ALEXANDER SCRIABIN

THE DEFINITION OF A NEW SOUND SPACE IN THE CRISIS OF TONALITY

Luís Miguel Carvalhais Figueiredo Borges Coelho

Tese apresentada à Universidade de Évora
para obtenção do Grau de Doutor em Música e Musicologia
Especialidade: Musicologia

ORIENTADORES: *Paulo de Assis*
Benoît Gibson

ÉVORA, JULHO DE 2016

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To Marta, João and Andoni, after one year of silent presence.

To my parents.

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I would like to express my gratitude to my friend Paulo de Assis, for all his dedication and encouragement in supervising my research. His enthusiasm, knowledge and always-challenging opinions were a permanent stimulus to look further.

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I am never grateful enough to my sister Mafalda and her husband Francisco for their constant support—and to my nephew, Pedro, for being a new reason of joy.

To Xico and Tiago I am always grateful for an ever-lasting friendship.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the new compositional system introduced by Scriabin in 1909–1910, focusing on *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, n°1, *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 and *Promethée* op. 60. Based upon exhaustive pitch and formal analysis the present study (a) claims the inexistence of non-functional pitches in all analysed works, (b) shows that transpositional procedures have structural consequences on the "basic chord", and (c) for the first time advances an explanation on the intrinsic relation between the sonata form and the slow *Luce* line in *Promethée* op. 60.

Keywords: Scriabin, Prometheus, Mystic Chord, Synaesthesia, Theosophy

RESUMO

Sob o título de "Alexander Scriabin: a definição dum novo espaço sonoro na crise da Tonalidade", a presente tese descreve o novo sistema compositivo introduzido por Scriabin em 1909–1910, tomando como ponto de partida o estudo de *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, nº1, *Prélude* op. 59, nº2 e *Promethée* op. 60. Baseando-se numa análise exaustiva das alturas e da forma, este estudo (a) conclui pela inexistência de alturas não funcionais em qualquer das obras analisadas, (b) mostra que os procedimentos transpositivos têm consequências estruturais no "acorde básico", e (c) pela primeira vez explica a estrutura formal de *Promethée* op. 60 a partir da relação intrínseca entre a sua forma sonata e a linha lenta de *Luce.*

Palavras-chave: Scriabin, Prometeu, Acorde Místico, Sinestesia, Teosofia

ABBREVIATIONS LIST

MC	Mystic Chord
CC	Chord Centre
T	Transpositional level, numbered from 0/unison to 11/major seventh

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation describes the new compositional system introduced by Scriabin in 1909–1910, providing a detailed formal and pitch analysis of the four works that firstly implemented it: *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, n°1, *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 and *Promethée* op. 60. The pitch analysis will particularly focus Scriabin's motivic and thematic procedures, as a crucial element in defining his large-scale pitch-class structures.

Chapter one introduces the new musical system developed by Scriabin in the years 1909–1910, referring to his own account of the system's main features and to the secondary literature. It includes (a) the notions of basic chord and chord centre, (b) the main transposition procedures, (c) the T3 transposition cycle, and (d) extended or variant configurations of the chord centre. Crucially, this chapter argues that non-functional pitches are inexistent in the studied pieces, and that particular transpositions of the basic chord do have important structural consequences (some of which are presented here for first time). Moreover, given its intrinsic relation to the musical conception, Scriabin's affinities to Theosophy are briefly addressed.

Chapter two contains detailed analysis of three piano miniatures composed in close vicinity to *Promethée* op. 60: *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, n°1 and *Prélude* op. 59, n°2. *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 was probably composed as a small-scale study for *Promethée* op. 60, *Poème* op. 59, n°1 explores elision procedures within the chord centre and *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 introduces the Mystic Chord II. This chapter also functions as an introduction and preparation to the large scope analysis of *Promethée* op. 60.

Chapter three is entirely devoted to the analysis of *Promethée* op. 60, particularly focusing on: (a) the *Tastiera per Luce*—colour keyboard—and its two lines, (b) the sonata form and its intrinsic relation to the slow line of *Luce*, (c) the concrete relations of the music fabric to Helena Blavatsky's theosophical, esoteric thought, and (d) the pitch-based analysis of the complete score.

A summary of the most striking aspects of this study is offered at the end of the book as a Conclusion. In addition to the main text a Glossary is given at the end of the book, containing all technical and theosophical terms used throughout the dissertation.

I. A NEW MUSICAL SYSTEM

1 Extinguishing dominant

After his Piano Sonata n°4 op, 30, written in 1903 under the influence of Richard Wagner's harmonic world, the chaining of tritone-based harmonies as a means of delaying resolution became increasingly prevalent in the works of Alexander Scriabin, dramatically hastening the evolution of his musical language. The disruptive potential of the tritone interval was the very reason for such a rapid evolution.

As Taruskin (2000) points out, the tritone establishes in relation to a "defining root" a "minimally expressed dominant function", in such a way that the "leading tone will seek its resolution by ascent [and] the seventh by descent" (p. 329). Yet,

> Because of the tritone's symmetrical properties, by changing the defining root we can cause an exchange of the two functions: what had been the leading tone tending upward will become the seventh tending downward, and vice versa. (...) The two roots that accomplish this transformation must themselves lie a tritone apart (Taruskin, 2000, pp. 329–330).

