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An Arabesque Through Time with Flute and Piccolo Literature Abstract

The following research focuses on eight compositions for flute and piccolo, representing a variety of musical styles surrounding the twentieth century. The literature is drawn from solo, collaborative, and orchestral settings, and it includes works by living, female, and BIPOC composers. Additionally, the pieces are often underlined by the intersection between music and dance, as well as the context in which they were composed. One such composition is Arthur Honegger's "Danse de la Chèvre" (1921), a contemporary work for solo flute that was written to accompany a solo dancer. Other collaborative pieces include Gabriel Fauré's "Fantasie" (1898); Camargo Guarnieri's "Sonatina for Flute and Piano" (1947); Christopher Caliendo's "Four gypsy Pieces" (2011); and Amanda Harberg's "Sonata for Piccolo and Piano" (2018). Orchestral excerpts derive from the following larger works: Igor Stravinsky's Firebird Suite (1919); Maurice Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé (1912); and Sergei Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf (1936).

Gabriel Fauré was a French composer who was born on May 12th, 1845 and lived through November 4th, 1924. Starting from a young age, Fauré studied under Camille Saint-Saëns at L'École de Musique Classique et Religieuse à Paris. While pursuing his musical studies in Paris, Fauré became an organist, and eventually a professor, as well. As a composer writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Fauré helped found la Société Nationale de Musique in order to promote avant-garde composers to the public. Initially, the society was received with contempt from the French people, particularly those who believed solely in the prowess of classical music. Other European countries received the innovative compositions quite well until eventually, French society became more open to the idea of experimentation in music. Unfortunately for Fauré, this shift in musical values occurred after his passing. A progressive composer himself, Fauré's instrumental and vocal compositions provided a bridge between the late Romantic and early Modern eras. This is illustrated by the piece: **"Fantasie" Op. 79**, written for flute in 1898. "Fantasie" emerged from a request by the famed flutist and *ami* of Fauré: Paul Taffanel. While teaching at the Paris Conservatory, Taffanel wanted his students to enter a competition with a piece that demonstrated their musical versatility. Even today, Fauré's "Fantasie" is regarded as a staple piece of French literature in the repertoire of many flutists worldwide; however, the piece did not always receive such a label of prestige. A connection between remnants of the Romantic period and the emergence of Modern music, "Fantasie" was viewed as distasteful by the majority of French traditionalists who did not approve of the work's experimental harmonic nature. In fact, Fauré himself was said to have disliked the piece and its modern hue. Despite this initial questioning, "Fantasie" has come to prove its merit as a multifaceted work overtime. The emergence of more exploratory compositions in the twentieth century has illuminated the prestige of "Fantasie" in precisely the way Taffanel envisioned it.

The flute excerpt from *Daphnis et Chloé* was written by: **Maurice Ravel**, a French composer who lived from March 7th, 1875 to December 28th, 1937 (Myers). *Daphnis et Chloé* premiered in 1912, and has traditionally been performed as a ballet with orchestral accompaniment. The storyline is inspired by the Greek literary work of the same title, detailing a romance struck between the two titular characters. The spectacle contains reverberations of the tale of Syrinx and Pan, the inspiration behind a separate work for unaccompanied flute by Claude Debussy. Stylistically, *Daphnis et Chloé* embodies the spirit of the era in which it was composed by providing rhythmic deviations from the classical through romantic structures (“Daphnis and Chloé”). Contrary to the rhythmic departure from previous musical traditions, Ravel’s masterpiece remains overwhelmingly mindful of the styles that predate it, melodically. Overtime, Ravel’s compositions have not been viewed as entirely innovative in their own rites. Rather, his works have been portrayed as experimental in terms of the harmonic variations he incorporated into the larger, more structural, tonal paradigms. In other words, the classical basis remains, with contemporary trifles meticulously incorporated throughout. This blend of tradition and experimentation, coupled with conventional choreography, provided a mostly palatable display of art in a time when conflict dominated over more radical compositions. Ravel’s compositions were at first frowned upon by the most conservative of musicians, due to his adventurous rhythmic and harmonic character. Nonetheless, they soon found favor with the more innovative composers of the day, including Gabriel Fauré at the Paris Conservatory. Ravel’s noteworthy compositions, aside from *Daphnis et Chloé*, included: purely orchestral pieces, concertos for piano and orchestra, and brief excursions in opera. Additionally, Ravel followed *Daphnis et Chloé* with another crowning achievement– an orchestral ballet masterpiece titled: *Boléro*, in 1928 (Myers).

