Musical Exoticism

Images and Reflections

RALPH P. LOCKE

Eastman School of Music (University of Rochester)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

implicit lexicon of devices. I will dub it, for polemical and practical purposes, the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm (of musical exoticism). But I will also go on to propose a more encompassing definition of musical exoticism that enables us to deal with a wider range of instances of musical portrayals of "the exotic," including works from before Mozart – and also works (such as *Madama Butterfly*) that engage almost continuously in exotic portrayal, even during passages that make little or no use of musical "exoticisms" in the narrow, countable sense.

Existing definitions

Currently circulating definitions, such as the ones found in music dictionaries, encyclopedias, and critical writings, often center on issues of musical style. Perhaps they have been influenced by a similar tendency in art history. According to the noted art historian Enrico Crispolti,

> "Exoticism" may be defined as the imitation of elements in alien cultures that differ from native traditions.[5]

("Elements," a vague enough word, can include both kinds of visual exoticism mentioned above: Delacroix's way of portraying Eastern subject matter without altering his usual Western techniques; and the indebtedness of later artists to the flatness of Japanese wood-block prints or the angularity and generalized features of African masks.)

Definitions of musical exoticism have surely also been shaped by a general tendency within music scholarship to privilege explanations that grow out of what is regarded as the ultimate empirical evidence: the notes of the score, "the music itself." This is a corollary of the tendency to conceive of music history primarily in terms of styles and genres – often embodied in a small number of masterworks – rather than in terms of institutions, functions, meanings, and performative (and listening) practices.[6]

The tendency to see exoticism as embodied in specific musical materials (or stylistic markers) is particularly clear in a recent, thoughtful series of articles on musical exoticism by the French musicologist Jean-Pierre Bartoli:

> In the artistic domain [generally], "exoticism" indicates a combination of procedures that evoke cultural and geographical Otherness [*altérité*]. Most often, such a combination makes use of meaning-units [*unités significatives*] that seem not to belong to the idiomatic artistic language but, rather, seem borrowed from a foreign artistic language.[7]

Bartoli goes on to demonstrate a corollary of this principle: certain "meaning-units" that are standard options within the foreign artistic (or, more specifically, musical) tradition but happen to be shared by Western styles are chosen less often as markers of the exotic. A tune that does come from the region in question but uses what, to Western ears, might sound a lot like the C-major scale may not feel unfamiliar enough to merit its being incorporated into an exotic piece.[8]

Bartoli often writes as if the musical "procedures" and "units" that are selected and combined by the exotic composer operate in a purely musical context. He makes little or no mention of non-musical elements (such as an exotic opera's plot, sets, and costumes), even though these have often been what motivated the composer to copy or create distinctive musical elements and have then served as the framework within which the performer and listener "reads" the musical codes.[9] Most basically, Bartoli sees the "units" as either selective "borrowings" (*emprunts*) – in other words, what Crispolti calls "imitations" – from the music of the region or else as invented devices that give the impression of standing in for the foreign music (in more or less the same way that selective "borrowings" do, except with less documentary verisimilitude).

Whatever one calls it, the close copying (or attempted or apparent copying) of a foreign style undoubtedly comprises, for many scholars, the core – or even the near-entirety – of the exoticizing process. Jonathan Bellman invokes the familiar musicological concept of stylistic "borrowing" to launch his richly suggestive introduction to the 1998 essay-collection *The Exotic in Western Music.*

> Musical exoticism ... may be defined as the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference ... Characteristic and easily recognized musical gestures from the alien culture are assimilated into a more familiar style, giving it an exotic color and suggestiveness.[10]

These foreign gestures comprise what Bellman calls the "nuts and bolts level" at which exoticism (*always*, he implies) works in music.[11]

Thomas Betzwieser, in the authoritative encyclopedia *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, expresses the same point of view even more plainly, using another favorite musicological term: "influence." Like Bartoli, he starts by addressing exoticism in the arts, generally. "The chief characteristic [of exoticism in art] consists of the influence of foreign, especially non-European elements upon European art." In musical works, Betzwieser continues, these foreign elements are of three distinct kinds. (1) All exotic works make "use of 'exotic' musical material." Operas, in addition, make use of (2) plots and characters that are similarly marked as exotic and (3) production aspects (sets, costumes), likewise marked.[12] What is true for

opera, Betzwieser implies, is also true for genres and art forms that are closely analogous, such as dance works, Broadway musicals, and films.

