

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Reynaldo Hahn (1874 - 1947) was a Venezuelan-born, naturalized French composer whose vocal works have recently gained interest and recognition in American universities, yet his piano works were virtually unknown until 2001, when American pianist Earl Wild released a recording of Hahn's fifty-three solo piano pieces collectively entitled *Le Rossignol Éperdu*. The pieces in *Le Rossignol Éperdu* were written between 1902 and 1910, and are organized into four suites with each given a programmatic title except the first.¹ Wild's recording was the first to include all four suites, and the second suite, entitled "Orient," particularly drew special attention from disc reviewers. BBC Music Magazine lauded, "...six pieces devoted to the Orient, with their exotic reflections of Debussy and Satie, are perhaps the most remarkable" and International Record Review described the "Orient" suite as "...the shortest...but the most experimental."²

Hahn's "Orient" suite is intrinsically tied into the cultural phenomenon of Orientalism that has a long tradition in the history of Western music.

¹Patrick O'Connor, "Hahn, Reynaldo," In Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12169> (accessed December 4, 2009); Ivory Classics, "Earl Wild: Reynaldo Hahn – *Le Rossignol Éperdu*" *Ivory Classics Website*, <http://www.ivoryclassics.com/releases/72006/> (accessed December 3, 2009)

²Max Loppert, review of *Reynaldo Hahn: Le Rossignol Éperdu* (CD) by Earl Wild (piano), *BBC Music Magazine* (July 2002), quoted in Ivory Classics Website, <http://www.ivoryclassics.com/releases/72006/> (accessed December 3, 2009); review of *Reynaldo Hahn: Le Rossignol Éperdu* (CD) by Earl Wild (piano), *International Record Review*, (December 2001) quoted in Ivory Classics Website, <http://www.ivoryclassics.com/releases/72006/> (accessed December 3, 2009).

Some Western composers have always looked to the East for musical and dramatic inspiration as early as the seventeenth century, and the trend peaked in the twentieth century.³ Particularly in France, Orientalism played an important role during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it was used as a vehicle to form a new musical identity in reaction to the prevailing Wagnerian influence.⁴ The catalytic event of *Paris Exposition Universelle* in 1889, combined with French artists' pre-existing affinity to the Orient, led these prominent French composers to seek new French styles by incorporating Oriental themes or styles in their compositions.⁵ Hahn's piano suite "*Orient*" exemplifies as a product of this Orientalism phenomenon.

The objective of my essay is, in homage to Earl Wild, to introduce Reynaldo Hahn's piano series "*Orient*" to a wider audience by placing the work in a historical context, particularly focusing on the prevalence of Orientalism in *fin-de-siècle* France. This essay will include a historical overview of Orientalism in music, various musical styles that connote Orientalism within the context of Western music, compositional analyses on selected examples of Oriental styles in the music of Saint-Saëns and Debussy as proponents of this musical trend from Romantic and modern eras, a literary analysis on Hahn's aesthetic views and a detailed theoretical analysis of his "*Orient*" series.

³John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 139.

⁴*Ibid.*, 157.

⁵*Ibid.*, 157-8; Barrymore L. Sherer, "Song of the Orient," *Met Opera Family Website* http://www.metoperafamily.org/operanews/_archive/22898/orientalism.22898.html (accessed November 23, 2009)

Limitation of Study

In analyzing the Oriental styles in specific compositions, I will limit my investigation to piano music. Many Oriental styles in these compositions are gesture-based, and while piano is a highly adaptable instrument, there are certain gestures, such as slides on string instruments, that are not quite possible to do on piano.

When it comes to better understanding Hahn's Oriental styles, I will limit my comparison to Saint-Saëns and Debussy for two reasons. One is for the sake of universal acceptance. Many of Saint-Saëns' and Debussy's works have already been analyzed and the presence of Oriental style has been validated in academic literatures.⁶ Although drawing comparisons to works by lesser known composers certainly holds value of its own, it does not serve my present purpose of popularizing Hahn's music to a wider audience.⁷

Another limitation to be placed, in regards to analyzing Hahn's music, is disregarding other possible influences aside from Orientalism. At the turn of the twentieth century, too many cultural "-isms" emerged (e.g. Symbolism and Impressionism), and including other philosophies strayed from the primary topic of my research at hand.⁸

⁶MacKenzie 141-159, Sherer.