Igor Stravinsky, composer of the *Firebird Suite*, was born on June 17th, 1882 and lived until April 6th, 1971. Born in Russia to musical parents, Stravinsky was naturally inspired to become a musician himself. His parents, however, strongly advised against this aspiration. Stravinsky honored his parents' request until his father's passing, at which point he began studying with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Stravinsky then collaborated with Sergei Diaghilev and his *Ballets Russes*, at which point he started working on scores to accompany ballets. *Firebird Suite* was initially performed in the year 1910, with multiple renditions to follow. Namely, the renowned flute excerpt is most often associated with the 1919 edition (Baxtresser). The *Firebird* orchestral score accompanies the ballet choreography of Michel Fokine, whilst also proving to be one of Stravinsky's crowning achievements as an independent work for orchestra. The plot of the production centers around the Russian legend of an enchanted firebird, as she provides aid to an honorable prince ("The Firebird"). As portrayed by his *Firebird Suite*, much of Stravinsky's work connects deeply to his Russian heritage, resonating throughout his ballets, operas, and symphonies alike. Stravinsky was forced out of his native country during World War I, finding solace in Switzerland, France, and ultimately, the United States. Thus, he resorted to channeling the Russia of his childhood through his compositions. Although Stravinsky's operas, symphonies, and ballets alike were regarded as avant-garde at the time of their premiers, they have since been regarded in a more positive light as "revolutionary" works of art ("Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky"). Today, Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* can be found in groundbreaking productions, such as *Fantasia 2000*. In this collaborative display of animation and music, actress Angela Lansbury states: "The music from Igor Stravinsky's ballet, *The Firebird* inspires such a voyage. And so we conclude this version of *Fantasia* with a mythical story of life, death, and renewal." Upon inspection, the themes she describes quietly echo the life of Stravinsky himself.

Arthur Honegger, a Swiss composer who combined numerous European styles into his works, was born on March 10th, 1892 in western France, and he passed away on November 27th, 1955. He began his musical studies at the Zurich Conservatoire, later continuing his studies at the Paris Conservatory where he was exposed to other contemporary influences, namely Fauré and Ravel. Honegger became known as a “Nouveaux jeune” in the shifting musical world for his operas, orchestral symphonies, oratorios, and even “symphonic poems.” Perhaps surprisingly, Honegger was not viewed as a radical composer by the classical musicologists who condemned the works of many contemporaries. This was simply due to the fact that much of Honegger’s early compositional philosophy paid tribute to traditional tonal structures. However, he slowly began to venture into more dissonant harmonies and experimental productions (Lécroart).

Honegger composed “**Danse de la Chèvre**” in 1921 as a work for solo flute to be accompanied by a dancer. In a departure from ballet productions, “Danse de la Chèvre” is for a singular dancer of a more contemporary choreographic style. This composition follows in the footsteps of Claude Debussy’s “Syrinx,” another work for solo flute and dancer(s). Honegger’s piece for solo flute received its first visual portrayal by Jane Lysana, believed to have been more of a theatrical dancer than a classical dancer (Lemaître and Jouard). Her style would certainly have fit well with the overall character of the piece, being that the piece emerged out of the “Dada” era in Europe. “Dada,” short for “dadaism,” refers to the “new, irrational art movement” of the 1920s (“A Brief History of Dada”). The title of Honegger’s work literally translates to: “Dance of the Goat,” more connotatively meaning “The Goat’s Dance,” as it is indicative of a sprightly goat, parading jubilantly with the peaks and lulls of the flute melody line. Honegger’s innovative musical portrayals culminated with the invasion of France in World War II, at which point, he released works meant to inspire “hope” for the French people (Lécroart).