Thus, in this standard view, the exotic in music comes "from the alien culture" (Bellman) – or at least is fashioned to sound as if it might easily have come from it – and consists of "non-European elements" (Betzwieser) or ones that could credibly be heard as such. I would agree that emphasizing concrete details of style and the authenticity of the borrowings is important and often utterly crucial. But by emphasizing the principle of stylistic codes (or by discussing it and almost nothing else, as Bartoli does), we end up giving too little attention to broader and equally crucial principles. The quotation above from Bellman hints at this, by referring to "evok[ing]" and "suggestiveness." These resonant words suggest that we might profitably consider the non-musical elements in an exotic work (e.g., genre, work title, an opera's plot) or, at a deeper level, the cultural values (including ethnic stereotypes) that shaped a work's composition and that continue thereafter to shape its performance and reception in successive generations. Such a broader area of focus is perhaps reflected also in Betzwieser's quick shift from "foreign" and "non-European" to "'exotic' musical material" (with scare quotes around the crucial word). We need to pay attention to what the chosen musical materials were intended to signify, in context, and what they have meant to audiences and critics over the years.

Furthermore, we need to have a working definition of musical exoticism that does not exclude works that unquestionably evoke a foreign place or people despite using few stylistic markers of "Otherness" or none at all – works such as Rossini's *Italiana in Algeri* (The Italian Woman in Algiers, 1813), which sounds obviously Middle Eastern in just one number for chorus. Steven Huebner has put the matter plainly with specific regard to operatic portrayals of the Middle East or Orient (taking the latter term broadly enough to include the Gypsy woman Carmen):

> Some of the best writing on this subject ... [falls into] a kind of reductionism ... "Orientalism" appears to exist for [critics such as Herbert] Lindenberger only in music with an oriental color, even though the signs and topics of common-practice tonal syntax can project equally well a stand toward a passive [or seductive or nasty] East that might also be called orientalist.[13]

A broader definition

In short, we need a broader approach. I therefore propose the following new definition of musical exoticism. It forms the starting point for our

remaining deliberations in this chapter and the rest of the book. Or starting points, for its five distinct aspects encompass various considerations that previous definitions have generally not addressed, such as the functions that musical exoticism can carry out within the culture that produces it.

- Musical exoticism is the process of evoking in or through music – whether that music is "exotic-sounding" or not – a place, people, or social milieu that is not entirely imaginary and that differs profoundly from the home country or culture in attitudes, customs, and morals. (The setting can also be removed in time, as we shall discuss.) More precisely, it is the process of evoking a place (people, social milieu) that is *perceived* as different from home by the people who created the exoticist cultural product and by the people who receive it.
- Beneath the surface, the place (people, social milieu) that is being evoked may be perceived as resembling home in certain ways.
- The differences and resemblances between Here and There may carry a variety of emotional charges: they may register as consoling, may trouble a listener's complacency, and so on.
- Whereas the differences between Here and There were generally conscious on the part of the creator(s) of the exotic musical work and readily apparent to listeners of the day, the *resemblances* may have been relatively conscious *or quite unconscious* and readily apparent *or not readily apparent*. For example, they may not have been mentioned by critics at the time of the work's first appearance.
- In any case, if the work continues to be performed over many years, such broader cultural resonances – the perceived differences from *and* resemblances to the home culture – are likely to fade and be replaced by others, given that listeners may now be living in new and different cultural situations and may thus bring different values and expectations to the work.