⁷Jean-Christopher Etienne, the French musicologist and theorist specializing in Reynaldo Hahn's musical works, makes an argument paralleling Hahn's musical gestures to a lesser popular French impressionist composer Gabriel Dupont,⁷ yet drawing such comparisons will thus defeat my intention of popularizing Hahn's music to wider audience.

⁸Since rising popularity of Orientalism in *fin-de-siècle* France was a phenomenon within the French musical culture of the time, (e.g. a reaction against the prevailing Wagnerian influence on European musical scene), the Orientalism should be viewed as part of the French nationalistic movement in music. Including other "-isms" would be conflicting from my research interest, and therefore, not included in my essay. This nationalistic trend in France will be the reason why I only picked two French composers, Saint-Saëns and Debussy, and their piano works as points of comparison to Hahn and his piano pieces.

Importance of Study

Previously written studies have only focused on Hahn's biography and his vocal music in general. There are nine doctoral-level papers regarding Reynaldo Hahn and his vocal works available via Digital Dissertation Online, yet none of them casts any light into his instrumental music, and attention to his piano music is non-existent.⁹ This essay is the first step in introducing Reynaldo Hahn's piano works in particular, analysis of which is long overdue and most deserving of attention.

believe the rising popularity of Orientalism in *fin-de-siècle* France should be viewed as part of the French nationalistic movement in music because the cause of this phenomenon is partially rooted in the reaction against the prevailing Wagnerian influence on European musical scene.

⁹Debra Lea Spurgen. "A Study of Solo Vocal Works of Reynaldo Hahn with Analysis of Selected Melodies" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1990); Linda Cuneo-Laurent, "The Performer As Catalyst: The Role of Singer Janet Bathori (1877-1970) in the Careers of Debussy, Ravel, 'Les Six' and Their Contemporaries in Paris, 1904-1926" (PhD diss., New York University, 1982); Thea T. Engelson, "The Melodies of Reynaldo Hahn" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2006); Kil-Won Kim, "A Detailed Study of Reynaldo Hahn's Setting of Poetry of Paul Verlaine" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1995); Renee A. Kingcaid, "A Hothouse of Orchids: Proust's *Les Plaisirs thesis Les Jours*" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1982); Linda A. Haslach, "Entre nous: Vocal music from the salon of Winnaretta Singer, the Princesse Edmond de Polignac" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Maryland College Park, 1999); Peggy Ann Lockman, "Joseph H. Benton, Oklahoma Pioneer and International Opera Singer: Part I. A Compendium of His Life. Part II. A Comparative Study of His Vocal Teaching Philosophy" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1995).

Literature Review

As my research encompasses several different focal points, I reviewed literature in three categories: Orientalism, Claude Debussy's Orientalism and Reynaldo Hahn's Orientalism.

1. Orientalism

Several books discussing Orientalism have been published. Edward Said's *Orientalism* analyzes the term "Orientalism" from political and historical perspectives.¹⁰ This argument regarding Orientalism in music is further discussed in the field of music in Derek Scott's "Orientalism and Musical Styles," where the author summarizes commonly used techniques to mimic the Oriental sounds on Western musical instruments.¹¹ Musicologist Ralph P. Locke, in his *Musical Exoticism*, took the Oriental argument in music to another level, summarizing the maneuver that Western composers incorporated to evoke Orient into three different processes, which is to be further discussed in the first chapter of this essay.¹²

MacKenzie's *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* includes the author's response to Said's two books, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, but the value of his work is in contextualizing Orientalism in wider cultural context, including not only music, but other disciplines such as visual arts and design. Although his writing is quite comprehensive in its coverage of the list of musical compositions incorporating the

¹⁰Said's discussion on Orientalism is in general and not about music. The book conveys the point that the Western view is colored by its own perception of the Orient, and that Orientalism is to continue incorporating more biased concepts from the Western past instead of representing the cultures to be classified under one. I do not believe that this political view does not apply to music, and therefore, his book is not included in my research.