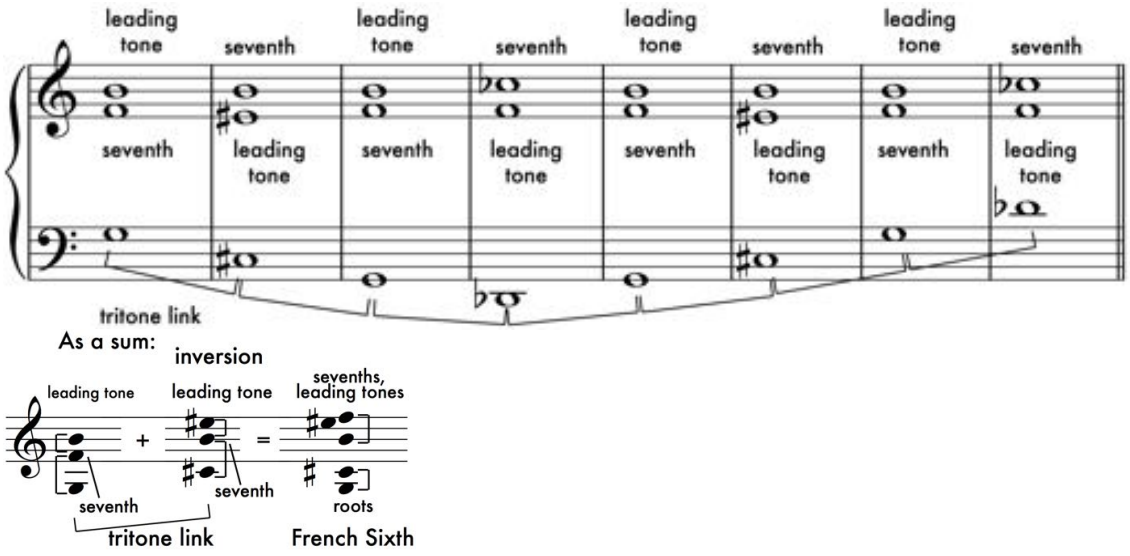
Dernova was the first to identify the significance of this particular chaining in Scriabin's works, calling it the Tritone Link (Taruskin, 2000, p. 330). She also showed how Scriabin's extensive use of the dominant chord with lowered fifth—which could also be described in terms of a French Sixth—was meant to overlap the root notes: what originally were two differentiated chords became, thanks to invariance, a single thetrachord, which was simultaneously dominant of two, also augmented four distant, tonics (as cited in Bowers, 1974, p. 154).

The chaining of such chords tends to dispel their highly directional potential, converting them into static entities, because no change of pitch-class content follows a functional change, which is merely suggested by the interchange of root notes itself. As Taruskin explains,

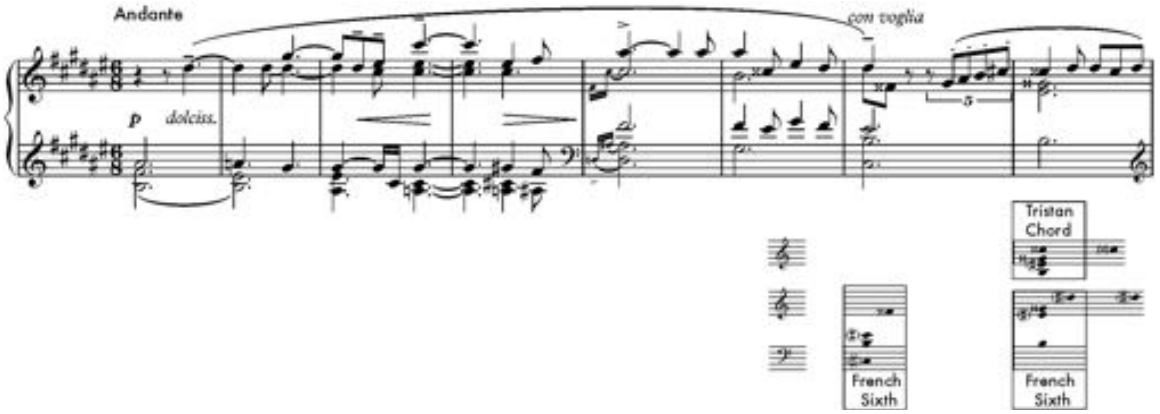
> Until one of the roots leaves the tritone treadmill and proceeds along the circle of fifths (or, in a pinch by semitone) the eventual destination of the tritone is in doubt, and one can even forget that the tritone *has* a destination (2000, p. 329–330).

That is why he rightly considers this "extremely potent means of prolonging and embellishing the dominant function" to be even more subversive than Wagner's, containing in itself "the seeds for the eventual neutralization of that function, indeed, of 'function' itself, and its veritable extinguishing" (2000, p. 331).

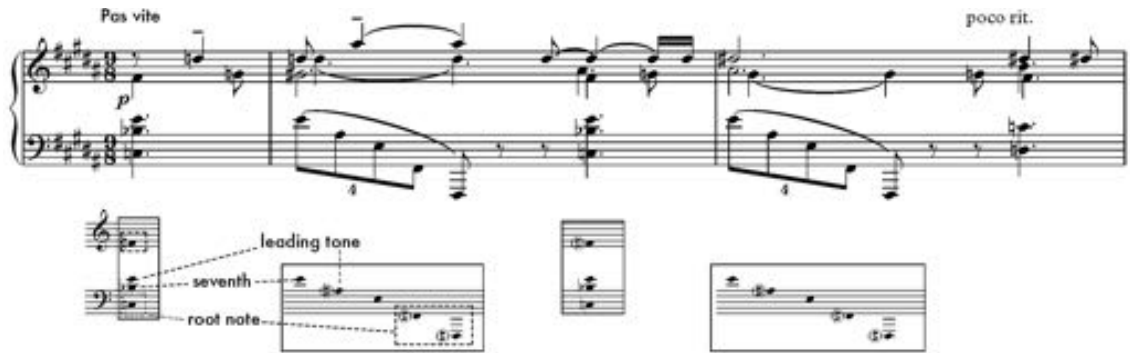
Example 1. Scriabin's tritone link (reproduced from Taruskin, 2000, p. 331)