This new definition, multifaceted though it is, remains woefully incomplete. For one thing, it does not even raise a crucial question: "How do musical elements, in an exotic work, interact with non-musical ones?" For another, the clause "whether 'exotic-sounding' or not" skirts the no-less-crucial question, "How much and in what ways does the resulting music sound like the music of the region or culture in question – or at least plausibly evoke it for a listener who has never encountered the musical tradition in question?" My definition does not rely upon the presence of exotically coded musical styles – the very "figures," "elements," "meaning-units," or "nuts and bolts" that previous definitions have understood to be (in the

language of logic) a sufficient indicator of musical exoticism and (according to Bartoli, at least) a necessary one as well.[14]

Still, my definition explicitly includes the possible use of such coded styles. It needs to, given that so many exotic works rely upon them. Indeed, as we shall see, the adoption of musical styles from cultures perceived as Other became so widespread in the twentieth century that some observers began to prefer not to consider it exotic at all but instead simply an aspect of intercultural sharing, with no larger "representational" function. In their view, the musical aspects of the distant culture are being represented (adapted, etc.) but no other aspects. (See Chapters 9–10.)

By keeping the various options open – exoticism that makes extensive use, little use, or no use of exotic style – the definition sets us on the path toward formulating a broader paradigm (or method of approach) for musical exoticism than the one that has prevailed for several centuries and that still shapes much thinking and commentary today. This new, broader paradigm deserves explicit presentation in the present chapter, as I shall be applying and testing it repeatedly in Part II of the book. First, though, we should discuss in some detail the paradigm that is currently in place.

The "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm

Given that most prior studies of musical exoticism have been based on narrowly focused definitions, it comes as no surprise that they have adopted a variety of correspondingly "narrow-bore" approaches. (I mean this term descriptively, not judgmentally. A narrow approach, after all, has a chance at digging deep, and a broad one may easily become superficial.) These determinedly narrow approaches, taken together, comprise what I call the "Exotic Style Only" Paradigm of musical exoticism (or Exotic-Style Paradigm, for short).

The Exotic-Style Paradigm assumes that music is, by compositional intent, exotic – and that it registers as exotic to the listener – if (and, often, only if) it incorporates specific musical signifiers of Otherness. In recent years, these signifiers have sometimes been described as analogous to visual or verbal markers (such as have been codified by semioticians and narrativity theorists). Tara Browner, for example, has proposed applying the threefold terminology of Peircean semiotics – symbol, index, icon – to compositions (e.g., by Arthur Farwell) that in some way "appropriate" (her word) musical traditions of Native Americans.[15] Michael Pisani, studying that same repertoire in greater detail, finds particularly helpful

satirical *opéras-bouffes* in a supposed exotic locale, precisely in order to poke fun at the supposed high-minded (but sometimes merely exploitive) foreign settings of French grand opera. One stage direction encapsulates the critique: *Les brigands* (1869) is set "on the border between Spain and Italy," even though the two countries do not touch. Or maybe there *is* a border – rather wide and deep – between Spain and Italy. It is called France. Opera's eternally sought Elsewhere was often simply Nowhere, or else – like it or not – Here.

Such a conclusion, presented comically in the Offenbach, creates deeper implications for nineteenth-century serious operas than might appear on the surface. These implications become evident when one turns to operas about Gypsies. Gypsies – mainstream European representations of the people who more often call themselves Roma – have long been granted an almost mythical presence within the European imagination. Spanish Gypsies, in particular, are central to the experience of opera lovers. Bizet's Carmen is the most renowned, but a close runner-up is surely Verdi's Azucena, the central character (many have argued) of Verdi's *Il trovatore*.[12] We might even think of Azucena as the operatic "mother" of Carmen. Verdi's three most popular middle-period operas – *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata* – were among Bizet's favorites in the Italian repertoire. He praised them for their "flashes of genius." And *Il trovatore*, in particular, was surely in his mind when he wrote, in an article, that the best of Verdi's works are "vigorously alive, kneaded of gold, mud, gall, and blood."[13]

What, then, do the Gypsies in these two operas – Azucena and Carmen but also various secondary characters – tell us about themselves, through their words and actions, and the various types of music assigned to them? How specifically Spanish or Spanish-Gypsy are they? Do they present any features that link them to Gypsies elsewhere, or to other exotics, such as Middle Easterners? Are they really Us? The remainder of the present chapter attempts to suggest some answers to these questions by looking, first, at widespread images of Spanish Gypsies and, then, at various aspects of, and moments in, *Il trovatore* and *Carmen*.

