Points of interest

* The development of Impressionism
* Nineteenth Century preoccupation with the Orient.
* The move away from Romanticism.
* Gamelan as a musical form.
* Moorish music influences.

Estampes No.1 &2

‘Pagodes’ & ‘La Soiree Dans Grenade’.

C. Debussy 1903.



**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Fusion Music

Set Work 1

**Harmony & Tonality**

* Impressionism marks a move away from functional tonality. (Tonal centres used).
* Modulations are made to unrelated keys.
* Chords are often extended and move in parallel patterns.
* Open 5th chords are used in *Pagodes* to blur the harmony.
* Chromatic movement is abundant.
* The Moorish lament is used in *Soiree* as is the Phrygian mode
* *Pagodes* makes use of the Slendro scale. *.*

**Melody**

* Melodies showcase many features of Impressionist music.
* Melodic lines are often fragmented, altered in pitch and rhythm upon repetition, based upon whole tone scales or pentatonic scales and infused with chromaticism.
* Thematic transformation is also used to develop musical ideas.
* In *Pagodes* melodies are created using Javanese scales.
* Melodic lines in *Soiree* are more conjunct.
* Debussy composed three *Estampes* in 1903.
* *Pagodes* is through-composed with sections defined by changing textures and sonorities. Different tempo markings also highlight the beginning of a new section.
* *La Soiree Dans Grenade* is divided into four sections. Each section is defined by repetition of ideas and also changes in style. The sections are characterised in the following way: section 1 – Habanera rhythm, section 2 – more rhythmic, section 3 – syncopated, section 4 – return of previous ideas.

**Structure**

* In both pieces the texture is constantly changing.
* *Pagodes* features a multi-layered texture built up over a core melody.
* Melodic ostinatos are used to build textures.
* The music is often contrapuntal in nature.
* The Habanera rhythm is constant in *Soiree* and is introduced across the whole range of the piano.
* Spread chords are used to emulate the Spanish guitar.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* Impressionism was seen as a move away from the formality and over exuberance of Romanticism.
* Debussy was introduced to Gamelan at the Great Fair in 1889.
* Composers wanted to move away from the strict conventions of tonal and functional music and become more experimental.
* Impressionism was also explored in Art and Literature.
* Debussy creates the effect of a Gamelan ensemble using piano sonorities.
* The damper pedal is used to great effect in *Pagodes* to emulate the sustained nature of metallophones.
* Whole tone & pentatonic scales give an impression of Oriental music.
* The Habanera rhythm creates the feeling of Moorish music.
* Crisp staccato articulation emulates Spanish Flamenco music.
* Pedal notes are used to create sustained timbres.
* *Pagodes* uses repeated ostinatos to help create structure.
* Off-beat chords are used to form an accompaniment.
* The music is cyclic and based upon repetition of ideas.
* Higher pitches have quicker rhythms than lower ones.
* Demisemiquavers are a prominent feature in *Pagodes.*
* The Habanera rhythm appears in *Soiree.*
* Staccato articulation is used.
* Rubato & frequent tempo changes are a feature of Impressionism.

Wider listening: *Bachianas Brasilieras –* Villa Lobos, *Adiemus -* Karl Jenkins, *La Mer –* Debussy, Nights in the Gardens of Spain – De Falla