trinity.”¹¹⁶

Przybyszewski articulated these thoughts and feelings in a document, ‘Confiteor’, which became the definitive anti-positivist manifesto and clearly shows Wagner’s influence. He argued that

art has no aim, it is aim in itself; it is the absolute because it is a reflection of the Absolute—the Soul... Art stands above life, penetrates the essence of the universe... Tendentious art, art-pleasure, art-patriotism, art possessing a moral or a social aim ceases to become art... To act upon society in an instructive or moral sense, to foster patriotism or social instincts through art means to humiliate art, to throw it down from the summits of the Absolute into the miserable accidentality of life, and the artist who proceeds that way does not deserve the name of artist. A democratic art, an art for the people, is even lower... a plebeian act of making accessible what, by the nature of things, is not easily accessible. Art so conceived becomes the highest religion, and the artist becomes its priest.¹¹⁷

Walter Pater, one of Szymanowski’s most beloved authors, also mused over the passions of art in *The Renaissance*, writing that

of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.¹¹⁸

Within this quasi-religious tone, the role of the artist himself was elevated to that of a high priest who could supposedly enlighten his subjects with the clarity of his truth-revealing vision, refined aesthetics and sublime beauty. This subsumption of the artist to a higher state of being is a relevant concept to the ecstatic and rapturous states found in much of Szymanowski’s middle period works.

¹¹⁵ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 12.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁷ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 330.

¹¹⁸ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 238-9.

Young Poland in Music set in motion Szymanowski's journey of emancipation from the dominating force that was German music and reaffirmed his European vision; freedom from the shackles of Polish provincialism. In turn, it also exposed him to many of the artistic ideals and tenets that were vital to his personal and professional development. As Szymanowski later wrote,

during the period immediately preceding the Great War, a period of the most acute ideological crisis, we were witness to a feverish, determined search for new paths and new problems.... It seemed that the mighty spectre of a magnificent past haunted this activity. *Nobless oblige*: German music had to remain 'great', it still had to be universal, it could not withdraw from its celestial fortress.¹¹⁹

He was very well aware of these early influences, stating in 1922 that there was no point

in reproaching me on account of those German influences which were evident at a certain stage of my career, for I am more acutely aware of them than any critic. I know all too well the story of my bitter struggle with the vampire of convention, of how I finally succeeded in strangling the spectre which had tried to strangle me.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Szymanowski, 'On the Work of Wagner, Strauss and Schoenberg' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 216.

¹²⁰ Szymanowski, 'My Splendid Isolation' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 98-9.

iv) Tadeusz Miciński

Part of the legacy of Young Poland was the successful cross-fertilization that occurred between like-minded artists of various disciplines. Writers, poets, composers and painters became familiar with one another and their work. For Szymanowski this included the work of Tadeusz Miciński, the poet whose work was to have the most profound and long-lasting creative impact. Chylinska notes that Szymanowski's first biographer and musicologist, Zdzisław Jachimecki (1882-1953), wrote in his book *Karol Szymanowski: Outline of His Works to Date* published in 1927, that

Szymanowski selected a strange poem (T. Miciński's *May Night*) as the program of his daring music. In the sixty-seventh line of the poem (we) encounter the name of the vizier's daughter: 'I wandered once through the colonnades that Abderrahman made for his beloved, in the amethyst night of Sheherazade, with talismans burning in the sky... Pan plays pipe in the oak woods, a lilting tune for dancing Ephemerides, tangled in amorous embrace, eternally young and sacred...'¹²¹

Unfortunately Jachimecki's account of Szymanowski's selection of Miciński's *May Night* as the source of literary inspiration or indeed program is not verified by Szymanowski himself in any of his correspondence or writings. However, as Szymanowski and Jachimecki first met in 1909 and began their letter-writing correspondence and friendship as early as 1910, one can place a certain amount of faith in the veracity of his claims.¹²² In addition to relating more serious musical concerns that Szymanowski shared with him, Jachimecki also provides us with some tantalising descriptive material. His recollection of their first meeting certainly corroborates the image of Szymanowski as an aesthete, whose fondness for the finer things in life extended to his attire;

He was well-built, dressed very elegantly, had a slight limp on his left leg which, not being shorter than his right, at each step betrayed discreetly a stiff knee-joint... the fantastically knotted black silk tie of the Berlin photograph of 1906 had given way to a splendidly tied cravat – which toned in ideally with his coat.¹²³

Jachimecki's observations and critiques, derived from his personal relationship and correspondence with Szymanowski, provide insights with a level of authority and authenticity

¹²¹ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 78.

¹²² See Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 31, 38.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 64.

that is difficult for other musicologists to reproduce. This is pertinent in regard to Jachimecki's testimony of Miciński's importance to Szymanowski. Szymanowski composed a set of *Six Songs* in 1909 set to Miciński's verse that was later published in 1925 with the posthumous dedication 'To the memory of a great poet and friend'.

Jachimecki's comments emphasize just how pivotal their friendship and Miciński's poems were in helping Szymanowski discover and express his own authorial voice. He writes that Szymanowski's "musical journey into the sphere of Miciński's artistic mind"¹²⁴ was an inspiration that freed him from the bounds of conventional compositional structures. Szymanowski's musical nature was moved "to an unbelievably subtle vibration in sympathy with the mood of the verse and to create in it a congenial artistic work whose shape seemed to throw a shadow not on the earth, on grey everyday existence, but on a screen of dreams covered with stars."¹²⁵

From Miłosz, we can learn a small amount of background detail concerning Miciński's life. Notably, he was

born in Łódź, studied philosophy in Kraków and in Germany; he traveled extensively all over Europe and, inevitably, chose Zakopane in the Tatra Mountains as one of his permanent homes. During World War I (in 1918), he was killed in Russia by a mob who mistook him for a czarist general because of his beard and bald pate. A thorough investigation of his writings has never been undertaken, as their alloys of stupendous richness have discouraged scholars.¹²⁶

The diverse array of themes in Miciński's poetry and his fascination with the Dionysian, mysticism, antiquity, exoticism and the occult seemed to resonate with Szymanowski's own *fin-de-siècle* preoccupations. In addition to this, Miciński translated the works of Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-73) that Szymanowski set in his Third Symphony, *Song of the Night*, revealing his fascination with Persian and Sufi culture.¹²⁷ Given the Szymanowski family's progressive and literary-minded attitude, it is highly likely that Karol was aware of Miciński's poetry during his childhood and early adolescence at the Tymoszwka estate. Iwaszkiewicz recalls the rooms of the Szymanowski house being "strewn with copies of books by [contemporary Polish writers] Wyspiański, Stanisław Przybyszewski and

¹²⁴ Ibid, 73.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 340-41.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 172.

Kasprowicz,”¹²⁸ so it is not difficult to imagine that Miciński’s works would have also found a home on the Tymoszwka bookshelves. Szymanowski and Miciński’s personal relationship began in 1905 when they met through Szymanowski’s involvement in the Young Poland in Music Group.

To recapitulate, during his formative years, and approximately from 1901-1910, Szymanowski’s musical output was still heavily influenced by the late Romantic German models of Strauss and Wagner. Szymanowski reflected later on this German domination that,

its inordinate sense of proportion, its romantic and transcendental pathos, suggested to us a vision of a unique scale of values, a certain universality of style, by the side of which all other concepts of music seemed pointless and naïve.¹²⁹

During this phase, we can observe that the seeds for his next creative phase were being sown; the relationship with Miciński and his interest in Nietzsche’s writings. Importantly, Nietzsche’s work was very much a product of late German Romanticism and indelibly connected to Wagner.

After 1910 this grand illusion gradually began to falter, with the individual visions of key non-German composers suggesting an alternative reality and freeing the creative spirits of a new generation of composers across Europe. Szymanowski was fascinated by contemporary French and also Russian music. Stravinsky’s music held a specific attraction through which, as Wightman notes, his “influence was not so much direct as catalytic.”¹³⁰ This statement applies equally as well to the French composers.

Having played through the score for four hands of *Petrushka* with Arthur Rubinstein numerous times during the autumn of 1913, Szymanowski wrote to his friend Stefan Spiess, “Stravinsky (the one of the Russian ballets) is quite a genius, I am very impressed by him and par consequence I am beginning to hate the Germans (I don’t mean the old ones, of course!).”¹³¹

Again Szymanowski’s later reflections of this period are illuminating:

¹²⁸ Ibid, 27

¹²⁹ Ibid, 245.

¹³⁰ Wightman, ‘Introduction’ to Szymanowski, *Szymanowski on Music*, 31.

¹³¹ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 60.

The work of Claude Debussy is perhaps the most revolutionary to emerge in the musical domain in the pre-war period. Soon another figure associated himself with this revolution, namely Igor Stravinsky, and the legend of the universality of German music began to crumble, although this is not to diminish its importance and true grandeur in preceding centuries.¹³²

Debussy and Stravinsky's music helped to break the stranglehold of the German tradition for Szymanowski. Their refreshingly original aesthetics suggested an alternative, where before none had been conceivable. Szymanowski described their arrival as a fresh epoch in the history of music, writing, "new doors have been opened, leading us towards the boundless expanses of free creativity independent of all old, authoritarian doctrines."¹³³ In many ways, it was not only the music of the visionaries such as Stravinsky and Debussy that liberated Szymanowski. It was also the literary and social trends that developed in the late nineteenth century, sparking a revival in the study of Hellenism, ancient mythologies and an interest in exotic and oriental cultures. And yet, within this new expressive phase in Szymanowski's music, the foundations of Romanticism were never completely eschewed; rather new joys were created within this sunset.

In the changing splendours of this dying sun, some poetic minds will find new joys; they will discover dazzling colonnades, cascades of molten metal, a paradise of fire, a melancholy splendour, nostalgic raptures, all the magic of dreams, all the memories of opium. And the sunset will then appear to them as the marvellous allegory of a soul, imbued with life, going down beyond the horizon, with a magnificent wealth of thoughts and dreams.¹³⁴

¹³² Szymanowski, 'The Future of Culture' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 246. Wightman notes that this is the text of a contribution Szymanowski made at a conference between 3 and 7 May 1933, devoted to the future of culture. Szymanowski's contribution was published in *Entretiens*, Vol. 2, 'L'Avenir de la Culture', Paris, 1933, 188-95.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Charles Baudelaire, 'Further Notes on Edgar Poe' in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. P.E. Charvet (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 189.

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2.1 Nietzsche and Szymanowski

i) Nietzsche the Musician

The names of Karol Szymanowski and Friedrich Nietzsche may not immediately appear closely linked to those readers unfamiliar with the oeuvre of the former. However, there are many striking parallels between them. The wide-ranging intellectual and artistic efforts of both Szymanowski and Nietzsche placed them firmly in the mould of Renaissance Man, a concept similar to both Wagner's ideal and the ancient Greek 'total man'.

For Nietzsche, the goal of life itself to which all his work aspired, was to become a true artist: philosopher, writer and musician. He looked to the Greeks as the original expression of this philosophy, which must be experienced and lived in order to be understood. The ending of *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* expresses this manifesto:

Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to *live*: what is needed for that is to stop bravely at the surface, the fold, the skin; to worship appearance, to believe in shapes, tones, words, in the whole *Olympus of appearance*! Those Greeks were superficial – *out of profundity*... And isn't this precisely what we are coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of current thought and looked around from up there, looked *down* from up there? Are we not just in this respect – Greeks? Worshippers of shapes, tones, words? And therefore – *artists?* ...¹³⁵

Whilst Nietzsche's work as a philologist, philosopher, writer and poet has brought him well into the sphere of public consciousness for over 130 years, it is not as widely known in disciplines outside of musicology that Nietzsche initially aspired to be a composer. German baritone Dietrich Fisher-Diskau's book *Wagner and Nietzsche* explores the pair's 'astral friendship', however his observations on Nietzsche individually are also pertinent. He writes, "with Nietzsche, the world obtained a thinker for whom music became the dominant experience in life. Artistic and cerebral creation were one and the same in his person. For it

¹³⁵ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 282.

was as a musician that he began his career.”¹³⁶ The French writer George Liébert also explores this topic in his fascinating book *Nietzsche and Music*.¹³⁷

Moreover, Nietzsche valued music and composition more highly than writing and language for its ability to express “the inner being of the world,”¹³⁸ to borrow Schopenhauer’s expression. This belief in the power of music was a feeling that would intensify throughout his life; in 1884 he wrote that “music is by far the best thing: now at present more than ever I would have liked to be a musician.”¹³⁹ Musical expression has a unique ability to express the inexpressible, bypassing cultural, national and language barriers precisely because it is not constrained by verbalisation. Nietzsche wrote in 1887, “in comparison to music all communication through words is shameless. The word diminishes and makes stupid; the word depersonalises: the word makes what is uncommon common.”¹⁴⁰

In the same way that a writer is constrained by words and language, one could argue that composers are similarly bound by the possibilities of notation in as far as recording instrumentation, pitch, rhythm, tempi and the like, which also varies according to the era in which they are composing. But, in the discipline of music it is the responsibility of the performer to find an authentic interpretation that satisfies what is written on the page and also imparts a certain measure of their own creativity and individuality in its realisation. No two musicians, no matter how slavishly they follow the attention to detail of a given score, could ever replicate one another’s performance and it is purely a matter of personal taste and aesthetics that determines which interpretation will be considered more favourable to a given listener.

Nietzsche would often read a phrase of his writing aloud in order to perfect its rhythm and intonation. No doubt aware that it was the common practice in antiquity, he “would declaim it in order to experience its cadence, its accent, its tonality and metrical movement,

¹³⁶ Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, *Wagner and Nietzsche*, trans. J. Neugroschel (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1976), 1.

¹³⁷ Georges Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, trans. David Pellauer and Graham Parkes (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2004). Unfortunately this book is marred by some imprecise citations, however these may be due to the multiple translations. For one example see page 78. I found the quotation between footnote 29 and 30 to be untraceable.

¹³⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne, vol. 1 (Massachusetts: The Colonial Press, 1958), 264.

¹³⁹ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 203. The original source is a letter dated 22 June 1887: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 8 vols (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1986), 8: 95.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. The original source is: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1980), 12: 493.

also in order to test out the clarity and precision of the idea expressed.”¹⁴¹ Again, it was music that informed this practice, and his writing often sought to align various concepts through the aural sound effects of alliteration and assonance, rather than through written out arguments. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, his amusing criticisms of the German language, of which he was undoubtedly a masterful exponent, provide an insight into his perception of these similarities of expression between language and music;

What torture books written in German are for anyone who has a *third* ear! How vexed one stands before the slowly revolving swamp of sounds that do not sound like anything and rhythms that do not dance, called a “book” among Germans! Yet worse is the German who *reads* books! How lazily, how reluctantly, how badly he reads! How many Germans know, and demand of themselves what they should know, that there is *art* in every good sentence – art that must be figured out if the sentence is to be understood!... who among book-reading Germans has enough good will to acknowledge such duties and demands and to listen to that much art and purpose in language? In the end one simply does not have “the ear for that”; and thus the strongest contrasts of style go unheard, and the subtlest artistry is *wasted* as on the deaf.¹⁴²

Nietzsche draws our attention to these points of aesthetic detail and the tonal fastidiousness required to achieve a valid interpretation. The fact that he expected this of himself and sought it in the work of others reveals the extent to which his musical ideas informed his writing, and points us to the relationship and symbiosis of common ideals between the different creative practices. Of pertinence to music also is Nietzsche’s requirement of a higher level of consciousness that he demanded of the listener or reader. His aural sensitivities and heightened awareness meant that a greater level of refinement was required, a “regeneration of listening.”¹⁴³

Whilst it may seem obvious that musicians be required to listen whilst playing, this concept was vital in reinvigorating the *quality* of the listening, reawakening the senses and bringing a greater awareness to composer, performer and audience alike. These parallels between music and writing may in part explain why Nietzsche’s work has had such a far-

¹⁴¹ According to the memory of Louis Kelterborn, one of Nietzsche’s students at Basel. As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 4. The original source is: Curt Paul Janz: *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1978), 1: 475.

¹⁴² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966), 373.

¹⁴³ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 5.

reaching influence on so many artists from different genres including painters, dancers, musicians, poets, playwrights, and novelists.

Nietzsche had a vivid musical imagination, and was known for his dramatic improvisations at the piano. This was a trait that also translated into his mature writing style. Characterised by a passionate vitality, his free and uninhibited prose the antithesis to the dry and lifeless academic style which Nietzsche perceived as being part of the problem with contemporary German culture, rooted as it was in excessive rationalism. In much the same way as music switches between character, shifting emotions and moods in an instant, Nietzsche's writing style similarly captures the play of ideas, shifting concepts, duelling forces and motifs.

One of the most startlingly obvious correlations which shows the importance Nietzsche placed on music, is the original title given to his first major work, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, inspired by the writings and music of Wagner. Fourteen years after the original edition was published, Nietzsche's 'Attempt at a self-criticism' alludes to the difficulty he faced selecting a title. Different alternatives were obviously entertained; "the 'Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of *Music*'. – From music? Music and tragedy? The Greeks and the music of tragedy?"¹⁴⁴ Of course, he eventually decided on the more succinct title, *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Indeed his famous statement, "life without music is nothing but an error,"¹⁴⁵ which often seems to be quoted rather flippantly, also displays his fundamental commitment to music. His focus on music and relationships with other professional musicians continued throughout his career, most famously within the framework of his relationship to Richard Wagner (1813–1883), whose work he initially championed but from which he later distanced himself from, replacing praise with denunciation.

It was not only his infamous and well-documented relationship with Wagner that brought Nietzsche into close contact with the music world of nineteenth-century Germany, but also his entire social network of friends and colleagues;

composers, orchestra conductors, pianists, professors, musicologists, and music publishers – from Wagner, of course, to Liszt and Brahms, and including Peter Gast,

¹⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), xxxi.

his faithful friend, Hans von Bülow, Hermann Levi, and Arthur Nikisch – to cite only the best known among them and those who left a mark on his works or his correspondence.¹⁴⁶

As Andre Schaeffner notes, “in the whole history of philosophy it would be impossible to find another philosopher who frequented musicians to such an extent.”¹⁴⁷

Nietzsche’s introduction to music was a natural consequence of his father’s position as the local Lutheran Pastor in Röcken near Leipzig. Music played an important role in the day-to-day church services and theology. His father was known to be a competent pianist and was the young Friedrich’s first piano teacher. Witnessing his father’s untimely death when he was only five years old had a strong effect on the sensitive boy. This was magnified by his father’s traumatic physical demise over a period of eleven months, which suggested to the young Nietzsche that life itself was full of meaningless suffering and agony. He would later write that “The first event that impressed itself on my dawning consciousness, was my father’s illness,”¹⁴⁸ which Nietzsche’s mother described as “agonies of paralysis, of convulsions, of failing eyesight and finally of dementia.”¹⁴⁹

Koehler describes the impact of this event, writing that “his dreams were to be plagued by these visions for decades to come.”¹⁵⁰ Another tragedy struck the family the following year, with the sudden death of Nietzsche’s younger brother, Joseph. After this, Nietzsche’s mother moved the family to the nearby village of Naumburg, allowing Nietzsche to attend the prestigious Schulpforta school. The role of piano teacher then fell to his mother and later to the local choir director. The young Nietzsche eagerly studied the works of Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Bach and became competent very quickly, being able to play several of Beethoven’s sonatas and transcriptions of Haydn Symphonies after only two years of lessons.¹⁵¹

In his schooling at Schulpforta, Nietzsche was directed towards the study of classical Greek texts, culture and mythology. Interest in this subject area had been renewed by the work of the late eighteenth-century German art historian Johann Joachim Winkelmann (1717-

¹⁴⁶ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁷ As translated and quoted in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 1. The original source is: André Schaeffner, introduction to *Friedrich Nietzsche, Lettres à Peter Gast*, 2 vols. trans. Louise Servicen (Monaco: Ed. Du Rocher, 1957), 1: 44.

¹⁴⁸ As quoted in Joachim Kohler, *Nietzsche and Wagner: A Lesson in Subjugation*, trans. Ronald Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 15.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 13.

68), whose study focused on Hellenic culture and traditions. This introduced a new facet of theology for Nietzsche, whose religious experiences prior to this point had been exclusively Christian. Nietzsche's interest in the study of ancient Greece, both academically and spiritually, would lead to his first occupation as a classical philologist.

Another figure of importance at Schulpforta was Nietzsche's teacher, the German poet Ernst Ortlepp (1800-64). By all accounts he was a rather eccentric yet politically progressive elderly man when they met, and became something of a father figure to Nietzsche. Ortlepp translated the works of Byron and Shakespeare but was also a pianist, known for his wild improvisatory sessions and 'demonic ballads' showcased at various taverns around the town, as well as his ample abilities to imbibe.¹⁵² Having met Richard Wagner in 1830, it was most likely Ortlepp who introduced Nietzsche to Wagner's music and views on the revival of antiquarian ideals.¹⁵³

As a teenager, Nietzsche continued listening to and absorbing music in a sacred setting, often sitting in on rehearsals of oratorios at the church; "Seated in the solemn darkness of the cathedral I listened attentively to the sublime melodies."¹⁵⁴ The piano continued to be an important part of Nietzsche's routine, throughout his school years and beyond. Liébert notes that "it was the piano, the instrument of solitary intimacy, that was and that in the future would often be his principal confidant."¹⁵⁵ The practice of free improvisation at the keyboard came naturally to Nietzsche and his musical outpourings were impressive, one friend noting "I do not believe Beethoven's improvisations could have been more poignant than those of Nietzsche, especially when a storm filled the sky."¹⁵⁶ Fisher-Diskau notes that "Nietzsche's piano playing, his improvising and fantasizing, have been enthusiastically reported... [his] touch, extremely intense without being hard, was widely nuanced and orchestral in its effect."¹⁵⁷

As a young composer Nietzsche felt the need to try and balance his free-flowing ideas with a rigorous technical foundation, writing "masses of fugues,"¹⁵⁸ despite his aversion to the strict requirements inherent in their nature and expounded in the textbooks he studied, such as

¹⁵² Kohler, *Nietzsche and Wagner*, 17.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵⁴ As translated and quoted in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 14. The original source is: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, ed. Hans Joachim Mette, Carl Koch, and Karl Schlechta, 5 vols. (Munich: Beck, 1994), 1: 27.

¹⁵⁵ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 15-6.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20. The original source is: Janz: *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*, 1: 83.

¹⁵⁷ Fischer-Dieskau, *Wagner and Nietzsche*, 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

Albrechtsberger's 'Elementary Method of Composition'. Over time his compositional output increased to include a sonatina for piano, two piano sonatas, several miniatures works for piano and vocal lieder, a sacred Kyrie for choir, soprano and orchestra as well as attempts at a dramatic poem for large orchestra, *Ermanarich*. In these compositions, one can see the work of a competent and gifted amateur, although not a revolutionary in any sense.

In his writing he also valued the process of honing and refining a piece of work, carefully selecting and rejecting until the creative artist is appeased by the result, reasoning that

in reality, the imagination of a good artist or thinker is productive continually, of good, mediocre and bad things, but his *power of judgement*, sharpened and practised to the highest degree, rejects, selects, knots together; as we can see now from Beethoven's notebooks how the most glorious melodies were put together gradually and as it were culled out of many beginnings... All the great artists have been great workers, inexhaustible not only in invention but also in rejecting, sighting, transforming, ordering.¹⁵⁹

Nevertheless, the spirit of improvisatory freedom which came naturally to Nietzsche when he was in front of the piano was not something he felt could be overlooked in the creative process. Indeed it was this initial quality that Nietzsche sought to capture in his work to ensure that it appeared effortless and fresh, even if that meant hours of careful reworking and laborious effort. Nietzsche elaborates further, writing

the artist knows that his work produces its full effect when it excites a belief in an improvisation, a belief that it came into being with a miraculous suddenness: and so he may assist this illusion and introduce those elements of rapturous restlessness, of blindly groping disorder, of attentive reverie that attend the beginning of creation into his art as a means of deceiving the soul of the spectator or auditor into a mood in which he believes that the complete and perfect has suddenly emerged instantaneously.¹⁶⁰

Judging success by his own yardsticks, unfortunately as a composer Nietzsche could never quite manage to bind the Apollonian elements of form and structure with the freedom suggested by his imagination. The wilder Dionysian qualities of improvisation and abandon

¹⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 83.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 80.

would always win. He did seem to be aware of his failing in this regard, noting with some humour that his works were sometimes gripped by “a barbarous frenzy.”¹⁶¹ Liébert writes that “knowing his insufficiencies as a composer, we ought not to be surprised that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which he opposes these two divinities, Nietzsche seems often to reduce music to the Dionysian alone, implicitly characterized by the absence of form and convention.”¹⁶²

Unlike his musical compositions, which floundered without the necessary structural clarity and internal logic of “the Apollonian drive to beauty,”¹⁶³ in his writing Nietzsche managed to achieve a balance between the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects. The dichotomy between these forces is central to Nietzsche’s arguments in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where in the opening paragraph Nietzsche juxtaposes the “tremendous opposition... between the Apollonian art of the sculptor and the imageless Dionysian art of music.”¹⁶⁴ The only true work of art, he argues is one that achieves a unification between these elements, such as in the Attic tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

¹⁶¹ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 23. The original source is: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 4: 77.

¹⁶² Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 21.

¹⁶³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 33.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

ii) Szymanowski the Author

If Nietzsche ultimately failed as a musician but succeeded as a writer, the opposite can perhaps be said for Szymanowski. Nietzsche's self-expression through dual disciplines, writing and composing, was a practice also shared by Szymanowski. Naturally the majority of scholarly interest has focused on his compositions; however Szymanowski was a steady, if not quite prolific, writer throughout his life. As Wightman has observed, "throughout his career Szymanowski frequently devoted himself to literature, from the aphoristic *Sketch for my Cain...* [1903-4] to the introduction to his memoirs, drafted in 1936, only a few months before his death."¹⁶⁵

Beginning in his youth at the Tymoszwowka estate, where he would write poetry, libretti and storylines for his musical theatre and operettas, the habit continued on with more poetry, prose pieces, a novel, novellas, dramatic outlines for operas and ballets and academic, polemic and social commentaries. Wightman lists in the index of his book thirty-one literary works ascribed to Szymanowski, although this includes copies of interviews, speeches and newspaper letters. His largest and most personal work, a novel entitled *Ephebos*, was almost completely destroyed during the 1939 German raids on Warsaw. What remains of the manuscript are mere fragments, an introduction and title page, scraps of pages from various chapters, sketches of intended material in draft format and notes.

Judging from these surviving fragments, the novel would have been of considerable value in helping us to better understand Szymanowski as a complete artist. *Ephebos* was written as a virtual escape from everyday reality. In a particularly bleak period immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, Szymanowski was confined to the family apartment in Elizavetgrad, complaining to friends that, "the boundless irony of my present provincialism is simply frightful. To be stuck in Elizavetgrad, of all places, at such times as these is beyond all comprehension!"¹⁶⁶ The isolation of Tymoszwowka during the war had been at least bearable, as his beloved Kompozytornia¹⁶⁷ enabled focussed and disciplined work, resulting in his most productive years. Even this retreat was gone now, and with it the desire to compose. Szymanowski wrote:

¹⁶⁵ Wightman, 'Preface' to Szymanowski, *Szymanowski on Music*, 9.

¹⁶⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 220. Letter to Spiess and Iwański, 4/17 January 1919.

¹⁶⁷ A shed on the grounds of the estate that Szymanowski had renovated into a composing studio with his piano on hand.

I have completely abandoned music for the present... For music one must feel the innate pleasure and charm of life, and this is truly impossible in the present foul situation and moral stench sensed on all sides. My new novel-writing mania originates in this, and so I'm creating for myself some sort of artistic surrogate, antidote, illusion of life.¹⁶⁸

Szymanowski's literary writing during this time was a conscious attempt to withdraw from the reality of everyday life. He explained in the introduction to *Ephebos* that it was written as a "sweet solace and sweet remembrance of the past, as a way of blocking off, by means of a magical vision of Italy called forth from memory, the black abyss of an unending succession of days, weeks and months spent in the most terrible external circumstances."¹⁶⁹

Szymanowski considered the novel to be worthy of publication, telling Spiess that if there was something he deserved to be remembered for "by fellow-believers of course, it was this frank and bold apology."¹⁷⁰ Intended as a *mea culpa*, he forbade its publication during his mother's lifetime, entrusting the manuscript to Iwaszkiewicz for safeguarding. Much of the content deals with Szymanowski's own self-discovery in relation to his homoerotic and sexual predilections.

The main characters of *Ephebos* are two Poles who travel throughout Italy, a youthful Prince Lowicki who has a passion for writing, and an older and successful composer Marek Korab, whose successful career has made him "at least as famous as Paderewski."¹⁷¹ Iwaszkiewicz reflected later in his own book, *Meetings with Szymanowski* that he realised these two characters were in fact portrayals of Szymanowski himself, as a young man and as a future projection. He observed:

Lowicki is Szymanowski in his youth, uncertain, learning, not understanding himself and anxiously seeking 'true' love, in the end unable to find an outlet for his individuality and searching for it in literary work; in Korab, Szymanowski painted himself as he would like to be in the future: very famous and rich, very certain of his artistic value, surrounded by general adoration and moving with ease from one success to the next.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 221. Letter to Spiess and Iwański, January 1919.

¹⁶⁹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 221-22.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 221. Letter to Spiess, October 1918.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 224.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 222.

Szymanowski's decision to cast a prince and an artist as the two main characters is typical of the patrician tone, which, as Wightman observes, dominates the work and evinces Szymanowski's own belief in the supremacy of the noble classes.¹⁷³ The introduction to *Ephebos*, for example, contains a stark contrast between his dedication of the book to those "brooding solitary in high, impregnable towers upon the mystery of love," and the destructive "proletariat masses" and "narrow-minded and egoistic nationalism,"¹⁷⁴ that threaten to destroy post-war Europe. Coupled with Szymanowski's article from 1922 entitled 'My Splendid Isolation', Wightman notes that comparisons to Nietzsche's concept of *Pathos der Distanz* are difficult to resist in this instance.¹⁷⁵

From the section entitled 'What is Noble?' Nietzsche writes that

every enhancement of the type 'man' has so far been the work of an aristocratic society – and it will be so again and again – a society that believes in the long ladder of order of rank and differences in value between man and man, and that needs slavery in some sense or other. Without that pathos of distance which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata... the other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either – the craving for an ever new widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of ever higher, rare, more remote, further stretching, more comprehensive states – in brief, simply the enhancement of the type 'man', the continual 'self-overcoming of man', to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense."¹⁷⁶

Whether this aristocratic narcissism was unique to Szymanowski, or whether it was a more universal phenomenon, is debatable. Thomas Mann writes in his short story *Death in Venice* that "inborn in almost every nature is a luxuriant, tell-tale bias in favour of the injustice that creates beauty, a tendency to sympathize with aristocratic preference and pay it homage."¹⁷⁷ Szymanowski's sense of refinement and sensitivity, which in his mind was intensified by his nobility and artistic profession, was reflected in his need for aesthetic beauty in everyday life, witnessed for example in his careful attention to sartorial matters.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ As quoted and translated in Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 222-23. Wightman gives the original sources as Teresa Chylinska ed., *Karol Szymanowski Pisma Tom 2. Pisma Literackie* (Krakow: PWM, 1989), 128.

¹⁷⁵ Wightman, 'Introduction' to Szymanowski, *Szymanowski on Music*, 49.

¹⁷⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966), 391.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. David Luke (London: Vintage Books, 1998), 220.

During his Viennese stint of 1911, Jachimecki described his lifestyle of vanity and excess writing that

bewitched by elaborate comfort, numerous servants, the unceasing making of purchases in the dearest shops, the frequenting of luxurious locales, giving the impression of being great gentlemen, minor independent princes, they looked on the world from this perspective.¹⁷⁸

The memoirs of Kazimiera Iłłakowiczówna also attest to Szymanowski's affectations. She became acquainted with the composer in 1913, describing him as charming and very handsome, but not at all Bohemian. Instead he was "a typical young landowner; a man who was reticent to some extent, exceedingly well educated, very delicate."¹⁷⁹ Thankfully his aesthetic refinement was a trait that also extended into his compositions during this time, which are noted for their refined sonorities, exquisite textural details and beauty of sound.

In any case, according to Iwaszkiewicz's recollection of *Ephesos*, throughout the course of the novel, the figures of Prince Lowicki and Marek Korab grow to realise their attraction and mutual dependency toward one another. The fusion of these two figures, representing the elements of both sides of Szymanowski's creative personality, is highlighted in the concluding moments when the Prince, under the Sicilian moonlight, meets Korab;

the maturity which Lowicki has attained... eases their discovery and understanding of each other, and their meeting in the temple becomes the starting-point of a new harmony between the two artists, the writer and the composer.¹⁸⁰

If Iwaszkiewicz's assertion that both characters are representative of past and future projections of Szymanowski's own character, then it is of significance that in order to achieve wholeness the fusion of writer and composer is required. In this regard the comparison to Nietzsche and also Wagner offers itself. Ostensibly it was not only the content of Nietzsche's writings that shaped Szymanowski's ideas, but the shared connection of expression through both writing and composing that seems to have drawn Szymanowski even closer to his idol.

¹⁷⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 95.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 125.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 225.

iii) The Ephebe and Thomas Mann

One of the most relevant subject matters dealt with in *Ephebos* is that of the young ephebe. The term ephebe is often used to describe the adolescent form of Dionysus. Notoriously fluid, the half human, half divine figure of Dionysus was one of the most amorphous of all the Greek gods. The depiction of his physical form varied widely from animal to human to divine, but one of the common portrayals of him around 430 BC is as a beautiful, beardless and effeminate youth.¹⁸¹ In one particular passage of *Ephebos*, Korab the composer is contemplating writing an opera based on Euripides' *Bacchae*. He discusses the difficulties one would face in trying to cast:

That ephebe with sensual lips, clothed in coloured, patterned chiffon and a coat the colour of saffron, the untanned hide of a deer thrown over his shoulders, an ephebe with long coppery ringlets both sides of his beautiful, delicate, youthful face, his deep eyes burning with the fire of an inscrutable, eternal mystery! Who could play such a youth, with a flower-bedecked thyrsus in his hand, and his head crowned with ivy and scarlet roses?!¹⁸²

The portrayal or description of the adolescent form of Dionysus was nothing new, having been the subject matter of artistic portrayal for centuries. Carl Kerényi explains the subversive appeal of the ephebe, writing that “the god’s half-female character, which was expressed both in the long robe of the bearded Dionysus and in the almost hermaphroditic body of the young and naked Bakchos¹⁸³, was an attraction to the phallic beings, and so were the Bacchic women.”¹⁸⁴

The ephebe was a character that piqued the interest of several artists, writers and musicians at the *fin-de-siècle* and the years leading up to World War I. Whilst Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* had largely been ignored by academics on account of his criticisms of rational historical scholarship, the response in artistic fields was much farther reaching. Nietzsche hoped that the affirmative life spirit evoked in *The Birth of Tragedy* would

¹⁸¹ Albert Henrichs, 'Dionysus' *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Oxford Reference Online. <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t111.e2226>

¹⁸² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 225.

¹⁸³ Another name for Dionysus.

¹⁸⁴ C. Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 268.

invigorate like-minded artists, its influence “capable enough of seeking out its fellow infatuated enthusiasts and of luring them in a dance along new secret paths.”¹⁸⁵

One such example can be found in the work of Thomas Mann (1875-1955), whose work shared similar preoccupations. Indeed, parallels between Szymanowski and the Nobel prize-winning author are particularly salient. Mann was also absorbed with the intellectual ideas of Schopenhauer and particularly Nietzsche, whom he read from a young age. These parallels were furthered by Mann’s deep fascination with ancient Greece culture and his own literary preoccupations with the *fin-de-siècle* notions of decadence and decay. Despite being married with six children, Mann’s own personal struggles to understand his erotic predilections informed much of his work, which was often channelled through a Nietzschean framework of Apollonian and Dionysian forces, making Mann a prime ‘fellow enthusiast’.¹⁸⁶

Mann’s statement from 1930 that a writer’s work represents “a realization, fragmentary to be sure but self-contained, of our own nature, and by so realizing it we make discoveries about it; it is a laborious way, but our only way of doing so,”¹⁸⁷ reveals and gives authorial consent to reading a certain amount of autobiographical content in his works. David Luke likens this method of working to an almost cathartic path to self-understanding, writing “it was more like a serious process of self-discovery and practical self-analysis, of fictional experimentation with actual or potential selves and actual or potential intellectual attitudes.”¹⁸⁸ Similarly, Downes has noted that in a fragment entitled ‘Writing Books’ (1921) “Szymanowski wrote of the courage demanded of the writer, and in particular of the need to reflect upon the sources and spirit of the author’s voice.”¹⁸⁹

His 1912 short story, *Death in Venice*, is narrated through the eyes of the exhausted, yet venerated German author, Gustav von Aschenbach. Mann details Aschenbach’s increasingly degenerative obsession with the fourteen year old Polish boy, Tadzio, and his subsequent demise and loss of dignity. As the story unfolds, the extent to which Aschenbach is controlled by unseen forces and powers beyond his control is gradually revealed. His initial appearance as a respected and esteemed writer is revealed to be an Apollonian façade, one that is consequently obliterated by the violent Dionysian forces within his character. After watching the ephebe Tadzio bathing and running from the water, Aschenbach exclaims

¹⁸⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 6.