Example 2. Piano sonata n°4, op. 30: bars 1–8



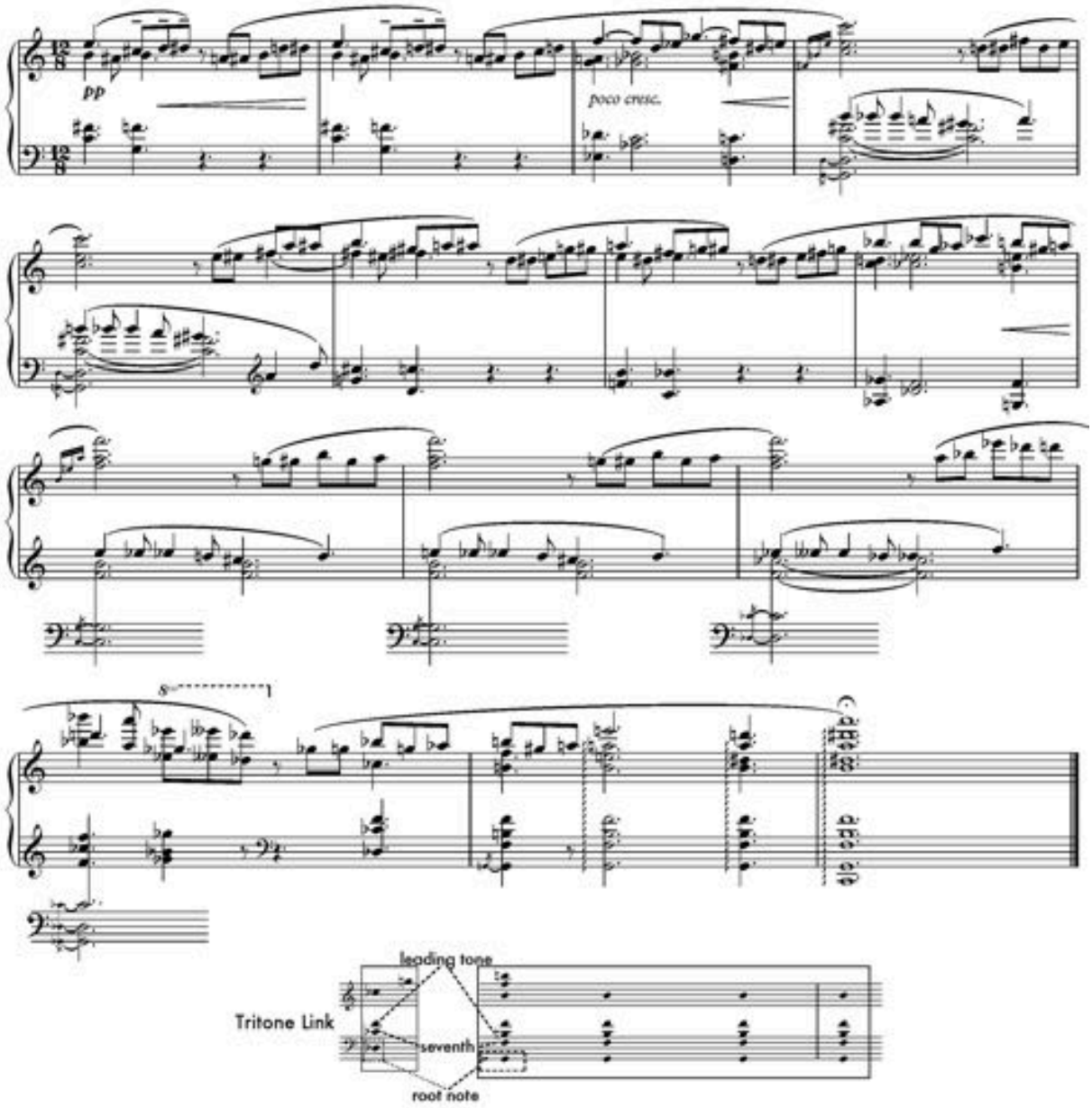
Example 3. Tritone Link in *Poème languide* op. 52, n°3: bars 1–2



In 1908, five years after his Piano Sonata n°4, op. 30, Scriabin's procedures for systematically delaying resolution reached paroxysm in *Désir* op. 57, n°1. Its bass line distantly suggests an eventual resolution to a C major tonic that never arrives. The only classical triad articulated in the whole piece—

the augmented fourth distant G♭ major chord in bar 12— is however coexistent with a C♭ in the sustained harmony. The final gesture of the piece introduces a D♭–G♮ Tritone Link, whose resolution, suggested by the first two notes of the last *arpeggiato* chord, is frustrated by the complete deployment of the harmony. Even if the piece that completes the set, *Caresse dansée* op. 57, n°2, does resolve the same basic material to the expected C major chord, *Désir* op. 57 n°1 was a clear sign that dominant function, and hence the tonal system, were just one step away from extinguishing. Scriabin took that next step by changing context.

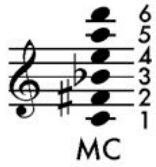
Example 4. *Désir,* op. 57, n°1



2 Establishing a new context

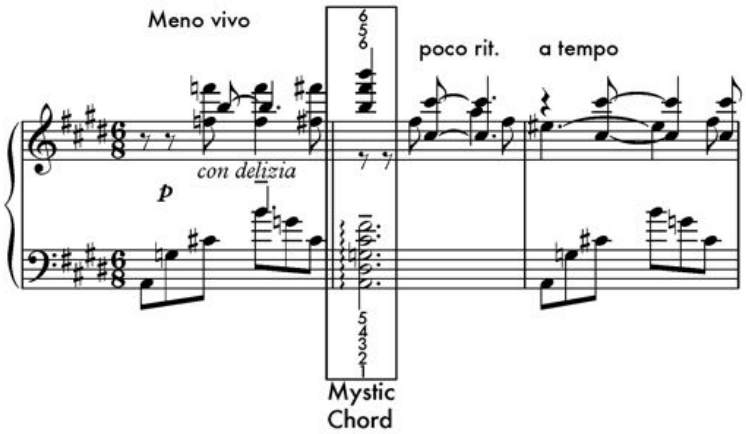
In 1909–1910 Scriabin introduced what in his own words was an "entirely different system" (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 289), with the "most quitessentially Scriabinesque of harmonies" (Taruskin, 2000, 340) at its core: the Mystic Chord.[1]

Example 5. Mystic Chord



Taruskin (2000) suggests the Mystic Chord could have been experimentally derived from one of the most characteristic harmonies of the *Poème de l'extase* op. 54, which is also the last chord of *Désir* op. 57, n°1 (p. 338).[2] The first vertical articulation of a complete Mystic Chord is indeed featured in the work that immediately followed the *Poème de l'Extase op. 54:* the Piano Sonata n°5, op. 53.[3] Moreover, this early occurrence of the Mystic Chord is articulated within its basic superposed-fourths structure.