¹¹Derek B. Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Styles," *Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (1998): 309-335.

¹²Ralph P. Lock, *Musical Exoticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

oriental themes, it stops short of discussing the musical features that represent Orientalism.¹³ For this study, I will refer to MacKenzie's work for outlining, while Scott's article will be used to define Orientalism as a musical style.

2. French Orientalism by Camille Saint-Saëns and Claude Debussy

English musicologist Roy Howat wrote a chapter entitled "Debussy and the Orient" in his 2009 publication of *The Art of French Music*. The chapter encompasses Debussy's direct musical influences from Javanese and Indian music in addition to philosophical influences from the East.¹⁴

More focused studies on Debussy's gamelan influences have been discussed extensively in Kiyoshi Tamagawa's D.M.A. essay "Echoes from the East: the Javanese Gamelan and Its Influence on the Music of Claude Debussy." The author evaluates the presence of exotic elements in all of Debussy's piano pieces and several major orchestral pieces, and he is quite comprehensive in providing both basic theoretical analyses and musicological context.¹⁵

A similar but more concise study than that of Tamagawa is found in Brent Hugh's notes from his lecture recital. Hugh focuses more on finding gamelan elements directly in the composition and demonstrates the phenomenon by using musical excerpts, which I

¹³MacKenzie, 1-39, 140.

¹⁴Roy Howat, *The Art of French Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 110–125.

¹⁵Kiyoshi Tamagawa, "Echoes from the East: the Javanese Gamelan and Its Influence on the Music of Claude Debussy"(D.M.A. thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1988).

find helpful in encouraging visual and intuitive understanding of Debussy's compositional procedures in creating the atmosphere reflective of the "Orient."¹⁶

3. Reynaldo Hahn and His Compositions

Aside from dissertations, there is no extensive writing about Reynaldo Hahn available in English. There are many mentions of his name in several biographies of Marcel Proust, including *The Translation of Memories: Recollection of the Young Proust* by P.F. Prestwich, *Monsieur Proust* by Céleste Albaret and *Marcel Proust and Spanish America* by Herbert Craig¹⁷ although the information in these books is too fragmented to have a complete picture of Reynaldo Hahn as a person.

Several biographies of Reynaldo Hahn are available in French and Spanish. The oldest source on Hahn is *Reynaldo Hahn: su vida y su obra* (1979) by Daniel Bendáhan. As the title suggests, Bendáhan provides a genealogical research on Hahn's family, an overview of Reynaldo Hahn's life in a chronological manner and a list of his compositions. *Reynaldo Hahn, Caraqueño: Contribución a la biografía caraqueña de Reynaldo Hahn Echenagucia* (1989), written by Mario Milanca-Guzmán, was written in

¹⁶Brent Hugh, "Claude Debussy and the Javanese Gamelan," *Brent Hugh Website*, <http://brenthugh.com/debnotes/gamelan.pdf> (accessed October 23, 2009).

¹⁷Marie Nordlinger, *The Translation of Memories: Recollections of Young Proust*, trans. by P.F. Prestwich (London: Peter Owen Publication, 1999); Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*, trans. Georges Belmont (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976); Herbert Craig, *Marcel Proust and Spanish America* (London: Bucknell University Press, 2008): 1-18.

critical response to Bendáhan, questioning the legitimacy of data and facts provided by Bendáhan.¹⁸

While the aforementioned two Spanish books are fact-based and more chronicle in nature, the French biography *Reynaldo Hahn, le musicien de la Belle-Époque* by Bernard Gavoty provides more personal information on the composer, including his aesthetics, his musical studies, his view of religions, love, humor, and fellow composers.