¹⁸⁶ David Luke, introduction to Mann, *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, xi.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, viii.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, viii-ix.

¹⁸⁹ Stephen Downes, preface to *Szymanowski, Eroticism and the Voices of Mythology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

and to behold this living figure, lovely and austere in its early masculinity, with dripping locks and beautiful as a young god, approaching out of the depths of the sky and the sea, rising and escaping from the elements – this sight filled the mind with mythical images, it was like a poet’s tale from a primitive age, a tale of the origins of form and of the birth of gods.¹⁹⁰

The story is full of symbolic references, with Tadzio himself the chief figure; a youthful and effeminate Dionysus, revealing in his perfect form the “meeting-point of the Apolline cult of disciplined sculptured beauty and the dark destructive longing of Eros-Dionysus.”¹⁹¹ Aschenbach on the other hand had toiled for decades at serious and important work, gratifying only the Apollonian within him that sought perfection and rational order. Mann questions at last, “could it be that the enslaved emotion was now avenging itself by deserting him, by refusing from now on to bear up his art on its wings, by taking with it all his joy in words, all his appetite for the beauty of form?”¹⁹² Throughout the course of the story it becomes clear that the Dionysian spirit to which he is referring does not avenge itself through abandoning him completely, but rather through reeking total havoc on his seemingly ordered and restrained existence.

The initial inspiration for the short story may have originated with an occurrence from Goethe’s life, when as a seventy-four year old on holidays in Marienbad he courted and proposed to a seventeen year old girl, Ulrike von Levetzow. However, in his recollections Mann admits that “nothing is invented” in the story and that the initial inspiration was reinvigorated and altered after his own trip to Venice in 1911. Clearly Mann did include some fictional elements, such as the death of Aschenbach at the conclusion of the story. The figure of Tadzio was identified in 1964 as the real life ten year old boy, Władysław Moes, who was on holiday with his mother and three sisters at the time of Mann’s stay.

In the years after Mann’s death, Moes gave Mann’s Polish translator his own detailed account of the holiday as a boy, recalling particular events chronicled in the story and his memory of “an old man looking at him on the beach.”¹⁹³ Despite Mann’s description of Aschenbach’s love for Tadzio as “impossible here, absurd, depraved and ludicrous”¹⁹⁴ and his decision to add four years to the boy’s age, presumably to reduce the distaste felt by his

¹⁹⁰ Mann, *Death in Venice*, 226-7.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, xxxvii.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 201.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, xxxv.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 244.

readers, the story was still received with much hostility. The German-Jewish critic Alfred Kerr blamed Mann and *Death in Venice* for making “pederasty acceptable to the cultivated middle classes.”¹⁹⁵

In any case, the point here is that Mann channelled several aspects of his own personal life into his work. Of course, he did not follow the same path as Aschenbach in the novel, but through his writing he could explore aspects of his own personality in a self-contained manner. Similarly, coupled with his scholarly study of classical antiquity, Szymanowski’s own voyages to Italy and North Africa ignited several passions, both musical and otherwise, in the young composer that became of vital significance to his compositions.

In August of 1910 Szymanowski wrote to Spiess that he was glad to hear that his friend had been reading *The Birth of Tragedy*, “as it was one of the few books which imparted great truths to him about the essence of art.”¹⁹⁶ However it was also in the same correspondence that Szymanowski began questioning his own sexual orientation. He would not discuss these concerns explicitly until he came to write *Ephesos* in 1919; however he confessed to Spiess that something was troubling him, alluding that

of these reflections I really cannot write at all because they concern things which I can in no way set down and which you could surmise... Have you read Plato’s *Symposium*? I advise you to reread it. It is excellent, homely company in this respect, you know.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Ritchie Robertson ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5.

¹⁹⁶ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 82.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

iv) Szymanowski's Travels

Szymanowski's initial trips to Italy during 1905, 1908 and early 1910 had provided pleasant holidays and inspired more earnest studies of Classical literature and history. By mid-1910 however, Szymanowski had committed to an intensive period of self-imposed study and a rigorous reading scheme. This steep learning curve was coupled with a new level of maturity and self-confidence brought about by the intellectual acquaintance with his elderly Russian neighbour, Natalia Davidov, who would become an important advocate throughout his career, and to whom Szymanowski dedicated his Second Piano Sonata. She became a frequent visitor at the Tymoszwowka estate, conducting long conversations about music, art and life in general and became not only a close friend, but also an influential advisor. Shortly after this relationship developed, Szymanowski wrote to Spiess "you have no idea how much I am thinking and how much I've changed... You'll get more value out of me now."¹⁹⁸

Therefore, it wasn't until his travels in 1911 that Szymanowski had reached a point of maturity where he began to fully absorb the sights and their historical significance, in addition to the continuation of his own journey of personal discovery. As Downes notes, his route through Italy to Sicily and returning via Vienna, "encapsulates the shifting blend of his aesthetic allegiances."¹⁹⁹ With Spiess as his travelling companion, and financial supporter,²⁰⁰ the journey began in Florence with stops in Rome, Calabria and Sicily, and then back again through Rome, Florence and on to Venice.

It was the Hellenic ruins of Sicily that most impressed Szymanowski, touring Messina, Palermo, Agrigento, Syracuse, Taormina and Segesta. In Syracuse they visited the fountain said to be the original source for the myth of Arethusa, the inspiration for the first of the *Mythes* triptych, as well as the amphitheatre later appropriated for the backdrop for the third act of *King Roger*. The metopes they saw at the Palermo museum provided the germinating idea for *Metopes*, op. 29. He wrote from Agrigento, "this is marvellous, you have no idea what a huge impression these ruins and nature make – Stefan and I are constantly ecstatic."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 79.

¹⁹⁹ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 1.

²⁰⁰ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 76.

²⁰¹ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 44.

Szymanowski once again travelled with Spiess in 1914, this time revisiting Sicily and journeying farther afield to North Africa. His impressions from this trip reveal his excitement and a newly found aesthetic awakening. The eastern exoticism of Algiers, Constantine, Biskra and Tunis was a significant force in his music for the next decade, concluding with the opera *King Roger*. Aside from the violin works (*Notturmo and Tarantella*, *Mythes*, First Violin Concerto) and *King Roger*, which was set in twelfth-century Sicily, almost all of Szymanowski's compositions display either Mediterranean or Eastern influences, with literary sources ranging from Greek mythology to the thirteenth and fourteenth-century Persian poets, Jalal ad-Din Rumi and Hafiz of Shiraz. Most well known are the *Love Songs of Hafiz*, Symphony no. 3 '*Song of the Night*', *Metopes* for solo piano and the *Songs of an Infatuated Muezzin*.

Stefan Spiess's recollections from both the 1911 the 1914 journeys provide invaluable insight into the transformations that were occurring within Szymanowski and highlight some of their more profound shared experiences. Of their earlier trip, Spiess recalled;

we made an excursion to Segesta, beautifully situated amidst hillocks, lost, lonely in the depths of a valley. After we had been going along this valley for such a long time that it now seemed monotonous to us, we suddenly saw emerging from behind the curves of a hill, a pale yellow temple with Doric columns, as if brought alive from Greece. We were enchanted by this view. I can compare this feeling to the one we experienced when we saw the marvellous bas-reliefs in the museum at Palermo – the metopes taken from the temple in Selinunt, dating from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C.²⁰²

Attesting to Szymanowski's maturity and the serious study to which he had devoted himself prior to the trip Spiess noted the composer's "totally unique absorption in impressions, his inquisitiveness and his knack of forming – with the help of a rich imagination and co-ordination of impressions with knowledge previously acquired – a full historical picture of the country being visited."²⁰³

Spiess's recollections from the later trip are lengthy, however it is worthwhile to relay them at least in part here.

²⁰² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 94.

²⁰³ Ibid.

During our journeys through Africa in 1914, of which I was also the instigator, we frequently heard the calls of the Muezzins in Tunisia, coming from the minarets at sunset. And this experience left some trace in Szymanowski's works. It gave rise to *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin* in 1918 to a text by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. In the III Symphony... Karol also made use of themes noted during his travels in Africa.

We were enormously impressed by the Muslim feast of Ramadan, which we saw observed in Biskra by the Kabyle tribesmen from the hills situated to the south of the city of Algiers – just on the fringe of the desert. We then heard songs and dances performed on folk instruments – turben, zornie, flute, zither and drums...

From Biskra we travelled to Sicily and then to Italy... we arrived at Paestum in Calabria, where we again admired a Greek temple. We met a shepherd with flowing, bright-blue smock, with a flock of sheep grazing amongst the Doric columns. This moment we immortalised with a photograph...²⁰⁴

Most commentators agreed that it was after the 1911 and 1914 trips that Szymanowski was able to finally cast off any traces of German epigonism and express himself musically in his own compositional voice. Downes notes this creative blossoming was tied not only to the geographical and literary inspirations discovered, but also to his own personal revelations regarding his erotic predilections writing that “the years immediately following a homosexual ‘awakening’ during a visit in 1914 to Italy and North Africa were to be the most productive of Szymanowski’s compositional career.”²⁰⁵

Arthur Rubinstein’s memoirs support this, he recalled that “after his return he raved about Sicily, especially Taormina. ‘There,’ he said, ‘I saw a few young men bathing who could be models for Antinous. I couldn’t take my eyes off them.’ Now he was a confirmed homosexual, he told me all this with burning eyes.”²⁰⁶ One may speculate that Szymanowski was living out Walter Pater’s aphorism, “not the fruit of the experience, but the experience itself, is the end.”²⁰⁷

The exile imposed by war, which made any further travels inconceivable in the immediate future, led Szymanowski to reflect over his recent experiences and ‘awakening’ in even greater depth than he may have otherwise. Wightman notes that he “developed a craze for constantly reminding himself where he had been with Spiess the same time the preceding

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 129.

²⁰⁵ Downes, *Szymanowski, Eroticism and the Voices of Mythology*, 14.

²⁰⁶ Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 103.

²⁰⁷ Pater, *The Renaissance*, 7.

year.”²⁰⁸ As well as gazing over his photographs and notebooks from his recent journeys, Szymanowski continued his literary studies at Tymoszewka. Between 1914-15 for example, he was reading the works of Tadeusz Zieliński, “an authority on the civilization of ancient Greece and the author of an exegesis of Euripides’ *The Bacchae*,”²⁰⁹ translations of Aeschylus, Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance* and *Promenades archeologiques en Mediterranee* by the Byzantine art historian Charles Diehls.²¹⁰

Szymanowski’s often quoted remark,

If Italy did not exist, then I also could not exist. I am not a painter or a sculptor, but when I walk through the museums, the churches and finally the streets, when I look on those elevated noble works, eternally smiling down serenely and tolerantly on all base, soulless bunglers – when I become aware of those entire generations of the most beautiful, the most talented people then I feel it is worthwhile living and working...²¹¹

actually predates the 1911 and 1914 journeys. It occurs in a rather acrid letter written to Jachimecki in 1910, in which Szymanowski vents his frustration regarding Paderewski’s behaviour at a celebration for Chopin’s centenary. What most commentators fail to include in the above quote is the conclusion to the sentence; “whereas in Lwów circles I should suffocate in a single moment as if trapped in the potassium cyanide atmosphere of Halley’s Comet.”²¹² This is not included in order to diminish the intensity of Szymanowski’s feeling toward Italy, but merely to set the citation in its complete context.

²⁰⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 142.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 152-3.

²¹⁰ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 80.

²¹¹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 84. Letter to Jachimecki, December 1910.

²¹² *Ibid.*

2.2 The Birth of Tragedy

i) A revitalisation of the Dionysian spirit

Aside from the striking parallels in approach and interests between Szymanowski and Nietzsche discussed in section 2.1 above, the real focus of this thesis is the subject matter of the Dionysian spirit identified by Nietzsche. Precisely, it was his revitalisation of the Dionysian spirit as depicted in his first work, *The Birth of Tragedy* and published in 1872, which we know Szymanowski had read and studied in great detail in the years directly preceding the composition of the First Violin Concerto. In the work, myth is cast as a means through which a civilization can preserve and celebrate its history and culture, keeping its traditions and stories alive and relevant.

Nietzsche's commitment to the Dionysian as a phenomenon, life force or even religion, remained firm throughout his career—in 1888 for example, he would renew the vows of his 'faith', writing "I am the disciple of the philosopher Dionysus."²¹³ Although references do not always appear in such explicit terms as found in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the Dionysian is a recurrent theme that weaves throughout his later writings in veiled references and symbolic representations that continue up until his final work, *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*. As Bruce Ellis Benson notes, this is "perfectly appropriate, for Dionysus is perhaps the most amorphous of all Greek gods, one who appears in various forms and is both human and divine."²¹⁴

In the opening paragraph of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche articulates the fundamental opposition that exists between two creative forces; the Apollonian drive to structure, clarity, form, individuation and the dream, and the Dionysian drive to ecstasy, abandonment, intoxication, subsumption of the individual and ritual madness. These two opposing principles derive their names from the ancient Greek deities, Apollo and Dionysus, creating a "tremendous opposition, in terms of origin and goals, between the Apollonian art of the sculptor and the imageless Dionysian art of music."²¹⁵ Interestingly Nietzsche assigns Apollo to the concrete arts of sculpture and architecture, whereas traditionally his lyre would have associated him with the realm of music. Dionysus is ascribed the non-representational art form of music. Nietzsche argues that

²¹³ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 71.

²¹⁴ Benson, *Pious Nietzsche: Decadence and Dionysian Faith*, 190-91.

²¹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 19.

these two very different drives run in parallel with one another, for the most part diverging openly with one another and continually stimulating each other to ever new and more powerful births, in order to perpetuate in themselves the struggle of that opposition only apparently bridged by the shared name of 'art'; until finally, through a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'will', they appear coupled with one another and through this coupling at last give birth to a work of art which is as Dionysian as it is Apollonian – Attic tragedy.²¹⁶

The dual aspects of Apollonian and Dionysian forces are cast as the basis through which Greek tragedy and myth were originally born, out of the spirit of music. It is only through the marriage of these elements that a true music drama can once again be reborn and realise its highest art form, as promised by the operas of Wagner. As Douglas Smith notes, “for Nietzsche, music is the womb of myth and tragedy, the source of the greatest period of Greek cultural achievement and, potentially, of German cultural revival.”²¹⁷

One of the essential tenets of this Dionysian art was the absolute affirmation of life itself, despite the suffering and miseries of the human condition; “the eternal life beyond all phenomena and in spite of all annihilation.”²¹⁸ Art and particularly music are cast as fundamentally metaphysical forms within our existence, justified as aesthetic phenomena as opposed to a moral or religious one. In his ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’ added in 1886 as a preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche reiterates that “art – and *not* morality – is established as the real *metaphysical* activity of man... the existence of the world is only *justified* as an aesthetic phenomenon.”²¹⁹ Morality, and above all the Christian doctrine, “which is and wants to be exclusively moral”,²²⁰ denies the unmediated instincts inherent in all forms of art, which reveals a hostility to life itself. As the Dionysian artist says ‘yes’ to life, it follows therefore in Nietzsche’s view that “A Christian who is simultaneously an artist *does not exist*...”²²¹

In the fourteen years that had passed since Nietzsche wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, it became clear to him that the real enemy of the Dionysian spirit was not the Apollonian drive to individuation or Socratic rationalism, as he had initially envisaged. Rather, the true antagonist was Christianity – hence Nietzsche’s pleading final words in *Ecce Homo*: “Has

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Douglas Smith, introduction to Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, xxi.

²¹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 90.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 8.

²²⁰ Ibid, 9.

²²¹ Michael Silk, ‘Nietzsche, Decadence, and the Greeks’ *New Literary History*, vol. 35, (2004), 601.

everyone understood me? - *Dionysus versus the Crucified*.”²²² Christ came to represent the negation of the will to life and the spirit of resignation, as opposed to the Dionysian affirmation of will in spite of the inescapable suffering of life with its unique concept of rebirth and renewal.

Nietzsche advances the notion that, since its inception, Christianity was built upon the “disgust and aversion felt by life itself, merely disguised, concealed, and masquerading under the belief in an ‘other’ or better’ life.”²²³ As such it must fear and condemn art, which threatens to expose its illusory nature, and so cultivates a “hatred of the ‘world’, a curse on the affects, fear of beauty and sensuality.”²²⁴

It is in this context that Nietzsche’s book argues against morality and pro art, inventing an ontological stance that was a “fundamental counter-doctrine and counter-evaluation of life, a purely artistic, an *anti-Christian* one.”²²⁵ The incomplete yet sure instinct which drove Nietzsche to begin writing the book in 1871,²²⁶ has crystallised with the assistance of hindsight, allowing the author to articulate its true goals. In his ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’ Nietzsche continues on regarding the creation of this movement, asking of this phenomenon “what should it be called? As a philologist and man of words I baptised it, not without taking a certain liberty—for who knows the true name of the Antichrist?—with the name of a Greek god: I called it the *Dionysian*.”²²⁷ In retrospect, Nietzsche notes that in his tentative naming of the Dionysian, the ‘new soul’ should have sung rather than spoken, as it is through song and dance that man “expresses himself as a member of a higher communal nature.”²²⁸

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche draws heavily from the philosophies of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and his concepts as articulated in *The World as Will and Representation*. Schopenhauer’s tome in two volumes was first published in 1819, later revised in 1844 and finally appeared as an extended edition in 1859. Schopenhauer privileged music above other art forms as a universal language of the highest degree. He argued that, unlike other art forms, music is not merely a copy of appearance but in a metaphysical sense

²²² Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 151.

²²³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 9.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid, 10.

²²⁶ Raymond Geuss, introduction to Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), viii.

²²⁷ Ibid, 10.

²²⁸ Ibid, 23.

is “directly a copy of the will itself.”²²⁹ Nietzsche apparently read the book cover to cover and without intermission after discovering it in a bookshop in 1865. The abstract nature of music, which Schopenhauer privileged above the plastic and visual arts can also be discerned in Walter’s Pater’s remark from around the same time as *The Birth of Tragedy*, that “all art constantly aspires toward the condition of music.”²³⁰

Although Schopenhauer and Nietzsche both agreed on the idea that human impulses are driven by an underlying will, their opinions diverged significantly in their approach to the application of this knowledge in life itself. In Schopenhauer’s pessimistic worldview, the Will for insatiable desires and unceasing human compulsions lead to a life of suffering and unhappiness; with these impulses needing to be suppressed in order for the individual to gain control. Nietzsche acknowledges this will or underlying drive in human nature, as well as the suffering and torment that are experienced alongside it. However, he argues that despite this, life should be affirmed and celebrated. Through this process one can seek a liberating truth between creative consciousness and understanding or individual cognition.

Dionysian suffering and the essentially abysmal truth of life is articulated in the tragic insights and “horrible wisdom of Silenus.”²³¹ According to Greek myth, when the satyr and companion of Dionysus was captured by King Midas, he forced questions upon him as to the very best and most preferable of all things for man, to which Silenus answered

Miserable ephemeral race, children of chance and toil, why do you force me to tell you what it is best for you not to hear? The very best of all things is completely beyond your reach: not to have been born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best thing for you is – to meet an early death.²³²

Whilst recognising this truth, Nietzsche argues that the Apollonian concept of the *principium individuationis* is a feature of appearance, and that only by reconnecting with the collective Dionysian experience can one experience the original unity which characterises primordial being. The ‘naïve’ Apollonian culture is appealing but should not be trusted. When the façade is exposed it reveals “powerful misleading delusions and pleasurable illusions”²³³ which deceive us and prevent us from reaching a deeper truth. When faced with the primal

²²⁹ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, 262.

²³⁰ Seiler R. M. ed., *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 413.

²³¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 31.

²³² *Ibid*, 27.

²³³ *Ibid*, 29.

Dionysian force, the smooth and artificially calm exterior of the Apollonian façade disintegrates;

The muses of the art of ‘appearance’ paled before an art which in its intoxication spoke the truth, in which the wisdom of Silenus cried out woe! Woe! To the Olympians in their serenity. The individual, with all his limits and moderation, sank here into the self-oblivion of the Dionysian state and forgot the Apollonian principles. *Excess* revealed itself as the truth, and the contradiction, the bliss born of pain spoke out from the heart of nature.²³⁴

The balance of power between these opposing forces, and the way in which they interacted throughout history form the basis for Nietzsche’s argument pertaining to the origin and subsequent decline of Classical Greek tragedy through the centuries. The argument Nietzsche advances is that Attic tragedy, from around the fifth century BC, manages to successfully fuse lyric poetry with the essential ingredient of music, which subsequently inform and feed off one another. The balance between Apollonian plastic art and the Dionysian art of music is achieved during this time by poets such as Aeschylus and Sophocles. However, once this balance is overthrown, and Dionysian instinct disregarded in favour of Socratic rationalism, then myth and tragedy are disavowed in the name of reason and science.²³⁵

Socrates, whose eye “never glowed with the sweet madness of artistic enthusiasm”,²³⁶ was concerned exclusively with the useful, the measurable and the justifiable. As Nietzsche notes of “the Socratic principles: ‘Knowledge is virtue; sin is the result of ignorance; the virtuous man is the happy man’: in these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy.”²³⁷ This demise became evident in the plays of Euripides, Plato and the New Comedy, which subordinated music to the literary text, and so beginning the eventual demise and extinction of music on the stage. Moreover, the original Apollonian tendencies of clarity and representation are transformed into mere concepts, or “logical schematism,” whilst the Dionysian spirit of ecstasy and abandon is watered down to “naturalistic emotion.”²³⁸

The connection to Wagner is revealed when it becomes clear that Nietzsche’s argument is in fact a double-pronged attack. In addition to his arguments pertaining to the

²³⁴ Ibid, 32.

²³⁵ Ibid, xx.

²³⁶ Ibid, 76.

²³⁷ Ibid, 78.

²³⁸ Ibid.

birth of tragedy in antiquity, there is also a relevant contemporary context: the urgent regeneration of modern German culture. In his 1886 preface, Nietzsche draws parallels between the demise of Attic tragedy and the decadence of current day Germany, alongside his desire for a resurgence, or a “*rebirth of tragedy* – and other blissful hopes for the German character.”²³⁹

These concepts are linked by music, and are corroborated by ideas from Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*, which is quoted at length. At the time Nietzsche wrote the book, it was of course Wagner’s music which so tantalizingly promised this rebirth through the dramatised marriage of music and myth. In 1870-71 when Nietzsche was writing his book, Wagner’s operas “appeared to offer both an innovative musical aesthetics and a revival of traditional mythical content, elements of progress and continuity which appealed to a nation and culture in transition.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Ibid, 86.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, viii.

i) Wagner and Nietzsche

Wagner's attempt to revitalize the state of German music through the inspiration of Hellenic art was borne out in the construction of the *Bayreuth Festspielhaus*. Wagner looked to the spirit of ancient Greece, their gods Apollo and Dionysus, and their form of storytelling through myth and tragedy - and sought to recreate this for nineteenth-century German audiences through his own vision of the ancient music-drama which would unfold in the purpose-built premises there. Wagner employed massive forces and combined the various art forms in one creation, a concept that Nietzsche had explored in his lecture from 1870, 'Greek Musical Drama'; "Constrained yet graceful, multiplicity and yet unity, many arts at the peak of activity, and yet *one* work of art – this was the ancient music-drama."²⁴¹

From their first meeting at Tribschen in 1869, Nietzsche was charmed by both the charismatic composer and his wife Cosima, who saw in the young professor a useful advocate for their Bayreuth project. Over the course of 23 visits Nietzsche made to Tribschen, he bonded with Wagner over their mutual admiration for Schopenhauer, writing enthusiastically after one trip that "all that is best and most beautiful is associated with the names of Schopenhauer and Wagner."²⁴²

Coming from a classical philologist's standpoint, Nietzsche's espousal of Wagner's ambitious plans for a musical-metaphysical drama could provide invaluable propaganda. Wagner's music, particularly *Tristan und Isolde* (1865), appealed directly to Nietzsche's musical sensibilities, with its seductive chromaticism, sensual dissonance and themes of yearning and hidden sexuality. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, he challenges any 'genuine' musician to experience the music alone from the third act without "expiring under the convulsive beating of the wings of the entire soul."²⁴³ Despite his later break from Wagner, his admiration for this work, and indeed much of Wagner's music itself, never faltered.

The high levels of expectation with which Nietzsche looked forward to the festival at Bayreuth, that "greatest victory an artist has ever achieved,"²⁴⁴ were to be sorely deflated at the actual event. He was hopeful that Bayreuth would be a turning point, away from the

²⁴¹ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 45. The original source is: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 1: 531-32.

²⁴² Benson, *Pious Nietzsche: Decadence and Dionysian Faith*, 104.

²⁴³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 113.

²⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 209-10.

“levelling mediocrity, democracy, and ‘modern ideas’!”²⁴⁵ imposed by the *Reich*, and toward the regeneration of German culture and the birth of a ‘new society.’ Instead, Nietzsche was not confronted by the cosmopolitan and refined ‘free spirits’ with whom he so wished to engage, but by a suffocating heat, a stream of political figures and their entourages from the new empire, and a rowdy crowd of spectators.

Nietzsche recalled that, “gathered together were all the leisured riffraff of Europe and the first prince who arrived walked in on Wagner as into his own home, as if it were nothing more than one more amusement. And, at bottom, it was nothing else.”²⁴⁶ As Liébert notes

the atmosphere was that both of a spa and a jolly party. In the crammed inns, instead of the contemplation into which tragic catastrophe is supposed to plunge the ‘artist-spectator,’ gripped ‘by the voice arising from the deepest depths of things,’ there were only lively, laugh-filled conversations amid the smoke of sausages and cigars and great streams of ‘*German beer*.’ The first souvenirs were already on sale: medallions of the Nibelungen and Wagnerian neckties, announcing those Grails in red glass and Parsifal pants that were so to amuse Willy and Colette.²⁴⁷

After witnessing this opening of Bayreuth in 1876 Nietzsche was utterly disappointed, and began to view Wagner as an inherently untruthful artist. Much later in 1883 he alludes to Wagner in several thinly veiled references as *der alte Zauberer* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; a magician who enchants and intoxicates those around him with his beautiful façade. The promised tragic pathos of Bayreuth was in reality an overtly theatrical spectacle.

In time, Nietzsche would write of his aversion to the highly stylised form of Wagner’s operas, which deviated so far from his imagined interpretation of the original Greek musical drama. As Liébert notes, in comparison to Aeschylus and the original Dionysian dithyramb, Wagner’s opera was akin to the demise of Euripides and his ‘dramatized epic.’ Nietzsche wrote that “*The Ring* marked a decadent step in relation to *Tristan*, that reincarnation of ancient tragedy, where the role of the chorus was taken by the orchestra, the

²⁴⁵ From his 1886 preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, titled “An Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 25.

²⁴⁶ As translated and quoted in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 63. In the explanatory notes on page 225, Liébert clarifies that this was an initial version of the passage, eventually rewritten in section 2 of “Human, All-Too-Human,” from Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*. For the final version, see Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 116-17.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

source of the Dionysian vision, of which the stage setting, like a mirage, was but an emanation.”²⁴⁸

Nietzsche’s disenchantment with Wagner was bitterly felt and the relationship between the former ‘master’ and his avowed admirer swiftly soured. Nietzsche went on to retract many of his initial eulogies towards the man he had once looked up to as an almost god-like figure. The creative freedom that Nietzsche had initially felt to be so strong in Wagner’s spirit now revealed a very un-Dionysian nature, which was controlling, self-indulgent and megalomaniacal. Trying to understand how he could have been so deluded, Nietzsche wrote in 1876

those things that now, in retrospect, might be understood as heralds, prove on closer inspection to be a desultory collection of traits that tend more to arouse misgivings than they do hopes: a restless, irritable spirit, a nervous haste in seizing upon a hundred different things, a passionate pleasure in almost pathologically intense states of mind, abrupt swings from moments of most heartfelt serenity to states of turbulence and noise.²⁴⁹

Nietzsche articulated many colourful statements of increasing ferocity against Wagner. For example, he described Wagner to have an effect “like the ongoing consumption of alcohol. He dulls our perception, he fills the stomach with phlegm. Particular effect: degeneration of rhythmic feeling.”²⁵⁰ Or when he described Wagner as a musician, who more than any other “is master at finding the tones from the realm of suffering, dejected, tormented souls... he knows how the soul wearily drags itself along when it can no longer leap and fly, nor even walk.”²⁵¹ These insults levelled at Wagner would have been particularly harsh in the context of the importance Nietzsche placed not only on rhythm, but also on the spirit of song and dance in music.

Nietzsche’s acrimonious turn against Wagner centred around questions of art, morality, religion and redemption. Having placed such high expectations on Wagner, and indeed supported Wagner’s music and ideals in German society through the endorsement of his philosophical writings such as the ‘Forward to Richard Wagner’ in *The Birth of Tragedy* and the ‘*Untimely Meditations*’ written between 1873-76, Nietzsche’s ideological and social

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 81.

²⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Richard Wagner in Bayreuth’ in *Unfashionable Observations*, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 263.

²⁵⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Sechs Bänden* (Munich: Hansler Verlag, 1966), 931.

²⁵¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 143.

rejection of Wagner shapes much of his future work. Wagner's music is seen to be decadent and untruthful, promising escape to an other-world through intoxication and seduction. Nietzsche warns that

Wagner is a seducer in the grand scale. There is nothing tired, enervated, life-threatening, or world-denying in matters of the spirit that his art fails to defend secretly—he shrouds the blackest obscurantism inside the light of the ideal. He flatters every nihilistic (—Buddhistic) instinct and disguises it in music, he flatters every aspect of Christianity, every form in which religion expresses decadence. Just open your ears: everything that has ever grown on the soil of *impoverished* life, the whole counterfeit of transcendence and the beyond, has its most sublime advocate in Wagner's art.²⁵²

Just as the 'night' in *Tristan* is not grounded in the realm of reality, so too is Wagner's music an illusion of an other-world. In the face of the abhorrent wisdom of Silenus, Wagner is unable to accept and celebrate this suffering, which would transform it into life affirming Dionysian ecstasy. Instead, Wagner deals with this human condition by self-deception and attempts to mend it by way of redemption. *Parsifal*, with its overtly Christian symbols and rites, represents the epitome of this delusion. However, this is an untenable position for Nietzsche, who has shown that the metaphysical enemy of music and true art is Christianity itself.

Increasingly, the most turbulent figure in this whole situation was possibly Nietzsche himself. His own warnings of the dangers of genius and greatness that could spoil a man, written with Wagner in mind, were to spell out an unwitting prophecy of his own future. He described Wagner's grand egocentrism writing,

It is in any event a dangerous sign when a man is assailed by awe of himself... when the sacrificial incense which is properly rendered only to a god penetrates the brain of the genius, so that his head begins to swim and he comes to regard himself as something supra-human. The consequences that slowly result are: the feeling of irresponsibility, of exceptional rights, the belief that he confers a favour by his mere presence, insane rage when anyone attempts even to compare him with others. Let alone to rate him beneath them, or to draw attention to lapses in his work.²⁵³

²⁵² Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 256-57.

²⁵³ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 87-88.

Wagner perhaps recognised these exceptional forces and unhinged qualities in Nietzsche's personality, understanding that his nature was 'excessive in all directions,' and that his grandiose defection, played out in the public sphere, could not be subjected to the same rules that would govern a normal relationship. Wagner would write to Nietzsche's close friend, Franz Overbeck, in 1879 that

I always felt that Nietzsche, in his association with me, was subject to the laws of an essential life crisis... even if I recognised with horror in the decisive turn in his evolution the intolerable weight that this crisis must have been for him, I had to realise that one cannot relate such a violent psychic phenomenon to moral norms, so that the only possible attitude is a deeply felt silence.²⁵⁴

Whilst Nietzsche's dialectic stance regarding Wagner was unapologetic in its rancour, he seemed unable to disavow him altogether, and remained in part as much drawn to him as he was repulsed by him. He was still seduced by *Tristan* and even *Parsifal*, of which he confessed "I admire this work; I wish I had written it myself; failing that, *I understand it*."²⁵⁵ His decision to turn against Wagner was the result of uncompromising philosophical principles, much the same as his renunciation of Socrates, Christ and Germany. Thomas Mann describes this rejection in terms of a love-hate relationship noting that "Nietzsche's relationship to the preferred objects of his criticism was simply one of passion – a passion without specific sign, for it was constantly shifting between the negative and the positive."²⁵⁶

After seeing his hopes of a reinvigoration of the Dionysian spirit through Wagner's music drama dashed, Nietzsche postured,

apart from all the over-hasty hopes and erroneous applications to the present which debased my first book at that time,²⁵⁷ the great Dionysian question mark which it put in place endures still, also with respect to music: what would music have to be like to be no longer of Romantic origin, like German music – but *Dionysian*? ...²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 56. The original source is: Geneviève Bianquis, *Nietzsche devant ses contemporains* (Monaco: Ed. du Rocher, 1959), 89.

²⁵⁵ Nietzsche, postscript, *The Case of Wagner*, 183. Quoted in Liébert, 132.

²⁵⁶ Thomas Mann, 'Nietzsche's Philosophy in Light of Recent History' in *Last Essays*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 150.

²⁵⁷ Here Nietzsche is referring to *The Birth of Tragedy*.

²⁵⁸ Nietzsche, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' in *The Birth of Tragedy*, 11.

ii) Mediterranean Inspiration

Having rejected Wagner's music, Nietzsche turned his attention instead to an unlikely source, Bizet's *Carmen*. To Nietzsche, *Carmen* represented an exotic Spanish disposition of sunshine, simplicity and honesty. It held the promise of the future; "*il faut mediteranniser la musique...*"²⁵⁹ The antithesis of Wagner's cloistered, untruthful and suffocating intensity, the unhealthy obsession of night and redemption were replaced instead with lightness and gaiety.

As early as 1878, when *Human All Too Human* was first published, Nietzsche had started to dream of a southern solution. It contained the following poem:

Leaving behind suffocating German noise
For Mozart, Rossini, and Chopin
I see your boat, German Orpheus,
Turn toward Greek lands.

Oh, do not hesitate to turn the heading of your desire
Toward southern lands,
Isles of the Blessed, the play of Greek nymphs
No boat has ever had a lovelier goal -
This is what is henceforth given me.²⁶⁰

To have this disposition did not require being born in the sunny Mediterranean lands, rather it could be acquired by conviction. Mozart's genius is described as un-German for the fact that he was constantly dreaming of Italy when he was not there.²⁶¹ Nietzsche articulated these thoughts, writing

If such a southerner, not by descent but by *faith*, should dream of the future of music, he must also dream of the redemption of music from the north, and in his ears he must have the prelude of a more profound, more powerful, perhaps more evil and mysterious music, a supra-German music that does not fade away at the sight of the voluptuous blue sea and the brightness of the Mediterranean sky, nor does it turn yellow and then pale as all German music does.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 236.

²⁶⁰ As translated and quoted in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 195. The original source is: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 11: 302-3.

²⁶¹ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 271.

²⁶² Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 385.