Example 6. Piano Sonata n°5, op. 53: bars 263–265



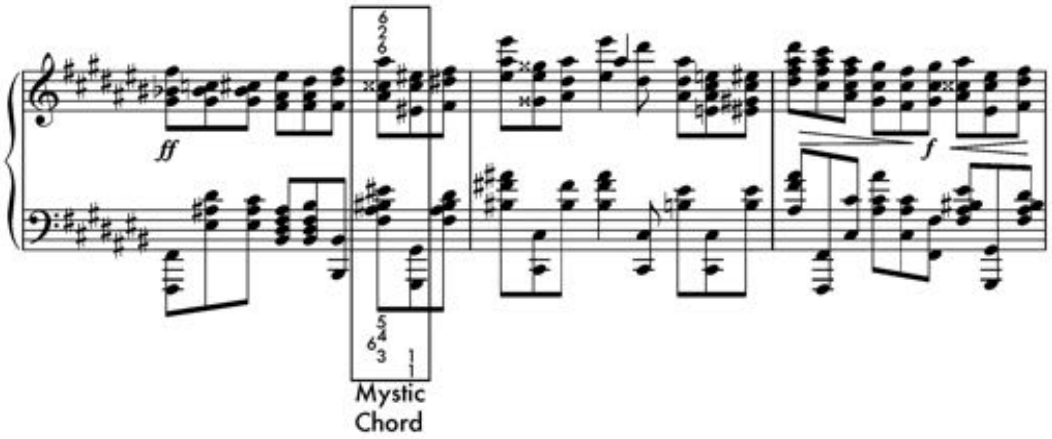
[1] Rosa Newmarch, had already called it a "'mystical' chord" (1915, p. 230), in her article for the Musical Times on occasion of the English premiere of

[2] Taruskin shows that, tacking A♮ as the axial note between the last chord of *Feillet d'Album* op. 57, n°1 and an A♮-based Mystic Chord, the intervallic content of the former is inverted by the last.

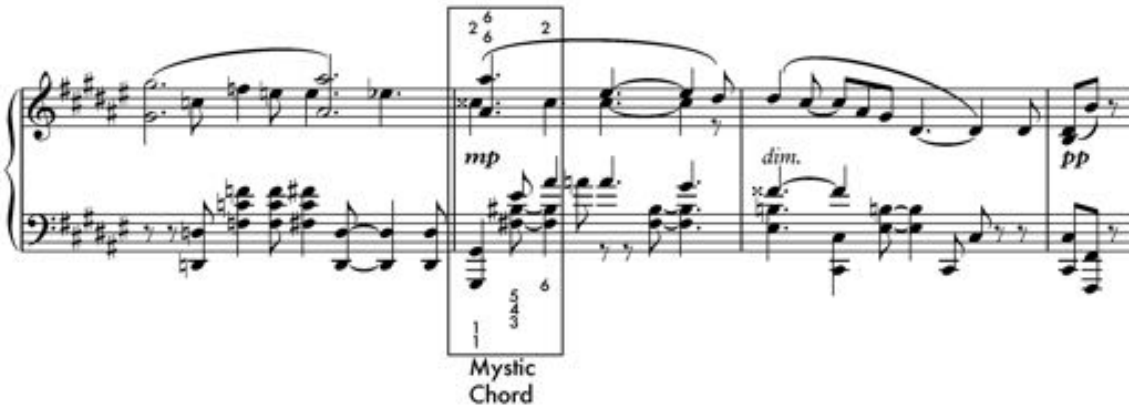
[3] In spite of its opus number the Piano Sonata n°5, op. 53, was composed after the *Poème de l'Extase,* op. 54 (Bowers, 1996, III, p. 176).

However, complete Mystic Chords –though not vertically simultaneous–can be found in much earlier works, such as *Prélude* op. 37, n°2, (Sabaneev, 1987, p. 178), or, even before, in the Piano Sonata n°4, op. 30 (Eberle, 1978, p. 17).

Example 7. *Prélude* op. 37, n°2: bars 6–8



Example 8. Piano Sonata n°4, op. 30, second movement: bars 6–8(1)



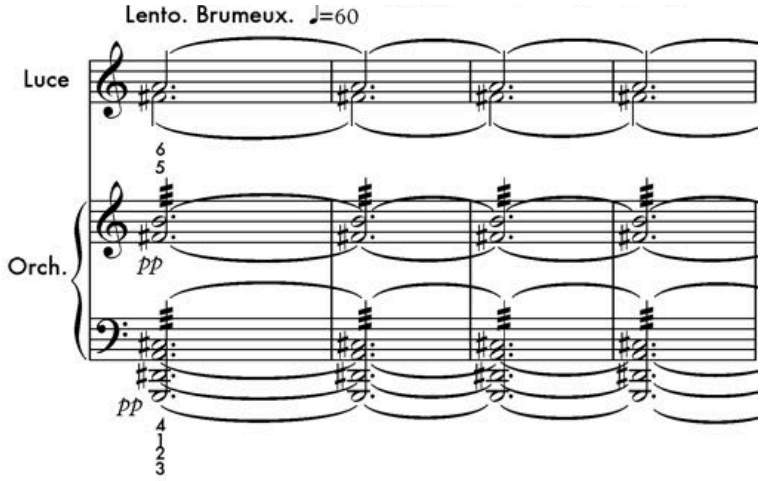
On the other hand, the first four constituents of the Mystic Chord—partials 1–4[4]—form amongst themselves the most distinctive harmony of Scriabin's previous creative period: the Tritone Link. Both facts show that, even if it tracking the first occurrences of the Mystic Chord in Scriabin's earlier works is certainly of interest, the groundbreaking aspect of his new sound space[5] was not the particular harmony of the Mystic Chord itself, but the context in which it was used. In all above quoted works, the Mystic

[4] Every constituent of the basic Mystic Chord is called partial, in this study, and is assigned a number corresponding to its relative position in relation to the root note. In lowered partials, with respect to the basic Mystic Chord, a flat precedes the original digit.

