

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION AND CONSIDERATION IN PROGRAMMING HAHN'S "ORIENT" SERIES IN A PIANO RECITAL SETTING

Hahn's four *Orient* series were in the conservative language of French Romantic composers like Saint-Saëns and Félicien David, depicting Middle East and North Africa as the *Orient*. This makes sense because Hahn was a student of Saint-Saëns at one point, so the musical influence from Saint-Saëns to Hahn would have been greater than from Debussy, with whom Hahn was not on speaking terms.¹³⁸

As opposed to Debussy's lifelong devotion to incorporating Orientalism in his music, the Orientalism did not seem to provide sustaining interest to Hahn. Several reasons could be presumed for this case;

Hahn's social circle was narrower and limited mostly to Parisian intellectual circle than that of Debussy. While Debussy was actively pursuing meeting people from further East¹³⁹, Hahn kept his friendship to the elite circle of Paris. Debussy was both argumentative and experimental while Hahn also appeared to have kept his apprenticeship more seriously, best indicated in his long-lasting teacher-student relationship with Camille Saint-Saëns.¹⁴⁰ These differences in personal traits may have made differences in composers' stylistic traits for venturing out in their compositions.

¹³⁸Gavoty, 142.

¹³⁹Howatt, 119.

¹⁴⁰Studd, 252; Harding, 20.

Hahn also valued tradition in his stylistic adoption. Hahn's *Thème Varié en nom de Haydn*, which he mimicked Haydn's classical style in addition to adopting the melody H-A-Y-D-N (si-la-ré-ré-sol), showcases his value in respecting traditional style than venturing out to create a new sounds or concept.

It could be argued, based on the time period, that perhaps Hahn's *Séries 2*: "Orient" from *Rossignol Éperdu* was composed out of whim, just to be fashionable enough to attract notice in the *salon culture*, which was his social circle. Ironically his *Orient* series may have placed him in the label from which he was trying to escape: a livingroom composer, a musician of the *salon*.

However, with its more linear and less experimental content, Hahn's music is best suited to open the second half of a recital program, providing an alternative to more popular lyrical works, like Schubert's *Impromptu*, Poulenc's *Intermezzo*, or Fauré's *Barcarolle*.

Hahn's language of the Orientalism proved to be more conservative than his contemporary Debussy. While his compositions may not be shocking, they remain pleasant.

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