North and South were drawn as the new battlelines. Nietzsche claims he did not have enough strength for the North, lamenting the fact that he spent his entire youth there, where “uncouth, artificial souls rule who work as assiduously and necessarily at their measures of prudence as does the beaver on his dam.”²⁶³ By contrast, after spending time in Naples, Nietzsche writes of his spirit for the South, witnessing the evening sunset, “with its velvet red and gray... like a shudder of sympathy with myself that I should have begun my life by being old, and tears and the feeling of being saved just at the last moment.”²⁶⁴

This dichotomy between North and South and the idea of Southern spiritual renewal brings to mind once again Mann’s *Death in Venice*. The unhealthy and obsessive work undertaken by Aschenbach in Munich is characteristic of German decadence, having reached a “difficult and dangerous point which demanded the utmost care and circumspection, the most insistent and precise effort of will, and the productive mechanism in his mind.”²⁶⁵ Again there is a sense of façade and degeneration, looking in depth at Aschenbach’s writing, Mann describes an “elegant self-control concealing from the world’s eyes until the very last moment a state of inner disintegration and biological decay.”²⁶⁶

Once in Venice, with thoughts of Athens, of “nymphs and Achelous”²⁶⁷ and the beautiful ephebe Tadzio in his vision he “suddenly desired to write... never had he felt the joy of the word more sweetly...”²⁶⁸ All of this occurring under the warmth of the Mediterranean sun, that

so numbs and bewitches our intelligence and memory that the soul, in its joy, quite forgets its proper state and clings with astonished admiration of that most beautiful of all the things the sun shines upon: yes, that only with the help of a bodily form is the soul then still able to exalt itself to a higher vision.²⁶⁹

As Ritchie Robertson observes, *Death in Venice* was but “one of a series of texts in which travellers from Northern Europe have their sexual horizons enlarged by visiting the

²⁶³ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 195. The original source is a fragment written during the Autumn of 1881: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 9: 607.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Mann, *Death in Venice*, 197.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 205.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 238.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 239.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 238.

South,”²⁷⁰ which in turn reinvigorated their artistic outlook. Goethe’s *Roman Eulogies* and Szymanowski’s novel *Ephebos* both spring to mind as examples.

Nietzsche’s hopes that music should become more ‘Mediterranean’ was a wish that came to fruition, although it was most fully realised during the period of his mental decline in the 1890’s and after his death in 1900. French composers were eager to seek inspiration from the warmer climes after Bizet’s *Carmen*, written in 1875, and the rising prominence of Spanish composers such as Manuel de Falla. Emmanuel Chabrier wrote *Espana* in 1883 after holidaying there, Ravel drew from his Basque heritage in works such as *Rapsodie espagnole*, composed between 1907-8, and Debussy also found Spain to be a fecund source of inspiration, as witnessed by his *Iberia* from 1910.

Szymanowski’s opinions on the topic are pertinent. He writes of Nietzsche’s dreams for music to escape the “dull flatlands of Germany” in exchange for a ‘wicked, capricious, southern’ music’, although “Nietzsche centred his yearnings, not altogether aptly, on *Carmen*. It is, indeed, a glorious work, but how much more would he have rejoiced had he heard Debussy’s *Iberia* or *Nocturnes*.”²⁷¹ We can perhaps see that Szymanowski had not realised Nietzsche’s attraction to *Carmen*’s subject matter went beyond music to deeper philosophical levels; of love and death, pitted against one another in the cruellest of Dionysian manners, evoking in nature the horrific wisdom of Silenus.²⁷² Nietzsche wrote of the essence of this love, “translated with equal terror into a formula, as in Don Jose’s last cry, which concludes the work:

‘Yes. I have killed her,
I—my adored Carmen!’”²⁷³

In Szymanowski’s eyes, one opera which successfully managed to cast off the German shroud of its composer’s northern heritage was Strauss’s *Elektra*. In 1909 Szymanowski had travelled with Spiess and Fitelberg to attend the world premiere in Dresden.²⁷⁴

Elektra was the one work of Strauss’ that Szymanowski saw as a true exception in his oeuvre. No doubt he approved of Hofmannsthal’s modernisation of the Greek tragic myth perpetuated by Sophocles. Strauss later remarked that a “central catalyst in his decision to

²⁷⁰ Robertson, *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, 96.

²⁷¹ Szymanowski, ‘My Splendid Isolation’ in *Szymanowski on Music*, 98.

²⁷² Fischer-Dieskau, *Wagner and Nietzsche*, 179.

²⁷³ Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 615.

²⁷⁴ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 68.

compose *Elektra* was his desire to counter Johann Joachim Winkelmann with Hofmannsthal's 'demonic, ecstatic Hellenism.'²⁷⁵ Understandably therefore for Szymanowski, *Elektra* was the pinnacle of Strauss' output; "a poetic masterpiece, stripped of all superficially aestheticised Hellenism, it stood on the abyss of a most profoundly conceived realism."²⁷⁶

For Szymanowski, Strauss succeeded in *Elektra* precisely because he allowed the music to contain the power of myth in a Dionysian sense. According to Nietzsche, the goal of myth, and subsequently Dionysian music, is to experience "universality and truth staring into the infinite."²⁷⁷ The universality of music lies in its ability to transcend this limiting form of communicating, breaking down barriers and allowing the spectators to participate in the communal and somewhat ritualistic offering of music performance.

This concept of infinity is vital. The Dionysian does not dictate or set boundaries, rather it is open and endless, affirming the process rather than the end result and valuing becoming over being. It dwells in the subconscious and exists only in the present. It expresses an impulse and is based on instinct, allowing each listener to experience their own truth through reconnecting to the universal spirit, the "vivid event refracted in this mirror immediately expands emotionally for us to become the copy of an eternal truth."²⁷⁸

Instead of trying to capture the essence of a scene or imitating emotions or phenomena, it has a special ability to embody these things within the listener firsthand. Remembering the importance of Schopenhauer to both Wagner and Nietzsche's work, according to Schopenhauer, music is "an unmediated copy of the will itself."²⁷⁹ It can deepen connections to a dramatic scene or concept, paint imaginary pictures in the mind's eye, recall memories, nostalgic thoughts and reveal insights that would otherwise have remained hidden. And yet the mechanisms through which it achieves this are mysterious still.

Reflecting on this phenomenon, Schopenhauer does not deny its existence but notes with a certain perplexity that one cannot "demonstrate any similarity between that play of melody and the things which hovered before him."²⁸⁰ This is the gift of music, its ability to transcend the literal and communicate directly to the soul, its nature, which is simply to be.

²⁷⁵ Bryan Gilliam, 'Strauss and the sexual body' in *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss* Cambridge, ed. Charles Youmans (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), 278.

²⁷⁶ Szymanowski, 'On the Work of Wagner, Strauss and Schoenberg' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 215.

²⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 94.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ As quoted in Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 88.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

Similarly, the English art critic John Ruskin defended the paintings of Turner, which many critics of the day derided for being unrealistic or not literal depictions, writing that they “were in fact deeply true to nature, once nature is understood not superficially but in terms of its infinity and unity, which are in turn expressions of the glory of God as the creator of nature.”²⁸¹

The opposing force of this infinite, intangible state of wonder is a literal representation, the Apollonian state. Nietzsche cautions that if a scene is depicted in musical terms literally, then the “vivid event is immediately stripped of any mythic character.”²⁸² Nietzsche laments this regression in classical antiquity with the occurrence of the New Attic Dithyramb, in which music becomes a mere caricature and counterfeit of the will, a “wretched copy of the phenomenon and so infinitely poorer than the phenomenon itself.”²⁸³

Nietzsche warns modern composers that attempting this style of tone painting, whereby “external analogies between a life or natural event and certain rhythmic figures and characteristic sounds,”²⁸⁴ for example in attempting to depict a sea-storm or battle, has the opposite and unwanted effect of closing in, suffocating and stultifying the imagination. The listener has shifted from the subconscious to the conscious, moving from freedom to the superficial. Describing this degeneration, as it occurred in the New Attic Dithyramb, Nietzsche writes that music

no longer expressed the inner essence, the will itself, but only reproduced the phenomenon in an unsatisfactory way, in an imitation mediated through concepts, and from whose intrinsically degenerate music the truly musical natures turned away with the same repugnance which they felt towards the Socratic tendency with its lethal consequences for art.²⁸⁵

Strauss’ later works, particularly his tone poems, are symptomatic of these problems. The programmatic elements within *Don Quixote*, *Ein Heldenleben* and *An Alpine Symphonie*, to name a few, all attempt to achieve a certain sense of mimicry or musical tone painting. Szymanowski describes the Straussian experience of nature for example as “brutal

²⁸¹ As quoted in Paul Guyer, ‘Art and Morality: Aesthetics at 1870’ *The Cambridge History of Philosophy 1870-1945*, vol. 1, (2003), 339.

²⁸² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 94.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 93.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

naturalism,”²⁸⁶ which one can conclude, leaves little room for Nietzsche’s ideal of the myth-creating power of suggestion.

Parallels can also be drawn between Nietzsche’s reading of the New Attic Dithyramb as a product of decadent and degenerate culture and Szymanowski’s views on Strauss’ music within the political atmosphere of *fin-de-siècle* Germany. In his later years, Szymanowski viewed Strauss’ post-*Elektra* music as a mere derivative of Wagner’s dominant musical model. Coinciding with the high point of German Imperialism, Strauss’s music was “uncannily bound up with the underlying psyche of pre-war Germany,”²⁸⁷ with many of his works after *Elektra* reflecting this decadent demise;

After this supreme creative effort, he permitted himself to sink into aesthetic quietism which typifies *Der Rosenkavalier*, the *Alpine Symphony*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and a whole series of increasingly weak works in which there is a distasteful resting on laurels and the decking-out of bourgeois complacency in the ceremonial robes of a profound and refined culture.²⁸⁸

In turning away from German music, Nietzsche sought an answer in the Mediterranean, the birthplace of Dionysus. He asked, “what would music have to be like to be no longer of Romantic origin, like German music – but *Dionysian*?...”²⁸⁹

Before proceeding to the next segment, which addresses the figure of Dionysus within Greek mythology up to modern interpretations of the god, it must be noted that even when discussing the Dionysian outside music, one encounters a host of inherent contradictions and paradoxes. Henrichs warns those wishing to further acquaint themselves with the god that a balanced and unified view of Dionysus is “not only difficult to achieve but is essentially incompatible with the complexity of the god and with his disparate manifestations.”²⁹⁰ Understanding and accepting these conflicts is essential in coming to a deeper understanding of the god. With these limitations in mind, Nietzsche’s fundamental question still arises, “Yes, what is Dionysian?”²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Szymanowski, ‘Karol Szymanowski on Contemporary Music’ in *Szymanowski on Music*, 201.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 214.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 216.

²⁸⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 11.

²⁹⁰ Henrichs, ‘Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence’, 209.

²⁹¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 6.

2.3 The God Dionysus

i) Dionysus in Antiquity and the subsequent appropriation of Dionysian myth

In order to grasp Szymanowski's understanding of the figure of Dionysus, it is worth considering his status as a god in ancient Greek and Roman culture and also to address briefly the various interpretations and meanings that have been assigned to him throughout various periods in history, leading up to early twentieth-century thought. This is not a simple task; as Carpenter has observed, Dionysus is indeed "the most complex and multifaceted of all the Greek gods,"²⁹² a fact confounded by his polymorphous nature and unusual birth. Some of the many contradictions that abound are due to the gradual evolution of Dionysus' character, painted through stories and myths from as early as 1250 B.C. As Henrichs notes,

from a historical point of view, Dionysus must thus be seen, like any other Greek god, as a composite figure who acquired new aspects in the course of time, which in turn modified his previous identities and the overall conception of him. Throughout antiquity, as long as Dionysus was a living part of an ever changing culture, he too was subject to continuous differentiation and change."²⁹³

Yet, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* also reminds us, "while modern scholars regard Dionysus inevitably as a construct of the Greek imagination, in the eyes of his ancient worshippers he was a god - immortal, powerful, and self-revelatory."²⁹⁴ We may reflect upon these myths as mere fables, but to the Greeks living at the time the gods were perceived as real figures; powerful icons that could either wreak destruction or bestow bounty and plenitude.

In Walter Pater's view, Dionysian worship was primarily the religion of those Greeks who lived amongst—and tended the vine, producing the life-sustaining wine which formed an essential part of everyday life. In examining Dionysian mythology, Pater writes that the

religion of Dionysus carries us back to its [Greece's] vineyards, and is a monument

²⁹² Thomas Carpenter, introduction to Thomas Carpenter & Christopher Faraone ed., *Masks of Dionysus* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 1.

²⁹³ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 205.

²⁹⁴ Albert Henrichs, 'Dionysus' *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Oxford Reference Online. <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t111.e2226>

of the ways and thoughts of people whose days go by beside the winepress, and under the green and purple shadows, and whose material happiness depends on the crop of grapes.²⁹⁵

Throughout antiquity Dionysus represented four facets of life: the vine, ritual madness, the mask and theatre, and the afterlife. Most recognizable as the god of wine and intoxication, he oversaw the cultivation and harvest of the vine, closely associated to the vitality of life and its connection to the natural world. E. R. Dodds explains the Greek's conception of him, not only as god of the vine, but as

the Power in the tree... the blossom-bringer... the fruit-bringer... the abundance of life... not only the liquid fire in the grape, but the sap thrusting in the young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature.²⁹⁶

As god of the mask and theatre he “presided over dramatic performances in Athens and Attica and whose name and rituals were closely associated with the origins of tragedy and comedy.”²⁹⁷ As god of ritual madness, it was believed that he had the ability to inspire frenzied states of ecstasy and uncontrollable acts of violence in his followers. His female entourage, known as maenads, led nocturnal dances and sacrifices in forests and on mountain-sides in his honour.

His final province was connected to the underworld, death and the afterlife. As such, the figure of Dionysus and Dionysian paraphernalia was commonly depicted in funerary-art which decorated tombs throughout ancient Greece and Rome. As Henrichs relates, it was in these four areas “that Dionysus exercised his power over the Greeks and their imagination.”²⁹⁸

According to the myth perpetuated in Euripides' *Bacchae*, Dionysus was the 'twice-born' son of Zeus and the mortal princess of Thebes, Semele. In the prologue to the play Dionysus relates the motivation of his return to Thebes, which involves retribution toward the city for failing to recognise and worship his divinity and to clear his mother's slandered name. Semele's beauty attracted Zeus's attentions, leading him to visit her in his mortal guise and

²⁹⁵ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 9-10.

²⁹⁶ E. R. Dodds, introduction to Euripides, *Bacchae*, ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944), x.

²⁹⁷ Albert Henrichs, 'He Has a God in Him: Human and Divine in the Modern Perception of Dionysus' in Thomas Carpenter and Christopher Faraone ed., *Masks of Dionysus* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 13-4.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

impregnating her with his child. Zeus's wife Hera was outraged both at her husband's infidelity and that a mortal woman was bearing her husband's child. Meanwhile, no one in Semele's family believed her claims that she was carrying a divine son, thinking her pregnancy to be the result of a common extra-marital affair.

Hera takes advantage of her frustration, tricking her to prove the child's paternity by asking Zeus to appear before her in his true godly form, knowing that she will not be able to survive the encounter. Semele puts the proposition to Zeus and he accepts, showing himself as a lightening bolt and striking Semele dead. In the moments before she dies, Hermes, Dionysus's half brother, flies down and saves the foetus, sewing him into Zeus's thigh, where he is carried to full-term and eventually reborn. Whilst his mother was mortal, Dionysus is a fully divine god, although his mortal appearance paradoxically leads to further confusion. The unusual situation of his double birth connects him closely to the cycles of birth and death and his characteristic traits of life and violence.

Euripides' play is the most complete surviving account of Dionysian mythology, dating from around 406 BC before Athens fell to Sparta.²⁹⁹ To give a brief synopsis, following on from the prologue, Dionysus returns to Thebes as a grown man and now a stranger to the city, accompanied by an entourage of maenads. He is angry that his mortal family has hitherto ignored his divine status. During his absence, Semele's father has instated his grandson Pentheus to the throne. Pentheus tries to repress the Dionysian cult spawned by the god's return that threatens to overturn social and moral order and has the stranger arrested. But Dionysus conjures an earthquake and breaks free from his bonds. Meanwhile, Dionysus possesses all of the women of Thebes, who flee from the city to join the maenads. Swarming on the mountains they engage in bacchic rites, which initially are peaceful in nature, but turn violent and wild when they realise that men are watching their rites. Pater describes these initial bacchic rites, writing

And first, they let fall their hair upon their shoulders; and those whose cinctures were unbound re-composed the spotted fawn-skins, knotting them about with snakes, which rose and licked them on the chin. Some, lately mothers, who with breasts still swelling had left their babes behind, nursed in their arms antelopes, or wild whelps of wolves, and yielded them their milk to drink; and upon their heads they placed crowns of ivy or of oak, or of flowering convolvulus. Then one, taking a thyrsus-wand, struck with it upon a rock, and thereupon leapt out a fine rain of water; another let down a reed upon the earth, and a fount of wine was sent forth

²⁹⁹ Barry B. Powell, *Classical Myth*, 7th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 273.

there; and those whose thirst was for a white stream, skimmed the surface with their finger-tips, gathered from it abundance of milk; and from the ivy of the mystic wands streams of honey distilled.³⁰⁰

Once Pentheus' men, who have been sent to the mountain to retrieve the women, are discovered by the maenads, they are chased back to the city, reporting;

And we, by flight, hardly escaped tearing to pieces at their hands, who thereupon advance with knifeless fingers upon the young of the kine... tore the heifers to shreds amongst them; tossed up and down the morsels lay in sight—flank or hoof—or hung from the fir-trees, dropping churned blood.³⁰¹

Dionysus begins to take a hold of Pentheus and convinces him that the safest way to witness and disarm these dangerous women is to assume a feminine guise himself. Thus Pentheus' own madness begins as he is led through the town, comically dressed as a woman, and into the mountain where he is set upon by the wild women who tear him to pieces with their bare hands. Pentheus' own mother, Agave, is the initiator of "the sacred rites of slaughter,"³⁰² and returns to the city proudly displaying her son's head on a *thyrsus*, thinking in her insanity that she has killed a lion. As Dionysus reveals himself as the god, Zagreus, and the chorus chant "Our king is a hunter."³⁰³ As Agave returns to her senses, the profundity of tragic horror and desolate sorrow becomes clear and she laments, "I see my greatest sorrow. Woe is me!"³⁰⁴ Agave is exiled and the play ends with her father Cadmus pondering the cruel ruin that Dionysus has wrought upon his family.

It is Euripides' *Bacchae* which provides the starting point for Szymanowski's operatic masterwork, *King Roger*. The opera was conceived in collaboration with the librettist Iwaszkiewicz, Szymanowski's cousin and poet, and is representative of the *fin-de-siècle* struggle between Schopenhaurian pessimism and the Nietzschean affirmation of life. Downes notes that in their youth "the composer and the poet had often discussed German literature and philosophy, particularly Nietzsche."³⁰⁵

Although the setting of *King Roger* is transported to twelfth-century Sicily, much of

³⁰⁰ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 71-2.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁰⁴ R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus: An Interpretation of the Bacchae* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1969), 141.

³⁰⁵ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 18.

the drama that unfolds initially mirrors Euripides' work. The conclusion however deviates somewhat, even more so after Szymanowski's decision to change the ending that Iwaskiewicz had originally intended for the opera. Downes asserts that in addition to the classical context, the more contemporaneous notion of "Wagnerian redemption as the integration of psychological dualisms... is fundamental to the 'message' of *King Roger*."³⁰⁶ The basic premise is as follows. A stranger in the form of a shepherd (Dionysus) enters the land of King Roger and begins to convert people against the church with his strange powers of persuasion. King Roger (Pentheus) initially rejects the shepherd, ordering for him to be killed, but then changes his mind. Throughout the night a Bacchic ritual of song and dance envelops the court until Roger intervenes, arresting the shepherd once more. Dionysus breaks free of the bonds and is followed off-stage by his entourage, King Roger alone stays to meet the new dawn.

Iwaskiewicz, who also wrote the libretto, notes that "sensual curiosity overwhelms Roger during all his meetings with the mysterious shepherd. The religion of the shepherd and the religion of Dionysian raptures affect Roger... sensually."³⁰⁷ A dispute over the final scene led to Szymanowski changing Iwaskiewicz's proposed conclusion. Iwaskiewicz outlined this disagreement and articulated his original idea, writing

Roger not only discovered Dionysus in the ruins of the old theatre, but followed him and what is more, flung himself into the chaos of the mysterious Dionysian cult... It was contrary to history, but dramatically more logical. Roger not only recognised Dionysus in the shepherd, but followed him into the darkness, abandoning everything for him. Szymanowski changed this conclusion. Perhaps he did not understand the ultimate repudiation of the world that I had introduced; perhaps he considered my simple conclusion to be a superfluous elucidation.³⁰⁸

Much of the critical interpretation in recent years has focused on the synthesis of Apollonian and Dionysian elements that inform Roger's actions at the end of the opera. His decision to greet the dawn alone is symbolic of his strength in withstanding and overcoming not only Dionysus, but also the Dionysian within himself. He is able to experience the vitality and rebirth of the new day because he has achieved a synthesis between Apollonian traits of moderation and order and the Dionysian elements of abandonment and ecstasy within himself. Wightman notes that in this way he can be viewed as a 'Dionysian Übermensch,' alongside the likes of Goethe and Zarathustra, whilst those unsuccessful protagonists include

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 273.

Mann's Aschenbach and Leverkühn.³⁰⁹ Remembering Apollo's domain as the sun god, Downes writes of the inherent symbolism, "the sun rises on Roger's psychic regeneration, celebrating his 'divine' revelation."³¹⁰

Returning to the modern reconstruction of Dionysus, the difficulty that classical scholars face lies in reconciling the various surviving myths, rituals, texts and iconography in which Dionysus appears. This task is made even more difficult by the many centuries and vast geographical regions, which any comprehensive study must consider. For example, one of the last references was discovered at the Trullian Synod in Constantinople and dates from 692 AD. The Christian fathers had to warn their worshippers that

Dionysiac dances and initiations were forbidden; that men must not dress like women nor women like men for ritual purposes; that Dionysiac masks were no longer acceptable; and that the name of that abominable god, Dionysus, was not to be invoked during the vintage.³¹¹

It seems as though the party was not over yet, much to the disapproval of the church. The list of forbidden acts is very useful in cataloguing the Dionysian realms as they were practiced at the time however; masks and theatrical role-play with a gender distortion, rites of dancing and sacrifice, all no doubt coupled with the worship and imbibing of his nectar. Regional varieties in the myths and portrayal of Dionysus are also to be encountered. Etruscan literature, for example, refers to Dionysus as 'Fuf'luns'. Fuf'luns becomes prominent in artefacts from the regions around the seventh-century BC when Italy became interested in cultivating their olive and wine crops.³¹²

In addition to the time and geographical challenges, the depiction of the god himself also undergoes several changes. At times he is portrayed as an effeminate beardless youth, at others a masculine bearded figure surrounded by either maenads and nymphs or satyrs and silenoi³¹³. He can encompass both gentle and violent emotional states; he is depicted as being sober or intoxicated. He represents both comedy and tragedy, and appears in animal, plant or human form. As Henrichs summarizes, he is "ephemeral and timeless, and embodiment of life as well as death, thus incorporating the whole spectrum of human experience."³¹⁴ Walter F.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 19.

³¹¹ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 213.

³¹² Larissa Bonfante, 'The Etruscan Dionysus' in *Masks of Dionysus*, 221-35.

³¹³ Plural for Silenus, an old satyr. Powell notes that "he is shown in art with thick lips and a pug nose, riding on an ass, so drunk he can barely maintain his balance." Powell, *Classical Myth*, 275.

³¹⁴ Henrichs, 'He Has a God in Him' in *Masks of Dionysus*, 41.

Otto also studied the duality inherent in Dionysus' nature, writing that he incorporates "the antitheses of ecstasy and horror, infinite vitality and savage destruction; in the pandemonium in which deathly silence is inherent... At the height of ecstasy all of these paradoxes suddenly unmask themselves and reveal their names to be Life and Death."³¹⁵

During the Middle Ages, Christianity led the movement to stamp out pagan rites and rituals, as witnessed in the example from Constantinople quoted in the previous passage. Interestingly, it was in the early stages of Christianity that the god Dionysus did in fact pose the greatest threat to the Christian faith. The similarities between Dionysus and Christ are uncanny, leading some observers to envisage Dionysus as forerunner to Christ, and in one case to speculate as to whether they were in fact brothers.³¹⁶ Nietzsche's famous dictum from the closing of *Ecce Homo* certainly comes to mind, "*Dionysus versus the crucified...*"³¹⁷

The most striking similarities include their overcoming death through rebirth/resurrection, their inherent suffering, the promise of salvation after death for their followers and the symbolism of blood and wine.³¹⁸ Jesus' crown of thorns that was placed on his head during his crucifixion could also be seen as a modification of Dionysus' garland wreath of ivy. However, Christianity prevailed throughout the Middle Ages, and Dionysus survived these long centuries as a fragmented shadow of his former glory. Under his Latin name, Bacchus, he had become a "metonymy for wine rather than the god of wine... reduced to a bloodless figure of pagan mythology."³¹⁹

The Renaissance saw a reversal in his fortunes, with many of the Italian painters and writers turning to pagan gods and the works of the Roman poets for inspiration. This resurgence of interest in antiquity led to an explosion of Dionysian representation over the following centuries, witnessed through the paintings of Titian, Piero di Cosimo, Caravaggio, Velasquez and Rubens as well as the sculptures of Michelangelo and Giambologna. Henrichs notes that Dionysus was reinstated as "the divine embodiment of a luxurious lifestyle, of closeness to nature, and of uninhibited enjoyment of the senses."³²⁰ However, although his portrayal was essentially accurate, it did not capture the depth of his spirit, merely the attractive veneer. Henrichs attributes this to the fact that the Greek Dionysus was viewed

³¹⁵ W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, trans. R. B. Palmer (Bloomington, Indiana, 1965), 121.

³¹⁶ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 216.

³¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 151.

³¹⁸ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 212-13.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 213.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, 214.

through Roman eyes, a distinction which highlights the difference in philosophical outlooks between the two civilisations.

ii) The Modern View of Dionysus

The next major period of Dionysian transformation was led by the German Romanticists, who were concerned not only with the god's outward physical projection but also his inner world, his spirit or soul. Many German writers, historians and philosophers from the late eighteenth-century onwards looked to ancient Greece as a model for their own cultural regeneration, sparking a renewed interest in Classical academia.³²¹ Early work by writers such as Winckelmann, Herder and Hölderlin formed the basis for the later expression of Dionysian Romanticism in the nineteenth century as espoused by Schelling, K. O. Müller and F. Creuzer. In differentiating between the Greeks' outlook and that of the Romans, the hidden realm of dreams, the imagination and the subconscious were emphasised. Dionysus was no longer a god in human form but a "new symbol of poetic inspiration and of a state of 'animal-like sensuality' which would lead to deeper insights."³²²

The new nineteenth-century Dionysus resonated with the ideals of Romanticism, which revered nature, revolutionary freedom and creative self-expression of the artist but also extemporised freely on the nature of individual suffering and the delicate equilibrium between life and death. Gradually the god was removed from his literal representation, instead becoming a notion or abstract concept, "Dionysus became the 'Dionysian,' and the god of wine became a metaphor for a sustained state of higher intoxication."³²³ It was the ideas of these German writers, poets and philosophers, steadily progressing throughout the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, that provided the foundation upon which Nietzsche drew from in *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is worth noting therefore, that Nietzsche's ideals of Dionysus were very much a product of this new Romanticism which had swept across Europe following the French Revolution.

This shift in thought led to several alterations in the conceptual understanding of the god. Dionysus' propensity for anthropomorphic transformations and particularly his penchant for walking amongst men in human form have created the persona of "a god in human disguise."³²⁴ In linking the god to a human physical form and appearance, a misunderstanding of his essential difference to humans has arisen; his status as one of the immortals has been conveniently glossed over. Henrichs cautions against the modern tendency to interpret

³²¹ Josine H. Blok, 'Quests for a Scientific Mythology: F. Creuzer and K. O. Müller on History and Myth' *History and Theory*, vol. 33, no. 4 (1994), 27.

³²² Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 216.

³²³ *Ibid*, 218.

³²⁴ Henrichs, 'He Has a God in Him' in *Masks of Dionysus*, 22.

Dionysus as “a mere personification of powers located within the individual psyche or in the social environment,”³²⁵ which puts us “in danger of growing oblivious to that aspect of him that was foremost in the minds of the Greeks – his divine capacity to appear among mortals when least expected and to make his presence felt by affecting their personalities and changing their lives.”³²⁶ As witnessed in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, the punitive consequences for such a failing were indeed extreme.

Continuing on from the German Romantics, who transformed the god into an abstract concept, Nietzsche goes one step further in distorting our relationship to Dionysus, internalising the god and placing him within the realm of the human psyche. As Henrichs observes, Nietzsche “destroyed Dionysus as a god even as he preserved him as a concept... by transplanting him from the natural world onto the tragic stage and from there into the human psyche.”³²⁷ In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche refers to the figure of Dionysus very little, instead writing of ‘the Dionysian’, which he defines as “a transformative emotional experience characterized by the breaking down of boundaries, loss of self, identification with the Dionysiac group, and ‘the affirmation of life in spite of suffering’”.³²⁸

Having broken out of the confines of literal depiction, and moving into the realm of the psyche, the Dionysian was now well and truly an abstraction. Moreover, the mythical framework in *The Birth of Tragedy* enabled Nietzsche to avoid precise definitions of the terms Apollonian and Dionysian. They are described at length and their characters are revealed, however “their fundamental essence remains obscure – they are variously described as powers, forces, impulses, drives.”³²⁹ One example of this can be seen when Nietzsche describes the experiences of a man who joins in the collective Dionysian experience through the portals of song and dance, writing, “he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams.”³³⁰

Nietzsche’s personal identification with Dionysian traits and the discovery of Dionysian elements within mankind led to the assimilation of worshipper and god, in turn uncovering ‘god-like’ elements within people under the Dionysian influence. Similarly, Erwin Rohde championed a similar interpretation which blurred the demarcation between

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid, 23.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid, 24.

³²⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, xxiii.

³³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, and The Case of Wagner*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 37.

mortal and deity, human and divine. Rohde argued that “the worshipers of Dionysus became one with their god at the height of their ritual ecstasy; by achieving unity with him, every human follower of Dionysus was temporarily transformed into a god and became not merely godlike, but divine.”³³¹ Whilst this transformation happened on an individual level, to Rohde it was still part of a larger, ultimately positive collective spiritual experience where the individual became subsumed into the group consciousness. But, this abstraction comes at the expense of understanding Dionysus as an external figure or as a “divine force outside the human sphere, as the Greeks did.”³³²

There is little doubt that Szymanowski strongly identified with Nietzsche’s theories of this ‘Dionysian state’ and may well have felt that it was something that resided within his own being. It was of course an immensely fascinating and seductive calling for any artist wishing to be reinvigorated by the Dionysian creative spirit. Moreover, Szymanowski’s belief that his nobility and artistic profession set him above the average man can only have enhanced his ability to identify with the god, channelling his energy and creative spirit. This concept has resonated with many artists and scholars throughout the twentieth-century and as Henrichs points out, “current definitions of Dionysus reflect these psychological and anthropological categories and trace the specific force of his divinity to its repercussions in the human psyche.”³³³

Classicist Winnington-Ingram explains the moment from the *Bacchae* when Pentheus is trying to tether the imaginary bull that Dionysus has conjured in front of him, writing that “he is performing a futile task of constraining the animal Dionysus within himself.”³³⁴ Another example in classical scholarship can be found in Dodds’ statement in the introduction to the *Bacchae* that “to resist Dionysus is to repress the elemental in one’s own nature.”³³⁵ The significance of understanding this particular strain or misconception in *fin-de-siècle* thought on this subject matter is to illustrate that in Szymanowski’s eyes, the god Dionysus was not merely a separate divinity or a set of myths from Ancient Greek culture, but a flexible concept and construct of the intellect and the imagination, that could be experienced by humanity both on an individual and collective level.

³³¹ Henrichs, ‘He Has a God in Him’ in *Masks of Dionysus*, 28.

³³² *Ibid*, 24.

³³³ *Ibid*, 25.

³³⁴ Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus*, 84.

³³⁵ Euripides, *Bacchae*, xvi.

On the verge of his final madness, Nietzsche would famously address a card to Cosima Wagner writing “Ariadne, I love you,” and signing off as Dionysus.³³⁶ Critically, it was Nietzsche’s ‘error’ regarding the internalisation of Dionysus that his “fellow infatuated enthusiasts”³³⁷ absorbed and identified with. Like Nietzsche, Szymanowski also saw himself within the Dionysian figure. After enthusiastically studying Walter Pater’s *Denys l’Auxerrois* from his book *Imaginary Portraits*, Szymanowski drew the comparison between himself and the character of Denys, the French derivation from the Greek name of Dionysus, writing that “this figure is for me some sort of mystical symbol for various personal dreams about life – and it is difficult for me to part myself from him mentally.”³³⁸ This statement from 1917, one year after the First Violin Concerto, highlights the intense personal bond that Szymanowski felt to the spirit of Denys/Dionysus.

³³⁶ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 49.

³³⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 6.

³³⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 208. Letter to Iwaszkiewicz, November, 1917.

iii) Dionysus Zagreus

In Pater's mythological *Imaginary Portraits*, the figure of Denys, "a denizen of old Greece itself,"³³⁹ returns to the civilization of men during the mid thirteenth-century. The story plays out in the ancient French town of Auxerre, "a veritable country of the vine."³⁴⁰ Pater's description of Denys' rituals and his affects on the town folk highlights the God's darker side. In the *Imaginary Portraits*, Pater evokes a variant of the Dionysus myth, that of Dionysus Zagreus. It is worth noting that Nietzsche also draws on this lesser known version from Orphic mythology regarding Dionysus Zagreus in *The Birth of Tragedy*, metaphorically linking his dismemberment to the state of individuation, which is the "source and original cause of suffering."³⁴¹ Although the Zagreus myth is not fully known, scholars have pieced together the basic premise, which is understood as follows:

Dionysus Zagreus is the product of an incestuous union between Zeus and Persephone. While still a child he was killed by the wicked Titans, who dismembered him, cooked or roasted his flesh, and ate it. The Titans were killed by Zeus's lightning bolts, but Zagreus was restored to a new life, either because his heart had been saved or because his limbs were put together again. From the ashes of the Titans the first men were born. This is, in essence, the sequence of events which constitutes the Zagreus myth.³⁴²

In Pater's work, the story relating to the mysterious figure of Denys combines elements from the Dionysian myth as related in the *Bacchae* with those of the Dionysus Zagreus myth. As Connor has noted, it is relayed in such a way that it enables the modern reader to understand the story of Dionysus as both "narrative fact and as metaphor."³⁴³ The tale of his birth clearly draws from Euripides version of events, albeit retold in a thirteenth-century setting; "the child, a singularly fair one, was found alive, but the mother dead, by lightning-stroke as it seemed, not far from the lord's chamber-door, under the shelter of a ruined ivy-clad tower."³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Walter Pater, 'Denys L' auxerrois' in *Imaginary Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 47.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 51.

³⁴¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 59-60.

³⁴² Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 221.

³⁴³ Steven Connor, 'Myth as Multiplicity in Walter Pater's Greek Studies and 'Denys L' Auxerrois'' *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 34, (1983), 40.

³⁴⁴ Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, 59.

Denys' first flesh eating experience however, where he tears "hot, red morsels with his delicate fingers in a kind of wild greed,"³⁴⁵ as well as his subsequent death, "his body, now borne along in from of the crowd, was tossed hither and thither, torn at last limb from limb,"³⁴⁶ testifies to the inclusion of elements from the Dionysus Zagreus version of the myth. Pater's vivid detailing and evocative language is spectacular, bringing to life the horror of the situation. After describing Denys' dismemberment, Pater continues

The men stuck little shreds of his flesh, or, failing that, of his torn raiment, into their caps; the women lending their long hairpins for the purpose. The monk Hermes sought in vain next day for any remains of the body of his friend. Only, at nightfall, the heart of Denys was brought to him by a stranger, still entire. It must long since have mouldered into dust under the stone, marked with a cross, where he buried it in a dark corner of the cathedral aisle.³⁴⁷

The dark side within Denys' nature, which corresponds to the element of the Zagreus myth, is only recognised amongst the townsfolk by the elderly monk Hermes, who was "whimsically reminded of that *after-thought* in pagan poetry, of a Wine-god who had been in hell."³⁴⁸ Pater's interpretation of the Dionysian myth represents a dominant *fin-de-siècle* view of the god's duality, as well as his inherent capacity for suffering and melancholy. Pater states with perspicacity that, "Denys certainly, with all his flaxen fairness about him, was manifestly a sufferer."³⁴⁹ It was this element of divine suffering which also attracted Nietzsche to the Dionysus Zagreus myth and enabled him to draw comparisons to Schopenhauer's pessimistic view of the world.

The Zagreus myth draws our attention to the violence which resides within Dionysus' character. Zagreus actually means "the great Hunter,"³⁵⁰ and in much of the literature Dionysus is often referred to as simply 'the Hunter'.³⁵¹ The Dionysiac winter dances performed in antiquity culminated in "the tearing to pieces, and eating raw, of an animal body."³⁵² The warm flesh and blood consumed by the followers represented Dionysus himself, thereby transferring some of the vital powers of the god into themselves. Dodds

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 64-5.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 76.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 67.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 250.