Sergei Prokofiev was both a pianist and composer by trade, born in Ukraine on April 23rd, 1891 and living until March 5th, 1953. Similarly to Igor Stravinsky, Prokofiev studied under Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, among other notable professors “at the St. Petersburg Conservatory” (“Sergei Prokofiev”). Stylistically, Prokofiev appeared to follow the models of both Ravel’s and Stravinsky’s substantial undertakings with modern compositional techniques. To that end, Prokofiev’s musical experiments proved to be the most radical of these attempts, providing a definitive shift into the modern and contemporary eras of music. This can be seen through Prokofiev’s adventurous dissonances, apparently a musical personification of the composer’s naturally untamed spirit (“Sergei Prokofiev”). This untamed spirit, a childish spirit perhaps, compliments the concept behind his famed *Peter and the Wolf* quite well. Prokofiev composed *Peter and the Wolf*, a musical “fairytale,” in 1936 (“Peter and the Wolf”). *Peter and the Wolf* is a “symphonic fairytale,” in the words of Prokofiev himself, once again combining orchestral instruments with ballet dancers. Each character has an accompanying orchestral instrument portraying the noises, sound effects, timbre, and color that are most closely aligned with the character. The flute, in particular, represents a “chirping” bird throughout the musical story (“Regional Peter and the Wolf”). This can be seen as the “Bird’s Theme” incorporates dainty grace notes, nimble leaps, and soaring runs, in addition to its “lively and fast” tempo (“Regional Peter and the Wolf”). Written during the time of Stalin’s reign in Russia, Prokofiev’s work provides a delightfully youthful departure from the horrors of the realities facing his home country (“Peter and the Wolf”). Relatedly, Prokofiev stated that his primary aim in telling a story through music was so that: “Children get an impression of several instruments of the orchestra just by hearing the piece performed” (Farrell).

Camargo Guarnieri was a composer of the twentieth century who was born on February 1st, 1907 and lived until January 13th, 1993, when he passed away at the age of eighty-six (“Learn About Camargo Guarnieri”). Guarnieri’s full name is: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Camargo Guarnieri, which can be attributed to his Italian father, who wanted each of his children to have “a name honoring a great composer” (Stevenson). Following his upbringing in a family that needed his musical talents to survive, Guarnieri studied at the São Paulo Musical and Theater Conservatory. He later became a student of Nadia Boulanger in Paris, as well (Stevenson). Following in the footsteps of the star Brazilian composer: Heitor Villa-Lobos, and receiving encouragement from the ethnomusicologist: Mario de Andrade, Guarnieri began writing music that became a blend of cross-cultural influences. Following the premier of possibly his most famous piece: *Canção Sertaneja*, Guarnieri wrote the piece: **“Sonatina for Flute and Piano”** in 1947. “Sonatina for Flute and Piano” is reminiscent of Guarnieri’s Brazilian heritage and influences, incorporating rhythmic and melodic motifs of music from his country of origin. A silent-film pianist, composer, and choral conductor (Stevenson), Guarnieri’s works span across song and dance (Vermont Public Radio). They essentially provide a synthesis of culturally significant, classically traditional, and refreshingly modern elements (Vermont Public Radio). Unique to Guarnieri is his ability to compose music in a multitude of forms and genres, including, but not limited to: operas, visual productions, and classical chamber pieces (Stevenson). In terms of his stylistic tendencies, Guarnieri embodies the contemporary blueprint. He masterfully incorporates dissonance into his melodic and harmonic lines that would otherwise ring of classical paradigms. This technique makes for detail-oriented studies of Guarnieri’s compositions, as well as unique listening experiences.

The work: **“Four gypsy Pieces”** for piccolo and piano accompaniment was written by **Christopher Caliendo** in 2011. Caliendo is a living composer, born in the latter half of the twentieth century, who has been hailed as a multi-talented and versatile musician. Caliendo has amassed a variety of prestigious awards, and he has witnessed countless premiers of his works at renowned venues around the world. These honors include, but are not limited to: the Henry Mancini Scholarship for Film Production, as well as “The Efficacy of Patience,” premiered at the Vatican’s Contemporary Sacred Music Festival (Godbey). Uniquely attributed to Caliendo is his wealth of compositions characterized as “world music,” meaning that he has written scores with the traditions of various cultures and peoples in mind. Correspondingly, Caliendo has written for a vast array of instruments, as well. “Four gypsy Pieces” is one such composition, paying homage to the light, agile character so often associated with the piccolo. Vibrant technical elements and extended techniques for the piccolo can be seen in numerous places throughout the piece. Much like the dance style that the piece endeavors to convey, the piccoloist must arabesque through grace notes and triplet figures, all while keeping the rhythmic precision of the work alive. It is important to note that this composition sparks a mindful conversation of the term used to describe the seemingly implied culture, being that it is disrespectful to refer to the people of Roma origin in this manner. In the context of this piece, however, the term: “gypsy” is not used to describe a people’s ethnic origin, rather it is indicative of the musical style in which the techniques employed emerged (“Grammarphobia”). Much like Guarneri, Caliendo bridges the worlds of music and dance together, as illustrated through his American Tango and gypsy Americano pieces for flute and guitar. Caliendo has also worked largely on compositional projects in the film and television series industries, which comprise some of his most famous works to date (*IMDb*).