The Roma (Gypsies) in life and image

European Gypsies are now generally called Roma and include the Sinti and other sub-groups. The Roma in Spain, though, are more often referred to – including by themselves – as *gitanos*, the Spanish etymological equivalent of "Gypsies" (see Chapter 6). In Verdi's *Il trovatore* (1853), the Gypsies are

generally referred to by the standard Italian terms *zingari* and *zingarelle*. Each act of this opera bears a title, and the one for Act 2 – in which we meet Azucena – is the Spanish word for a female Gypsy, "La gitana."

The Roma (or Romani people) of Spain arrived, to a large extent, during the so-called Golden Age of Spain, when the Muslims ruled the Iberian Peninsula. For centuries after the Christian "Reconquista" (1492), the Roma in Spain often lived under fear of expulsion. Their children were sometimes taken away and raised as Christians in orphanages. Rom men were long excluded from government service and trade guilds and were often conscripted to row the nation's galleys. Roma ended up as wanderers within Spanish society, traveling from village to village. They repaired items of metal, told fortunes, and sang and danced. In time, they ended up speaking a version of Spanish (called *caló*) that was laced with Romani words. And their musical traditions became one of the primary bases of the performance art that, by the mid-nineteenth century, was known as flamenco.

In addition, a whole raft of stereotypes – some perhaps innocuous or even "admiring," others plainly pernicious – grew up around the *gitanos*, such as that they preferred their life of perpetual wandering for its "freedom," disdained material possessions, but also, though outwardly cheerful, were untrustworthy and violence-prone (as one could purportedly sense in their music-making and dancing). Many Spaniards believed that the *gitanos* stole Christian babies and could lay a curse on someone with an evil stare. More generally, the very fact that the *gitanos* regularly interacted with the larger society – and, in some cases, could pass for Spaniards – no doubt made them appear more threatening than if they had lived entirely apart, speaking little or no Spanish.[14] Yet, though unique in many ways, the Roma of Spain were (and remain today) an instance also of a more basic and familiar phenomenon that has occurred and continues to occur in many countries: an impoverished and, to some extent, culturally distinct ethnic immigrant population.

The international literary and artistic world, including the world of opera, seems to have half-recognized this. Obsessed with the Spanish Gypsies for several centuries now, creative artists and nattering journalists alike have often let the Roma (from Spain or elsewhere), "stand for" other marginalized groups. The concept of the Gypsy or (in French) *bohémien* became a widely resonant metaphor. Poor students and artists, though neither truly oppressed nor set apart ethnically, were described as living "like Gypsies" if they avoided fixed employment and moved from one cheap apartment to another.[15] The laconic title of Puccini's opera *La bohème* – based on Henri

Murger's novel *Scènes de la vie de bohème* – is always left untranslated. Its import might be rendered as "Life in That Part of Paris Where Young People Who Should Know Better and Are Lucky Enough to Have Decent Prospects in Life Choose Instead (the Sweet, Idealistic Fools!) to Live like Gypsies."

"Abietta zingara"

Verdi based *Il trovatore* on the most successful Spanish play of the Romantic era, *El trovador* (1836) by Antonio García Gutiérrez. The libretto (primarily by Salvatore Cammarano) reproduces nearly all of the stereotypes, positive and negative, mentioned above. For example, Azucena tries to deflect the Count's questions by claiming – in the third person – that a Gypsy wanders without plan: "The sky is her roof / And the world, her country." The libretto also reflects certain historical realities, most basically the status of the *gitanos* as Spain's internal Other. Seen against the opera's ethnic norm – its Us, namely the Count, Leonora, and the Spanish soldiers – the Gypsies are at once Them and part of the opera's Us. "They" speak "our" language (Spanish, represented in the opera by Italian), and live and work in "our" vicinity.