[5] The concept of sound space was firstly introduced by Bayer (1987), who has defined it as "a mode of intrinsic spacialization, entirely defined by the respective situation of the sounds towards each other" (p. 13). Each musical system defines a set of possible sounds and regulates the way they relate to one another, thus delimiting and structuring its specific sound space.

Chord was still articulated as a dominant that sought resolution;[6] As Scriabin explained himself, in his new musical system the Mystic Chord is a "basic chord"—no longer "a dominant chord, but a tonic chord, a consonance", thus substituting the previous function of the triad (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 55). The first four bars of *Promethée* op. 60 constitute the best example of a chord, which used as a consonance, has lost all its previous directionality.

Example 9. *Promethée* op. 60: bars 1–4



The basic chord was the common ground of melody and harmony, because their hitherto functional difference was now abrogated. They were, in Scriabin's own words, "two sides of the same coin" (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 54): "melody (...) an unfolded harmony and harmony (...) a 'condensed' melody" (p. 289). "As everything else", harmony and melody had to be "merged with one another in the world of oneness" (idem). Such an assumption implied a completely new functional frame, particularly because Scriabin considered the V–I polarity of common-practice tonality to be precisely grounded on difference between harmony and melody: classical melody was intrinsically correlated with the dominant's craving for the tonic, producing a lyrical mood that was no longer in order. The new axiom was: "melody is made of harmonic tones and vice versa" (ibidem).

In order to constitute a new sound space without the old V–I polarity two very distinct options were possible:

1. Establishing a non-functional system.
2. Replacing the old V-I polarity.

[6] To a D Major chord that would never arrive, in the Piano Sonata n°5, op. 53, and to F♯, in Prélude op. 37, n° 2 and in the Piano Sonata n° 4, op. 30.

Scriabin took the second. In his new sound space each transposition of the basic chord would define a precise centricity grounded in its root note and a new polarity would be established between T6—augmented fourth—transpositionally related chords. The previous relation of the Tritone Link with two different tonics was thereby abrogated. On the other hand, if radically taken, functional equivalence between melody and harmony had an inevitable consequence, which Scriabin made explicit himself: in his new system there was no room for any "single superfluous note" (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 55). Giving *Promethée* op. 60 as an example, he further explained that even the work's figurations belonged all to the basic chord (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 285). This statement, systematically undervalued in previous analytical works on Scriabin, is confirmed in the present study.

3 Scriabin's chord centre

In 1935, Zofia Lissa characterized Scriabin's basic chord, the Mystic Chord, as a *Klangzentrum*[7]—Chord Centre—, which she described as the "generic basis of composition from and on which all constructive elements derive and depend, both in terms of harmony and melody" (p. 18). Very similar to Scriabin's above quoted statements on his basic chord, Lissa's description of the chord centre didn't suppose a new insight to Scriabin's late composing technique. However, from then on, the term *Klangzentrum* was generalized in German language literature. It is taken in this study as well, although provided with an extended content: it is used to distinguishing the Mystic Chord from the set it forms with its below detailed extensions.

Von Gleich summarized, in his study on the orchestral works of Scriabin, what he believed to be the ruling principles of the chord centre in *Promethée* op. 60 (1963, p.69). He rightly noticed that the chord centre could be indistinctively featured (a) in its complete or any of its incomplete forms, and (b) with all kinds of internal permutations and inversions. Defining as harmonic those tones that belong to the chord centre, Von Gleich contradicted Scriabin's above quoted statement, however, by sustaining that non-harmonic tones were possible within Scriabin's chord-centre technique, also claiming that combination of different chord centres never occurred (idem). The existence of non-harmonic tones in Scriabin's late style has remained undisputed till the present day. The inexistence of combined chord

[7] The concept *Klangzentrum* (Chord Centre) was created in 1927 by Erpf and reused in 1935 by Lissa, although with a different meaning. According to Eberle (1978), "the differences in content both authors attribute to the term (...) arise from its use for Scriabin's late period" by Lissa, while Erpf relates it to Schoenberg's atonal and twelve-tone periods (p. 49).

centres has been occasionally questioned, but still had a very significant influence in later analytic studies.[8] Both claims are questioned in the present study.

In English language literature, the term *Klangzentrum* is very exceptionally used, and even the concept of a basic chord has been predominantly devalued, in favour of pitch-class set theory concepts.[9] Some tools of the pitch-class set theory are, without question, a useful instrument in the motivic and short-scale analysis, and are therefore used in this dissertation. However, a pitch-class set theory based analysis fits uneasily larger scale structures that (a) define a precise centricity, (b) establish precise functional relations and (c) whose nature does not depend on completeness—as it is the case of Scriabin's basic chords. With the pitch-class set theory as sole conceptual background Baker (1986) claims, for instance, that the "6–34 [Mystic Chord] almost never appears as a melodic motive in *Prometheus"* (p. 237)—a statement that is only unquestionable in its own terms. Attributing the Mystic Chord a quality that is intrinsically alien to its nature, Baker's analysis of *Promethée* op. 60 systematically takes as different entities what is, in fact, the same basic chord, with degree of completeness as anachronistic criteria. Perle, assumes that "for Scriabin, as for Schoenberg, and almost at the same time, a diatonic scale of functionally differentiated notes was replaced by a semitonal scale of functionally undifferentiated notes" (1984, p. 102)—a claim that clearly contradicts Scriabin's reference to the replacement of the V-I polarity by a new ♯IV-I polarity. Far more moderate in the use of the pitch-class set theory, Pople, wrote that the "visual aid corroborates the long-standing publicity concerning the consistent function of 6–34 A [Mystic Chord] as a consonance" (p. 217)—Pople's contribution in clarifying the transpositional patterns of the repeated sections in *Promethée* op. 60, was of great significance, as we shall see in chapter III.