³⁵¹ His other name Bakchos, or Bacchus in Latin, means "the Shoot," which is representative of the new tendrils shooting from the vine, ivy and the green sprouting branches of trees. See Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 250.

³⁵² Euripides, *Bacchae*, xiv. Dodds notes that these practices are referred to in the regulations of the Dionysiac cult at Miletus (276 BC), and were attested to by Plutarch and others.

describes these rites as a

mixture of supreme exaltation and supreme repulsion: it is at once holy and horrible, fulfilment and uncleanness, a sacrament and a pollution—the same violent conflict of emotional attitudes that runs all through the *Bacchae* and lies at the root of all religion of the Dionysiac type.³⁵³

From the original myth as perpetuated in the *Bacchae* we already know that Dionysus' retribution was swift and unforgiving for non-believers, inspiring his followers to commit barbarous acts of carnage. The dismemberment of the infant in the Zagreus myth as well as the anthropophagus element further highlights the disturbing and dark side of Dionysus. In the *Bacchae*, we are initially impressed and entertained by the Stranger god, however our sympathies end up with his victims. He does not attempt to present a fair and balanced ruling, or judge within the confines of morality. He is "beyond good and evil,"³⁵⁴ his retribution seemingly at odds with the crimes committed against him. Nietzsche likens this aspect to a child at play, who builds and destroys at will, gaining enjoyment from both in equal measure.³⁵⁵ If indeed there is a moral to be drawn from the ancient's portrayal of Dionysus, including the *Bacchae*, it may well be as Dodds suggests that "we ignore at our peril the demand of the human spirit for Dionysiac experience."³⁵⁶

It is this ability to incite violence, when coupled with the loss of individual consciousness, that drives those under his influence to commit such heinous acts, such as Agave participating in the hunting, killing and feasting on her son's body, bringing his head on a spear to the king, believing it to be the head of a lion. Another example of this darkness and violence, particularly against defenceless children, is described in *Imaginary Portraits*, through Denys' effect on the townspeople as his mood turned black;

A kind of degeneration, of coarseness – the coarseness of satiety, and shapeless, battered-out appetite – with an almost savage taste for carnivorous diet, had come over the company. A rumour went abroad of certain women who had drowned, in mere wantonness, their new-born babes. A girl with child was found hanged by her own act in a dark cellar. Ah! if Denys also had not felt himself mad!³⁵⁷

³⁵³ Ibid, xiv-xv.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, xli.

³⁵⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 114.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, 66-7.

It is interesting therefore that both Nietzsche and Pater were drawn to highlighting this dark side of the god's character through the Zagreus myth, which was much more uncommon and often ignored prior to this. Perhaps they both sensed that understanding of his province as wine god, fertile and full of vitality, connected to the vine, ivy, flowers, plants, animals and nature in general, had already been given due consideration and was well understood. It is possible that in focusing on his opposite aspect they were merely trying to achieve a more balanced understanding of the god's nature and his effect. The monk Hermes in *Imaginary Portraits* recalls "certain old readings in which the Wine-god, whose part Denys had played so well, had his contrast, his dark or antipathetic side; was like a double creature, of two natures, difficult or impossible to harmonise."³⁵⁸

Henrichs notes that within the context of a given myth or ritual Dionysus is viewed "either as an embodiment of life or as an agent of death and destruction... [but] the Greeks themselves tended to regard Dionysus' two sides as closely connected and inseparable."³⁵⁹ In this sense, Dionysus' 'light' and 'dark' sides are representative of the whole experience of life, one is meaningless without the other. Death is necessary for new life to occur and the god does not distinguish along moralistic lines of 'good' and 'evil'. Nietzsche notes of this Dionysian paradox, "All that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both."³⁶⁰ In any case, it was this paradigm which would grip the imagination of the next generation of Dionysian scholars in the twentieth-century, with the god's dark side dominating thought and discussion. As Henrichs writes, the "modern reception of Dionysus can be summarised as loss of self, suffering and violence."³⁶¹

Wightman points out that "it is not difficult to appreciate Szymanowski's interest in Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*, for Denys, like the shepherd in *King Roger*, was a denizen of the ancient world living amongst men of later generations."³⁶² As Oscar Wilde wrote, the shepherd was a figure from another place who made "the world mad with a new ecstasy of living, stirring the artists simply by his visible presence, drawing the marvel of music from reed and pipe."³⁶³ In addition to this, Denys transformed the artists who were working amidst the verdant and overgrown gardens, "till they found themselves grown into a kind of

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 66.

³⁵⁹ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 212.

³⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 58.

³⁶¹ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 206. Henrichs defines the modern study of Dionysus as dating from 1872 with Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and two articles by Adolf Rapp written on the subject of maenadism, up until 1972 with the publication of Rene Girard's work *La violence et le sacré*.

³⁶² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 208.

³⁶³ Seiler, *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, 164.

aristocracy, like veritable *gens fleur-de-lises*.”³⁶⁴ Surely this idea of a figure from the periphery or a place of ‘otherness’, who stirred the artistic passions of those around him and raised its standards, was something Szymanowski felt bore more than a fledgling resemblance, not only to the character of the shepherd, but to his own situation as a misunderstood artist living on the periphery of the Polish musical establishment.

³⁶⁴ Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, 65.

iv) Pater and Duality

However, of even greater significance than *Denys L'Auxerrois* to the *fin-de-siècle* understanding of Dionysus, was Pater's essay 'A Study of Dionysus: the Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew.' First published in the journal *Fortnightly Review* in 1876, four years after Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, it later provided the opening to his book *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* published in 1895.³⁶⁵ *Greek Studies* also contained Pater's sequel essay 'The Bacchanals of Euripides', and together these two essays laid much of the groundwork for Pater's later fictional stories. The Dionysian and Apollonian paradigm addressed in 'A Study of Dionysus', as well as his interest in the darker mythology of Dionysus Zagreus would suggest that Pater was thoroughly familiar with Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Surprisingly, it is almost certainly the case that Pater was completely unaware of Nietzsche's existence and that the two authors were in fact drawing similar conclusions based on existing material independently of one another. Their appraisal of Dionysus, and indeed the dichotomy between Dionysus and Apollo, shows remarkable similarities in thought. But as Inman explains that whilst "critics of Pater have often wondered whether or not he was aware of Nietzsche... the catalogue of the Taylor Institution Library at Oxford (where Pater did most of his borrowing) did not acquire any books by Nietzsche until 1894,"³⁶⁶ which was the year of Pater's death. Also, Pater's one trip to Germany occurred in 1862, making any prior knowledge of Nietzsche even more unlikely. Pater unwittingly gives a fitting description of this occurrence in the preface to *The Renaissance*, writing that

The various forms of intellectual activity which together make up the culture of an age, move for the most part from different starting-points, and by unconnected roads. As products of the same generation they partake indeed, of a common character, and unconsciously illustrate each other; but of the producers themselves, each group is solitary, gaining what advantage or disadvantage there may be in intellectual isolation.³⁶⁷

In their readings of Dionysus, both Pater and Nietzsche share a common appraisal of the god through sets of opposites. Nietzsche contrasts the god's "abominable mixture of

³⁶⁵ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 237.

³⁶⁶ Andrew Inman, *Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of his Library Borrowings and Literary References* (New York: Garland, 1981), 159-60.

³⁶⁷ Pater, *The Renaissance*, xxxii.

sensuality and cruelty,”³⁶⁸ and from the Zagreus myth, the “dual nature of a cruel, wild daemon and of a meek and mild sovereign.”³⁶⁹ Continuing in this vein much later in 1933, Otto described the god’s paradoxical nature as a mixture of “immediate presence with absolute remoteness” and “infinite vitality with savage destruction.”³⁷⁰ In 1944 Dodds writes of the Stranger god; “he is Dionysus, the embodiment of those tragic contradictions—joy and horror, insight and madness, innocent gaiety and dark cruelty—which, as we have seen, are implicit in all religion of the Dionysiac type.”³⁷¹ However, of the nineteenth-century scholars, Henrichs crowns Pater over Nietzsche as the “true artist of Dionysiac dualism.”³⁷² This is perhaps due to the fact that a great deal of Nietzsche’s argument was absorbed with contrasting Dionysus against Apollo, leaving less space to address the full range of dichotomies within Dionysus himself.

Whilst Pater’s work deals briefly with the Apollonian dichotomy, it focuses primarily on the inherent duality within Dionysus, as ascertained by the subtitle ‘The Spiritual Form of Fire and Dew’. This epithet, he explains, was an expression “borrowed from William Blake,” and illustrates the Greek tendency to associate natural objects with a human form of the god; “form, with hands, and lips, and opened eyelids – spiritual, as conveying to us, in that, the soul of rain, or of a Greek river, or of swiftness, or purity.”³⁷³ From Pater’s study we can glean that Dionysus should not only be understood as a distant figure from Greek mythology, but we should try to imagine him as the Greeks themselves did; the spiritual form within nature itself. His work, “one of the most impressive and probing interpretative efforts made on behalf of the god,”³⁷⁴ makes constant reference to dualities in both natural phenomenon and emotional states, which are within the realms of the god.

Pater depicts the opposing forces within Dionysus as the contrasts between summer/winter, joy/melancholy, light/dark, delicacy/brutality and hunter/spoil. It is Dionysus’ persistence of life in spite of suffering, overcoming so many maladies and trials from his birth, which allows us to empathise with him, the

beautiful, weeping creature, vexed by the wind, suffering, torn to pieces, and
rejuvenescent again at last, like a tender shoot of living out of the hardness and stony

³⁶⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 25.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 60.

³⁷⁰ Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 121.

³⁷¹ Euripides, *Bacchae*, xli.

³⁷² Henrichs, ‘Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence’, 237.

³⁷³ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 37.

³⁷⁴ Henrichs, ‘Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence’, 239.

darkness of the earth, becomes an emblem or ideal of chastening and purification, and of final victory through suffering.³⁷⁵

The duality that Pater speaks most eloquently of is Dionysus' conception as a spirit of fire and dew, engaging not only in the mythology but also illuminating the Greek conception of his character. In the infant's double birth, Dionysus first sustains the heat of the fire from the lightning strike, and then afterwards a second birth from dew in which he survives the freezing colds of spring. Of Semele's childbirth, Pater writes that Dionysus is

fire-born, the son of lightning; lightning being to light, as regards concentration, what wine is to the other strengths of the earth... The mother faints and is parched up by the heat which brings the child to the birth; and it pierces through, a wonder of freshness, drawing its everlasting green and typical coolness out of the midst of the ashes... In thinking of Dionysus, then, as fire-born, the Greeks apprehend and embody the sentiment, the poetry, of all tender things which grow out of hard soil...³⁷⁶

Dionysus is protected from Zeus' fire by his placement in the thigh, "protected by the influence of the cooling cloud, the lower part of his father the sky, in which it is wrapped and hidden, and of which it is born again, its second mother being, in some versions of the legend, Hye – the Dew."³⁷⁷ These ideas of nature symbolism and of Dionysus' opposing qualities provide a strong basis for the following examination of Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto and Miciński's *May Night*.

³⁷⁵ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 49-50.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

2.4 Miciński's *May Night* and the First Violin Concerto

i) *May Night*

If we recall from part one of this thesis, Szymanowski's biographer Jachimecki revealed with due authority that in composing the First Violin Concerto Szymanowski selected "a strange poem (T. Miciński's *May Night*) as the program of his daring music."³⁷⁸ As stated in the earlier discussion, *May Night* was published in 1902 as part of an anthology, *In The Darkness of Stars*. Szymanowski was familiar with these poems in 1904-05 and yet he waited over ten years to use *May Night* as the starting point for a composition. There could be any number of reasons for this, however in light of Szymanowski's recent travels to Italy, Sicily and North Africa, his fascination at the time with antiquity, scholarly reading on these topics and immersion in the works of Pater, Nietzsche and Diehl, it is likely that he returned to Miciński's work, rediscovering the qualities within it that resonated with these new areas of interest.

Unfortunately, little is known regarding Miciński's own education and literary background, aside from the account given previously. We know that he received both a Polish and German education as was common in the Prussian-occupied section of Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is also useful to remember his standing as one of the Young Poland poets, whose reading was both current and inclusive of exotic and ancient texts. So, while it is difficult to ascertain whether Miciński was familiar with Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* and Pater's 'A Study of Dionysus', it is highly probable, given the modernist aims of the Young Poland movement, which kept abreast with recent trends in German and progressive European literature. The following translation of *May Night* is provided by Wightman.

Asses in crowns settle on the grass –
Fireflies kiss wild roses –
And death flits away on the pond
And plays his wanton song.
Ephemerids
Flying in the dance –
O flowers of the lake, Nereids!

³⁷⁸ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 78.

Pan plays on his pipes in the oak-grove.
Ephemerids,
Flying in the dance,
Flying in the dance
In amorous tangle
The eternally young
Embrace
And celebrate –
With deadly shaft
They penetrate.

In the twinkling blue wave
Gold carp and roach,
And patient kingfishers
Gaze with their eyes of steel –
And in the black forest the clatter of the forge,
Midst the rowan the kestrels with eyes like tinder
In merry piping and songs,
I fly through the woods
To the nocturnal revels,
Held in the forest glades.
All birds do me homage,
For today is my wedding with the goddess.
And nearby at the lake,
I stand in crimson blossom,
Tears of joy fall with rapture and terror,
Burning in amorous conflagration –
Fire embraces these ancient trees,
And they weep with pitchy tears,
And a friendly gull – from Arctic seas
Runs an Aureole over us.
Ah, crimson creepers of fakirs,
Ah, kingly starlight of cactus,
Ah, two glass tombs and amidst the palls
The eternal fire of our hearts.
The king of the Griffons stretches his wings,
Stirred from his beloved swan –
Amidst the fiery steeds and manes
We hurry with the crowds of cloudy Norns –
Upwards under us –

And the snow with its fleece –
As if waves were gushing from the earth –
And all around the sapphire immensity –
And fire – and forests – and these owls,
Staring with terrorstruck eyes at
The divine madness of our festival.
The derisive tears flow on me,
Because our lips cannot meet,
And while the river oozes into the sea,
We stand mute in terror;
In rapture, in bloody conflagration,
And in our hands bound with flowers,
Rust-coloured stigmata trickle through.
The few dying Ephemerids
Fall at my feet with a rustle,
And the black ant grave-diggers
Bury them under the snake-weed.

Once I wandered through those pillars
That Abderrahman created for his beloved,
Sheherazade, in the amethyst night,
When in the heavens, talismans burned –
- - - I heard the bray of an ass –
Ah, how hopeless –
How savage and harsh a flute.
But never in the human throat
Did such a spirit release
Such a cry from the depths as of one damned.
I do not rival him!
Ephemerids,
Flying in the dance –
O flowers of the lake, Nereids –
Pan plays on his pipes in the oak-grove.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 178-9. The formatting markings are original. Wightman cites the original Polish source as Łobaczewski, S., *Karol Szymanowski. Życie i Twórczość* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1950), 357-59.

ii) Dionysian Elements

Dionysus is not named in the poem, but we can recognize him from the detail and descriptions of accompanying symbols and figures. Warburg's maxim, "der liebe Gott steckt im Detail,"³⁸⁰ is a fitting aphorism in this instance, for it is in the finer points and particulars that Dionysus is revealed to us as the 'I' of this poem. The figure depicted here is "the centre of a cycle, the hierarchy of the creatures of water and sunlight in many degrees,"³⁸¹ ruler of forests and water, twice-born from the spirit of fire and dew, signifying the self-perpetuating cycle of life. There is a veritable cornucopia of Dionysian references, symbolism and ritual from the first to the last line of the poem. Moreover, Miciński seems to be referencing both the 'light' and 'dark' sides of the god, suggesting his awareness of the Dionysus Zagreus mythology that had come to prominence in the preceding decades.

The title of the poem generates images of a dream world, with nocturnal mayhem and fantastical elements invoked through its association with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Shakespeare's play revolves around the marriage of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, to Hippolyta. According to Greek mythology, Theseus was the king of Athens, in one version of the myth he marries Hippolyta whilst in another account he marries Ariadne. In the latter version, Theseus subsequently deserts his bride on the island of Naxos, where she was rescued and married to Dionysus. Ariadne and Dionysus/Bacchus' story has been the subject of many artistic endeavours, most famously Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912-16) and Titian *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1523-24). The Shakespearian dream-like aspect is continued in the opening, with the ridiculous image of 'asses in crowns' drawing a parallel to Nick Bottom's transformation in the play.

Taking Shakespeare's play as a reference point one might initially imagine discovering themes in Miciński's poem such as love, intoxication, loss of identity and perhaps a wedding, a forest setting at night, spirits and fairies. Shakespeare's play draws from the Greek tradition of comic theatre, festivals which were performed as part of the City Dionysia in Athens to honour Dionysus. Remembering that one of Dionysus' four provinces was the theatre, not only tragedies but also comedies, it is not surprising to find in Shakespeare's work elements of the absurd, chaotic disruption of normal social order, elements of cross-

³⁸⁰ Henrichs, 'He Has a God in Him' in *Masks of Dionysus*, 40. Henrichs explains art historian Aby Warburg's 1925 maxim, roughly translated as 'god is in the detail.' Warburg believed 'a painting's most telling details, understood as 'cultural symbols,' reveal the true spirit of its epoch and exemplify the formative role of historical recollection in general, which informs all culture.'

³⁸¹ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 14.

dressing, sexual licentiousness, intoxication and loss of individual identity and consciousness. However, continuing on from the title and opening line, it soon becomes clear that it is not Shakespeare's invocation of the comedic tradition from the City Dionysia that is being referenced in Miciński's poem, rather the *fin-de-siècle* figure of Dionysus.

This god, although never named explicitly as Dionysus in the poem, is the epitome of opposites. It is this duality and contrast that translates into Szymanowski's musical evocation also. In fact it is fitting that Dionysus is not revealed by name in the poem, and that Szymanowski chose not to directly indicate that *May Night* was a 'programmatic' source for the First Violin Concerto. Doing so would have removed the sense of entering into a limitless realm that one experiences when listening to the Concerto. The poem is a vision, the Apollonian dream image, from which flowed the Dionysian element of music. Szymanowski's Concerto is not reliant on the poem in order to be understood musically, but in understanding the poem we can gain deeper insights into the music. As Nietzsche stated, "music itself, in its full unrestricted form, has no *need* for the image and the concept, but rather only *tolerates* their proximity."³⁸²

The differentiation between a programmatic understanding of his music, and having a deeper awareness of the forces at play, the underlying substratum, is something that Szymanowski discussed in an interesting exchange with the American violinist Robert Imandt in 1923. Imandt enquired of the composer, in regard to the *Mythes*, whether they should be understood as a "series of 'still' pictures, radiating colours and feelings from a certain, clearly defined fixed point, or whether each piece was a narrative presenting the stories afresh to the listener."³⁸³ Szymanowski responded

It is not to be a drama, unfolding in a series of scenes, each of which has anecdotal significance – it is rather a complex musical expression capturing the beauty of the *Myth*. The principal of 'tonality' of the 'flowing water' in *Arethuse*, the 'still water' of *Narcisse* (the motionless, transparent surface of the water), where the beauty of (the ephebe) Narcisse is reflected are the general strands of the work...³⁸⁴

So it would seem that the narrative which unfolds in the actual myth is not privileged above the idea or mood suggested by the myth. But, Szymanowski continues on in his

³⁸² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 41.

³⁸³ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 144.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. Undated letter, in response to Imandt's enquiry, which was dated 25 October 1923.

response to Imandt and contradicts himself with the following statement regarding the third work of the trilogy;

In *Dryades*, it would be possible on the whole to imagine the programme in an anecdotal sense. And so there are the murmurings of the forest on a warm summer's night, a thousand mysterious voices which intermingle in the darkness: the games and the dances of the Dryads. Suddenly the sound of Pan's flute. Silence and anxiety. A languorous and balmy melody. Pan appears, amorous [illegible word] of the Dryads, their fright in diverse, indefinable episodes: Pan leaps away in flight, the dance resumes, then little by little, everything calms down in the freshness and silence of daybreak. In sum, a musical expression of the languorous restlessness of a summer night.³⁸⁵

Of primary importance to Szymanowski therefore is to capture the essence of the myth. Secondary to that is the music's ability to vividly portray elements of a programmatic nature; Szymanowski does not dispute that this occurs. But, the integrity of these musical effects is upheld because they are not concerned with portraying the drama, representing certain characters or imitating natural elements as in Strauss's tone poems, merely this invocation is a side effect of the sincere alignment between myth and the musical representation of it. Schopenhauer has touched on this subject of authenticity, writing that

when the composer has been able to express the impulses of the will which constitute the core of an event in the universal language of music, then the melody of the song, the music of the opera becomes expressive. The analogy between these two found by the composer must have proceeded from the unmediated knowledge of the essence of the world, without the conscious intervention of reason, and must not be a conscious and deliberate imitation mediated by concepts, otherwise music does not express the inner essence, the will itself, but only offers an unsatisfactory imitation of its phenomenal appearance, like all truly imitative music.³⁸⁶

So in Schopenhauer's view, which was also shared by Nietzsche, it is Socratic reason that stands in the way of true expression, and if one can overcome this rationality via an unconscious or Dionysian world-view, then it is possible for music to capture the nature of phenomenon itself, or in Szymanowski's words 'a complex musical expression capturing the beauty of the myth.' Musical success in portraying an image, myth, concept, phenomenon or event is dependent on the approach or mindset of the composer, and also the sympathy or

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Schopenhauer, as quoted in Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 89.

alignment between the composer and the true essence of that thing. In the case of Szymanowski and Miciński, although the poem is not expressly cited, and despite the fact that Dionysus is not explicitly named, the mindset of the composer and poet is in true alignment with the spirit of the myth depicted. The First Violin Concerto is a fine example of this resonance, demonstrating in practice Schopenhauer's expression that "it is possible to explain why music allows every picture, indeed every scene of real life and the world to stand out with greater meaning; all the more so, admittedly, the more analogous its melody is to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon."³⁸⁷

When examined in isolation, *May Night* yields a vast number of Dionysian tropes and is littered with references to nature symbolism throughout. The ritual madness of the nocturnal festival, held in the forest, is described as both joyful, terrifying and rapturous, but also mystical, hence the owls that stare 'with terrorstruck eyes at the divine madness of our festival'. The rite in question is a wedding, and we can deduce from Greek mythology that the goddess to whom he will be betrothed is Ariadne. As Kerényi relates, Ariadne

attained to that very position which all Dionysiac women held in their own minds: that of the wife of Dionysus, his only true companion. She was the only one who was ever spoken of as the god's true wife... In the form in which the story of her became famous, she was the daughter of King Minos and of Pasiphae, daughter of the Sun: a mortal maiden, but with the name of a goddess. 'Ariadne', originally 'Ariagne', meant the 'holy' and 'pure'...³⁸⁸

This explanation elucidates some of the confusion relating to whether Ariadne was in fact a goddess or merely mortal, corroborating the reading of Dionysus and Ariadne into Miciński's 'wedding with the goddess'. Kerényi also cites a Roman wall-painting which depicts the meeting between Dionysus and his divine betrothed, noting that she was "certainly no earthly maiden," and more akin in appearance to a "risen Persephone or Aphrodite."³⁸⁹

Ariadne and Dionysus' union is said to have taken place on an island of Naxos, although the mythology extant presents several different variations of the circumstances of her arrival there. The most common story is that she was abandoned on Naxos by Theseus, after having helped him to slay her half-brother, the Minotaur, and assisting him to find his way out of the labyrinth by giving him a ball of wool. Theseus took Ariadne and sailed off

³⁸⁷ Ibid, 88.

³⁸⁸ Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 269.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 272.

together with her sister Phaidra on his ship to Naxos with the intent to marry her. He then abandoned Ariadne on the island, leaving her forsaken and alone, taking up instead with her sister. Theseus' motivations for this betrayal are variously described, some versions recount that Ariadne fell asleep on the island, impervious to the fact that the ship had sailed, others tell that Dionysus appeared in a dream to Theseus, in which he warned that Ariadne belonged instead to him. Kerényi attests that "Theseus never took Ariadne to wife."³⁹⁰

According to Burkett, "the marriage with Dionysus stands in the shadow of death,"³⁹¹ with older mythology relating that Ariadne was in fact dead when Dionysus reached the island, killed at the bequest of Dionysus by Artemis' arrow, presumably as punishment for her assistance in the treacherous murder of her half-brother. *May Night* depicts the former scenario, with Dionysus restoring Ariadne's "joy in life by his embrace... behind the swirling mists on a loft mountain, or in some garlanded paradise known only to the imagination,"³⁹² albeit with Miciński's dark overtones of death and sexual violence.

The historical placement of the ritual celebration in the Attic Anthesteria is of relevance. The marriage festival of Dionysus and Ariadne occurred between two dark days of "defilement and sacrifices for the Chthonic Hermes."³⁹³ So in Naxos they celebrated the marriage twice, once with "joyous revelry, and the other with mourning and lamentation."³⁹⁴ The 'rust-coloured stigmata', which trickles through the lovers flower-bound hands, a sign of Dionysus' Christ-like divinity, also portends to the suffering and pain, which is also bound up within the ecstasy and rapture of their union. The association between blood and wine was also common in antiquity, with "wine being described as the blood of the vine."³⁹⁵ Incidentally, Miciński's reference to the asses at the opening and close of the poem draws another parallel between Dionysus and Christ. As Evans notes,

one of Dionysos' favourite animals was the mule. A famous ancient painting shows him riding in a triumphal procession on the back of a mule while satyrs hail him waiving ivy branches. This scene calls to mind the description of Christ entering Jerusalem on the back of a donkey and greeted by throngs waving palm branches.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 270.

³⁹¹ Burkett Walter, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 164.

³⁹² Koehler, *Nietzsche and Wagner*, 2.

³⁹³ Burkett, *Greek Religion*, 164

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Arthur Evans, *The God of Ecstasy: Sex-Roles and the Madness of Dionysos* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988), 149.

Further Dionysian emblems in Miciński's poem can be discerned through references to the god's entourage and nature symbolism; Pan, nymphs, maenads, water, woodlands, flowers, plant life including ivy, insects, birds, animals, fire and dew. Pan and his flute, if we are to judge based on his previous invocation in *Dryads et Pan* and also as the protagonist of the chase in *La Fontaine d'Arethuse* in the *Mythes*, appears twice in the concerto, as in Miciński's poem, represented by the soloist's harmonics accompanied by cross-rhythms in the harp (figure 83, **Ex. 1** & figure 112, **Ex. 2**).

This can be deduced, not only from the fact that harmonics on the violin achieve an airy likeness akin to a flute or set of pipes, but also from the harmonics passage in *Dryads et Pan*, marked 'La flute de Pan' and supported by Szymanowski's own statement quoted previously. In the *Dryads* the sudden sound of Pan's flute is captured by the solo violin, with the surrounding silence (**Ex. 3**), followed by a languorous melody marked *Lento amoroso* figure 6, in which the lower register of the violin is exploited to achieve the rich and dark lower tones of Pan's flute. Even Pan's 'leap away in flight' is ingeniously realised by a quick succession of natural and fixed harmonics (*Piu mosso, scherzando*, **Ex. 4**). Likewise, in *La Fontaine d'Arethuse* we find double harmonics, which we can presume are also representative of Pan, whereas the middle myth, *Narcisse*, does not contain any harmonics. This omission is in accordance with Szymanowski's decision to make harmonics synonymous with the musical persona of Pan during this period.

The nymphs of Miciński's poem are Nereids, literally nymphs of the sea, which is in keeping with the setting on the island of Naxos. Nereids are often associated with lakes, streams and rivers as they are depicted here, the 'flowers of the lake'. Nymphs were divine and beautiful young women, who had not yet carried a child, "lovely beings, often amorous, who inhabit wild places or who accompany the greater gods and goddesses."³⁹⁷ Their sexual freedom was a common characteristic, hence the modern day psychoanalytical term, nymphomania. Akin to the fairies portrayed later in Shakespeare's time, they were close to being immortal, but could still die despite their divinity.

As Pater notes, Dionysiac worship was not only tied to the vine and tree, but from his birth out of the dew, was connected also with "ancient water-worship, the worship of the *spiritual forms* of springs and streams,"³⁹⁸ as embodied by the Nereids for example. The cool touch of water is present throughout the poem, not only in the dewy tears, tranquil ponds and lakes in the opening and closing stanzas, but in increasing intensity in the middle verse. The

³⁹⁷ Powell, *Classical Myth*, 165.

³⁹⁸ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 27.

‘twinkling blue wave’ leads to the cataclysmic description of the ‘snow with its fleece – as if waves were gushing from the earth’, before the ice melts, gradually dissipating as ‘the river oozes into the sea’.

If Dionysus’ spirit of dew connects him to the natural elements of water, snow and clouds, then conversely we can understand his fire spirit as being intertwined with the green matter from the earth, which in turn feeds the fire. In this vein, we hear in *May Night* the ‘clatter of the forge’ and witness the ‘kestrels with eyes like tinder’, seemingly ready to ignite as the fire ‘embraces these ancient trees’. This fire that consumes the forest is indivisible from the amorous conflagration and rapture of the deities, the ‘eternal fire of our hearts’ becoming joined through this ‘bloody conflagration’.

iii) Mystical and Exotic References

The reference to the ‘crowds of cloudy Norns’ is atypical to a Dionysian interpretation: commonly Norns are more closely linked to concepts of fate and destruction such as the three Norns in Wagner’s *Gotterdammerung*. Their female presence does call to mind Dionysus’ female followers, the Bacchae or maenads, although this is speculative. It is possible that Wagner’s appropriation of elements of Norse mythology had a flow on effect, reviving interest in other writers and poets and that Miciński may have been attempting to blend elements from Greek and Norse mythology in this instance. Pater notes for example that the maenads were remnants of a “certain cloud-world which had once covered all things with a veil of mystery.”³⁹⁹

Similarly, the reference to ‘fakirs’ does not coincide with Greek mythology, supporting Wightman’s observation that Miciński’s poetry can be “characterised by the presence of seemingly disparate elements.”⁴⁰⁰ Miciński’s translation of Jalal ad-Din Rumi’s *Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz* may provide some clarity, when we interchange the Arabic term fakir for its Persian counterpart, dervish, both of which describe wandering Muslim Sufi ascetics. This collection of Rumi’s poems reflected his life-changing attitude that occurred after “meeting the wandering dervish Shams al’Din Tabrizi,”⁴⁰¹ and was selected by Szymanowski as the literary inspiration for his *Third Symphony ‘Song of the Night’*. Rumi abandoned his Islamic religious study after meeting Shams and formed the Mevlevi order of Dervishes, who practiced the whirling dance, in order to experience ecstatic states.

‘Sheherazade’ and the figure of ‘Abderrahman’ are another seemingly incongruous inclusion, and certainly have been a great source of perplexity, in terms of understanding their reference either within a Dionysian context, or within the context of Miciński’s interests. The full translation that Wightman provides in the segment on the First Violin Concerto reads;

Once I wandered through those pillars
That Abderrahman created for his beloved,
Sheherazade, in the amethyst night,

³⁹⁹ Pater, ‘The Bacchanals of Euripides’ in *Greek Studies*, 58.

⁴⁰⁰ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 34.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, 172.

When in the heavens, talismans burned –⁴⁰²

This would seem to suggest that Sheherazade was Abderrahman's beloved, but this is not supported by the fables of *Tales of a Thousand and One Nights*, in which Sheherazade's charming husband is King Shahryar and her father, Jafar, is the vizier to the King. It seems that Jachimecki was also confused about this reference, writing of the 'strange' poem; "in the sixty-seventh line of the poem we encounter the name of the vizier's daughter."⁴⁰³

The mystery reference can in all likelihood be explained as the result of an error in translation. Wightman discusses the poem in an earlier section of his book in relation to the *Masques*, op. 34 and includes a short translation of these four lines in question. This translation, presumably also his own, reads; "I wandered through the colonnades that Abderrahman built for his beloved, in the amethyst Sheherazadian night with talismans burning in the sky..."⁴⁰⁴ In this translation, Sheherazade functions as an adjective to describe the quality of the night, perhaps a hint that the night is given over to story-telling, myth and folklore? Moreover, the 'talismans burning in the sky' alludes to Ariadne's constellation, which according to some Greek myths was created when Dionysus threw Ariadne's crown, her golden wreath, into the sky to commemorate the goddess.⁴⁰⁵

With this in mind, a process of elimination has led to the understanding of 'those pillars that Abderrahman created for his beloved' as a reference to the Marabout de Sidi Abderrahmane, a cluster of sacred dome-shaped shrines on the coast-line of Casablanca. The main tomb is that of Sidi Abderrahmane Thaalibi, who is thought to have been the founder of Thaalibiya, now Algiers, considered by many Moroccans to be a Saint.⁴⁰⁶ Ross writes that he was "reputedly an "ecstatic" Sufi, so intoxicated by his state of closeness to God that people thought he was crazy."⁴⁰⁷ He goes on to describe the shrine or mosque, which is still a popular destination for tourists and religious pilgrims;

Seeking isolation from men, Sidi Abderrahmane settled on this rocky outcrop along what was then an uninhabited coast. Tombs crowd around the mausoleum of Sidi Abderrahmane, and small inhabitations have been built amongst these creating a tiny

⁴⁰² Ibid, 179.

⁴⁰³ Chylinska, *Szymanowski*, 78.

⁴⁰⁴ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 165.

⁴⁰⁵ Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 272.

⁴⁰⁶ <http://www.morocco.com/blog/visiting-the-venerated-site-of-marabout-de-sidi-abderrahmane>

⁴⁰⁷ Information on this topic was difficult to find. Eric Ross is an Associate Professor at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, and gained his PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of McGill in 1996. <http://ericrossacademic.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/moroccos-seaside-shrines/>

village. Though the shrine is only accessible at low tide there are people there all the time. The *shawafât* (“mediums,” literally “seers,” always women) who receive pilgrims live there, as does the shrine’s guardian. People visit Sidi Abderrahmane to deal with mental issues... [he was] assisted in his therapeutic work by a female companion, Lalla Rissania, who is also believed to be buried on the rock.⁴⁰⁸

The diversity and “seemingly disparate elements”⁴⁰⁹ in Miciński’s work, though not strictly Dionysian, can be understood as reflections of non-Greek mythologies and ancient cultures that surprisingly still bears some hallmarks of the Dionysian religion and mysticism. Samson could well be describing the poetry of Miciński in the following quotation, which actually refers to Szymanowski’s Third Symphony, but is equally well placed in the context of the Violin Concerto;

It is no mere coincidence that many artists at the turn of the century (including Delius, Debussy and Szymanowski in the world of music) should have been attracted to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on the one hand to Sufism and other mystical beliefs on the other. Certainly Szymanowski’s preoccupation with a Dionysian cult of beauty and love was given added stimulus by Persian mystical poetry.⁴¹⁰

Perhaps it is Miłosz’s observations that provide the best foil to the seeming madness of Miciński’s *May Night*. Whilst admitting that the “very texture of his works, with their fantastic symbolism pushed to a frenzy, attracted certain of his contemporaries,”⁴¹¹ he also noted wryly that

one should keep in mind that ever since the era of Romanticism, many Poles had been attracted to crazy flights of half-philosophical, half-poetic imagination; and certainly Tadeusz Miciński surpassed them all. His work, at first sight, gives the impression of a madhouse where various epochs of history are incongruously jumbled together and notions of time and space are blurred.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ <http://ericrossacademic.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/moroccos-seaside-shrines/>

⁴⁰⁹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 34.

⁴¹⁰ Samson, *The Music of Szymanowski*, 121.

⁴¹¹ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 341.

⁴¹² *Ibid*, 340.

iv) Nature Symbolism and Duality

Within *May Night*, the Dionysian fertility of the natural world is seen through the many references to plants, animals and flowers in the poem, from the wild roses and oak-grove, to the rowan berries, forest glades and woods populated by ancient trees. The ‘crimson creeper’ cited is a common name for the vine *Parthenocissus*, a climbing plant derived from the grape family *Vitaceae*.⁴¹³ The leaves of the deciduous creeper closely resemble the shape of ivy leaves, however they turn a fiery scarlet colour before they fall from the vine.