Il trovatore is set in the early fifteenth century, a time when (historians tell us) significant numbers of Roma arrived in Spain. We quickly see that the native aristocrats are in near-constant battle with each other over control of land and castles, and ready to duel over a particularly desirable young gentlewoman. Gypsy smiths provide the needed swords and armor. Indeed, at the beginning of Act 2, the Gypsy men sing the famous "Anvil Chorus" while hammering red-hot metal. (The Gypsy women join the cheerful refrain.) The Anvil Chorus amounts to one of the few portrayals of physical labor in nineteenth-century opera. Julian Budden notes that its tune is "primitive, demotic" and lacks evident exotic traits.[16] The net result echoes an unusually sympathetic view – and a not inaccurate one, as noted above – of Roma as hard workers.

By contrast, the orchestral introduction to this Anvil Chorus marks the Gypsies as different from the rest of the opera's characters. It is studded with features from the *alla turca* style, such as sudden shifts of key and mode, and downbeat trills followed by repeated upward leaps of a fourth (see Fig. 6.3, features 3, 10, and 11).[17] These features are consistent with the aura of Easternness that surrounded the Roma throughout Europe. In other words, there seems to be no particular desire here to match any known (or

Whole-tone procedures became a particular obsession of Debussy (whereas Ravel largely avoided them).[49] Some heavily whole-tone pieces – such as *Voiles* and *Cloches à travers les feuilles* – give no unmistakable outward indication of Elsewhereness. (In the first of these pieces, the *voiles* could be veils on women in Algiers or, equally well, sails on boats in a French port. In the second, the *cloches* – church bells – whose chiming we are hearing through leafy trees are presumably in rural France.) The titles of other such whole-tone-drenched pieces suggest places that are somehow "special" yet still undefined: for example, "Fêtes" (Festivals, the second of the three *Nocturnes* for orchestra) and the expansive piano piece *L'isle joyeuse* (The Joyful Island).[50] One more glance at *Faune* can demonstrate how whole-tone writing can be incorporated and what effect it can make. The opening flute solo (Ex. 9.1 above) feels like a whole-tone fragment that has been enriched by a few chromatic passing notes. Measure 32 brings four whole-tone flourishes, two in the clarinet and two in the flute. These four flourishes, and Example 9.1, amount to arabesques, and "modernist" – or Russian-influenced – ones. In them, Easternness is at once present and hidden: half-Submerged, we might say.

Transcultural Composing

The discussion of musical exoticism becomes more varied and complex as we move to consider pieces composed (and often read) in a frank spirit of transculturalism. By Transcultural Composing I mean the practice of composing for Western contexts – for example, a piano recital or a wind-ensemble concert – a work that incorporates certain stylistic and formal conventions of another culture's music, often a music that has a quite different context (e.g., a village celebration or religiously inflected ritual). Pieces typical of Transcultural Composing blend, interweave, or merge musical elements that the composer (and audience) would recognize as being "our own" with those of the distant Other culture (or several distant Other cultures).

Earlier in this book, we encountered several intentional and at least somewhat informed efforts at such stylistic replication (though at that point we simply called them instances of exoticism). Mozart's "Rondo alla turca," we may recall, repeats a standard (if simple) Turkish *usul* drum rhythm again and again in the left-hand accompaniment; and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 14 incorporates melodies, instrumental sonorities, and harmonic practices that Liszt encountered in "Gypsy" music of the day. Nonetheless, and for reasons noted earlier, it was in the early twentieth

century that Transcultural Composing suddenly became a more widely practiced and accepted compositional option and one that might or might not (depending on many factors) deserve to be distinguished from exoticism. Prominent instances include pieces in Indonesian style, such as Debussy's *Pagodes* and Ravel's *Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes*; and pieces in Spanish style, such as Debussy's *Soirée dans Grenade* and *Ibéria* and Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole* and *Boléro*.[51] Are such works not just Transcultural but also exotic (in the sense defined in Chapter 3)? That is, do they portray a locale and its population? Or do they merely absorb and incorporate (or give the impression of incorporating) the musical sounds that those people make? For the moment, I prefer to leave such questions open, which is why I have proposed the phrase "Transcultural Composing" rather than, say, "Purely Musical Exoticism."[52]

Like Submerged (and half-Submerged, and Absorbed), the term Transcultural is not standard within musicology. It derives from "transculturation," a concept that social scientists – concerned to remain "value-free," i.e., disinterested – have devised for discussing the process by which cultures draw from and influence each other. Along with related concepts – for example, colonial encounter, cultural transfer, and syncretism – transculturation has been eagerly taken up by literary historians and ethnomusicologists.[53] (The term "multicultural" has more broadly political-ideological implications. For example, multicultural curricula in America's public schools encourage exposure to and tolerance of ethnic difference.)