None of the aforementioned biographies of Reynaldo Hahn contain any reference to his influence directly from the Orient; therefore, one could assume that his Orientalism was influenced by the trend of the time. Therefore, finding Oriental elements through compositional analysis will be the only way to understand Reynaldo Hahn's Orientalism.

A brief theoretical analysis of the majority of Hahn's works has been done by French musicologist Jean-Christopher Etienne on his website Reynaldo-Hahn Net.¹⁹ I have received the permission from the author to translate and use his analysis on Hahn's *Orient* suite in my essay.²⁰

Methodology

The essay will continue with the Second Chapter that provides an overview of Orientalism in a musicological context. Due to the perceptive nature of Orientalism that calls for time-sensitivity, the chapter will focus on how its compositional procedures have

¹⁸Mario Milanca-Guzmán, *Reynaldo Hahn, Caraqueño: Contribución a la biografía caraqueña de Reynaldo Hahn Echenagucia* (Caracas: Academia Nacional de Historia, 1989); Daniel Bendáhan, *Reynaldo Hahn: su vida y su obra* (Caracas: Monte Avila Editores, 1979).

¹⁹Jean-Christopher Etienne, e-mail message regarding authorship of *Reynaldo-hahn.net*, December 7, 2009.

²⁰*Ibid.*, "Analyse de l'œuvre pour piano: Poèmes et Carnet de Voyage" *Reynaldo Hahn Website* 2001, <http://reynaldo-hahn.net/Html/rossignol7.htm> (accessed November 25, 2009)

changed. The chapter will also include Orientalism theories by Ralph L. Locke, providing procedures on how to analyze Hahn's *Orient* series from *Le Rossignol Éperdu*.

The Third Chapter serves to define French Orientalism in the Romantic era as exemplified by selected Saint-Saëns piano works. Piano works will include the second movement of Piano Concerto No. 5 by Camille Saint-Saëns, focusing on analyzing Orientalism that is more based on Middle East and North Africa, a type of Orientalism that was more prominent in French Romantic composers.

The Fourth chapter will provide a summary of English musicologist Roy Howat's discussion regarding Debussy's compositional approach to Orientalism, focusing on detailed analysis on his innovative adaptations.

The Fifth Chapter will cover a biographical sketch of Reynaldo Hahn. The chapter will be designed to familiarize readers with the composer, and to include his career as performer, composer and music critic. The purpose of this chapter is to make a coherent biography of Hahn in English by synthesizing his biography in Spanish and French, including *Reynaldo Hahn: su vida y su obra* by Daniel Bendáhan, *Reynaldo Hahn, caraqueño* by Mario Milanca-Guzmán, *Reynaldo Hahn, le musicien de la Belle-Époque* by Bernard Gavoty. In addition to Hahn's career as musician, composer and critic, the composer's direct or indirect experience with Oriental music by Western composers will be examined.

In the Sixth Chapter, I will conduct an analysis on the six piano pieces of the "Orient" suite from *Le Rossignol Éperdu: 53 poèmes pour piano* by Reynaldo Hahn. I will incorporate analyses regarding each of the six pieces as outlined in Reynaldo Hahn's website under "Analyse de l'oeuvre pour piano: Poèmes et Carnet de Voyage" by Jean-

Christopher Etienne.²¹ In addition to Etienne's analyses that are given on the website, I will conduct an additional analysis myself. The additional analysis will focus on finding and pointing out the Oriental to be discussed, including thematic investigations, direction of the melodies, scale degrees and other elements that may concern Orientalism.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, will be the summary of my findings, including the differences in approaches to Orientalism by Hahn and other composers. The discussion will include programming of this series in the recital setting, and personal comparisons between other French piano pieces.

²¹Jean-Christophe Etienne, "Analyse de l'œuvre pour piano: Poèmes et Carnet de Voyage" *Reynaldo Hahn Website* 2001, <http://reynaldo-hahn.net/Html/rossignol7.htm> (accessed November 25, 2009)