Ivy and the vine are synonymous with Dionysus, often wreathed around his and his followers’ heads as a garland, or as an uncontrollable vine, with sprouting tendrils draping all manner of things. Pater notes of the ivy garland that it was initially “worn on the head for coolness”⁴¹⁴ by those working the vines in the scorching heat of the Mediterranean sun. In any case, Miciński’s allusion to the crimson variety of the vine, as well as the bright red ‘rowan’ berries and ‘crimson blossom’, cleverly emphasises Dionysus’ inherent fire spirit. Miciński contrasts this against Dionysus’ spirit of dew by including the ‘cactus’, a plant known to survive in the hottest environments on earth, conserving and storing water within their stems.

Dionysus’ connection to the animal world is highlighted by the presence of all manner of creatures; donkeys, fireflies, ephemerids,⁴¹⁵ carp, roach, kingfishers, kestrel, gull, swan, horses and owls. Insects, fish, birds and beasts are all referenced, culminating in the ‘king of the Griffons’. A mythical creature, the Griffon was depicted as having the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle with characteristic traits of courage, intelligence, strength and majesty.

According to the Greeks, the Griffon was a particularly revered creature as it was an amalgamation of lion and eagle, king of the beasts and birds respectively. Whilst Dionysus was often associated with beasts such as bulls, leopards or lions, frequently morphing into these forms in many of the stories related to him, most readers would be less familiar with his winged form. One such reference to this mythology related by Pater in ‘A Study of Dionysus’; “A winged Dionysus, venerated at Amyclae, was perhaps meant to represent him thus, as the god of enthusiasm, of the rising up on those spiritual wings, of which also we hear

⁴¹³ Arthur Yates and Co. ed, *Yates Garden Guide*, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 2002), 241.

⁴¹⁴ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 21.

⁴¹⁵ A type of insect with a short life span, hence their ephemeral existence.

something in the *Phaedrus* of Plato.”⁴¹⁶ The winged Dionysus attains and transmits a state of ecstasy,

he is the inherent cause of music and poetry; he inspires; he explains the phenomena of enthusiasm, as distinguished by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, the secrets of possession by a higher and more energetic spirit than one’s own, the gift of self-revelation, of passing out of oneself through words, tones, gestures.⁴¹⁷

Nietzsche, who saw himself as an incarnation or votary of Dionysus, also invoked this rapturous winged god, writing “this is my Alpha and Omega: that all that is heavy become light, all body become dancer, all spirit become bird.”⁴¹⁸ The epiphany of this bird-wisdom is revealed in *Zarathustra*:

If ever I spread tranquil Heavens over me and soared with my own wings into my own heavens; If I swam playfully in deep light-distances, and if to my freedom some bird-wisdom came:—but this bird-wisdom speaks: ‘See, there is no above, no below! Throw yourself around, and out, and back, you who are light! Sing! Speak no more! ‘—Are all words not made for those who are heavy? Do all words not lie for one who is light! Sing! speak no more!’—⁴¹⁹

Both for Pater and Nietzsche, Dionysus’ flight was a liberation of the soul. Schmidt argues that this “most powerful of dream images, the image of flight”⁴²⁰ liberates us, a feeling which most people would have experienced in dreaming and which Miciński evokes in the line, ‘I fly through the woods.’ Through his use of the first person, Miciński elicits a sensory response whereby it is not difficult to imagine the cold air rushing against one’s face and to see the forest tree trunks passing underneath.

Whilst the Griffon is representative of Dionysus’ domain over birds and beasts, both his ability to tame these wild creatures, and through his metamorphosis into animal and bird forms, its presence holds yet further symbolic significance. The griffon mates for life, and will not search for another partner in the event of its loved one’s death, which is a metaphor for the union between Dionysus and Ariadne, his “only true companion.”⁴²¹ This is somewhat

⁴¹⁶ Pater, *Greek Studies*, 18.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 202.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 203.

⁴²⁰ Paul Schmidt, ‘Pushkin and Istomina: Ballet in Nineteenth-Century Russia’ *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 20, (1988), 6.

⁴²¹ Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 269.

surprising, considering Dionysus' "effusive transgression of the sexual order, whose waves swept away all family life and its venerable principles,"⁴²² overturning social structures during his orgiastic frenzies and inciting licentiousness and abandon in his followers. As Henrichs' description attests, usually "Dionysus and his followers can be seen as abandoning, shifting, or transcending the limits of everyday experience through their association with exalted or anomalous conditions such as intoxication, masquerade, illusion, trance, or madness."⁴²³ For the Greek worshippers of the god in antiquity, it seems that Dionysus' marriage was sacred at least.

Another facet of Dionysus is the inherent contradiction that resides within him, hence his modern appraisal as "the god of paradox."⁴²⁴ Examining the paradoxes within Dionysus' character, many of which have already been discussed in relation to Nietzsche and Pater, we can understand these variants as fitting within two broad headings. Included in the 'light' side, are concepts and temperaments such as summer, fertility, sensuality, delicacy and joy, whilst the 'dark' side contains the opposing forces of winter, mortality, brutality, violence and suffering. Miciński's poem also reflects some of these dichotomies, but the main interest for this thesis lies in whether these opposites are translated into Szymanowski's score. To reiterate, this exercise is not intended to define with certainty abstract elements within Szymanowski's music, rather to highlight and illuminate the Dionysian forces at play within the First Violin Concerto.

The Dionysus encountered in Miciński's work reflects both the 'dark' and 'light' elements of the god, tending towards his dark side, in keeping with the contemporary *fin-de-siècle* interpretation of the time. References to the god's life-giving aspect are portrayed through the prevalence of nature symbolism and also through the sexual abandonment and promiscuity of his followers. The language used to describe this excess is aptly sensual, for example the 'wanton song' and 'amorous tangle'. But, this is shadowed against a backdrop of violence and death. It is 'death' who flits and plays this song, and the embrace is almost sadomasochistic in description; 'with deadly shaft they penetrate'. Nietzsche's descriptions of the orgiastic Dionysian festivities recorded in antiquity are pertinent, with their "feverish impulses" unleashing an "abominable mixture of sensuality and cruelty... the true 'witches' brew'".⁴²⁵

⁴²² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 24.

⁴²³ Henrichs, 'He Has a God in Him' in *Masks of Dionysus*, 14-15.

⁴²⁴ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 234.

⁴²⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 25.

This type of sexual violence also recalls Nietzsche's own poem, entitled 'Ariadne's Lament'. As Koehler notes, Nietzsche used a play on words to give the poem "an erotic twist and had her cry to Dionysus; 'Pierce me deeper! Pierce me with your dripping shaft!', begging him to penetrate her with his 'cruel barb'."⁴²⁶ But it is unlikely that Miciński would have been aware of Nietzsche's version of Ariadne's union with Dionysus. The poem was one of nine *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, completed in 1888 immediately prior to his irreversible mental breakdown. The publishing house planned to print six of the dithyrambs as an addendum to *Zarathustra IV* in 1889, as the other three, including 'Ariadne's Lament' appeared in similar format within the work. Fear of litigation and potential charges of blasphemy led to several delays and it was not until 1898 that the collection was printed, in full, under the title *Poems and Maxims*, with only two thousand copies printed.⁴²⁷ Corollary of these dates, it is unlikely Miciński was aware of Nietzsche's poem and the shades of algolagnia which it contained.

The 'eternally young' describes the short life span of the ephemerids, but is also symbolic of fertility and Dionysus' ability to make "old people feel young again."⁴²⁸ And yet the orb of death hangs heavily over the wedding rites. We are reminded of Dionysus' province over the afterlife through the imagery of the 'two glass tombs... amidst the palls' and the 'dying Ephemerids', buried under the snake-wood bush by the 'black ant grave-diggers'. The god's 'tears of joy fall with rapture and terror' and 'derisive tears flow on me because our lips cannot meet'. We may ask as the Greeks did, is Dionysus the "embodiment of life or an agent of death and destruction?"⁴²⁹

Miciński draws no solid conclusion, instead alluding to the eternal round of life itself through the repetition of the final four lines at the closing of the poem. Although the order is varied slightly, these lines are taken directly from the opening stanza. With the newly born Ephemerids resuming their dance, we feel the whole process is about to begin anew; the cyclic nature of life itself. We begin to understand Dionysus therefore as the Greeks did, regarding his "two sides as closely connected and inseparable... the biological life cycle with its alternations from birth to death."⁴³⁰

The inherent suffering and torment of life is understood, not only from the three

⁴²⁶ Koehler, *Nietzsche and Wagner*, 4.

⁴²⁷ William Schaberg, *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 173-77.

⁴²⁸ Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, 60.

⁴²⁹ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 212.

⁴³⁰ Henrichs, 'Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence', 212.

references to ‘terror’ throughout the Miciński’s poem, but also the ass’ ‘hopeless’ bray, which releases ‘such a cry from the depths as of one damned.’ Nietzsche’s “peculiar mixture and duality of the emotions” is evident here, the phenomenon whereby “out of the most intense joy the scream of terror or the yearning lament for an irreplaceable loss sounds forth.”⁴³¹ And yet, for Dionysus and his followers, a life of song and dance is chosen in spite of this suffering, out of this hardship the green sprig of life shoots through, a “bliss born of pain spoke from the heart of nature.”⁴³² For Miłosz, Miciński is grappling with “a feeling of metaphysical terror in the face of infinity,”⁴³³ much like the Dionysian wisdom which rejects the false security of naivety, “universality and truth staring into the infinite.”⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 25.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴³³ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 342.

⁴³⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 94.

2.5 The Ecstasy of Song and Dance

i) Elements of Nietzsche's Dionysian music.

Certain passages of *The Birth of Tragedy* reveal to us Nietzsche's view of what music must be like in order to be truly Dionysian. His opinion, we must remember, is that of a proficient if not professional musician. Nietzsche's claim in the opening paragraph, that a "tremendous opposition" exists "between the Apollonian art of the sculptor and the imageless Dionysian art of music,"⁴³⁵ seems to indicate an understanding that all music is of a Dionysian nature.

As Nietzsche advances his argument it becomes clear he concedes some exceptions: not all music can be understood as stemming from Dionysian springs. He particularly objects to operatic trends such as the recitative, which he argues subordinates music to the text with its constant switching between speech and song. Nietzsche described the style of this "parasitic opera-being"⁴³⁶ as "so completely unnatural and something so intrinsically in contradiction with the artistic drives of both the Dionysian and the Apollonian in equal measure, that one must deduce an origin of recitative which lies outside all the artistic instincts."⁴³⁷ Other types of music are also representative of an Apollonian state, such as the 'wave-like beat of rhythm,'⁴³⁸ which is comparable in Nietzsche's view to a musical rendition of Doric architecture.

Aside from these exceptions such as these, Nietzsche's belief in the 'imageless Dionysian art of music' is upheld. He elucidates, naming the elements which define "the character of Dionysian music, and so of music itself," as the "shattering force of sound, the unified flow of melody and the utterly incomparable world of harmony."⁴³⁹ Nietzsche identifies these three 'hallmarks' through which we can identify the Dionysian character in music, and therefore all music which is truthful to its nature.

The first of these, the 'shattering force of sound' is an unmistakable hallmark of Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto. Szymanowski employs a large orchestra, with two harps, piano, celeste and a range of percussion instruments augmenting the strings, triple wind

⁴³⁵ Ibid, 19.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 105.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 101.

⁴³⁸ Ibid, 26.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

and brass sections. From this vast instrumental palette, Szymanowski gradually builds the orchestral tutti in mass and volume over a series of ecstatic climaxes throughout the concerto, leading toward the apex reached in the final tutti after the cadenza, figure 99 until figure 109. Within this section, Szymanowski restates previously heard themes with growing intensity, enhanced by a moment of suspension created by a ‘false drop’ back to *piano* at figure 106, until at the final peak the immense and unbridled power of the full orchestral forces is unleashed at the *Maestoso, meno mosso*, four bars after figure 107 (**Ex. 5**). This climax is heightened by the fact that there is “no psychological break as the argument progresses to the mighty post-cadenza climax.”⁴⁴⁰

Palmer writes that Szymanowski launches “with a quasi-Straussian orchestral opulence the biggest, best and most unashamedly erotic climax of all.”⁴⁴¹ Likewise Wightman experiences the peak and following bars as a “massive climax and plangent detumescence,”⁴⁴² citing Iwaszkiewicz’s observation that the fundamental element of Szymanowski’s music was “above all eroticism.”⁴⁴³ The impact and success of this musical climax is achieved through accessing the raw elemental power of the Dionysian.

Aside from the sexual overtones, within the ‘shattering force of sound’ we can also behold in awe the brutal power of the god, a reminder that he is the god of epiphany. The sheer force and power of this Dionysian sound world also conveys the god’s capacity for violence and destruction, as experienced for example by Agave when Dionysus revealed himself to her and she came to understand the true horror of her actions. After all, as Nietzsche warns us, this is an “amoral artist-god, who wishes to experience the same pleasure and self-satisfaction in building as in destroying.”⁴⁴⁴

Balancing these overblown displays of orchestral power and force, Szymanowski reminds us that central to understanding Dionysus is to realise his essential duality. Therefore, within the Concerto we can also find the complement to this, moments where the instrumentation is seemingly hand-picked by the delicate and slender fingers of that epebe; the music expressing sentiments of the utmost delicacy and tenderness. Figure 111 (**Ex. 6**) captures this transformation, presenting the same material as in the tutti climax but this time with the solo violin singing sweetly on the E string, accompanied by two individual violinists from the orchestra. The ending of the concerto, in its delicacy, finely illustrates

⁴⁴⁰ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 179.

⁴⁴¹ Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 63.

⁴⁴² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 180

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 8.

Szymanowski's own sentiment that Polish national music is "the lonely song, joyous and free, of a nightingale singing spontaneously in the fragrant Polish May nights."⁴⁴⁵ It would seem that Szymanowski found this true Polish "long-lost homeland,"⁴⁴⁶ by following Nietzsche's advice: "let him listen for the blissfully beckoning call of the Dionysian bird, which hovers above him and wants to show him the way."⁴⁴⁷

The second element identified on Nietzsche's list is the 'unified flow of melody'. The concept of flow and unity suggests a seamless and uninterrupted melodic style, that moves freely and with an improvisatory quality. This quality of melody is present in the solo line at figure 11 (**Ex. 7**), and again in similar passage at figure 38 (**Ex. 8**), marked *Improvisando (a piacere)*. The chromaticism within the weaving line suggests an Eastern or exotic inflection, emphasising a certain sensuality in the line. To achieve the timbre required, the bow should be 'glued' to the string, with a feeling of traction or stickiness in the bow arm, like the sweet, sticky honey drawn out of the rock by Dionysus' female followers.

The final trait identified by Nietzsche is 'the utterly incomparable world of harmony'. The problem here is that harmony is such a broad description, but there is a more specific indication in regard to the type of harmony Nietzsche has in mind near the end of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche writes that the "original and not easily understood phenomenon of Dionysian art may be grasped in intelligible and unmediated form in the miraculous meaning of *musical dissonance*."⁴⁴⁸ He goes on to explain, "the pleasure produced by the tragic myth shares the same home as the pleasurable sensation of dissonance in music."⁴⁴⁹ This common origin or 'home' shared by music and myth is the Dionysian. So is the harmony of Dionysian music a specifically dissonant harmony? For example is it dissonance in Wagner's *Tristan* that causes "the convulsive beating of the wings of the entire soul?"⁴⁵⁰ Are the "countless cries of pleasure and woe from the 'wide space of the night of the worlds',"⁴⁵¹ what makes this music and its harmony 'utterly incomparable'?

⁴⁴⁵ Szymanowski, 'On Contemporary Musical Opinion in Poland' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 94. Wightman notes that this article was first published in *Nowy Przegląd Literatury i Sztuki (New Review of Literature and Art)* in July 1920.

⁴⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 126.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

Nietzsche's analogy illustrates the view that a discordant or dissonant harmony is a reflection of the "ugliness and disharmony"⁴⁵² that surrounds us in the world and our existence, which he reminds us can be "justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon."⁴⁵³ The "artistic use of dissonance,"⁴⁵⁴ manifests a sense of longing within us, whereby in a metaphysical sense we wish to hear but simultaneously we seek out something beyond this audible realm. This "striving towards the infinite" reaffirms the primordial quality of original joy, which in its Dionysian state of playful joy does not differentiate between creating and destroying, like a "child at play, arranging and scattering stones here and there, building and then trampling sand-hills."⁴⁵⁵

But within this unruly abyss of daily suffering there is pleasure experienced through pain, sensuality within brutality and violence. This is the transfiguration of the Dionysian, which through its "original joy perceived even in pain,"⁴⁵⁶ leads us to higher states. It is the dissonance in music, which Nietzsche draws a parallel to "dissonance in human form – and what is man but that?"⁴⁵⁷ which drives the Apollonian will to "cast a veil of beauty over its own essence," necessary to "make existence worth living and compel us to live on to experience the next moment."⁴⁵⁸

And so through dissonance, the antimony of Apollo and Dionysus is aligned, "Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, and Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus, and so the highest goal of tragedy and of art itself is achieved."⁴⁵⁹ Suffice to say, the concerto is a veritable goldmine of richly coloured dissonant harmony, much of which bears testimony to Szymanowski's early idolatry of Wagner. Whilst it is possible to give musical examples of how the concepts of harmonic and human dissonance translate into Szymanowski's Concerto, anyone who listens to the work can understand this for him or herself. After all, these are the "universal facts of which music alone can speak directly."⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵² Ibid, 128.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, 130.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, 117.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 114.

ii) Ecstatic States

In the first publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* from 1872, Nietzsche envisaged a triumphant revival of the German music engendered through the rebirth of tragedy and myth. These hopes never came to fruition. Instead, Nietzsche witnessed what he perceived to be the “transition to mediocrity, democracy, and ‘modern ideas’!”⁴⁶¹ In his ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’ he reflects on his earlier aspirations, recalling

I began to spin fables about the ‘German character’, as if it were just on the point of rediscovering itself and finding itself once again – and all this at the very moment when the German spirit, which not long before had still possessed the will to dominate and the strength to lead Europe, was drawing up its last will and testament, its definitive *abdication*...⁴⁶²

Nietzsche too had been mesmerised by the charismatic figure of Wagner, and in his youthful eagerness had been drawn into his powerful orbit. *The Birth of Tragedy* provided Wagner with valuable philosophical propaganda for his music and ideals, but the Hellenic revitalisation which Nietzsche dreamed of never eventuated. Nevertheless, Nietzsche’s ideas on how music should achieve this spiritual rebirth did not change throughout this disappointment, but remained constant and even intensified throughout his later writings. What I am referring to here is the ecstasy of song and dance.

The thoughts which Nietzsche first articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy* are as follows;

In song and dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward flying into the air, dancing. His very gestures express enchantment. Just as the animals now talk, and the earth yields milk and honey, supernatural sounds emanate from him too: he feels himself a god, he himself now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like the gods he saw walking in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: in these paroxysms of intoxication the artistic power of all nature reveals itself to the highest gratification of the primordial unity.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 11.

⁴⁶² *Ibid*, 10-11.

⁴⁶³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, and The Case of Wagner*, 37.

For Nietzsche, these most primitive, embodied and participative forms of human expression, song and dance, represent the passageway through which one can experience a higher state of Dionysus consciousness and original unity. The narcotic of song and dance is Dionysus himself, the god of intoxication and ritual madness, who enables man to cast off the shackles of individual consciousness and abandon himself to the primordial unity; “under the spell of the Dionysian it is not only the bond between man and man which is re-established: nature in its estranged, hostile, or subjugated forms also celebrates its reconciliation with its prodigal son, man.”⁴⁶⁴ In this state of ecstatic oneness, he himself is transformed into a work of art, “reunified, reconciled, reincorporated, and merged with his neighbour.”⁴⁶⁵ Arisen from the primitive power of song and dance, “here nature first attains its artistic exultation, here the tearing asunder of the *principium individuationis* first becomes an artistic phenomenon.”⁴⁶⁶

Ritualistic dancing has its roots firmly planted in Dionysus’ province of ritual madness, as witnessed in the mountain dancing of his female followers, the maenads. As Dodds notes, this

was practised by women’s societies at Delphi down to Plutarch’s time, and for which we have inscriptional evidence from a number of other places in the Greek world. The rite took place in midwinter in alternate years... It must have involved considerable discomfort, and even risk: Pausanias says that at Delphi the women went to the very summit of Parnassus (over 8,000 ft. high), and Plutarch describes an occasion, apparently in his own lifetime, when they were cut off by a snow-storm and a rescue party had to be sent out.⁴⁶⁷

The Bacchic rituals also call to mind the similar worship of Persephone and Demeter through the festival known as the Eleusinian Mysteries. For whilst Dionysus reigned in the regions of the vine, Demeter and her daughter Persephone were equally revered in the lands that relied on the grain for their primary source of nourishment. The myths of Demeter and Persephone also highlight the cycle of life and death, rebirth and growth, both in nature and within the human life cycle.⁴⁶⁸ Whilst it is unknown exactly what occurred during the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries it is thought that some kind of intoxicating substance may have been imbibed during the ceremonies, promoting a feeling of community within its participants.

⁴⁶⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 22.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 23.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Euripides, *Bacchae*, xi-xii.

⁴⁶⁸ Powell, *Classical Myth*, 254.

Nietzsche writes of this higher state of unity, “the call of the Eleusinian Mysteries rings out: ‘Fall ye to the ground, ye millions? Feelst thou thy Creator, world?’”⁴⁶⁹

In Nietzsche’s works, the tenets of song and dance were consistently championed and developed through *The Gay Science* (1882, revised 1887), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-85) and his ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’ (1886), which re-emphasised the need for dance. He wrote in *The Gay Science*, “I would not know what the spirit of the philosopher might wish more to be than a good dancer,”⁴⁷⁰ and that “it is our habit to think outdoors – walking, leaping, climbing, dancing, preferably on lonely mountains or near the sea where even the trails become thoughtful.”⁴⁷¹

Zarathustra gives us dictums such as “Sing! Speak no more!”⁴⁷² and “I should only believe in a god who knew how to dance.”⁴⁷³ For Nietzsche, the ecstasy of song and dance was not merely a theoretical or academic concept, but a philosophy which must be lived and experienced in order to be understood. Writing of the time spent during the creation of *Zarathustra* he recalled that “I could often be seen dancing; at that time, I could hike in the mountains for seven or eight hours at a time without any thought of tiredness. I slept well, I laughed a lot —, I had the most perfect vigour and patience.”⁴⁷⁴

The “Dionysiac monster who bears the name of *Zarathustra*”⁴⁷⁵ is called upon in the closing of his ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’ to implore those around him who still harboured a Schopenhauerian pessimistic world-view to experience the Dionysian insight, the levity achieved through laughter and dance.

Lift up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher! And do not forget your legs! Lift up your legs also, you good dancers, and even better: stand on your heads!

...

Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the man light on his feet, who beckons with his wings, poised for flight, beckoning to all the birds, poised and prepared, the man blessed and light-headed...⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 18-9.

⁴⁷⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 346.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, 322.

⁴⁷² Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 203.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, 36.

⁴⁷⁴ Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, 128.

⁴⁷⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 12.

⁴⁷⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 12.

Nietzsche's views had developed further, now unconscious singing and dancing can be seen to enable deeper connections within the body and the universe. As Crawford notes, this leads to a "mystical experience in which all things are dancing together in harmony with the will to power."⁴⁷⁷ describes Nietzsche's role of dance master, writing that

if he can get us to consciously take our stiff and clumsy first steps, this is already a different state of mind which might open a connection to our dancing Self. If we dance with thoughts, pen, ideas, then we do not take things so seriously, we are lighter. It is easier to find joy and thus easier to move our bodies in dance.⁴⁷⁸

Nietzsche's writings on the elemental nature of dance had a huge impact on the course of ballet in the twentieth-century. Describing him as "the first dancing philosopher,"⁴⁷⁹ he found an unlikely admirer in Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) whose experimental movements contributed to the evolution of modern dance as expressed by Fokine, Nijinsky and Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*. Through the stimulation of Nietzsche's ideas, Duncan engendered a return to a primitive idea of movement: "her preferred movement was to throw her head back – the very movement of trance in Dionysian rites, as shown on vase paintings representing the cultural processions of this god of ecstasy and transgression."⁴⁸⁰ As Nietzsche's disciple, Duncan proclaimed that "man must speak, then sing, then dance. But the speaking is the brain, the thinking man. The singing is the emotion. The dancing is the Dionysian ecstasy which carries all away."⁴⁸¹

Forms of ritualistic dancing have been a part of many different societies. Aside from the Dionysiac dancing rituals, other examples can be found in the Mevlevi Order of whirling dervishes, the American Shakers and the Siberian Shamans, with modern day equivalents including the original Love Parade in Berlin and the 'bush rave'. These forms of communal dancing "provide a religious experience that seems more satisfying and convincing than any other... It is with their muscles that they most easily obtain knowledge of the divine."⁴⁸² Citing Pentheus' text in the *Bacchae*, Dodds notes that "such dancing is highly infectious; it 'spreads like wildfire.'"⁴⁸³ He goes on to list examples of people dancing themselves into such frenzied states that unconsciousness and death were the result. One famous example from

⁴⁷⁷ Claudia Crawford, 'Nietzsche's Dionysian arts: dance, song, and silence' in Salim Kemal & Ivan Gaskell ed., *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 318.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 317.

⁴⁷⁹ Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 341.

⁴⁸⁰ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 84.

⁴⁸¹ George Balanchine and Francis Mason, *Balanchine's Festival of Ballet* (London: W. H. Allen, 1978), 730.

⁴⁸² Euripides, *Bacchae*, xii.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, xv.

modern dance is Nicholas Roerich's concept for *Le sacre du printemps*, which depicts a Pagan sacrificial dance where the 'Chosen One' dances herself to death as an offering to the god of spring.⁴⁸⁴

Fokine's sentiment from 1914, that the new ballet must advance "from the expressiveness of the face to the expressiveness of the whole body, and from the expressiveness of the individual body to the expressiveness of a group of bodies and the expressiveness of the combined dancing of a crowd,"⁴⁸⁵ can be understood in the context of Nietzsche's writings pertaining to the nature of the Dionysian dithyramb. Nietzsche similarly wrote "now the world of nature is to be expressed in symbols; a new world of symbols is necessary, a symbolism of the body for once, not just the symbolism of the mouth, but the full gestures of dance, the rhythmic movement of all the limbs."⁴⁸⁶ In addition to this new choreography, which was informed by primitive and folk dances, many ballets in the beginning of the new century also depicted scenes from antiquity and Greek mythology. In this setting, it is possible to observe a lineage from Nietzsche to many of the French and Russian musical masterworks; Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, Debussy's *L'après-midi d'un faune* and Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, already mentioned above.

One may speculate whether the mythical and ritualistic content of these ballets, with their glorious physical realisation on the stage by the likes of Nijinsky and Karsavina, was of equal or greater influence on Szymanowski than the 'Impressionism' of the composers whose music accompanied these works. The first assistant to Nijinsky, Dame Marie Rambert, described Nijinsky's *Le Sacre* as an "ecstatic performance, which was the greatest tragic dance I have ever seen."⁴⁸⁷ Szymanowski also had the rare pleasure of watching Nijinsky dance several different productions in January of 1913 when the *Ballets Russes* presented a season in Vienna. After watching Nijinsky's personification of the erotic and languorous satyr in *L'après-midi d'un faune*, "I tell you – caca! [nice, lovely] in the full sense of that strange word!"⁴⁸⁸ Rambert described the effect of his faun, noting that "he transported you at once into higher spheres with the sheer ecstasy of his flight."⁴⁸⁹

The appeal of freedom and lightness of step and the ability to move and dance no doubt held a particularly bittersweet fascination for Szymanowski. From a childhood accident

⁴⁸⁴ Balanchine, *Balanchine's Festival of Ballet*, 514.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 796.

⁴⁸⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 26.

⁴⁸⁷ Balanchine, *Balanchine's Festival of Ballet*, 514.

⁴⁸⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 118. Letter to Jachimecki, January 1913.

⁴⁸⁹ Balanchine, *Balanchine's Festival of Ballet*, 6.

he could not participate in physical activities and consequently was home-schooled and later excused from military service. Zarathustra's observation that it is "better to dance clumsily than to walk lamely,"⁴⁹⁰ must have been a particularly cruel barb for Szymanowski. Nevertheless, he channelled these dancing instincts into his compositions; possibly this musical impulse was intensified because he was unable to express this energy through his physical body. Downes, drawing on similar observations from Samson and Wightman, attests to the "importance of dance movements in many of Szymanowski's works,"⁴⁹¹ giving examples from his middle period as corollary to this fact. He writes that "apart from the Hafiz sets, one might turn to the *Songs of a Fairy Princess* of 1915 or the *Songs of an Infatuated Muezzin* of 1918—but also in large-scale works such as the Third Symphony (1914-16), the First Violin Concerto (1916) and *King Roger* (1918-24)."⁴⁹²

Miciński repeats the line 'flying in the dance' five times in *May Night*, so it is not surprising that Szymanowski's also incorporates many dance-like rhythmic figures in the First Violin Concerto. Within many of these instrumental dance sections, Szymanowski switches the internal rhythm from a straight 2/4 pulse to a feeling of 6/8 meter. For the most part, the meter doesn't actually change; rather the solo violin plays triplets, audibly shifting the perception to a triple meter. The double-stopped passage at figure 52, first in semiquavers and then in triplets, loops and spins around on itself, creating the effect of a whirling round, channelling Miciński's 'flying in the dance' (**Ex. 9**).

The dotted 'scotch-snap' rhythm, five bars after figure 58, compounds the feeling of a 6/8 meter, imparting a sensation of lightness and spring; 'Zarathustra the man light on his feet,' (*Subito avvivando deciso (Piu mosso)*, **Ex. 10**). It is not until four bars before figure 90 that a 6/8 meter is actually realised. Here the rapidly moving semiquavers in the solo line give the illusion of gathering momentum, a preparation for the violinist to launch up to the stratospherically high "E" and "F", where perhaps they will fly in rapture alongside the birds (**Ex. 11**).

We have already encountered some ideas as to the nature of Dionysian song and how it relates to melody, both in connection to the idea of Nietzsche's bird-song and as a unified flow of melody. Crawford identifies from Nietzsche's oeuvre two types of singing: conscious and unconscious. The first develops into the second, which can then be further divided into poetry and bird song. Much of Nietzsche's later works such as the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*

⁴⁹⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 258.

⁴⁹¹ Downes, *Szymanowski as Post-Wagnerian*, 171.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

are written in this poetic verse style, which he intended to be sung. Again, Crawford summarises Nietzsche's theories that one must begin somewhere writing that "we can learn a song and consciously sing it in normal social contexts; this is good and should be done, for it is one way to open up to the possibility of the second level of human singing – the unconscious song of the Self."⁴⁹³

To present a very condensed summary of a form that has evolved and adapted over the course of many centuries, a dithyramb can in essence be understood as a hymn that was sung, or sung and danced, in praise of Dionysus. The accompanying lyric poetry celebrated or narrated some aspect of the god's life or mythology. It predates the fifth-century BC but flourished in ancient Greece around that time when dithyrambic contests were performed as part of festivals such as the City Dionysia. In these contests various tribes fielded choruses of fifty men and fifty boys to compete for their region. These choirs could also include a leader, or *exarchon*, and over time instrumental and vocal solos were added as well as more complex rhythmic and lyric features.⁴⁹⁴

A nineteenth-century German revival by Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin and Nietzsche led to a modern reinvention of the dithyramb and a loosening of the definitions and conception of the form. A dithyramb could now indicate a piece of poetry, prose, dance, music or combination of these genres, which is created in honour of Dionysus. Nietzsche was drawn to the dithyramb as it harnessed the primitive powers of song and dance and expressed the exultation of Dionysus and his mythology through the spirit of music. His views toward this original dithyramb are in sharp contrast to his revulsion expressed toward the later version, the "*new Attic dithyramb*", in which Nietzsche saw music as being "sacrilegiously reduced to the counterfeit imitation of the phenomenon."⁴⁹⁵ Described the power of the original hymn, Nietzsche writes that

In the Dionysian dithyramb, all the symbolic faculties of man are stimulated to the highest pitch of intensity; something never before experienced struggles towards expression, the annihilation of the veil of Maya, unity as the spirit of the species, even of nature.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹³ Crawford, *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts*, 328-9.

⁴⁹⁴ Bernhard Zimmermann, 'Dithyramb' *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009) Oxford Reference Online. <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t111.e2253>

⁴⁹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 93.

⁴⁹⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 26.

One of the main problems Nietzsche had with opera was the theatrical and artificial construct of the medium, whereby the singing did not ever progress from the realm of conscious song to higher spheres of unconscious states; poetry and bird song. Liébert touches on this, noting that from Nietzsche's perspective "Wagner's essentially theatrical nature enslaved him to the words and gestures of his singing 'marionettes'."⁴⁹⁷ Corollary to this is the text itself. As any operagoer will attest, the words are fairly incomprehensible, assuming they are sung in a language the audience can understand in the first instance. Nietzsche was also of the view that modern audiences were unable to take in the text when it was presented simultaneously with extraordinary music, citing the example of the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

That Schiller's poem 'Ode to Joy' should be absolutely incongruous with the dithyrambic world-redeeming jubilation of this music, and that it should even be submerged like pale moonlight by this sea of flames, who can deprive me of this totally certain feeling? And who would dispute my affirmation that this feeling finds its cry of expression, when hearing this music, only because the music has deprived us of every capacity for images and words, and because *we hear almost nothing of Schiller's poem?*⁴⁹⁸

Because the sung text is incomprehensible to most listeners, and because a truly extraordinary music incapacitates the listener to absorb anything other than the glorious sonority of the voice and its musical line, Nietzsche observes that "the listener confronts this as if it were absolute music."⁴⁹⁹ Stylised and conscious singing, such as the contemporary operatic genres, must in Nietzsche's view return to vocal song; absolute music enhanced by the sonority of the human voice. Whilst this theory is perhaps rather controversial, no doubt especially to librettists and audience members who make a point of studying the text, the understanding of this phenomenon goes a long way in explaining the sublime and timeless quality of works such as Palestrina's Masses and Mozart's Requiem in which the Latin text is simple enough that it becomes subordinated, allowing the listener to focus instead on the musical lines of each voice.

⁴⁹⁷ Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 90.

⁴⁹⁸ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 91. The original source is a posthumous fragment written at the beginning of 1871: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 7: 366.

⁴⁹⁹ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 91. The original source is: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 7: 369.

Nietzsche's notes articulate his ideas for the renewal of a more primitive essence in music. In discussing *Tristan*, Liébert constructs the argument, via Nietzsche's words which are indicated by single quotation marks, that

in that work the voices often are assimilated to instruments to the point of merging with the orchestra, particularly in the second and third acts his [Nietzsche's] first move is to 'get rid of the singer,' to 'completely erase' that 'nonsense' that, moreover, imposes a 'repulsive spectacle.' Yet as 'one cannot really get rid [of the singer] for he has the most soulful sonority,' and because 'the orchestra is not sufficient,' the singer must 'be placed in the orchestra'... that is, as the full sonority of the human voice taken into the orchestra.' ...⁵⁰⁰

Many of Nietzsche's reservations regarding the 'repulsive spectacle' of nineteenth-century opera had their counterpart on the concert-hall stage with the spectacle of the virtuoso violinist, discussed further in part three.

Nietzsche argues one solution to the 'repulsive spectacle' of modern opera is to place the sonority of the singer within the orchestra. Another option is for the orchestral instruments to take over the vocal line entirely. From this viewpoint we can discern an argument that links the ancient chorus to the modern day orchestra, with the singer drawn into the folds of the orchestral fabric, emerging from time to time in the role of *exarchon*, but essentially leading from within. In the spirit of the Dionysian dithyramb, the voice is returned to a vocal sonority, and in doing so, the individual consciousness, or ego, is subsumed into the collective of the group.

It would seem that other composers shared Nietzsche's sentiment in this regard, and took the next logical step, using the vocal chorus in instrumental music and removing the text altogether. Debussy's 'Sirens' from his 1899 *Nocturnes*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* which he began writing in 1909, Scriabin's 1910 *Prometheus: Poem of Fire* and even Holst's 'Neptune' from *The Planets* attest to this interest in wordless and often off-stage singing. Szymanowski also incorporates some segments of this text-less singing, both chorus and individual, into his *Songs of a Fairy-Tale Princess*, Third Symphony and *King Roger*.