Recent writers addressing the influence of non-Western music on Western art music employ other terms that overlap significantly with my use of "transcultural": "transethnic," "intercultural," "hybrid."[54] I follow Shay Loya in adopting "transcultural" because of his persuasive application of it to the Liszt Hungarian(-"Gypsy") Rhapsodies.[55] Loya finds the concept attractive because it permits a range of possible relationships – including some degree of reciprocity – between the two cultures in question. He helpfully contrasts it to other terms often used by scholars for Western compositions based on non-Western or internal-minority (e.g., Romani/"Gypsy") musical traditions, terms such as "Orientalism" and "cultural appropriation." Such terms seem to Loya fraught with predetermined aesthetic and political value judgments. At the very least, they have acquired so many meanings by now that they are easily misunderstood.[56]

Certain commentators have described this or that instance of Transcultural Composing as if it amounted to a complete and faithful rendition, only minimally adapted, of a distant musical tradition. In 1947, Wilfrid Mellers dismissed certain pieces from the height of Debussy's

Figure 9.5 The performances at the Javanese *kampong* at the 1889 Paris World's Fair were witnessed with astonishment and delight by Debussy and hundreds of thousands of other visitors from across Europe and around the world. Above: four graceful *tandak* (courtly dancers, sent by the prince of Surakarta), named Seriem, Soekia, Tamiñah, and Wakiem. (By permission of the Société de Géographie and Bibliothèque Nationale de France.)

career – including *Pagodes* and the heavily Andalusian *Soirée dans Grenade* – as "too much like the raw material out of which art might be made, so passively sensory as to be hardly worth calling art at all."[57] In 1983, Richard Freed described *Pagodes* as "a more or less direct representation of [the gamelan's] sounds in keyboard terms."[58]

Freed's phrase "in keyboard terms" hints at a crucial feature of *Pagodes* that Mellers sought to deny: the work's artistry. Debussy, as his own writings and those of his friends attest, had listened intently to, and watched, Javanese gamelan and dance performances at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris (see Figs. 9.5–9.6).[59] His enthusiasm was boundless, and he used the subtle sounds and shifting textures that he had heard in the *kampong javanais* to point up limitations in Western music. (The

Figure 9.6 Likewise photographed at the Javanese *kampong* at the 1889 Paris World's Fair, the two-dozen-strong gamelan included performers on the *kendang* (barrel drum) and *bonang* (sets of six cradled kettle or pot gongs). (By permission of the Société de Géographie and Bibliothèque Nationale de France.)

polyphony in Palestrina suddenly seemed like "child's play"; Western percussion instruments, like "the barbarous noise at a fairground circus.")[60] The piano is in some ways apt for rendering the sounds of a gamelan. A piano note, played staccato, resembles somewhat a note struck on the gamelan's tuned percussion instruments (and then, usually, damped with the player's other hand). Also, the sustaining (right) pedal on the piano permits separate pitches to blend in a way analogous to the long, slow die-off of the sound of the gamelan's gong.[61]

But to transcribe an actual gamelan performance for piano would have been impossible since this would have required suppressing or drastically altering some of the primary features of Indonesian music-making.[62] A gamelan is an ensemble, containing multiple instruments (sometimes a few, other times a dozen or more). Although all the instruments in any one gamelan are tuned to a single scale, the scale's five (or sometimes seven)

notes rarely correspond to any one collection of five (or seven) notes on the piano. They may not exactly match the notes of the gamelan in a neighboring village, even one supposedly tuned to the same mode. Furthermore, the slight but significant differences between the tunings of the various instruments in a single gamelan (often not so slight in Bali) create rapid throbbing "beats." The resulting aural shimmer is much prized by local musicians and their audiences, whereas pianos are carefully tuned to minimize audible "beats" between the two or three strings that are tuned to a single note.[63] Still, critics such as Mellers and Freed are right in a way: a piece such as *Pagodes* gives the impression – to Western concertgoers – of being an intensely observed, though drastically condensed, reenactment of a performance from a highly developed foreign musical culture.[64]