Three varied forms were added to the original Mystic Chord by basic-chord analysts. Eberle (1978) published a Scriabin's draft from the period of *Promethée* op. 60—Example 10—in which the Mystic Chord appears as a heptachord,[10] with the addition of a partial 7 to the original six. By featuring all possible rotations of the heptatonic Mystic Chord and of the correlated seven-tone scale, the draft also shows that Scriabin's late style, as Perle (1984) referred, "makes no distinction between chord and scale" (p. 104), illustrating the functional equivalence of Scriabin's vertical and horizontal thinking.

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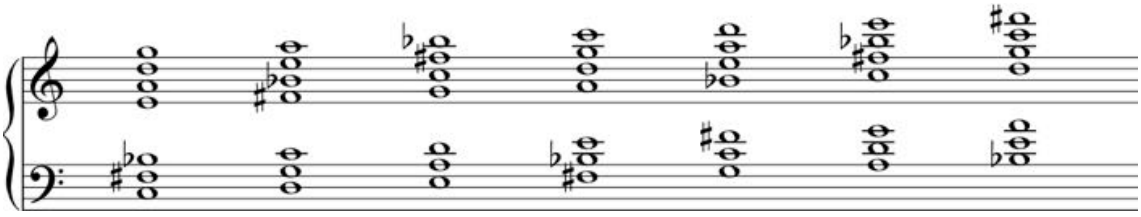
8 Eberle (1978), for instance, explicitly questions it, in relation to some specific passages of *Promethée* op. 60. However, his analysis of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 is pervaded by its spirit, describing as non-harmonic, tones that are in fact related to a secondary chord centre.

9 Sabbagh (2001), who specifically refers to the *Klangzentrum* (p. 14), and Gawboy (2010) are exceptions in English language literature, basing their analysis on the notion of a basic chord.

10 Interestingly, the acoustic scale—or Bàrtok scale—could also be derived from Scriabin's heptatonic chord.

Example 10. Scriabin's draft (reproduced from Eberle 1978, p. 64)

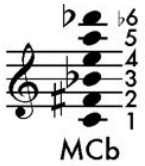


Eberle (1978) also found that Scriabin used two basic chords in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2: the Mystic Chord and a varied form, which results of lowering the original partial 4 (p. 81). This particular form is called Mystic Chord II in the present study.

Example 11. Mystic Chord II

Manfred Kelkel (1984) showed that Scriabin frequently uses an alternative form of the Mystic Chord, which differs from the original in its lowered partial 6. He named the resulting set as Mystic Chord b (Book III, p. 34).

Example 12. Mystic Chord b



Scriabin referred to both the Mystic Chord b and the Mystic Chord II in relation to the Piano Sonata n°7, op. 64 and the Piano Sonata n°6, op. 62, respectively (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 285).

In the four works analysed in the present study, (a) partials 6 and ♭6—in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, n°1 and *Promethée* op. 60—and (b) partials 4 and ♭4—in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2—alternate without ever coexisting, showing they are part of different entities[11] at this early stage of Scriabin's new sound space. On the other hand, featured in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Prélude* op. 59,

[11] As we shall see, partial ♭4 is used as an alternate entity, while partial ♭6 is only featured as a variant form.

n°2 and *Promethée* op. 60, partial 7 is treated as a natural extension of the hexaphonic basic chords, since it may co-exist with all other partials of the Mystic Chord, Mystic Chord b or Mystic Chord II.

Why Scriabin uses these precise variants of the Mystic Chord and not any other is a question that should be asked. For address it, the main transpositional procedures of Scriabin's new system have to be firstly explained.

4 Main transpositional procedures

According to Von Gleich (1963), any given chord centre could be freely followed by any other, in *Promethée* op. 60 (p. 69). Indeed, no pre-defined rule prevents any particular succession of chord centres, in Scriabin's new sound space. However, Von Gleich's claim tells us very little about Scriabin's composing procedures: if it is unquestionable that all kinds of transpositional relations between successive governing chord centres are possible in *Promethée* op. 60, some of them are overwhelmingly more frequent than others.

Pople (1989) rightly pointed that "by far, the most frequent successions observable in Prometheus [*Promethée* op. 60] are between sonorities reducible to forms of 6–34A [Mystic Chord] that differ by a multiple of ic3 [minor third]", giving the "opening of the work [as] example" (p.230). Gawboy (2010) inspiringly named the minor third related chord centres of the opening of *Promethée* op. 60 as "the 'home' F♯-A♮-C♮-E♭ constellation" (p. 257). Sabagh (2003), who went as far as to count all transpositional relations in *Promethée* op. 60, found that transpositional relations within minor third—T3—transposition cycles represented almost 70% of the total transpositions featured in *Promethée* op. 60 (p. 93). No less significant are his conclusions about Scriabin's transpositional patterns. He showed that

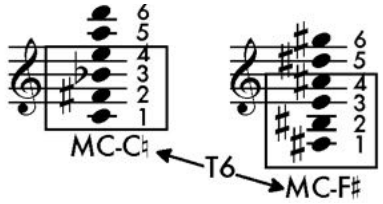
1. *Promethée* op. 60 often uses pivotal chord centres to switch between T3 transposition cycles (pp. 94–101).
2. In some of his later works, "Scriabin leaves the [cycle] of fifths, using other, also equidistant [cycles] instead" (p. 148). Particular significant, is this respect, is the alternate use of two different transposition cycles in *Etrangeté* op. 63, n°2—the minor third and the whole tone transposition cycle (p. 142). As Sabbagh perceptively states, "from each note of a circle another circle can be opened" (p. 143).