In order to achieve Dionysian transcendence, the musical line is stripped of the referential word and information-bearing text, and is now condensed to its purely musical

⁵⁰⁰ As quoted and translated in Liébert, *Nietzsche and Music*, 81-82. The original source is: Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, 7: 276-77.

element. What this wordless song emphasises is the flexibility of the voice, which can now be used in an almost instrumental, and certainly orchestral, capacity. But in making this connection, another thought arises; the chorus or orchestra is now capable of assimilating the voice and conversely the instrumentalist can also now express or emulate vocal song, because it no longer needs to articulate a text. In this regard, the solo violin in Szymanowski's Concerto can be understood, in certain passages which will be discussed, as a vocal line; expressing the subconscious and primitive drive for song.

iii) Song and Dance within the First Violin Concerto

Szymanowski re-imagines the singer/violinist as a vocal sonority, returning them to lead from within the core of the orchestra. He then translates this even further into his re-imagining of the concerto form. His solution, so to speak, is to restore the violinist to its position within the orchestra/chorus, from which it can emerge to lead proceedings in the role of *exarchon*. And remembering that the violin can now emulate the vocal sonority of the wordless singing, the result is that, “the full sonority of the human voice is taken into the orchestra.”⁵⁰¹ In this sense, each instrument of the orchestra can be imagined as a single strand or thread, which when bundled into multiple strands creates a fabric. From this weave the solo line emerges as a single strand on occasion, and then is reworked back into the fabric of the orchestral tutti. In this way the unnatural and self-conscious elements of the concerto form is absolved.

Szymanowski essentially created a new model of concertante style writing, which he aptly described when he commented; “really it is a symphonic work for quite large orchestra with solo violin, but it gives the impression of a concerto.”⁵⁰² The voice of the chorus leader, which belongs within the chorus, emerges from within the body of the chorus and is subsumed by the chorus. Szymanowski portrays this concept musically by ‘cross-fading’ the violinist in and out of the orchestral texture.

At the solo entry in the fourth bar of figure 47, the tutti first violins diminuendo on the high B, while the solo voice enters on the same note in *ppp* and slowly blooms throughout the pause until it is eventually audible and the listener differentiates this sound from that of the chorus heard before (**Ex. 12**). Similarly, in the first solo entry after figure 4, the beginning of the note is masked by the flute playing the same enharmonic tone (**Ex. 13**). The illusion of the solo line being engulfed, or subsumed by the chorus, can also be witnessed at figure 85, where the first and second violins continue on with the melodic line, a crescendo marked in the bar the soloist drops out (**Ex. 14**).

Passages that illustrate the vocal quality of the solo violin are characterised by the use of a high register, a certain rhythmic freedom and the lack of a clear pulse or meter. We can assume that Szymanowski associated the violin with the soprano voice type, as he writes similar melodic material, or song, for both instruments. Stanisława Szymanowska (1889-

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 177.

1938), Karol's sister, was a professional singer, and he wrote many of his songs with her soprano voice type in mind. So from his youth, composing in the family home, Szymanowski probably associated the female voice with a high register. Kochański's transcription of Roxana's Song, from *King Roger*, illustrates the adaptable nature of the wordless violin and soprano writing in Szymanowski's music from his middle period (**Ex. 15 & Ex. 16**).

This element and sensation of rhythmic stasis that accompanies these sections of song, can be traced to Nietzsche's conception of a Dionysian ecstasy, which is achieved through 'unconscious' singing. He writes that

The ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the usual limits and borders of existence, contains for its duration a *lethargic* element in which all past personal experience is submerged. As so this chasm of oblivion separates the world of everyday reality from that of Dionysian reality.⁵⁰³

Szymanowski realises this concept of lethargy and timelessness in a musical sense by removing all traces of driving rhythm and any sense of metre, from which the listener usually gains his bearings. When the sonority of the voice, the *exarchon*, is heard, the spectators and chorus alike are drawn into trance-like higher state of languorous ecstasy, where time seems to float, disconnected from the pulse of everyday reality.

The melodic material of these song sections has a meandering quality and a sense of intimacy, as if the violinist is merely singing to him or herself in an 'unconscious' way. The expressive chromaticism and high register evoke a certain feminine sensuality, reminiscent of the bewitching call of the siren, and Miciński's 'wanton song.' Examples of this can be heard at figure 48 for three bars, (**Ex. 12**), and also in the opening at figure 4 (**Ex. 17**). In both instances, the strings switch to a bowed *tremolando*, which masks any rhythmic pulse, whilst at figure 4 the arpeggiated chords and harmonic off beats in the harps serve to disorient the listener further. A longer passage in **Ex. 17** is included here to illustrate the rapid switch that occurs out of this lethargic state at figure 6, where the snap of the *pizzicato* string chord, rapid semiquaver movement and the pointed timbre of the oboe snaps the listener out of this state of reverie.

Whilst Palmer is correct in noting "the Concerto is an apotheosis of instrumental 'song'," ⁵⁰⁴ a more acute description would be to label it an apotheosis of instrumental 'song'

⁵⁰³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 46.

⁵⁰⁴ Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 64.

and ‘dance’. If the entire work was to be understood as consisting of only two elements, then these would undoubtedly be song and dance. From the opening until the close the form shifts seamlessly from one to the other, and whilst there are of course different characters and temperaments within the respective song and dance segments, overall the narrative switches effortlessly from one rapturous state to the other.

It is difficult to choose any one example of this; however figure 54 displays several of these transitions within a short period (**Ex. 18**). Here we can see the ‘dancing’ *marcatissimo* triplet chords rise in pitch to the high E harmonic octaves at figure 55. Gradually the tenor unwinds through rhythmic augmentation, *diminuendo* and *ritenuto*, arriving to a section of ‘vocal’ song at figure 56. The character becomes lighter and more buoyant at figure 57 and we intuit that the line is returning to a dance segment. However this doesn’t eventuate, and instead morphs back into ecstatic song, only to be interrupted by a sudden switch back to the dance at the *subito avvivando deciso*.

Even Kochański’s cadenza, which is the most self-consciously dramatic moment of the work, does little to interrupt this state of flow as it too weaves the elements of song and dance together with seamless unity. Distinct amongst all instrumental concertos, this flow and unity of form is what makes the First Violin Concerto so unique to the genre. This also explains why the piece eludes a simple or traditional approach to structural analysis; it develops as a pure stream of Dionysian consciousness.

From the Dionysian context of Miciński’s *May Night*, which relates the myth of Ariadne and Dionysus, to the inherent duality of the god and Szymanowski’s musical realisation of the ecstasy of song and dance as portrayed through the chorus and *exarchon*; the First Violin Concerto can be understood as a twentieth-century dithyramb to the spirit of Dionysus. In this hymn to the god which is “touched by the Dionysian magic!”⁵⁰⁵ what we see

resembles something which has risen as from a state of deep contemplation into the golden light, so full and green, so lavishly vital, so longingly immeasurable. Tragedy sits in the midst of this excess of pulsating life, pain, and pleasure, in sublime delight, listening to a distant melancholy song... garland yourselves with ivy, take the thyrsus in your hands, and show no surprise when the tiger and the panther lie down fawning at your feet.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 110.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

PART THREE - Kochański and the Violin Idiom

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3.1 Paweł Kochański

i) Playing Style and Technique

The third part of this thesis examines the important role of Szymanowski's musical collaborator and facilitator, Paweł Kochański. The Polish violinist was remembered as a musician of exceptional talent, with a refined sensibility and a captivatingly sweet, singing tone. In many ways, Kochański can be viewed as a precursor to the style of violin playing that would become increasingly prevalent in the twentieth century. In the areas of interpretation, aesthetics and musicianship he was a progressive figure. His predilection for the employment of a continuous left hand vibrato in certain passages classifies him alongside players of later generations. This trait of continuous vibrato was to become one of the most easily identifiable hallmarks of a 'modern' violin aesthetic. In addition to this, Kochański was able to vary his vibrato, consciously choosing the width and speed to suit the passage in question, thereby producing an even wider range of colours, effects, tonal and character contrasts. Violin critic and contributor to *The Strad* journal, Henry Roth, recalled that whilst first-hand accounts of Kochański's performances were sometimes contradictory, the impression from his few recordings was superior, writing

no matter what he plays Kochański enchants the ear at all times. In addition, he combines an exceptional, intuitive talent for expressive phrasing with a suave, musical intelligence... needless to say, his vibrato is highly developed, capable of varied speeds and colours, and his bow arm is ever fluent as is his entire musicality. His intonation is pure and his technique facile, though it is almost always used in the service of musical cognition, rather than virtuoso display... His art radiates sensitivity, and he is always a provocative stylist.⁵⁰⁷

Importantly, it was his interest in developing the possibilities of colour and tonal nuance that distinguished him from other performing violinists and elevated him to the level of facilitator and creative collaborator. Szymanowski described Kochański's method when assisting composers who sought his criticism on their compositions, writing that

his inexhaustible resourcefulness and inventiveness suddenly opened up new horizons and boundless possibilities. He came up with unexpected solutions which avoided both cliché and unjustifiable eccentricity. Whole pages were covered in

⁵⁰⁷ Roth, 'Refined Colourist', 689.

emendations and alternatives which always improved the expressive qualities and individuality of the work's sound.⁵⁰⁸

A rare published interview Kochański gave to the renowned violin critic Frederick H. Martens in the early 1920's provides many insights into his thoughts regarding violin literature and his role as a collaborative facilitator. In relation to the technical requirements of nineteenth-century violin works, Kochański noted that

speaking broadly, the older, standardized violin technique is marked by the composer's use of successions of thirds and sixths in themes and in passagework. This reflects the violinist's tendency to use his fingers as they lie naturally for playing. It is, perhaps, easier to play in thirds and sixths because of custom, habit, years of training. But the development of fine musical ideas should not be hampered by technical considerations. Besides, modern music may secure its special and very beautiful effects and yet be *thoroughly violinistic!* There is no mechanical reason why the violinist should not be able to play successions of seconds, fourths and fifths, if the musical idea calls for them. But violinists are afraid of them, in many cases, because in these intervals it is easier to hear false notes. Each one of the four strings must be in *perfect* tune, absolutely, and one's intonation must be flawless, to produce the proper effect.⁵⁰⁹

The 'standardized violin technique' to which Kochański refers is reflected in the technical literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The content of Carl Flesch's *Scale System* for example which was first published in 1926,⁵¹⁰ includes recommended daily exercises for thirds, sixths, octaves, tenths and harmonics alongside the standard scales and arpeggios. It was not until 1986 that Max Rostal, when preparing a new edition of Flesch's work, published an additional supplement that reflected the "rapid development"⁵¹¹ of violin playing that had occurred during the century.

Rostal's supplement addresses the demands that twentieth-century compositions now placed on violinists, many of which were first utilized by Szymanowski and Kochański some seventy years earlier. As well as an expansion of Flesch's original scale routine, new exercises for double-stopped unisons, fourths, fifths and sevenths were added, whole and quarter-tone scales and various pizzicato exercises also appear for the first time. Many of

⁵⁰⁸ Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 357.

⁵⁰⁹ Roth, 'Refined Colourist', 691.

⁵¹⁰ A staple in technical training to this day.

⁵¹¹ Max Rostal, preface to Carl Flesch, *Scale System: Scale Exercises in All Major and Minor Keys for Daily Study* (Berlin: Verlag, 1987).

these double-stopped intervals and effects are utilized to great effect in Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto, *Mythes* and *Notturmo and Tarentella*, written with Kochański's assistance.

Kochański described the creative process he shared with Szymanowski, writing that

we worked out these violin things together, for Szymanowski is not a violinist. When we were in the country, he said he would like to develop some of his ideas for my instrument. He would develop his themes, his musical ideas, at the piano, and, talking and studying them together, I would fix the mechanical form of his lovely colour-designs, so they would sound, so that the violin sonorities would obtain their fullest value.⁵¹²

For the performing violinist, one of the most appealing aspects of Kochański's collaborative style is the extent to which he has clearly thought through how each passage is to be physically realized on the instrument, which shows a consideration of violinistic concerns. Primarily this is evidenced by how well a passage sounds on the instrument, for example the resonance and colours created by certain keys, the choice of which string a passage is to be played on, suitable bowing, phrasing marks, articulation, the division of the four strings into positions, the use of chords and open strings and so on.

As Greive notes, Kochański's manuscripts were littered with a profusion of pencil markings; sketches, alternatives, solutions, fingerings and bowings. This in itself speaks volumes about his thought process as difficult passages were overcome by trial and error, violin in hand. Of the articulation, phrasing, bowing and fingerings, the composers whose work he collaborated on obviously shared the conviction of the importance of these markings, as they are most often included in the original editions.⁵¹³

Flesch's own *Memoirs* mentions Kochański several times, however not all of the facts given are correct. For example the dates he gives take an entire decade from Kochański's life, 1887-1924 instead of 1887-1934, however this may well be a publishing error as earlier in the book his dates are listed correctly.⁵¹⁴ Another inaccuracy relates to the Stradivarius instrument that Kochański owned. Flesch states that "he used to play one of the most beautiful Strads, the so-called 'Greffuhle'... (The correct name of the instrument may be 'Greville'...)." ⁵¹⁵ The violin he actually owned and played was not this instrument referred to

⁵¹² Frederick Martens, *String Mastery* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1922), 76.

⁵¹³ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 2: 7.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 340.

by Flesch, but was in fact a Stradivarius known as the ‘Spanish’, a wedding present from (his bride-to-be) Zofia’s father.⁵¹⁶

Kochański’s ‘other’ violin was one of the finest examples of Guarneri del Gesù’s craftsmanship from 1741, which he acquired in America in 1924. Remarkably, the instrument has survived in impeccable condition, which accounts for its high valuation even amongst instruments of this upper echelon. Following Kochański’s stewardship it was played by American virtuoso Aaron Rosand for some 50 years⁵¹⁷ and is now known as the ‘Kochański’ Guarneri.

Flesch’s recollections of the Belgian violinist Cesar Thomson (1857-1932), one of Kochański’s teachers, also provide insight into his student days. Flesch’s first reference notes that despite Thomson’s devotion to teaching over fifty years, his only pupils worth remembering were Albert Spalding (1888–1953) and Paul Kochański. Interestingly, Thomson spent several years in the mid seventies playing on the front desk of the Bilsse Orchestra⁵¹⁸ in Berlin with Eugene Ysaÿe, which allowed Flesch to point the moral, “hear, all you young virtuosos who regard the demand that you should spend some time in an orchestra as a serious insult!”⁵¹⁹ Kochański began lessons with Thomson directly after his time as concertmaster of the Warsaw Philharmonic.

Of most interest are Flesch’s insights into Kochański’s playing and character, which attest to the impact of Kochański’s presence in the new world. In a chapter entitled ‘America [1923-1928]’, Flesch discusses the violinists he deemed to be the most influential at the time, among them many of the great soloists, chamber, orchestral musicians and teachers, writing

Among the violinists resident in America who have not so far been mentioned, Paul Kochański [1887-1924] (*sic*) played an outstanding part. A Thomson pupil, he was a friend and collaborator of Szymanowski’s, of whose music he was considered the most authentic exponent. He died of an incurable disease at an all too early age... Kochański’s tone captivated by its sweetness; he was, moreover, an inimitable interpreter, as well as an excellent arranger, of little Spanish violin pieces. In the more extended forms he was less successful, because on the concert platform he

⁵¹⁶ Arthur Rubinstein unkindly remarked that this gift may have explained much of the Kochański’s attraction to his future wife. Despite this, Zofia and Paweł remained a close and happily married couple by all accounts until Paweł’s death at the age of 47. See Rubinstein, *My Young Years*, 361-62.

⁵¹⁷ The instrument was sold in 2009 for the reported sum of \$10 million.
<http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/guarneri-violin-sold-for-10-million/>

⁵¹⁸ The Bilsse Orchestra eventually became the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

⁵¹⁹ Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch*, 44.

suffered from nerves. Nevertheless, I remember a truly exemplary rendering of Brahms' Double concerto, with Kočański and Salmond as soloists. He was also a charming conversationalist; as a *raconteur* he was in the same class as Grünfeld, Rosenthal, or Thibaud. Thus he would, at times, have his greatest success *after* a concert when, having had their artistic fill, the music lovers had a wine with him and wanted to hear something about the human and all too human side of the artist. His death left a gap in American musical life that has not yet been filled.⁵²⁰

⁵²⁰ Carl Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch*, ed. & trans. Hans Keller (London: Rockliff, 1957), 340.

ii) Creative Facilitator

Szymanowski was not the only composer to utilise Kochański's vast knowledge of the instrument for the improvement of his violin compositions. The composers known to have worked with Kochański include Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Bloch, Bax and de Falla, however it is likely that in actuality many more composers sought his advice. Many of the characteristic traits of the Szymanowski and Kochański collaborative legacy can be found within these works, and the further study of this music would be a valuable area for future research. In a touching tribute following Kochański's death, Szymanowski wrote that

amongst the never-ending procession of musicians visiting him, be it in his New York flat or during his fleeting visits to Paris or London, one could meet there not only the younger generation of fellow-violinists, seeking his advice with total trust. One also met with some of the most famous of today's composers, bringing scores with them, seeking his clear, penetrating and so very competent criticism.⁵²¹

Giving further credence to this claim is Szymanowski's statement that "the greatest enthusiasts of Kochański's playing were, above all, the distinguished musicians and most famous composers of the present day, namely, Ravel, Stravinsky, de Falla, Prokofiev and many, many others."⁵²² Many works by these composers bear dedications to Kochański, no doubt as acknowledgement of their friendship and appreciation for his assistance in violinistic matters. Prokofiev, having sought Kochański's advice in regard to his First Violin Concerto, took the opportunity to consult with him further in New York, bringing the score for his *Hebrew Overture* scored for string quartet, clarinet and piano. Prokofiev writes that he visited Kochański again, "to show him the proofs of the *Hebrew Overture* and consult with him on bowings. He was, as always, perceptive and remarkably resourceful in coming up with solutions, and made some suggestions, although not many seemed to be needed."⁵²³

In addition to helping Prokofiev with this work and the First Violin Concerto, in 1925 Kochański was also involved in the creation of his *Five Melodies*, op. 35a. Prokofiev dedicated the first, third and fourth melodies to Kochański, the second to Cecilia Hansen and the fifth to Joseph Szigeti.

⁵²¹ Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 356.

⁵²² *Ibid*, 355-6.

⁵²³ Sergey Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries: 1915-1923 Behind the Mask*, trans. Anthony Phillips (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 614.

Igor Stravinsky also worked with Kočański on a smaller scale work, his *Suite for Suite d'après des thèmes, fragments et morceaux de Giambattista Pergolesi*. The year of composition for this work is usually listed as 1925. Greive however draws our attention to a discrepancy that exists regarding the timing of this work's creation. In an interview given in 1922, Kočański stated that

during the summer just passed I worked with Stravinsky on some of the things he is doing for violin... The Stravinsky composition is a delightful violin suite which he has made out of the Scarlatti 'Pulcinella' music of his ballet, in five or six movements. I expect to play it here next year.⁵²⁴

Despite this initial time and effort spent by Kočański's in 1922, and Stravinsky's promise that he would perform its premiere, it was the Australian violinist Alma Moodie who was given the exclusive first performance rights in 1925 for a number of months, due to a favour requested by Werner Reinhart.⁵²⁵

In any case, this work is dedicated to Kočański, and Stravinsky also saw fit to dedicate his *Firebird* transcriptions for violin and piano to him as well, the 'Prelude', 'Ronde des Princesses' and 'Berceuse'. So despite Kočański's unfortunate record of premiering works in which he invested creative efforts and energy, these collaborations appear to have returned some acknowledgement to him.

Kočański noted that "both these composers [Prokofiev and Stravinsky] were entirely willing to meet my demands with regard to practical play ability (not merely because we were friends), and it was most enjoyable working with them."⁵²⁶ Craft details the circumstances in which Kočański and Stravinsky met in 1914 in London, introduced to one another by their mutual friend Arthur Rubinstein.⁵²⁷ He also notes that it was in Kočański's New York apartment that Stravinsky met with Gershwin.⁵²⁸

Arthur Rubinstein's memoirs provide an account of Kočański's encounter with Bloch in 1921:

In New York, I gave one recital of violin and piano sonatas with Paul. On that

⁵²⁴ Greive, 'Kočański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 8.

⁵²⁵ Igor Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, ed. & trans. Robert Craft (New York: Knopf, 1982-1985), 160.

⁵²⁶ Frederick Martens, *String Mastery* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1922), 78.

⁵²⁷ See Robert Craft's footnote in Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, 293.

⁵²⁸ Stravinsky, *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, 293.

occasion, Ernest Bloch, the Swiss composer, honoured us by entrusting us to give the first world performance of his violin sonata. We played it from the manuscript. The composer assisted at our rehearsals, giving us precious indications about tempi and other details. On the other hand, he listened carefully to Paul's advice on possible improvements for the violin part and changed one or two places for the piano on my suggestion.⁵²⁹

Whilst it is unlikely that Bartok ever worked directly with Kochański, it is worth mentioning here that Bartok had copies of several of Szymanowski's works at the time he wrote his First and Second Violin and Piano Sonatas in 1921 and 1922, and also requested the music for Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto before attempting his own Second Violin Concerto written much later between 1937-38. Malcolm Gillies has contributed a fascinating article exploring the connection between Szymanowski's music and Bartok's sonatas.⁵³⁰ Gillies notes the many shared influences, common to both young composers, and describes in similar terms to Greive's the special effects created in the *Mythes*. Wightman also delves briefly into this area, including Bartok's Second Violin Concerto in the discussion.⁵³¹

Rubinstein's memoirs provide several amusing anecdotes attesting to Kochański's affable nature, entertaining impersonations, great personal charm and fondness for card games. Rubinstein recounts one summer holiday, spent in the vicinity of Biarritz and its casino, where long afternoons would be devoted to informal music making; "we made music in many ways; Ravel would try out with me a few pages of a new piece for four-hands. Paul would play his arrangements of Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* to Ravel's delight and the de Falla songs, which we all thought sounded better on the violin than when sung."⁵³²

In addition to advising composers, Kochański was a very active supporter of contemporary music, his end goal always being "the revelation of the unique beauty which is concealed within a musical work."⁵³³ This aim, sympathetic and generous to the composer, was even more important in the context of newly written pieces, which did not have any performance history or interpretative tradition. It is worth remembering that not all virtuosos were interested in taking the risks involved with performing new music. Jascha Heifetz, for example, never added Prokofiev's First Concerto, Berg or Bartok's Concertos to his repertoire.

⁵²⁹ Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 145.

⁵³⁰ Gillies, 'Stylistic Integrity and Influence in Bartok's Works: The Case of Szymanowski', 139-160.

⁵³¹ Wightman, 'Szymanowski, Bartok and the Violin', 161.

⁵³² Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 232.

⁵³³ Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 355.

Szymanowski attests to Kochański's musicianship and attitude, which was "deliberate, full of serious consideration, and enthusiastic in the face of the very question of music itself," and also to the level of commitment Kochański devoted to any given work, "developed only on the basis of his immediate relationship, his intuitive understanding, his specific 'synonymity' with the work being performed."⁵³⁴

Kochański composed several violin pieces and transcribed many works for violin and piano by other composers, mostly miniatures, among them works by Szymanowski, Paganini, Ravel, de Falla, Chopin, Nin, Glazunov, Schubert and Scriabin.⁵³⁵ As well as continuing on his collaborative work with various composers, during the American years Kochański focussed more and more on writing and transcribing works for violin and piano. Dr. John Erskin, dean of the Julliard School noted that despite how

magnificent his [Kochański's] playing and teaching were, I think he was a bigger man than we had yet realised. His influence and his fame were only beginning. Had he lived, I believe he would have distinguished himself in compositions, to which his attention was turning.⁵³⁶

It seems his professional life in New York started well from his very first concert. Rubinstein verified that his debut concert was a sensation in the city, recalling that

he [Kochański] played the Brahms concerto conducted by Walter Damrosch with the Symphony Orchestra. I had never heard him as inspired as on this evening. His manager, George Engels, had no difficulty in exploiting this success and Paul was right away in great demand by the most important orchestras and could look forward to a full season.⁵³⁷

Prokofiev also wrote that in 1921 he attended a Chicago Symphony concert in order to hear Kochański perform, but his recollections of the event are unfortunately dominated by his tortured experience of sitting through Mahler's Seventh Symphony, which he likened to "kissing a still-born child."⁵³⁸

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 3.

⁵³⁶ "Paul Kochański, Violinist, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1934, p. 13, col. 4.

⁵³⁷ Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 113.

⁵³⁸ Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, 622.

Aside from his commitment to solo, chamber and orchestral roles throughout his career, Kochański was also a dedicated teacher. His first formal teaching position was at the Warsaw Conservatory between 1909-11 where he taught the virtuoso class. This was followed by a position at Imperial Conservatory in St. Petersburg between 1916-18, replacing the legendary Leopold Auer who had been the previous violin professor there. The following two years were spent at the Kiev Conservatory before Kochański emigrated to the United States in 1921. From 1924 until his death ten years later, Kochański was a professor at New York's pre-eminent music school, the Julliard School.⁵³⁹ Rubinstein notes that he accepted the position "on the condition that he would be able to continue his concerts,"⁵⁴⁰ and went on to become an invaluable full-time professor there; "with Efrem Zimbalist he gave master classes and Paul's very special pedagogic talent soon became a great asset to the school."⁵⁴¹

Through his teachers, Młynarski and Thomson, Kochański had a direct link to the great Russian and Belgian violin schools. That Kochański managed to synthesise the best elements of these schools is evident in Roth's description of his playing as "a marvellous blend of the Russian school as represented by Auer's finest pupils and the older, grandly romantic Belgian school as epitomized by Ysaÿe."⁵⁴² But most importantly, in regards to the formation of his musical personality, he was exposed at a formative age to orchestral playing and repertoire. It was Młynarski who appointed him to the position of concertmaster in the newly established Warsaw Philharmonic in 1901, when Kochański was fourteen, and we know that he held this position for at least two years, possibly returning on occasion to lead the orchestra after this time as well.

Whilst it is unknown exactly what repertoire the orchestra programmed during these years one can assume that as a dedicated and enthusiastic young musician he would have studied the available repertoire. It is also possible to speculate as to whether he was familiar with the substantial and demanding solos required of the concertmaster that had recently been composed; works such as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*. In any case, Kochański's orchestral experience as concertmaster broadened his musical perspective and sensitivity considerably; developing his awareness of the entire orchestra, training him to become a fluent performer of a range of musical styles and periods and teaching him to adapt and be flexible to the differing requests from each conductor. Historically speaking, this experience is quite unique in the life of a virtuoso violinist, as most

⁵³⁹ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Rubinstein, *My Many Years*, 114.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid*, 144.

⁵⁴² Roth, 'Refined Colourist', 689.

players are focused at this time on honing their own craft through the concerto and solo repertoire in relative isolation.

Whilst there is not a wealth of biographical information to be found on Kochański, his years spent in America and his professorship at the Julliard school have contributed greatly to the amount of material available, particularly that written in English. During his years in America, his chamber music partners included Pablo Casals, Fritz Kreisler, Louis Persinger and Eugene Goossens.⁵⁴³ Kochański was highly esteemed by his contemporaries, a fact reflected in the warm tributes from his colleagues after his untimely death from cancer at the age of 46; “‘one of the world’s most distinguished artists’ (Mischa Elman), ‘...not only a great artist but a great person’ (Efrem Zimbalist), and ‘a fine colleague and valued friend’ (Jascha Heifetz).”⁵⁴⁴ His funeral, for example, was attended by over 1500 people in New York with his pall-bearers including Arturo Toscanini, Frank Damrosch, Walter Damrosch, Jascha Heifetz, Vladimir Horowitz, Fritz Kreisler, Serge Koussevitzky, Leopold Stokowski and Efrem Zimbalist.⁵⁴⁵

When we consider his standing amongst the most exceptional musicians of his day, as well as Szymanowski’s testaments to his position as muse and advisor in violinistic matters, it is quite surprising his role in the development of twentieth-century violin literature is so little appreciated and understood. One example of this oversight can be found in Mark Katz’s literature review style catalogue, *The Violin*, which seeks to “offer a comprehensive research guide to the violin, one that represents the wide variety of writings on the instrument, its makers, music, players and performance practices.”⁵⁴⁶ However Katz fails to list Kochański in either the individual biography segment or the studies by composer. Such a discrepancy is difficult to comprehend, despite the author’s apology, “by comprehensive, however, I do not mean complete.”⁵⁴⁷ Indeed, Kochański was in many ways the ‘violin whisperer’ of the twentieth-century, imparting not only to Szymanowski, but many other violinists, the “‘profoundly penetrating ‘secret knowledge of the violin’ which he himself enriched so greatly”.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ Greive, ‘Kochański’s Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection’, 1: 1.

⁵⁴⁴ “Paul Kochański, Violinist, Is Dead,” *The New York Times*, January 13, 1934, p. 13, col. 2, 5.

⁵⁴⁵ H. Sachs, *Arthur Rubinstein – A Life* (London: Phoenix, 1997), 250.

⁵⁴⁶ Mark Katz, *The Violin: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Szymanowski, ‘In Memory of Paweł Kochański’ in *Szymanowski on Music*, 357.

3.2 The Violin Concerto

i) Nineteenth-Century Romanticism

In order to appreciate the advances made by Kočański and Szymanowski in the First Violin Concerto, it is useful to gain an overview of the genre in the century leading up to their own contribution in 1916. The following paragraphs attempt to briefly address this, noting the key composers who wrote in the form as well as the major transformations undergone during the nineteenth century. It is by no means a complete catalogue, rather a synopsis of major figures and trends. Mention will not be made of composers' other violin works, such as solo pieces, violin sonatas and concert pieces, as the primary focus here is concerned with the violin concerto form alone.

The first major concerto of the Romantic period is Beethoven's Violin Concerto, op. 61, written in 1806. The grandiose nature, breadth of time and large-scale formal design demanded by Beethoven's 45-minute concerto became a model for nineteenth-century Germanic concertos written in the Romantic spirit. Continuing in this vein, Louis Spohr (1784-1859) made a significant contribution with his eighteen concertos, which blend the lyricism and virtuosity of Viotti's French school with a German sense of structure and form that continues on from Beethoven's monumental offering. Spohr also experimented with the progression of the movements. In his Violin Concerto no. 8 in A minor, op. 47, '*in modo di scena cantante*' (1816) for example, each movement flows continuously into the next without any breaks.

Both Mendelssohn's E minor concerto op. 64 and Brahms' concertos are of particular relevance here, as they were composed with the assistance of collaborative violinists, the latter with Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) and in Mendelssohn's case with Ferdinand David (1810-1873). Mendelssohn's E minor concerto reveals several novel innovations of form, notably the dispensation of an orchestral introduction stating the main themes in favour of an atmospheric two bar lead in, the inclusion of a written out cadenza, the placement of the cadenza prior to the recapitulation and the linking of the first and second movements with a continuously sounding bassoon note.

The friendship between David and Mendelssohn provided the initial inspiration for the work.⁵⁴⁹ David assisted Mendelssohn with many technical matters, often providing solutions to questions of bowings, technical execution and possibly also the solo part itself. The 2003 Urtext edition of the concerto includes a discussion entitled ‘Mendelssohn or David?’ that states “once Mendelssohn completed the autograph score, the text of the solo violin part was reworked partly by the composer himself and partly by Ferdinand David.”⁵⁵⁰

Mendelssohn and Brahms’ concertos also share another connection: Brahms’ advisor in violinistic and technical matters, Joachim, was also a student of David.⁵⁵¹ Joachim advised Brahms during the composition of the concerto, and was also the work’s dedicatee, premiering the concerto in Leipzig under Brahms’ baton in 1879. The scale of the work, whilst maintaining its fundamental Classical three-movement concerto form, is expanded greatly, incorporating a “symphonic breadth and character.”⁵⁵² Despite the virtuosic demands placed on the soloist, the work failed to please everyone. Music critic Hans von Bulow labelled it “a concerto against the violin”⁵⁵³, whilst Sarasate refused to perform the piece, famously remarking, “Why should I stand there while the oboe has the only proper melody in the whole piece?”⁵⁵⁴

Other German nineteenth-century concertos that bear witness to the depth of Joachim’s influence include Schumann’s (1810-1856) Concerto in D minor, and the most well known of Bruch’s three concertos, no. 1 in G minor (1866), which were both composed for the violinist. Schumann’s concerto is not indicative of his finest work, and is now rarely performed. The opposite may well be said of Bruch’s work. Joachim also was the advisor and dedicatee of the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák’s (1841-1904) Violin Concerto in A minor, op. 53 written between 1879-80 and revised in 1882.⁵⁵⁵

In countries outside of Germany and Austria, the Romantic violin concerto as a form continued to develop, often along nationalistic lines according to country and region. In France, Édouard Lalo (1823-1892) composed one concerto and two concertante works, his most well known the *Symphonie espagnol*, which fuses virtuosic techniques with Spanish and

⁵⁴⁹ Ullrich Scheideler, preface to Felix Mendelssohn, Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64 (Berlin: Verlag, 2003), iii.

⁵⁵⁰ Scheideler, comments to Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, 53.

⁵⁵¹ Robin Stowell, ‘The nineteenth-century bravura tradition’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 67.

⁵⁵² Stowell, ‘The concerto’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 157.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Eric Wen, ‘The twentieth century’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 79.

⁵⁵⁵ Stowell, ‘The nineteenth-century bravura tradition’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 69.

gypsy traits. Another Frenchman of note was Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921), of whose three violin concertos the no. 3, op. 61 is most often performed today.

Of the Russian nineteenth-century composers, only Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35 (1878) stands out for its excellence of form, musical content and violin writing. Aside from French and Russian composers, other significant late nineteenth century violin concertos include the aforementioned Dvořák Violin Concerto in A minor, op. 53, and the Romanian composer George Enescu's (1881-1955) Violin Concerto, composed in 1896.

ii) The Virtuoso Violinist/Composer

One of the most intriguing developments that occurred during the nineteenth century was the rise of the virtuoso performer-composer. As Stowell notes:

with the extension of the French school into Belgium in the 1840s and the influence of violinist-composers such as Spohr in Germany, the stage was set for the full flush of Romanticism to blossom in the form of the itinerant virtuoso, 'one of the essential and corroding institutions in music history' responsible for both the development and the debasement of the violin art.⁵⁵⁶

In this vein, Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840) was of course the chief protagonist whose career trajectory became the model for the travelling virtuoso in the nineteenth-century. Of the six surviving violin concertos, the Violin Concerto no. 1, op. 6 and the Violin Concerto no. 2 are the most frequently performed today and display Paganini's natural melodic sense, derived from the Italian *bel canto* style, alongside a dazzling array of technical feats.

Violinist-composers who followed in Paganini's footsteps were mostly of French or Franco-Belgian schooling, no doubt hoping to profit from the newly created niche of the concert spectacle. Belgium-born artists include Charles de Beriot (1802-1870) who composed ten violin concertos and his student Henri Vieuxtemps (1820-1881) who contributed seven concertos. Polish violinist-composers influenced by Paganini include Karol Lipinski (1790-1861), who wrote four violin concertos, and Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880), of whose two violin concertos, the second in D minor (1862) has remained in the repertoire of concert violinists and competition entrants.

Other violinists who composed in the virtuosic style include the Moravian-born Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1812-1865) who was thought to rival Paganini in technique and wrote a Violin Concertino in D major, op. 12 as well as a Violin Concerto in F sharp minor op. 23 entitled '*Pathetique*', and the Norwegian virtuoso Ole Bull (1810-1880), who composed two concertos for the instrument.

One of the problems arising from this new virtuoso concert genre was that audiences became conditioned to expect dazzling displays of technical wizardry combined with pleasing and easily absorbable melodies. The virtuosity displayed was very much a self-conscious

⁵⁵⁶ Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 61.

phenomenon, which served the individual ego and suited players of a certain temperament. Much of the music written was second rate at best, merely a vehicle through which the violinist could amaze and impress audiences, ensuring their fame and financial success.

Stowell's statement regarding the 'development and debasement of the violin art' is acute, as on the positive side, the boundaries of what was possible on the instrument were pushed further than ever before. Hundreds of new combinations of double-stopping, chordal writing, bow strokes and harmonics were explored, which in turn suggested new possibilities to non-violinist composers, expanding the range of the instrument immeasurably. Like many fashions, the virtuoso phenomenon provided decades of fascination and amazement, but audiences eventually grew tired of it, and the tide gradually turned toward the more inventive and sincere musicianship led by violinists such as Joachim in Germany.

There were of course exceptions to this demarcation between virtuosity and Romanticism at the end of the nineteenth century. One of the giants of the violin, both figuratively and literally was Eugene Ysaÿe (1858-1931), who managed to combine virtuosity with musicianship in equal measure. Wen describes a "gargantuan personality whose playing was characterised by enormous sweep and panache,"⁵⁵⁷ combining the musicianship of Joachim with the virtuosic flair and sensitivity of colour of Sarasate.