François Lesure puts an even more positive, almost ethical spin on the Transcultural aspect of pieces such as *Soirée* and *Pagodes*:

> [Debussy] disdained the amusing [*risible*] attempt at escape-through-sound that is called "exoticism." He was one of the first to admit [as even possible] a conversation [*communicabilité*] between musical cultures and to take an interest in what other musics could bring to the West, thanks to a broadened conception of musical time.[65]

In order to praise the Transcultural Composing that occurs in pieces such as *Pagodes*, Lesure denigrates exoticism, implying that it is hopelessly superficial if not entirely fabricated. Even if Lesure had accepted a less dismissive definition of exoticism (such as the one offered in Chapter 3), he might have still considered a piece such as *Pagodes* to be something very different: an instance of musician-to-musician sharing that somehow transcends or happily ignores all other (non-aural) aspects of the two cultures.

There are two obvious yet little-noted reasons why Transcultural pieces of the early twentieth century may strike observers (such as Mellers, Freed, and Lesure) as not obviously exotic(izing) in the manner of so many works from the previous century and more:

(1) Whereas the exotic regions and peoples that had been regularly alluded to by Mozart, Liszt, Verdi, or Bizet were few (e.g., Spaniards, "Gypsies," Eastern Europeans, and the Middle East), more and more cultures were now becoming known in the West. Information about the musics of these widespread cultures was potentially accessible to the determined seeker. Unfortunately, it tended to be hidden away in scholarly monographs or (for field recordings) in museums and archives. A composer could not count on audience members' knowing much about any relatively unfamiliar musical tradition (that is, other than

Hungarian-Gypsy, Spanish, and so on) that his or her piece was seeking to echo.

(2) On a non-musical level, most world cultures were quite unfamiliar, being geographically more distant from Europe, as in the case of East Asia, and/or inaccessible, as in the case of most of sub-Saharan Africa. They were also harder to understand, because they were culturally more different from the West than groups within Europe (e.g., the Roma) or the Middle East. (For example, Hindu and Shintoist religious texts do not overlap with the Bible as the Koran does.)

We may note a curious flip-flop in many critical and scholarly writings about works that engage in Transcultural Composing. The presence of exotic style elements has long been the primary factor by which writers determine whether a work between the years 1750 and 1900 engaged in the process of exoticizing a foreign culture. The absence of exotic (or foreign-sounding) style – a feature of almost all exoticizing works from before the *alla turca* craze – has tended to rule out a work from being considered as engaging in exoticism.[66] But suddenly, at the point when numerous composers do become deeply responsive to foreign styles – namely in the first half of the twentieth century – critics (and, subsequently, historians) tend to view this responsiveness as a marker of honest intercultural exchange, presumably free from the taint of Western dominance or condescension. A writer, such as Lesure (cited above), may consider a nineteenth-century work exotic(izing) – and, often, may object to it – because it contains just a hint of foreign (or imagined-as-foreign) music. Yet the same writer may rule out exoticism – and breathe a sigh of relief – when a work (from the twentieth century) actually contains more extensive (and/or more accurate) foreign elements. A double standard seems at work here. What Debussy and subsequent composers do tends to be regarded as well intentioned and admirable, whereas what Liszt (in the Hungarian Rhapsodies) and Delibes (in *Lakmé*) did several generations earlier – though perhaps, in technical terms, not always so dissimilar – is rejected as artistically trivial and culturally exploitive.[67]

Pagodes: Javanese pentatonicism Trans(culturally)figured

How Transcultural Composing operates – and whether we should regard as exotic(izing) a piece that engages in Transcultural Composing – can be better understood by looking at Debussy's *Pagodes* (*c.* 1903).