As we shall see in chapter III, transposition cycles other than the T3 transposition cycle are also featured in *Promethée* op. 60, always with the significant purpose of switching between different T3 transposition cycles.

5 The ♯IV-I polarity and the T3 Transposition cycle

Thanks to the very morphology of the Mystic Chord, Scriabin's new ♯IV-I polarity has a very distinct nature to the old dominant-tonic polarity. In fact, T6 transpositionally related Mystic Chords, albeit featuring the most distant intervallic relation possible within the octave's range between their respective partials 1, have a very close pitch-class content, materialized by invariance between their partials 1–4—those that previously compressed the Tritone Link. Moreover, partials 1 and 2 of any given pair of T6 transpositionally related Mystic Chords reproduce within each one of them the intervallic relation—and thus the polarity—that separates their respective partials 1. Transitions between T6 related Mystic Chords tend thereby to be smooth.

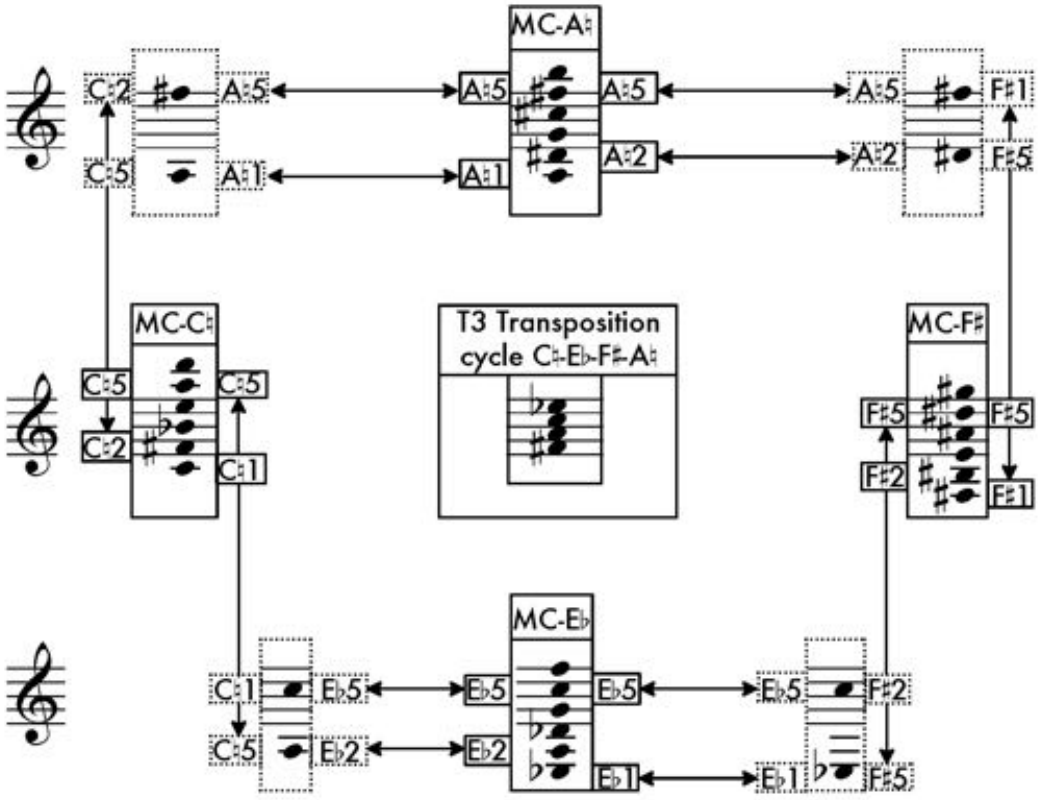
Example 13. Invariance between T6 transpositional related Mystic Chords



After symmetrically dividing the octave with the T6 transpositionally related Mystic Chords that define the new polarity, Scriabin subdivides the resulting augmented fourths into two parts of equal size by adding the minor-third related Mystic Chords to the set. A complete T3 transposition cycle is thus constituted. The two Mystic Chords that complete the cycle establish a secondary polar relation with each other and, thanks to the potential of their pitch-class content, simultaneously stress the main polar relation of the first two Mystic Chords of the set. That pitch-class potential is not due to invariance itself—two times lower between third minor Mystic Chords than between the polar augmented fourth distant Mystic Chords—but to the quality of the invariant partials. A T9 transposition of any given Mystic Chord functionally transforms (a) the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 5 of the starting Mystic Chord into partial 1 of the transposed one, and (b) the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 2, the

representative partial of the main augmented fourth polar relation within the starting Mystic Chord, in partial 5 of the transposed Mystic Chord—Example 14. In its turn, the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 5 of the T9 transposed Mystic Chord signals the first partial of the next T9 transpositionally related Mystic Chord—the Mystic Chord that establishes with the first of these three the defining augmented fourth polarity of Scriabin's new sound space. Reversely, a T3 transposition of any given Mystic Chord functionally transforms (a) the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 1 of the starting Mystic Chord into partial 5 of the transposed one, which points itself to the polar partial 2 within the following transpositionally related Mystic Chord, and (b) the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 5 of the starting Mystic Chord into the polar partial 2 within the transposed one. Finally, in its turn, the pitch-class that corresponds to partial 2 of the T3 transposed Mystic Chord signals the first partial of its polar T6 transposed Mystic Chord.