Ysaÿe's insight composing for the instrument is particularly relevant, his Six Solo Sonatas for Solo Violin, op. 27 representing his most lasting contribution to the repertoire. Ysaÿe aimed to experiment on the instrument, combining "musical interest with virtuosity on a large scale." He also observed that non-violinist composers "do not know well all the secrets and devices at the command of professionals,"⁵⁵⁸ highlighting the advantages which can be gained by having an intimate knowledge of the violin.

⁵⁵⁷ Wen, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 79.

⁵⁵⁸ Lev Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe*, trans. X. M. Danko (New Jersey: Paganiniana Publications, 1980), 309-312.

iii) The Violin Concerto at the *Fin de Siècle*

Of all these nineteenth-century trends, what is most striking, and of central importance to this thesis, is the observation that the ‘giants’ of late-Romantic and *fin-de-siècle* Germanic traditions such as Wagner, Mahler and Bruckner choose not to express their musical thoughts through the medium of the violin concerto. Perhaps the epic scale of their works was not conducive to the limits imposed by a solo violin, or they were too consumed with the demands of their gargantuan operas and symphonies that there was little room left for anything else. One can speculate but we may never know the reason why, in the hands of the most influential German composers, the genre of the violin concerto went from immense popularity to complete neglect at the end of the century.

Indeed, it was not only the violin concerto, which suffered at the *fin-de-siècle*; instrumental concertos in general were shunned in favour of orchestral tone poems, symphonic and operatic forms. Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is the only exception here, but his Violin Concerto in D minor, op. 8 was a youthful endeavour, written during his final school years between 1880-82. It is a delightful work and typical of his style, “pregnant with lush romantic melodies and technical challenges,”⁵⁵⁹ but of little significance in the development of the concerto genre and now rarely performed.

The German late-Romantic composers were not alone in eschewing the violin concerto. French composers at the turn of the century such as Debussy and Ravel were also too preoccupied or disinterested in contributing to the genre. Even the nineteenth-century Belgian and French composers Cesar Franck (1822-1890) and Ernst Chausson (1855-1899), who wrote exceptionally well for the instrument, chose not to write violin concertos. One can speculate as to the reasons why these composers overlooked the form: perhaps they viewed it as an empty vessel for sincere expression and progressive musical content after decades of misappropriation in the hands of virtuoso performers.

The poem genre was also fashionable at the time, Chausson’s *Poème* immediately springs to mind, and no doubt drew competition away from the concerto form. As Ysaÿe commented on the poem, it is “admirably suited for the expression of feeling and is free from the restrictions of the concerto... it is free, it lays no restrictions on the composer who is able

⁵⁵⁹ Stowell, *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, 158.

to express feelings and images outside any literary framework.”⁵⁶⁰ Aside from Tchaikovsky and Glazunov, Russian composers were also notably absent in contributing to the genre. Cui was an exception from within The Five, writing the Suite Concertante op. 25, however Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin all overlooked the violin concerto. Prokofiev’s two concertos and Stravinsky’s concerto came after Szymanowski’s.

There were only a handful of composers who wrote notable concertos at the beginning of the twentieth-century prior to World War I. Alexander Glazunov’s (1865-1936) Violin Concerto in A minor, op. 84, written in 1904, displays a characteristically Russian blend of virtuosic violin style with *fin-de-siècle* elements such as expressive melodic and harmonic chromaticism. In Scandinavia, Jean Sibelius’ (1865-1957) Violin Concerto in D minor, op. 47 (1903, rev. 1905) was a landmark work. A competent violinist himself, Sibelius still employs sonata form in the opening movement; however, he loosens the structure considerably, utilising a great number of freedoms in reordering the progression of events.

Most importantly however, Sibelius’ treatment of virtuosic writing, which is considerable and of considerable difficulty, is always used to serve the musical line and never merely virtuosic or showy. The melodic lines are long and soaring, and require a great deal of controlled intensity to successfully capture the spirit of the work. Sibelius also manages to evoke images of the bitterly cold landscape of his native Finland through the striking use of orchestral colouristic effects such as tremolandi, tremolo and the use of extremely soft dynamics. As such, Sibelius’ voice is unique and marks one of the first departures from both German Romanticism and the nineteenth-century virtuoso traditions.

Of the English composers, Elgar’s Violin Concerto, one of the longest in the twentieth-century literature at around fifty minutes, was written in 1909-10. Like Sibelius, Elgar was another violinist composer. Following on from this was Delius’ Violin Concerto composed in 1916: the same year as Szymanowski’s First Violin Concerto. These two works share many similarities in sentiment and expression despite the fact that Delius and Szymanowski were unaware of each other’s compositions, working independently at opposite ends of Europe. They shared similar the resemblance of their works perhaps due to their interest in similar philosophical and mystical preoccupations.

Bela Bartok’s (1881-1945) Violin Concerto no. 1, composed between 1907-08, was written as a gift and dedicated to the violinist Stefi Geyer, with whom Bartok was infatuated.

⁵⁶⁰ Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe*, 309.

After she rejected the work, or, reading between the lines, rejected Bartok, he never published or presented the work to the public in his lifetime. It was later published in 1956 and did not receive a public premiere until 1958.

Szymanowski's contemporary, Mieczysław Karłowicz (1876–1909), composed his Violin Concerto op. 8 in 1902. Karłowicz was a fellow member of Young Poland in Music and, as such, inhabited similar intellectual and artistic circles as Szymanowski. Whilst Karłowicz's concerto exhibits a richer harmonic palette than its nineteenth-century counterparts, the violin writing is still based around the familiar virtuosic model of arpeggiated chords and intervals of thirds, sixths and octaves.

As a continuation on from the concertos of Tchaikovsky and especially Glazunov, the work can be viewed essentially as late Romantic, expanding the harmonic vocabulary but not rewriting it. Stylistically speaking, the violin writing belongs to the nineteenth-century virtuosic tradition. Perhaps if he had not met his untimely death in an avalanche during a skiing expedition at the age of 33, he would have contributed further to the legacy of Polish violin literature.

When discussing the entire catalogue of violin concertos, there are obviously many common stylistic elements that occur throughout the work of all composers, including Szymanowski. Many of these shared components can be attributed to the nature of the violin itself; its singing propensities, polyphonic capabilities, tuning characteristics and the like. There are subtle trends, for example, in the works directly preceding Szymanowski's composition which do foreshadow certain elements contained in the 'new mode of expression' created by Szymanowski and Kochoński. This, however, is due mostly to the developments that were occurring in music generally around the turn of the century, such as the expanding harmonic palette, instead of specific advancement in violin writing.

None of these elements can be seen to exert any significant influence on Kochoński's and Szymanowski's compositions in a derivative sense. On the whole, all of the concertos in the century preceding the First Violin Concerto conform to the three-movement sonata format. Even the exceptions of movements running continuously from one to the next, such as Mendelssohn and Glazunov's concertos, are little more than joinery fashioned to link up disparate movements.

3.3 The Violin Idiom of the First Violin Concerto

With this brief historical framework in mind, we can now approach Szymanowski and Kochański's collaborative writing in the First Violin Concerto. Wightman goes so far as to say that "paradoxically, there is little in Szymanowski's 'new mode of expression' which had not already been exploited by earlier composers,"⁵⁶¹ giving several examples to support his case. Wightman's argument is specious however, as Szymanowski never claimed to have invented new techniques for the instrument, rather it is his conception of the violin itself that is original. This is not to suggest that Kochański and Szymanowski did not contribute novel and innovative facets in their approach to violin writing, but to make clear that they were never attempting to create a new technical vocabulary or dispense with the existing foundations of violin playing.

Even Szymanowski's description of the work in a letter from 1916 to Spiess attests to this; "I finished the Violin Concerto with the help of Paweł... I must say I am very happy with the whole thing – again a new, different music, but at the same time, a bit of a return to the old. The whole thing is terribly fantastical and unexpected."⁵⁶² The key to understanding their contribution to the violin concerto genre lies in the word 'expression'—it was a new language, unlike the language of the virtuoso tradition, Romantic sonata form or rhapsodic poem genres which dominated the preceding century. The Dionysian spirit of Szymanowski's new music required a new musical aesthetic, which Kochański helped to realise.

Many of the underlying reasons for this new expression have been articulated in part two of this thesis, which addresses the Dionysian impulse behind the Concerto; the unified and uninterrupted form, elements of song and dance and so on. As Stuckenschmidt has observed, "whenever music takes on the task of expression, it develops new technical means,"⁵⁶³ which is relevant here. The following section represents an attempt to identify the techniques and stylistic features used by Kochański and Szymanowski to realise their 'new mode of expression'.

Elements identified by Greive's investigation, 'The Kochański collection of manuscripts and Szymanowski's violin writing of 1915-16' will be used as the starting point.

⁵⁶¹ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 142.

⁵⁶² *Ibid*, 177.

⁵⁶³ H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Twentieth Century Music*, trans. Richard Deveson (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 7.

But, Greive's focus is limited to the *Mythes*, and he relates these techniques to examples from other compositions and arrangements in Kochański's manuscript collection. This thesis will identify the violin techniques of the First Violin Concerto, and identify cases where they relate to examples from *fin-de-siècle* orchestral and concertmaster violin repertoire, as well as other violin concertos, which directly preceded its composition. Whilst acknowledging that there is a certain degree of assumption here, it stands to reason that either Szymanowski and or Kochański would most likely have been familiar with the following compositions.

From this era, works containing major concertmaster solos include Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, composed in 1888, Strauss's *Don Juan* from 1888, *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche* from 1894-5 and *Ein Heldenleben*, which was completed in 1898. Also of relevance are the symphonies and orchestral works of Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) and Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915), some of which contain smaller solo violin passages. Mahler's symphonic output spans from 1888 when he completed his Symphony no. 1 until 1910 with his unfinished Symphony no. 10. Alexander Scriabin's first three symphonies date from 1899 until 1904, with *Le poème de l'extase* completed between 1905-8 and his *Prometheus Le Poème du feu* finished in 1910 and premiered the following year. Unsurprisingly, Scriabin was also an avid follower of Nietzsche and wrote his "indebtedness to the book [*The Birth of Tragedy*] for its elaboration of the Dionysian concept of abandon, pleasure, and rapture," noting how "it strengthened [his] own doctrine."⁵⁶⁴

Greive identifies six techniques found in the *Mythes* that can be recognised as being "characteristic of Szymanowski's colour-oriented violin writing."⁵⁶⁵ Greive emphasises that it is the context and the extent to which these devices are used that classify them as hallmarks of the Szymanowski-Kochański collaborative style, which is indeed the case. The techniques, which are all used "in a highly idiomatic manner [are]: (A) the use of different registers—especially the very high, (B) harmonics, (C) trills, (D) double stops, (E) chromatic glissandi, and (F) pizzicati."⁵⁶⁶ The last of these elements, pizzicato, is not of relevance to the violin writing in the First Violin Concerto and will not be included in this discussion. To this list I would like to add another idiomatic hallmark of Szymanowski-Kochański's collaborative style, namely 'chromatic melodic line', which overlaps in many instances with the other elements. In actuality, many of these elements are employed in conjunction with one another as will be evinced in the following examples.

⁵⁶⁴ Faubion Bower, *Scriabin, a Biography*, vol. II, 214-15.

⁵⁶⁵ Greive, 'Kochański's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 1: 1.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Szymanowski's use of registers, particularly the very high "E" string, was well suited with Kochański's strengths. Indeed Palmer argues that Szymanowski conceived the concerto with the "captivating sweetness of Kochański's tone in mind."⁵⁶⁷ I would not doubt that Kochański's tone realised the sonority of these passages to perfection, but I would argue that Szymanowski was also writing with a high soprano vocal sonority in mind, having associated this register of melodic writing with his sister Stasia's voice type from an early age.

This employment of registers for colouristic effect can be further divided into two types; the very high tessitura, and the contrasting of high and low tessitura. The first type, the very high "E" string melodic passages discussed in part two, often occurring within an passage of rhythmic stasis in the orchestral accompaniment, are one of the most distinguishable features of the Concerto (figure 48, **Ex. 12**).

This is often combined with a 'chromatic melodic line', such as the opening solo, which, as noted in part two, has an element of ecstatic languor. Here the shape of the line is characterised by semi-tonal movement and larger intervals moving both upward and downward (**Ex. 19**). The solo violin writing in Scriabin's tone poems, which expressed many of the same sentiments as Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto, could well have provided the initial inspiration for this type of chromatic lyricism. Of course, Szymanowski's writing is much more developed and extended over much longer phrases, but in Scriabin's *Le Poeme de l'extase* for example, one can witness the genesis of an idea which Szymanowski and Kochański would develop further (**Ex. 20**).

Szymanowski can be seen to experiment writing this type of vocal sonority for the solo violin within the development of his symphonies. The Second Symphony, written between 1909-10 opens with a solo violin. We can hear the beginning of his idiomatic writing for the instrument with certain recognisable intervals for example; however, Szymanowski has not yet placed the writing high on the "E" string and there is still a predominantly late-romantic feel to much of the thematic material which alludes heavily to Richard Strauss (**Ex. 21**).

Szymanowski's Third Symphony, *Song of the Night*, completed immediately prior to the First Violin Concerto in 1916, bears the hallmarks of the mature Kochański-Szymanowski collaborative idiom. The conception of this Symphony was very similar to the Concerto: one continuous movement of similar duration. Szymanowski described it to Ziloti as a symphonic

⁵⁶⁷ Palmer, *Szymanowski*, 64.

poem, however labelled it a Symphony because of his “organic horror of ‘symphonic poem’ (as a title).”⁵⁶⁸

The solo violin writing in this Symphony exhibits the advances made through the composition of the *Mythes* in 1915, displaying the vein of ecstatic languor found in the Concerto. The solo at figure 5 utilises the penetrating quality of the high “E” string, upward moving glissandi between larger intervals, chromaticism and a rhythmically static accompaniment (**Ex. 22**). This style of chromatic melodic line is also evident in the opening violin solo of the Third Symphony, joined here by the tutti first violin section between figures 1-2 (**Ex. 23**).

The second type of register use involves the contrast between the higher “E” string with the lowest “G” string. In passages such as these, the same material is heard first on the brighter string, lending a shimmering quality to the sound, followed by the rich and darkly expressive lower string. This effect is striking as the choice of these two strings produces the most vivid contrast with noticeably different tonal characters. It is more difficult to project on the “A” and particularly the “D” string of the violin, and, in addition, these middle strings do not generally produce such characteristic qualities.

The following two examples demonstrate Szymanowski’s use of high register followed by low register using the same thematic material (**Ex. 24 & Ex. 25**). Contrasting the sonority of the different strings was something that many composers were incorporating more and more in their works throughout the nineteenth century. Sibelius’ Violin Concerto comes to mind in this instance, with the opening material being restated later on the G-string, although the contrast in the range is not so dramatic (**Ex. 26**).

Part two of this thesis discussed the use of harmonics and noted that Szymanowski used them during works of his middle period to symbolise Pan’s pipes. Following on from harmonics on Greive’s list is the decorative and expressive use of trills, the use of unusual double stops and chromatic glissandi. In a sense, Szymanowski and Kochoński’s penchant for these compositional or violinistic possibilities can all be understood under the subheading of timbre, or more specifically, a *fin-de-siècle* conception of timbre. The use of tremolando, trills, glissandi, multi-layered string divisi writing, effects such as *sul ponticello* and *sul tasto* became an integral part of orchestral writing in the works of Mahler, Scriabin, Debussy and Ravel. These composers sought new colour-oriented and timbral effects from the stringed

⁵⁶⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 172. Letter to Ziloti, August 1916.

instruments, following on from the gains in the sphere of orchestration as championed by Rimsky-Korsakov. As Dahlhaus notes, the

reformulation of the notion of timbre, one of the crucial features of *fin-de-siècle* musical modernism... freed tone colour from its subservient function of merely clarifying the melody, rhythm, harmony, and counterpoint of a piece, and gave it an aesthetic raison d'être and significance of its own.⁵⁶⁹

For art critics, writing under the influence of Max Nordau's *Entartung*, the rise of timbre was indelibly connected to a kind of unhealthy nervous excitement—further evidence of a state of cultural demise. The Viennese critic Robert Hirschfeld described Mahler's symphonies as devoted to “the external nature of sonority, to colouristic artifice, to instrumental gloss.”⁵⁷⁰ Debussy's music receives an even harsher review: “with Debussy, there is an obviously conscious dissecting and unravelling of timbres, a splitting of tone and racking of nerves, from which we now know only one thing: that it is almost unbearable.”⁵⁷¹

The German writer and composer Walter Niemann's assessment of *fin-de-siècle* timbre in modern music, whilst intended as an insult, does in fact adequately give voice to the element of timbre in Szymanowski's music. He wrote in 1913, “the Dionysian and Bacchanalian whipping of our nervous system becomes the decisive feature of all truly modern music. Music is transformed... into the most sensitive timbral instrument of our nerves and moods.”⁵⁷²

The effects of timbre in the First Violin Concerto are indeed used to convey a sense of the Dionysian aesthetic; abandonment, rapture, sensuality and suffering. This is reflected not only in the solo part but also in the orchestral writing. At times, Szymanowski makes use of tremolandos and trill figures to heighten the sense of stasis, creating a hazy atmosphere in which rhythmic outlines appear blurred. Double-stopped intervals such as the consecutive minor sevenths and implied major ninths at figure 36 are used in a colouristic way, a pleasurable sensation of discord and dissonance that wants to resolve to the octave but is unable to (**Ex. 27**). Similarly, the inclusion of trills in the lower octave at figure 69

⁵⁶⁹ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 243.

⁵⁷⁰ Karen Painter, ‘The Sensuality of Timbre: Responses to Mahler and Modernity at the Fin de siècle’ *19th-Century Music*, vol. 18, (1995), 237.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷² Walter Niemann, *Die Musik seit Richard Wagner* (Berlin, Schuster and Loeffler, 1913), 150-51. As translated and quoted in Painter, ‘The Sensuality of Timbre: Responses to Mahler and Modernity at the Fin de siècle’, 238.

accentuates a sense of ambiguity, with the chord oscillating between the perfect octave and major seventh before leading into another section of minor sevenths (**Ex. 28**). The coupling of an octave with a trill on the lower note is one of Kočański's characteristic ideas.⁵⁷³

Another characteristic use of trills occurs at figure 64. Here, Szymanowski and Kočański combine a chromatic melodic line in the high register with single note trills, heightening the sense of rapturous ecstasy (**Ex. 29**). At figure 66 in this last example, we can find another trait, the chromatic glissando. Whereas in the *Mythes*, the glissando was also combined with a left-hand tremolo or trill, here Szymanowski and Kočański utilise a type of glissando combined with rapid semitone stops.

The effect is produced by using one finger, but instead of sliding downward in a continuous movement, one can imagine trying to play vibrato at the same time, thereby achieving a kind of shaking sound. Kočański incorporates a double-stopped version of this chromatic glissando in the fourth line of the cadenza (**Ex. 30**).⁵⁷⁴ In Szymanowski and Kočański's application of this effect, this feature is clearly audible, being brought into the foreground. Strauss uses this type of chromatic glissando in the solo violin part of *Ein Heldenleben*, however the orchestral writing is so texturally thick at this point that it is hardly discernable (**Ex. 31**).

Returning to Szymanowski's appropriation of this feature, in the orchestral writing of the Concerto the first and second violins also employ this effect. The divisi chords of both upward and downward glissandi create a dialogue effect between the two sections (**Ex. 32**). The descending minor third demi-semi quavers at figure 10 that begin in the upper-most register of the instrument, are also a kind of written-out trill embellishment, creating a rapturous oscillating effect (**Ex. 33**). This material is revisited in the cadenza, where Kočański continues the sequence of falling minor thirds, seamlessly joining these 'trill-like' demi-semi quavers into consecutive double stopped thirds, embellished with double trills (lines 4 & 5, **Ex. 30**).

Fin-de-siècle composers such as Debussy and Mahler were increasingly experimenting with trills in the string writing of their orchestral works. A similar passage can be found in the last movement of Mahler's Second Symphony, the *Resurrection* where divisi trilled chords of three players per line alternate between the first and second violins (**Ex. 34**).

⁵⁷³ Greive, 'Kočanski's Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection', 2: 3.

⁵⁷⁴ In regards to referencing musical examples from the cadenza, I will refer to the line number and any tempo or directional markings within that line.

Double-stopped passages displaying Kochański's cleverly conceived 'violinistic' approach to writing for the instrument can be observed at the *Piu mosso (energico)* in the cadenza. Here the left hand remains in half position, enabling the fingers to assume a comfortable shape, without having to accommodate any shifting of positions (line 2, **Ex. 30**).

Other passages incorporate the use of an open string in combination with double-stopped intervals on two other strings. The resultant three note chords are not only easier to play than three note chords which are stopped on all strings, but they create more resonance in the violin, as one string can vibrate without being dampened. This is used in combination with a 'looping' chromatic figure of thirds against the open "E" string at figure 96 (**Ex. 35**), and in the cadenza with both octaves and thirds set against the open "A" string at the *Allegro moderato marcatissimo* and *marcatissimo* passages respectively (lines 5-6 & 7-8, **Ex. 30**).

The inclusion of an open string within a three-note chord was not a new invention, with Brahms' Violin Concerto providing a nineteenth-century example of this (**Ex. 36**). Also, Rimsky-Korsakov uses this technique in the concertmaster solo of *Scheherazade*, op. 35 (**Ex. 37**). However it is Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* that provides a more immediate precursor to Szymanowski and Kochański's writing. Strauss writes a frenetic cacophony of descending chromatic two and three-note chords, utilising the open "E", "A" and "D" strings to depict the protagonist's *keifend*, or nagging, wife (**Ex. 38**).

These musical examples suggest that Szymanowski and Kochański drew from the *fin-de-siècle* orchestral repertoire when cultivating their own idiom of violin writing. In the place of late Romantic concertos, it was the orchestral string writing and concertmaster solos that displayed the musical developments of the time; increased chromaticism, extremes of register and the use of timbre and colour-oriented writing as an expressive means in itself. Kochański and Szymanowski re-imagined the genre of the violin concerto, successfully transitioning from the inherited nineteenth century Romantic and virtuoso moulds, to a vibrant and relevant medium through which the current musical ideas could find meaningful expression.

3.4 Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto

The final section briefly addresses the impact of Szymanowski and Kočański's 'new mode of expression' on Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto in D major, op. 19, as its composition was the most immediate in terms of time frame, it provides the most striking comparisons and the impact of Szymanowski and Kočański's work is not widely known or recognised. There has been a striking absence of material pertaining to this connection between Prokofiev's violin music and Kočański, despite the fact that several of Prokofiev's works are dedicated to him.

Prokofiev was a prodigious diarist, and his diaries were extremely important to him. Having imagined, as it turns out incorrectly, that the trunk of papers, manuscripts and various paraphernalia that Prokofiev had entrusted to the vaults of Koussevitzky's publishing house had been destroyed, he lamented that "most of all I mourn the loss of the Diary..."⁵⁷⁵ As Phillips notes, this highlights just how vital these records of his personal thoughts and everyday happenings were to him, and why we must take them seriously "if we want to know more about him."⁵⁷⁶ Phillips' English translation has only been recently published, in 2008, and aside from offering a fascinating insight into Prokofiev's world, it provides a very useful step in achieving the aforementioned aim. These diaries also correct many of the discrepancies regarding the dates of conception and composition of his First Violin Concerto.

In relation to Szymanowski and Kočański, Prokofiev's diary reveals that their first meeting occurred at some stage between the 3–12 April 1915. After returning from a business trip in Italy to discuss the possibility of a new ballet with Diaghilev, Prokofiev travelled home via Kiev, in order to visit his former teacher Glière. As mentioned in part two, Glière had offered Szymanowski a professorship earlier that year at the Kiev Conservatoire. Prokofiev's public profile had risen quite dramatically in his absence, which he recorded, writing

my success when I returned to Russia was in danger of quite turning my head. I stopped off in Kiev, and spent a day with Glière, who had convened all the professors at the Conservatoire to meet me. They all knew my music, had the scores, and were enthralled by my playing (apropos, I made the acquaintance there of the

⁵⁷⁵ Phillips, introduction to Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, xiv.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, xv.

violinist Kochański and the composer Szymanowski, whose music I liked very much.)⁵⁷⁷

Szymanowski had only just finished writing the first of the *Mythes* at this time. It is likely therefore that Prokofiev heard the first public performance of *La fontaine d'Arethuse*, which composer and violinist gave “at a concert in the hall of the Kupicki Club in Kiev on 5 April 1915.”⁵⁷⁸ The remaining two movements were completed in June. So it would seem that the timing of this initial meeting was indeed serendipitous, and had the effect of cementing both Szymanowski and Kochański firmly in Prokofiev’s sphere of interest.

Prokofiev’s diaries detail their next encounter at a reception held by the wealthy arts patron, Pyotr Suvchinsky. To preface these remarks, this entry dates from March 24 1916, five months before Szymanowski’s First Violin Concerto was fully sketched, and immediately prior to the Third Symphony, which Szymanowski began to work on in earnest “after his trip to Petrograd in March-April 1916.”⁵⁷⁹ Therefore, the works in reference are limited to the *Mythes* for violin and piano, and more youthful orchestral works. These clarifications noted, Prokofiev writes

Suvchinsky held a grand reception: Alchevsky, Koussevitzky, Diederichs, Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov with Yulia, Blumenfeld, Zakharov with Cecilia, Ovukhov, Asafyev. We all listened to visitors from Kiev: the composer Szymanowski and the outstanding violinist Paweł Kochański. I had already heard them a year ago in Kiev. Szymanowski writes wonderfully for the violin: ‘Not just a violin, but a whole orchestra,’ says Zakharov. His music is interesting, but somehow lacking in inner substance. ‘An adjective rather than a noun,’ says Yulia Weisberg. ‘Or even an adverb,’ adds A. Rimsky-Korsakov.⁵⁸⁰

At some stage between March 1916 and September 1917, Prokofiev entrusted Kochański with the responsibility of looking over the violin part of his First Violin Concerto, which had gradually been taking shape over this time. Between 1916-18, Kochański was living in Petrograd, teaching at the Imperial Conservatoire where he had replaced Leopold Auer, the great pedagogue with whom Tchaikovsky had not encountered such a sympathetic advisor in regard to his Violin Concerto in D major, op. 35. It is possible that Prokofiev, sensing with acuity the level of scrutiny these diaries would eventually be subjected to, chose

⁵⁷⁷ Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, 33.

⁵⁷⁸ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 142.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 171.

⁵⁸⁰ Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, 109.

not to relate in full detail the amount or nature of assistance in relation to the violin writing that Kochański provided.

Riseley speculates whether the “reason that perhaps less credit has been afforded some performers than is their due,”⁵⁸¹ relates to the more recent phenomenon of composers wishing to appear completely original, independent of any assistance afforded them by the performer. In this instance, a slightly longer, alternative translation of the quote that opens this thesis is worth citing here. Gillies’ version is true to Szymanowski’s more frank manner here.

Why should we beat around the bush?: we, with Paweł, created in *Mythes* and the Concerto a new style, a new mode of playing the violin, something quite epoch-making in that respect. All works of other composers approaching this style—even if they were works of genius—came later, under direct influence of *Mythes* and the Concerto, or by direct collaboration of Paweł. But those bastards would not admit it.⁵⁸²

This final sentence provides a marvellous insight into this issue! In a brief aside, Wightman also notes this type of discrepancy in regard to Bartok, highlighting the “striking contrast between Bartok’s privately expressed admiration for Szymanowski’s work (‘one of the best composers in the world’) and his seemingly studied avoidance of mention of Szymanowski’s name in his public writing.”⁵⁸³ Wightman suggests that this may in fact be “symptomatic of some discomfort at the closeness of Szymanowski’s art to his own—and perhaps the realisation that, at least in the limited field of violin music, comparisons might be odious.”⁵⁸⁴ With this parallel in mind, it should come as no surprise really that it is not until the diary entry of September 1917 that Prokofiev relates with a certain perfunctory tone that he

gave the Symphony to Ziloti for copying, while the parts for the Violin Concerto had already been made and had been scrutinised with the utmost care and understanding by Kochański, an outstanding violinist and musician. Both works were scheduled for performance in November, although Ziloti, made nervous by the uncertainty of the times, had not yet announced the concerts.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸¹ Martin Riseley, ‘The Violin Concertos of Sergei Prokofiev’ (Juilliard School, 1995), vii.

⁵⁸² Malcolm Gillies, ‘Stylistic Integrity and Influence in Bartok’s Works: The Case of Szymanowski’ *International Journal of Musicology*, vol. 1, (1992), 159.

⁵⁸³ Wightman, ‘Szymanowski, Bartok and the Violin’, 163.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁵ Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev Diaries*, 230.

Prokofiev had intended Kočański to give the debut performance of his First Concerto on 4 November 1917 in Moscow, however Ziloti's concerns proved correct. The Bolshevik Revolution laid ruin to any artistic plans, with Prokofiev noting wryly that "whatever else it hardly seemed a propitious time for concerts."⁵⁸⁶ Prokofiev spent more time with Kočański in 1920, writing that "Kočański also put in a fleeting appearance in Paris, bringing with him the superb solo part for my Violin Concerto he had made himself. I hope he will play it in London."⁵⁸⁷ All attempts to reschedule the premiere were unsuccessful however, and the work eventually received its first public airing in Paris 1923, with Marcel Darrieux playing under the baton of Koussevitzky. David Oistrakh recalls his first impressions when studying the concerto in 1925-26, writing

I cannot say the music appealed to me at first. It contained far too much that was strange and unusual at the time, both as regards the material itself and its treatment. But the more I worked at it, the more I liked it. Its melodious themes, fantastic harmonies, novel technique and especially the radiant mood of the whole music delighted me.⁵⁸⁸

Interestingly, the way in which Nestyev describes the Concerto also attests to the breakthroughs and influence of Szymanowski work, which returns the soloist within the orchestra, as *exarchon* to chorus;

throughout the [Prokofiev] Concerto the solo violin is given the interesting role of one of the leading members of the orchestral ensemble, the 'first among equals.' This becomes apparent in the very first statement of the main theme. The critic I. Yampolsky was correct in pointing out that 'the solo violin is not set against the orchestra, but rises from within to dominate it. This is a unique modern treatment of the *violino principale* role.'⁵⁸⁹

Reading between the lines of Prokofiev's diaries, one can assume that at some stage, either in the second half 1916 or the first half of 1917, Kočański assisted Prokofiev with editing and violinistic matters. Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto was sketched by the end of August 1916. Knowing Kočański's particular habits in regard to working on manuscripts,

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, 239.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid, 536.

⁵⁸⁸ David Oistrakh, 'In Memoriam' in Vladimir Blok comp., *Sergei Prokofiev: materials, articles, interviews* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 199-200.

⁵⁸⁹ Israel V. Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, trans. Florence Jonas (California: Stanford University Press, 1961), 141.

he no doubt had made his own copy of the violin part from Szymanowski's Concerto and taken it with him to Petrograd in order to continue revising and also to practice. This suggests that Prokofiev, having heard the *Mythes* in concert by this stage, could also have had access to the violin part of Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto, or at the very least, had access to the ideas and new musical aesthetics presented in the work through Kochański, who had only just finished assisting Szymanowski.

In 1925, with the advantage of perspective, Prokofiev described Szymanowski's Concerto writing that "it is complicated, iridescent, enormous... [but] there is in Szymanowski's tendency to languish in 6/4 chords, and to be reconciled to mutes and flageolets (harmonics), a hint of provincialism."⁵⁹⁰ Unfortunately he did not provide any descriptions of Szymanowski's music closer to the creation of his own concerto, or acknowledge the extent of Kochański's advice, which appears to be notably absent from his diary entries up until September 1917. Whatever the reason behind this omission, the influence of Szymanowski and Kochański's work and assistance must therefore be determined by an examination of the score itself.

Of the merely instrumental features identified in Szymanowski's Violin Concerto, three of these aspects can also be discerned in Prokofiev's work; the high "E" string tessitura, the frequent use of trills and innovative double stopping. In no way does Prokofiev's use of the idiomatic features developed in Szymanowski and Kochański's collaborative work suggest a lack of originality or creative vision on his own part, or indeed for Bartok, Bloch and Bax. Szymanowski himself was also aware of this, emphasising that each of these composers had their own unique voice; "all works by other composers related to this style (no matter how much creative genius they revealed)."⁵⁹¹ The aim here is not to find replicated passages from Szymanowski's work, but rather to try and perceive the liberating effect their music had in expanding the expressive and colouristic range of the violin and the violin concerto, and to identify passages which may have benefited from Kochański's "clear, penetrating and so very competent criticism."⁵⁹²

Prokofiev's employment of the very high "E" string register in pivotal moments of his Concerto imbues the score with an 'iridescent' quality similar to his description of Szymanowski's work. In some ways, Prokofiev's treatment is simpler than Szymanowski's 'complicated, enormous' work—with clearer counterpoint and a much stricter sense of

⁵⁹⁰ Nice, *Prokofiev*, 208.

⁵⁹¹ Wightman, 'Szymanowski, Bartok and the Violin', 159.

⁵⁹² Szymanowski, 'In Memory of Paweł Kochański' in *Szymanowski on Music*, 356.

rhythm in the orchestral accompanying. The melodic contours at figure 43 displays Szymanowski's sense of chromatic movement and larger intervals, but Prokofiev sets this against an accompanying 'motor' rhythm, a hallmark of much of his ballet music (**Ex. 39**).

The very high register is used at the close of the first and third movements. In the first example at figure 21, the bow stroke varies between chains of slurs and a measured tremolando, providing textural interest to the counterpoint that weaves around the flute melody. It is not difficult to imagine that these kinds of subtle nuances can be attributed to Kochański (**Ex. 40**). This material is revisited toward the end of the third movement at figure 58, providing a measure of cyclical symmetry. Here, the solo violin plays the main melodic theme in the extreme upper register of the instrument, with each note being delicately embellished with a trill. The accompanying harp semiquavers and tremolo in the middle strings creates a glowing and radiant timbre (**Ex. 41**).

The use of trills throughout the entire concerto is one of the most dominant features of Prokofiev's concerto. Although there are too many instances to mention here, one example of this can be found four bars before figure 5 (**Ex. 42**). Many of the key trilling passages achieve a sense of ethereal delicacy by incorporating effects found in Szymanowski's Concerto and *Mythes*. At figure 60 for example, Prokofiev writes a left-hand tremolando passage that alternates between the "E" and "A" strings (**Ex. 43**). Kochański's influence here is unmistakable. The passage can be most effectively realised by playing a continuous double-stopped trill on both strings simultaneously with the third and fourth fingers of the left hand, the bow then seesawing in an undulating fashion across the two strings to create the harmonic changes.

Violinistically, the conception of this passage is brilliant as the hand shape can remain comfortably in one position, simply moving stepwise on the first and third crotchet of each bar. This example is a variation of the double-stopped left hand glissando found in *La Fontaine d'Arethuse*, which as Foreman attests, is "one of Kochański's 'discoveries.'"⁵⁹³ (**Ex. 44**). The key to realising this effect is to combine the glissando with a slight pause on each semitone, so that the underlying notes are audible, at least in the beginning of the movement.

Another high register trill passage in Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, the *meno mosso (ma non troppo)* at figure 50, recalls Szymanowski and Kochański's treatment in *Dryads et Pan* four bars after figure 2 (**Ex. 45 & Ex. 46**). Prokofiev also uses octaves that are

⁵⁹³ Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1988), 193.

embellished with a trill on the lower register in the third bar of figure 57 (**Ex. 47**). The precedence for this was set in Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto at figure 69 (**Ex. 28**), however the downward semitonal movement of this passage also shares a strong similarity in design to figure 4 of *Dryads* (**Ex. 48**). There is little difference to the hand shape required to play a major second or an octave, the fourth finger being placed on either the adjacent lower or upper string to the first finger. In both examples the trill is executed by the first and second fingers, with the string of the fourth finger the only difference. Once again, Kočański's imaginative and innovative variations can be evinced in this example.

In relation to double-stopping, figure 17 (**Ex. 49**) of Prokofiev's concerto can be viewed as another variant of the chromatic harmonic passages discussed earlier, (**Ex. 35-38**) again aided by the resonance of the open "E" and "D" strings. Prokofiev also uses both single and double-stopped harmonics toward the end of the second movement inspired by Kočański's violinistic conception. Not only do natural harmonics have a better chance of projecting above an orchestra, the position of the hand can also remain in its natural, relaxed shape (**Ex. 50**).