Amanda Harberg is a living, female composer who was born in 1973 (*Naxos*).

According to John Corigliano, a modern-day composer whom Harberg has worked with, Harberg's music "touches the soul and invigorates the brain at the same time" (*Naxos*). Harberg completed her work: "**Sonata for Piccolo and Piano**" in 2018, which she has since expanded into a complete concerto, premiered in 2021. This pair of pieces for piccolo and accompaniment combines conventions of: "neoclassical, post-romantic and jazz" genres (Caruso). Harberg's compositional tendencies can be characterized as an alloy of a vast array of styles, effectively blurring the divisions between classical and contemporary styles. According to the *New York Times*, Harberg's works are also rather "lyric[al]" in that they sound much like singing voices, rather than instrumental voices ("Amanda Harberg"). This is masterfully intentional, as Harberg, a woodwind composer, finds it particularly essential to introduce more piccolo literature to the solo repertoire. Most piccolo literature to date is found in the context of an ensemble because the instrument is viewed as the high-pitched addition for a variety of tone colors. Despite this classification of the piccolo, Harberg believes that the instrument is beautiful both within an ensemble and outside of an ensemble. Thus, Harberg has made it her mission to transcend the stereotypes of this high-pitched instrument (Caruso). As Harberg crusades for the production of more piccolo repertoire, she also continues to work as a composition professor "at Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts and at the Interlochen Arts Camp" (*Naxos*). Through these engagements, Harberg encourages the next generation of composers to follow the music that moves them, personally, while exposing her students to the compositional techniques they need to succeed ("Amanda Harberg"). Additionally, Harberg is constantly developing her skills on the piano, which she often uses to accompany the flutists and piccoloists premiering her compositions (*Mason Gross*).

Notable Recordings

“Fantasie” Op. 79, Gabriel Fauré

- **Sir James Galway:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBuILwbk1PI>
- **Emmanuel Pahud:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=md7FtZ_OEEE
- **Denis Bouriakov:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zu5rTGvtXdg>

Daphnis et Chloé, Maurice Ravel

- **Emmanuel Pahud:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJAATKkQUcw>
- **Ulla Miilmann:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pPs80KdH_M
- **Giampaolo Pretto:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2oHGekW72U>

Firebird Suite, Igor Stravinsky

- **Israel Philharmonic Orchestra:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz6ZdzqxoyM>
- **Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (Flute Solo at 03:50):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz6ZdzqxoyM>
- **Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Flute Solo at 03:45):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHxstiIybz4>

“Danse de la Chèvre,” Arthur Honegger

- **Jean Pierre Rampal:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al5c-mLo3Cg>
- **Sir James Galway:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7ptmbdH3XY>
- **Alain Marion:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjmIDtVACX0>

Peter and the Wolf, Sergei Prokofiev

- **Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITBphW3qB0s>
- **Springfield Symphony Orchestra:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqZRHv7iqfQ>

- **Qatar Philharmonic (Flute Solo at 01:18):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oX9ww0C1fN0>

“Sonatina for Flute and Piano,” Camargo Guarnieri

- **Carlos Feller:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FR92X4Mk30c>
- **James Dutton:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJsM5sTr-uE>
- **Immanuel Davis:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngX-NjpWVfo>

“Four gypsy Pieces,” Christopher Caliendo

- **Nicola Mazzanti*:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEqyxvoBXyk>

*Note: This piece was specifically written for Nicola Mazzanti; therefore, he is the only piccoloist who has recorded this piece.

“Sonata for Piccolo and Piano,” Amanda Harberg

- **Erica Peel:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6lb05tJH6U>
- **Mindy Kaufman:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfwx63HN7Y0>
- **Regina Helcher Yost (1st movement only):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBX660E4kDk>

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