One similarity in bowing patterns can also be observed at figure 9, where Prokofiev writes a combination of articulations over the semiquavers; two slurred followed by two staccato up bows, separate bows on the string, staccato, slurs and so on (**Ex. 51**). This attention to fine detail and nuance would appear to be Kočański's work, moreover in light of the parallel to Szymanowski's work, four bars before figure 14 in the First Violin Concerto (**Ex. 52**). Riseley also notes the historical precedents of the 'two slurred, two separate' bowing, which can be found in the works of Viotti and Baillot, as well as the second movement of Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* and the second movement of Glazunov's Concerto (**Ex. 53**).⁵⁹⁴

So, in assessing Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, it would seem that Nestyev's statement, "Prokofiev's inventiveness in the field of tone colour deserves a separate analysis, for in this area he unquestionably contributed new modes of expression to violin playing,"⁵⁹⁵ is indeed misplaced, and should instead acknowledge the inventions made in this area by Kočański and Szymanowski.

⁵⁹⁴ Riseley, 'The Violin Concertos of Sergei Prokofiev', 38.

⁵⁹⁵ Nestyev, *Prokofiev*, 143.

3.5 Conclusion

In his 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche posed the question; "what would music have to be like to be no longer of Romantic origin, like German music – but *Dionysian*?..."⁵⁹⁶ This thesis intends to show one possible answer to Nietzsche's inquiry in the form of Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto. The significance of this thesis consists in an understanding of the work within a mythological and philosophical framework and outside the stylistically normative boundaries of Impressionistic, late Romantic and early twentieth-century musical styles. Szymanowski's inspiration is a metaphysical one, a spiritual state of mind inspired by the Dionysian that subsequently led to a "new style, a new mode of expression for the violin, something in this respect completely epoch-making."⁵⁹⁷

This new artistic rejuvenation, born from the dying embers of late nineteenth-century German Romanticism, occurred around the *fin-de-siècle* through the reappropriation and regeneration of classical Greek myth and tragedy. A modern understanding of the god Dionysus which incorporated the comprehensive duality of his character was forged by Pater and Nietzsche, suggesting a transcendence towards a life-affirming spirit and higher state of consciousness in a time of nihilism. Apollonian boundaries of a *principium individuationis* are dissolved through the ecstasy of song and dance; man is "no longer an artist, he has become a work of art."⁵⁹⁸ The internalised god Dionysus has become the *Dionysiac*.

As Nietzsche predicts, the concept articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is "one which, as its effect proved and continues to prove, knows well enough how to seek out its fellow-enthusiasts and to entice them on to new, secret paths and places to dance."⁵⁹⁹ In addition to Miciński's *May Night* and Szymanowski's middle period works, this thesis has made further reference to examples of similar creativity; Mann's *Death in Venice*, Scriabin's *Le poème de l'extase*, Strauss' *Elektra* and Diaghilev's productions with the *Ballets Russes*, whose staging of works such as *Daphnis et Chloé*, *L'après-midi d'un faune* and *Le sacre du printemps* involved so many leading artists of the day in their respective fields. The detailed constellation which inspired Szymanowski's new aesthetic and its impact on these works would be an exciting field for further research.

⁵⁹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

⁵⁹⁷ Wightman, *Karol Szymanowski*, 142. Letter to Zofia Kochońska, March 1930.

⁵⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, and The Case of Wagner*, 37.

⁵⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 6.

The concrete musical realization of the Dionysian spirit in relation to the violin has argued that Kochański played a crucial role and his contribution cannot be underestimated. As descriptions of his playing style and his collaborative work with Szymanowski attests, technique was always transformed from a display of virtuosity to serve the musical expression and musical aesthetics itself. Both Kochański and Szymanowski's exposure to *fin-de-siècle* orchestral music and the concertmaster solos from these works led to the incorporation of expressive gestures whose origins can be found in the scores of Strauss, Scriabin and Mahler. Up until this time such innovations had not fully crossed into the domain of the violin concerto.

These expansions and developments were undoubtedly Kochański's major contribution to the violin literature of the twentieth century and moreover set him apart from the virtuoso soloists of the nineteenth century, and indeed many twentieth century violinists. As well as creating and incorporating new sonorities, techniques and colouristic effects on the violin, Kochański's collaboration with Szymanowski became seminal for the possibilities realised and discovered by a new generation of composers including Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Bartok, Bloch and Bax. Jachimecki attests to the gains Kochański made in areas of innovation, writing

The technique of these works opened up new paths in this field of composition... These factors Szymanowski elaborated into a marvellous system, incomparably richer than the whole school of virtuosity, as we knew it hitherto. The most brilliant effects in Paganini's concertos and caprices are left far behind. We can say of this Szymanowski technique, in itself an evidence of creative genius, that it transcends by far the dreams of the best violin virtuosos of our times. Its effects are founded on the most fantastic harmonics, an inexhaustible variety of spiccato, of chords and double stoppings, a truly resplendent palette of colour.⁶⁰⁰

In this sense and without a hint of exaggeration Kochański can be viewed as a visionary figure in the evolution of twentieth-century violin technique, creating through his collaborations, compositions and transcriptions a unique idiom and a remarkable and enduring legacy. Szymanowski was correct when he likened Kochański's contribution to violin playing as "something akin to what Chopin did for the piano."⁶⁰¹ As the American

⁶⁰⁰ Zdzisław Jachimecki, 'Karol Szymanowski.' *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 8, (1922), 35.

⁶⁰¹ Gillies, 'Stylistic Integrity and Influence in Bartok's Works: The Case of Szymanowski', 159.

violinist Albert Spalding noted, “Paweł Kochański gave to the art world and to life something too rare, too enduring for mere death to efface or dim.”⁶⁰²

Within the genre of the violin concerto, Szymanowski’s channelling of a Dionysian creative force revitalised the form, making it relevant to a twentieth-century expression of modern musical content. Szymanowski’s selection of Miciński’s poem *May Night*, which this thesis argues depicts the wedding of Dionysus, is realized musically through an unbroken stream of musical consciousness that shifts seamlessly between the ecstatic expression of song and dance.

Indeed, Szymanowski’s First Violin Concerto can be understood as a Dionysian regeneration of the concerto itself. Nineteenth-century ‘Socratic’ Romantic traditions, with their ideal of beauty placed in structure, logic and clarity of form akin to the Doric column, are transformed through the Dionysian spirit and a recreation of the musical models of the Attic Chorus and the Eleusinian Mysteries. The First Violin Concerto represents the evolution from nineteenth-century thoughts and emotions to a newly achieved unity between Apollonian vision, the dream, Dionysian raptures and ecstasy.⁶⁰³

The First Violin Concerto can therefore be understood as a modern realization of a Dionysian dithyramb in music. Nietzsche’s philosophical vision aptly summarizes Szymanowski’s achievement in this context; “the newly reborn genius of Dionysian music now took hold of this dying myth: and in its hands it bloomed once again, with colours never seen before, with a scent which aroused a longing presentiment of a metaphysical world.”⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰² Greive, ‘Kochański’s Collaborative Work as Reflected in His Manuscript Collection’, 2:13.

⁶⁰³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 70.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 61.

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APPENDIX

Musical Examples

Please note that the source for each of the works is given in the Bibliography under the heading Musical Scores.

Ex. 1 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 452–463.

452 83

Fl. I *ppp* *pp dolciss.*

Fl. II

Ob. I *ppp* *p dolce espress.*

Cl. I in E *ppp*

Cl. II in Bb *ppp*

Fg. I *pp dolciss. espress.*

Fg. II *pp* *p dolce espress.* *pp dolciss.*

Cor. I in E *ppp*

Cor. II in Bb *pp dolciss.* *ppp*

Tmb. basco *ppp*

Cel. *pp*

Ar. I *p dolciss. marc.*

Ar. II *p dolce marc.*

Vno solo *dim.* *ppp* *dolciss. espress.*

Vni I *pp* *arco* *ppp dolciss.*

Vni II *pp*

Vle *pizz.* *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Cb. II *dim.* *ppp*

Cb. III *ppp*

458

Fl. I *pp dolciss. poco cresc.*

Fl. II

Ob. I *pp dolciss.*

Cl. I in la *espress. dolce* *p* cre - scen - do

Cl. II in sb *pp poco cresc.*

Cl. III

Cl. b. in la *pp* *p* cre - scen - do

Fg. I

Fg. II *p* cre - scen - do

Cor. III *dolce marcato* *simile*

Cor. IV *pp* *3* cre - scen - do *3*

Ar. I *pp*

Ar. II *pp*

Vno solo

Vni I *p dolciss.* *crescendo*

Vni II *p* *poco cresc.* *p dolciss.* *crescendo*

Vle *unis. arco* *p dolciss.* *div. a 2* *p dolciss.* cre -

Cb. *tutti div. arco* *p dolciss.* cre -

Ex. 2 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 652-659.

652 *rit.* (112) $\frac{2}{4} \left(\frac{6}{8} \right)$ *a tempo* *allargando*

Fl. I *ppp dolciss.* *solo* *ppp*

Cl. I *perdendosi ppp*

Cl. II *perdendosi ppp*

Fg. I *ppp dolciss.* *solo* *ppp*

Tmp. *perdendosi pppp*

Ar. I *p dolciss.* *ppp*

Ar. II *p dolciss.*

Vno solo *rit.* $\frac{2}{4} \left(\frac{6}{8} \right)$ *a tempo* *allargando*

vi I Ip. (6) *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi pppp*

vi II (6) *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi pppp*

Vlc (4) *arco pp dolciss.* *perdendosi pppp*

Ex. 3 Szymanowski, 'Dryades et Pan' in *Mythes*, op. 30, no. 3, bars 55-63.

(La Flûte de Pan.)
5 *a piacere*
sf *p gliss.* *mp* *accel.* *poco rit.* *poco allarg.* *Lento.*

6 *perdendosi* *ppp* *Lento amoroso.*
8 *ppp* *pp* *Lento amoroso.* *dolce espressivo*

molto affettuoso languido *p*

3 *pp sempre* *quasi tremolando - colla parte* *9* *ten.*

Ex. 4 Szymanowski, 'Dryades et Pan' in *Mythes*, op. 30, no. 3, bars 68-71.

ten. *Più mosso, scherzando* *etc. a piacere*

m.s. *Più mosso, scherzando.* *sf*

ten. *sf* *poco*

sub. Vivace.

sub. Vivace. *poco sosten.*

f *ad irato* *p* *pp*

Ex. 6 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 645-659.

645 *perdendosi* (110) *sub. poco animato* (111) *meno dolce espress.*

Fl. p. *pp dolciss.*

Fl. I *ppp*

Fl. II *p*

Ob. I

Cl. I in la *pp* *ppp*

Cl. II in sib *pp dolciss.*

Cl. III in mb *pp dolce*

Cl. b. in la *ppp*

Fg. I *pp* *ppp*

Cor. II in fa *ppp dolciss.*

Tmp. *ppp* *ppp sempre*

Trgl.

Cel. *pp dolciss.*

Pfte. *pp dolce* *con ped.*

Ar. I *p dolce*

Ar. II *p dolce*

Vno solo *perdendosi* *sub. poco animato* *meno dolce espress.* *pp dolciss. espress.*

Vni I (3) *con sord. sul tasto* *pp trillo* *ppp* *I p. pp espress. dolciss.*

Vni II (3) *con sord. sul tasto* *pp trillo* *ppp*

Vni II (3) *con sord. sul pontic.* *pp trem.* *ppp*

Vle (3) *div. a 2 con sord.* *pizz.*

Vc. I p. *con sord.* *pp dolciss. pizz.*

Cb. I p. *pp dolciss.* *con sord. pp dolciss. pizz.* *pp*

552 *rit.* $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩} (\text{♩})$ *a tempo* *allargando*

112 *solo* *ppp dolciss.* *ppp*

perdendosi ppp

solo *ppp dolciss.* *ppp*

perdendosi pppp

p dolciss. *ppp*

p dolciss.

rit. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩} (\text{♩})$ *a tempo* *allargando*

pp dolciss. *perdendosi pppp*

arco *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi pppp*

Fl. I
Cl. I
Cl. II
Fg. I
Timp.
Ar. I
Ar. II
Vno solo
vi I
vi II
Vle

Ex. 7 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 54-62.

11 Lento tranquillo. (Suivre!)

rit. *p dolce espr.*

Riten.

Ex. 8 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 199-208.

Lento assai. *Improvvisando (a piacere)* (Suivre) Accelerando.

Allargando.

Accelerando.

Ex. 9 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 272-290.

52 *Vivace scherzando.* (♩ = 116-120) *mp*

53

54 (*marcatissimo*)

Ex. 10 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 314-321.

58 *Tranquillo molto.* *dolciss.*

sub. avvivando deciso (Più mosso.)

sub. fenergico

Ex. 11 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 501-509.

The image displays a musical score for the solo violin part, covering bars 501 to 509. The score is written on three staves. The first staff begins at bar 90, marked 'arco'. The second staff contains a double bar line and a 'Poco riten.' marking. The third staff begins at bar 91. The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and is characterized by frequent slurs and dynamic markings such as *sf* and *f*. Fingerings and bowings are indicated throughout the piece.

Ex. 12 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 243-256.

46 *f* cre - scen - do *ff* meno mosso *rall.* al ⁴⁷ lar - gan - do *fff* Largo assai lunga

243

Fl. I
Fl. II
Ob. I
Ob. II
Cor. I
Cl. in A I
Cl. in A II
Cl. in Bb I
Cl. in Bb II
Fg. I
Fg. II
Cb. in Bb
Tr. in C I
Tr. in C II
Tr. in C III
Trbn. I
Trbn. II
Trbn. III
c. Trb.
Timp.
Trgl.
Pti.
Gr. c.
Ar. I
Ar. II
Vno solo
Vni I
Vni II
Vle.
Vc.
Cb. (3)

f *ff* *fff* *p* *pp* *ppp* *mf* *dolce* *cresc.* *unis* *arco* *pizz.* *div* *non div* *muta in Fig. III*

f cre - scen - do *ff* meno mosso *rall.* al ⁴⁷ lar - gan - do *fff* Largo assai lunga

Ex. 13 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 18-22.

4

18

poco rallentando *poco meno mosso*

Fl. p. *pp dolciss.*

Fl. I *p dolciss.*

Ob. I *p dolce*

Cl. I *p dolce*

Cl. in al. II *p dolce*

I *pp*

Fg. II *pp*

III *pp*

Cor. IV *pp dolciss.*

Tmp. *pp dolce*

Cel. *pp dolce* *pp dolciss.*

Pfte. *mf*

Ar. I *pp dolce*

Ar. II *pp dolciss.*

poco rallentando *poco meno mosso*

Vno solo *p dolce*

I p.

II p.

III p.

IV p.

V p.

VI p.

Vni I *pp dolciss. arco*

Vni II (4) *pp dolciss. arco*

(4) *pp dolciss. arco*

(4) *pp dolciss. arco*

(4) *pp dolciss. arco*

Vle (4) *pp dolciss. arco*

Vc. e Cb. *pp*

*Violini II e Viole in modo ordinario (non sul ponticello)

Ex. 14 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 470-475.

85

470

Fl. p. *mf dolce* *pp*

Fl. I *f dolce*

Fl. II *f dolce*

Ob. I *f dolce*

Ob. II *f dolce*

Ob. III *f dolce*

Cl. I *f dolce*

Cl. II *f dolce*

Cl. III *f dolce*

Cl. b. *f dolce*

Fg. I *f*

Fg. II *f*

Cfg. *f*

Cor. I *mf marc.* *f dolce marc.*

Cor. II *mf marc.* *f dolce marc.*

Cor. III *mf marc.* *f dolce marc.*

Cor. IV *mf marc.* *f dolce marc.*

Tr. I *senza sord. mf dolce*

Tr. II *senza sord. mf dolce*

Tr. III *senza sord. mf dolce*

Trbn. I *mf dolce*

Trbn. II *mf dolce*

Trbn. III *mf dolce*

c. Tb. *crescendo*

Tmp. *mp*

Trgl. *mp*

Ar. I *fff*

Ar. II *fff*

Vno solo *ff*

Vni I (6) *senza sord. f con passione* *fff*

Vni II (6) *senza sord. f con passione* *fff*

Vle *senza sord. unis. f con passione* *fff*

Vc. *senza sord. unis. f con passione* *fff*

Cb. *f*

cre - scen - do sostenuto

cre - scen - do sostenuto

un. molto passionato

Ex. 15 Szymanowski, *King Roger*, op. 46, act II, bars 237-249.

39 6 Andante 8

Fl. I

Cor. I.

Cel.

Ar. I

Roks. (nieuldoczna) (unsichtbar, singt) *ad libitum*

Edr.

Roger

40 solo *pp* *dolciss.*

pp *dolciss.*

pp

pp *dolciss.*

a tempo

Ro-ksa - na! Jej spiew! O Ro - re, Ko - nig!

Ro-ksa - na! Jej spiew! Ro-za - ne! Sie sngt!

6 Andante 8

Vni I div.

Vni II div. a2

Vc. div.

(con sord.)

ppp *sempre*

(con sord.)

ppp *sempre*

(con sord.)

ppp *sempre*

poco allargando

244

Fl. I

Cor. I.

Cl. in A b

I

II

Fg.

Cor. III in F e IV

Cel.

Ar. I

Roks.

pp

ppp *dolce espress.*

pp

pp *dolciss.*

pp *con sord.*

pp *dolciss.*

pp

pp

pp

pp

poco allargando perdendosi

Vni I div.

Vni II div.

Vc. div.

Ch. div.

ppp *dolciss.*

ppp

ppp

ppp

pizz.

ppp *dolciss.*

Ex. 16 Szymanowski, *Chant de Roxanne de l'opera 'Le Roi Roger'*, trans. Kochanski, violin part, bars 1-19.

Andante tranquillo

con sordino (ad lib)

pp (*improvisando*)

5

10

(*poco string.*)

veloce

(*lunga*)

ppp

p dolce espr.

15

riten.

allarg.

dim.

Ex. 17 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, bars 18-36.

18 (4)

poco rallentando *poco meno mosso*

Fl. p. *pp dolciss.*

Fl. I *p dolciss.*

Ob. I *p dolce*

Cl. I *p dolce*

Cl. in A II *p dolce*

I *pp*

Fg. II *pp*

III *pp*

Cor. IV in fa *pp dolciss.*

Tmp. *pp dolce*

Cel. *pp dolce* *pp dolciss.*

Pfte. *sf*

Ar. I *pp dolce*

Ar. II *p dolciss.*

poco rallentando *poco meno mosso*

Vno solo *p dolce*

I p.

Vni I II p.

III p.

IV p.

VI p.

(4) *pp dolciss.*

Vni II (4) *arco*

(4) *pp dolciss.*

(4) *arco*

(4) *pp dolciss.*

(4) *arco*

Vle (4) *pp dolciss.*

(4) *arco*

Vc. e Cb. *pp*

*Violini II e Viole in modo ordinario (non sul ponticello)

23

Fl. I *pp dolciss.* *solo pp* *rallen - tan - do* *ancora meno colla parte*

Cl. I *pp* *dolce espress.*

Cor. Ia IV *pp*

Ar. I

Ar. II

Vno solo *rallen - tan - do* *ancora meno*

Vni II *colla parte*

Vlc (4) *colla parte*

Vc. *con sord. (pizz.)* *arco* *pp dolciss.*

Cb. *con sord. (pizz.)* *ppp* *arco* *pp dolciss.*

28

Cl. I *sempre allarg.* *perdendosi*

Ar. I *p dolce*

Ar. II *p dolce*

Vno solo *sempre allarg.* *improvvisando*

Vni I *(con sord.) arco* *colla parte* *pp dolciss. sempre* *(con sord.) arco* *perdendosi*

Vc.

Cb.

6 subito più mosso, a tempo
capriccioso

7 ancora più mosso
Vivace assai

Fl. I
Fl. II

Ob. I
solo
ff sempre — marc. — ff

Cl. I
in la

Fg. I
Fg. II
III

Cor. I
in fa II

Trgl.
Pti
con bacch. di Trgl.
con bacch. di Tmp.
ppp

Pfte

Ar. I
Près de la table
marcatissimo

Ar. II
Près de la table
marcatissimo

Vno solo
subito più mosso, a tempo

Vni II
pizz.
ff

Vle
pizz.
ff

Vc.
pizz.
ff

arco sul ponticello
pp

arco sul ponticello
pp

pizz.
pp

pizz.
pp

* Se il suono dell'oboe, solo fosse troppo esiguo, sarebbe possibile eseguire le 4 sequenti battute di 2 o 3 oboi unisono.

Ex. 18 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 282-321.

Ex. 19 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 1-31.

Ex. 20 Scriabin, *Le Poeme de l'Extase*, op. 54, bars 69-80.

18 **molto accelerando**

Fl. picc. *cresc.* **Lento**

Fl. *cresc.* *p serio*

Ob. III *cresc. a 3* *p serio*

Cor. Ing. *cresc. f*

Clar. III *cresc.* *p dolci*

Fag. I *cresc.*

Cor. III *cresc.*

Arpa I

Viol. solo

Viol. I div. *p dolce espress. carezzando*

Viol. II div. *arco* *pp*

Vie. *arco* *pp*

Vcl. *pp*

molto accelerando **Lento**

19

Fl. III *cantabile* *p espressivo*

Ob. I *p espressivo*

Cor. Ing. *pp*

Clar. III *pp*

Cl. b. *p*

Fag. II *pp*

Cor. III *pp*

Arpa I *p dolce espr.*

Viol. solo

Viol. I div. *pp*

Viol. II div. *pp*

Vie. *pp*

Vcl. div. *p dolce espr. pizz.* *p*

Ex. 21 Szymanowski, Symphony no. 2, op. 19, bars 1-12.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Allegro moderato. Grazioso

Flauti I II
Clarineti in B I II
Clarinetto basso in B
Fagotti I II III
Corni in F I II III IV
Arpa
solo
Violini I
Violini II
Viola
Violoncelli
Contrabassi

$\frac{3}{4}$ Isolo (con sord.)
p dolciss. cantab. *con sord.* *pp dolciss.* *pp*
dolce sfpp *dolce sfp* *poco sf* *p dolce*
pp dolciss. *pp dolciss.* *pp*
dolciss p
 $\frac{3}{4}$ Allegro moderato. Grazioso
p dolce appassion. *dolce sf* *pizz.* *p dolce* *pp dolciss.* *pizz.* *arco div. 3Ap* *p dolce* *p dolce*
div. pizz. *pp dolce* *unif.* *p dolce*
pizz. *pp dolce* *p dolce*

Fl. I II ^{a2} 1 *poco rall.* *a tempo* *I. solo* *mf* *cantab.*

Ob.

Cl. in B I II

Cl. in B

Fg. I II *ppdolcis.*

Cor. in F I II III IV *senza sord.* *ppdolcis.*

Ar. *ppdolcis.*

poco cre - - - scen - - - do poco rall. *a tempo*

solo *dolce* *cre - - - scen - - - do* *poco f dolce*

Vni I *dolce* *cre - - - scen - - - do* *poco f dolce*

Vni II *pizz.* *pizz. Dolce*

Vle div. I p. II p. III p. IV p. *tutti div. pizz.*

Vc. I, II *pizz.* *(pizz.)*

Cb. 1

Ex. 22 Szymanowski, Symphony no. 3, *Song of the Night*, op. 27, bars 27-42.

5 **Meno mosso (quasi adagio ma poco agitato)**
 $\frac{4}{8}$ $\text{♩} = 76$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$

Fl. I
Fl. II
Ob. I
Ob. II
Cor. I
Cor. II
Cl. in B \flat
Bassoon I
Bassoon II
Cel.
Ar. I
Ar. II
Fite.
una corda

con sord.
pp ma tenuto dolce
pp
bisbigl. p
pp sempre
bisbigl. p
pp sempre
una corda

Meno mosso (quasi adagio ma poco agitato)
 $\frac{4}{8}$ $\text{♩} = 76$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ etc.

I solo
Vai I (5)
Vai I (5)
Vai I (5)
I solo
Vai II (5)
Vai II (4)
Vai II (4)
Vai II (4)
Vie (5)
Vie (6)
Vc. tutti
Cb. tutti
con sord.
pizz.
pp
arco
pp sempre
pp sempre
pp sempre
pp sempre
poco cresc. pp
poco cresc. pp
poco cresc. pp
pizz. con sord. poco
espress.
pp
con sord. pizz. sf poco
con sord. pp

rit. 6 al - - lar $\frac{5}{8}$ - - gan - - do 7 Poco meno, molto

Fl. I, II *pp dolce*

Cor. I. I, II *pp dolciss.*

Cl. in si b. I, II *pp* *mp espress.* *pp dolciss.*

Cl. b. in si b. I *pp ma ben tenuto* *mp espress.*

Fg. II. I, II *pp dolciss.* *pp dolciss.*

Cor. II. I, II, III *pp* *pp ma tenuto* *pp*

Tmp. *pp sempre*

Campli.

Trgl.

Cel. *dolciss.* *dim.* *pp*

Ar. I. *p dolce* *pp dolciss.*

Ar. II. *p dolce* *pp dolciss.*

Pfte. *pp* *rit.*

I solo. *pp* *allegretto* *pp* *Poco meno, molto* *molto espressivo*

Vni I. (5) *pp* *pp dolciss.*

Vni II. (4) *pp* *pp dolciss.* *div.* *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi* *pppp* *p dolce*

Vle (4). *arco sul pontic.* *pp* *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi* *pppp* *p dolce*

Vc. (3). *pp dolciss.* *pp* *pp dolciss.* *div.* *perdendosi* *pppp* *p dolce*

Cb. tutti. *pp* *pp dolciss.* *div.* *pp dolciss.* *perdendosi* *pppp* *p dolce*

Ex. 23 Szymanowski, Symphony no. 3, *Song of the Night*, op. 27, bars 1-14.

Moderato assai
 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\text{♩} = 84$

poco cresc. (1)

Flauti I, II, III
 Corno ing.
 Clarinetti I, II, III
 Clarinetto basso I, II
 Fagotti I, II, III
 Contrafagotto

Corni I, II, III, IV
 Tromboni I, II, III

Timpani
 Gran cassa
 Tam-tam

Arpa I, II
 Pianoforte
 Organo (ped.)

Arpe molto pesante ma piano
pesante ma piano
sempre con pedale

Moderato assai
 $\frac{4}{4}$ $\text{♩} = 84$

poco cresc.

Violini I (16)
 Violini II (14)
 Violenze (12)
 Violoncelli div. (5)
 Contrabassi div. (4)

pizz. non arpeggiando
pp pizz. non arpeggiando
pp pizz. non arpeggiando
pp arco
pp sempre pizz.
pp arco

cantabile molto espressivo
pp
arco
non arpegg. (div.)
non arpegg.

solo
p dolcis.
con sord. sf poco ppp
con sord. sf poco ppp

Ex. 24 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 160-177 & bars 210-222.

29 Tempo comodo (andantino)
Grazioso ed affabile. (♩ = 78-72.)

30 Poco sosten.

31 dolce espr.
A tempo

32 Poco sosten.

33 Rallent.

34 Sostenuto.

40 Subito meno mosso. (Largo)

41

cresc.

Avvivando.

Riten.

ff

ff

Ancora avvivando.

p

molto espress.

cresc.

sul G fino al segno

Ex. 25 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 410-441.

75 Poco meno. (sub.)

76 Ancora poco meno.

77 Empatico e affettuoso.

78 Allargando.

79 Tempo comodo. (allegretto)

80

6 6 1 4 1 2

grazioso

sul G

(pizz)

Ex. 26 Sibelius, Violin Concerto, op. 47, solo violin part, bars 1-16 & bars 258-269.

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 68$

1. Viol.

mf dolce ed espressivo

cresc.

f

poco f

Ex. 27 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 192-198.

36 *A tempo, poco accel.*
con passione

f *cresc.* *Lento assai.*

37 *Sostenuto.* *Rallent.*

ff *p dolciss.*

Ex. 28 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 377-409.

69 *Sempre avvivando.* *f marc.* *Poco più mosso.* 70
trm trm trm trm trm trm trm trm

71 *Poco sostenuto. NB. Rhythme de 3 mesures.* 72
sempref cresc. ff con passione trm trm trm

73 *Poco allargando.* 74 *Molto vivace.*
trm trm trm fff possibile fff

Ex. 29 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 348-360.

riten. *Rallent.* 64 *restez*

65 *Sostenuto.* *Rallent.* 66 *Piu mosso. (Vivace.)*
trm trm trm trm trm trm trm trm

Ex. 31 Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*, op. 40, concertmaster part, 6 bars before figure 36 until four bars after figure 36.

(Mäßig langsam)

molto espress. *cresc.* *f*

8

3

8

36

espr. *cresc.*

Ex. 33 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 51-56.

Molto tranquillo e dolce. (*Meno mosso.*)

10

4

11 Lento tranquillo. (*Suivre!*)

rit. p dolce espr.

6 3 3 6

Ex. 35 Szymanowski, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, bars 539-562.

96 Ancora poco più mosso. (*leggiere scherz.*)
f *marcatissimo*
97 *cresc. molto.* *ff*
98 *fff* *Poco rallent.*

Ex. 36 Brahms, Violin Concerto, op. 77, solo violin part, mov. 1, 4 bars before figure 4 until 5 bars after figure 4.

Ex. 37 Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade*, op. 35, concertmaster part, cadenza at figure 29.

29 *Recit. Lento* *con forza* *rit. molto* *lunga* *fz*

Ex. 38 Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*, op. 40, concertmaster part, 6 bars after figure 30 until 12 bars after figure 30.

Ex. 38 is a musical score for the concertmaster part of Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*. It consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The tempo and mood are indicated as *(schnell und keifend)*. The first staff starts with a dynamic marking of *fff* and contains several triplet markings. The second staff continues the melodic line with a dynamic marking of *sfz* at the end. The third staff begins with the instruction *(allmählich nachlassen)* and features dynamic markings of *sfz* and *dim.* (diminuendo).

Ex. 39 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, op. 19, mov. 3, 1 bar before figure 43 until 7 bars after figure 43.

Ex. 39 is an orchestral score for Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, movement 3. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are Ob. I, Cl. I and II, 2 Fag. (Bassoons), Arpa (Harp), Solo (Violin), and a piano section. A circled number '43' is placed above the first staff (Ob. I) and below the piano section. The Solo violin part features a *Solo* marking and a dynamic of *p*. The piano section includes markings for *div.* (divisi) and *pp* (pianissimo).

Ob. I

I
Cl.

II

2 Fag.

Arpa

Solo

pp

p

mp espress.

Solo

univ.

p espress.

pp

p

Detailed description: This page of a musical score features six systems of staves. The first system includes Ob. I, Cl. I, Cl. II, 2 Fag., Arpa, and Solo. The second system includes Solo and Piano. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a 3/4 time signature. The woodwind parts (Ob. I, Cl. I, Cl. II, 2 Fag.) feature melodic lines with various articulations and dynamics. The strings (Arpa and Piano) provide harmonic support with sustained chords and rhythmic patterns. The Solo part has a melodic line with a 'Solo' marking and a dashed line indicating a breath mark. The Piano part includes a 'univ.' marking and a 'p espress.' dynamic. The bottom of the page shows the Piano part with 'pp' and 'p' dynamics.

Ex. 40 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, op. 19, mov. 1, 3 bars before figure 21 until 6 bars after figure 21.

21 Andante assai (Assai più lento che la prima volta)

Fl.I. Solo *pp dolcissimo*

Arpa *pp*

Solo con sord. *pp*

Viole *pp*

Celli div. *pp* unis.

Bassi div. arco *pp* pizz.

21 Andante assai (Assai più lento che la prima volta)

Fl. I

Arpa

Solo

Viole

The first system of the score consists of four staves. The Flute I staff (Fl. I) has a melodic line with a slur and a flat (b) under a note. The Arpa staff features a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The Solo staff has a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (2, 3, 1, 2, 1, 3). The Viola staff (Viole) has a few notes at the beginning of the system.

Fl. I

Arpa

Solo

Viole

The second system continues the musical score with the same four staves. The Flute I staff has a melodic line with a slur. The Arpa staff continues its rhythmic accompaniment. The Solo staff has a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (3, 4, 4, 1). The Viola staff has a few notes at the beginning of the system.

Fl. I

Arpa

Solo

V. I

Viole

con sord.

pp dolce

The third system of the score consists of five staves. The Flute I staff has a melodic line with a slur. The Arpa staff continues its rhythmic accompaniment. The Solo staff has a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (3, 1, 3, 1, 2, 3, 2). The Violin I staff (V. I) has a few notes and the instruction "con sord.". The Viola staff (Viole) has a few notes and the instruction "*pp dolce*".

FL. I

CL. I

Arpa

Solo

V. I

Viola

fp

espress.

8

4 4 2 3 3 1 3 2 3 4 3 4 4 2 3 2 1 3 4 2 2 1 4

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a chamber ensemble. It features six staves: Flute I (FL. I), Clarinet I (CL. I), Arpa (Arpa), Solo (Solo), Violin I (V. I), and Viola (Viola). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The Flute I and Violin I parts have long, arched notes. The Clarinet I part has a dynamic marking of *fp*. The Arpa part has a complex rhythmic pattern. The Solo part has a complex rhythmic pattern with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4. The Viola part has a dynamic marking of *espress.*. There are two measures of music. A dashed line with the number 8 is drawn across the Arpa and Solo staves.

Ex. 41 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, op. 19, mov. 3, 1 bar before figure 58 until 5 bars after figure 58.

The image displays a page of a musical score for Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, op. 19, movement 3. The score is divided into two systems, each containing staves for various instruments and a solo violin part. The first system (measures 57-62) includes parts for Flute I (Fl. I), Flute II (Fl. II), Clarinet 2 (2 Cl.), Fagotto I (Fag. I), Arpa (Arpa), Solo Violin (Solo), and Piano. The second system (measures 63-68) includes parts for Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello/Double Bass (Vcl./Cb.).

Key markings and dynamics include:

- ritard.** (ritardando) at the beginning of measure 57.
- Piu tranquillo** (More tranquil) at the start of measure 58, circled with the number 58.
- Solo** marking above the Solo Violin staff in measure 58.
- pp** (pianissimo) dynamic markings in measures 57 and 58 for Fl. I, Fl. II, 2 Cl., Fag. I, Arpa, Solo Violin, Vn. I, Vn. II, and Vla.
- p dolcissimo** (pianissimo dolcissimo) dynamic markings in measures 59 and 60 for Solo Violin and Vn. I.
- unis. arco** (unison arco) marking above the Vn. I staff in measure 63.
- div.** (divisi) markings above the Vn. I, Vn. II, and Vcl./Cb. staves in measures 63 and 64.
- ritard.** (ritardando) at the end of measure 68.
- Piu tranquillo** (More tranquil) at the end of measure 68, circled with the number 58.

ten.
Fl. I
Cl. I
Arpa
Solo

ten.
Fl. I
Cl. I
Arpa
Solo

Ex. 42 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, op. 19, solo violin part, mov. 1, four bars before figure 5 until 8 bars after figure 5.

Ex. 43 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, op. 19, solo violin part, mov. 3, figure 60 until four bars after figure 60.

Ex. 44 Szymanowski, 'La Fontaine d'Arethuse' in *Mythes*, op. 30, no. 1, violin part, 1 bar after figure 9 until the end.

Ex. 45 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, mov. 3, figure 50 until 7 bars after figure 50.

Ex. 46 Szymanowski, 'Dryades et Pan' in *Mythes*, op. 30, no. 3, violin part, 7 bars before figure 3 until figure 3.

Ex. 47 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, mov. 3, 3 bars after figure 57 until 4 bars after figure 57.



Ex. 48 Szymanowski, 'Dryades et Pan' in *Mythes*, op. 30, no. 3, violin part, 1 bar before figure 4 until 10 bars after figure 4.



Ex. 49 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, mov. 1, 1 bar before figure 17 until 5 bars after figure 17.

Ex. 50 Prokofiev, First Violin Concerto, solo violin part, mov. 2, 3 bars before figure 40 until the end.

Ex. 53 Glazunov, Violin Concerto, solo violin part, mov. 2, two bars before figure 20 until 5 bars after figure 20.

The image displays a musical score for the solo violin part of the second movement of Glazunov's Violin Concerto. The score is written on three staves in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff begins with the instruction "poco a poco" and features a dynamic marking of *mf*. A box labeled "20" is placed above the first measure of the second staff, which is marked "Solo". The tempo instruction "a tempo Più animato" is placed above the second staff. The second staff includes the instruction "segue" and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third staff contains a second ending marked "II" and a dynamic marking of *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingering numbers (1, 2, 4).