Example 14. T3 Transposition cycle

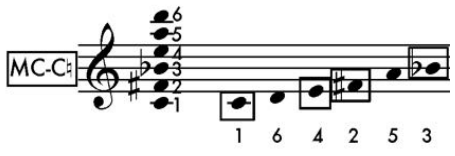
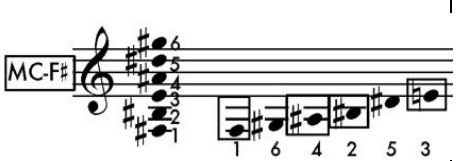
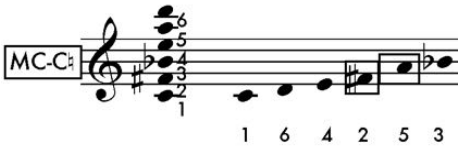
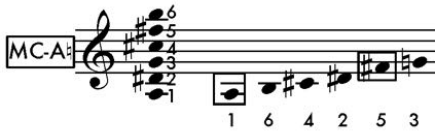
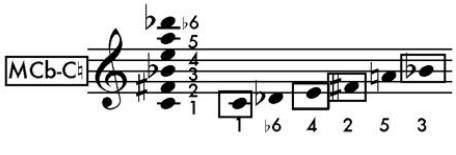
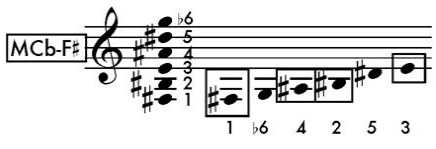
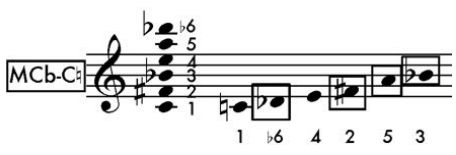
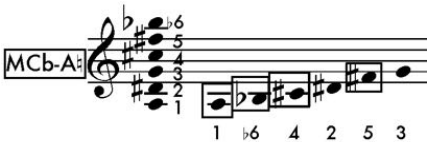


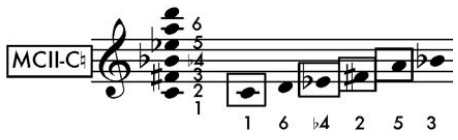
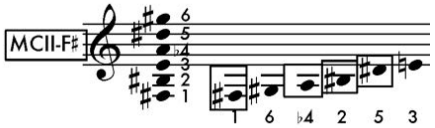
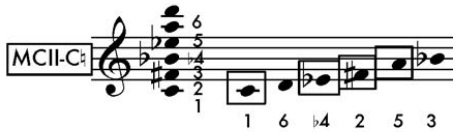
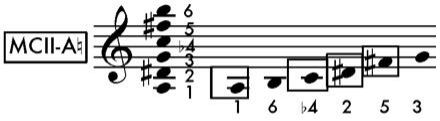
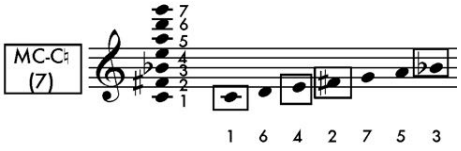
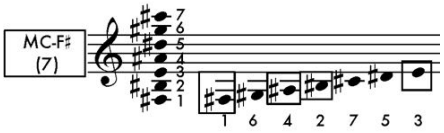
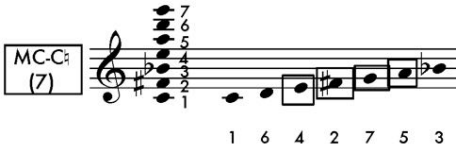
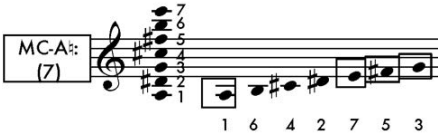
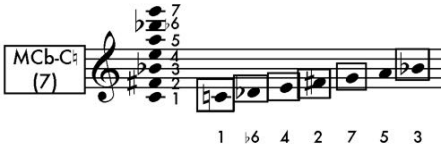
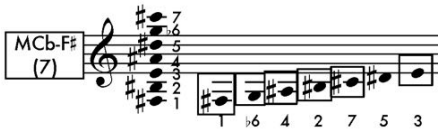
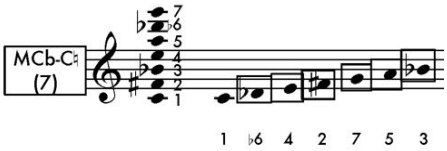
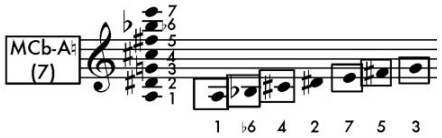
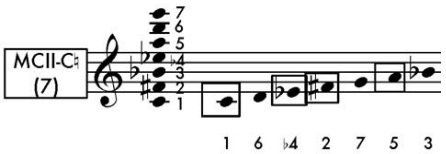
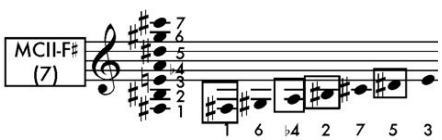
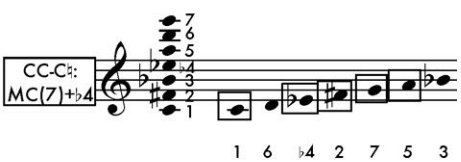
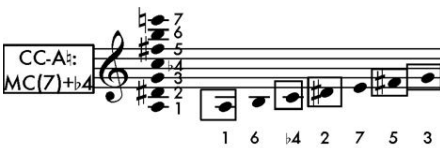
Even if a complete T3 transpositional cycle of Mystic Chords includes all twelve chromatic pitch-classes, all described functional relations are established within just four of them—C♮, E♭, F♯, A♮ in the T3 transposition cycle shown in Example 14—each one standing for one of the four Mystic Chords of the cycle as its representative partial 1. On the other hand, all described functional relations depend

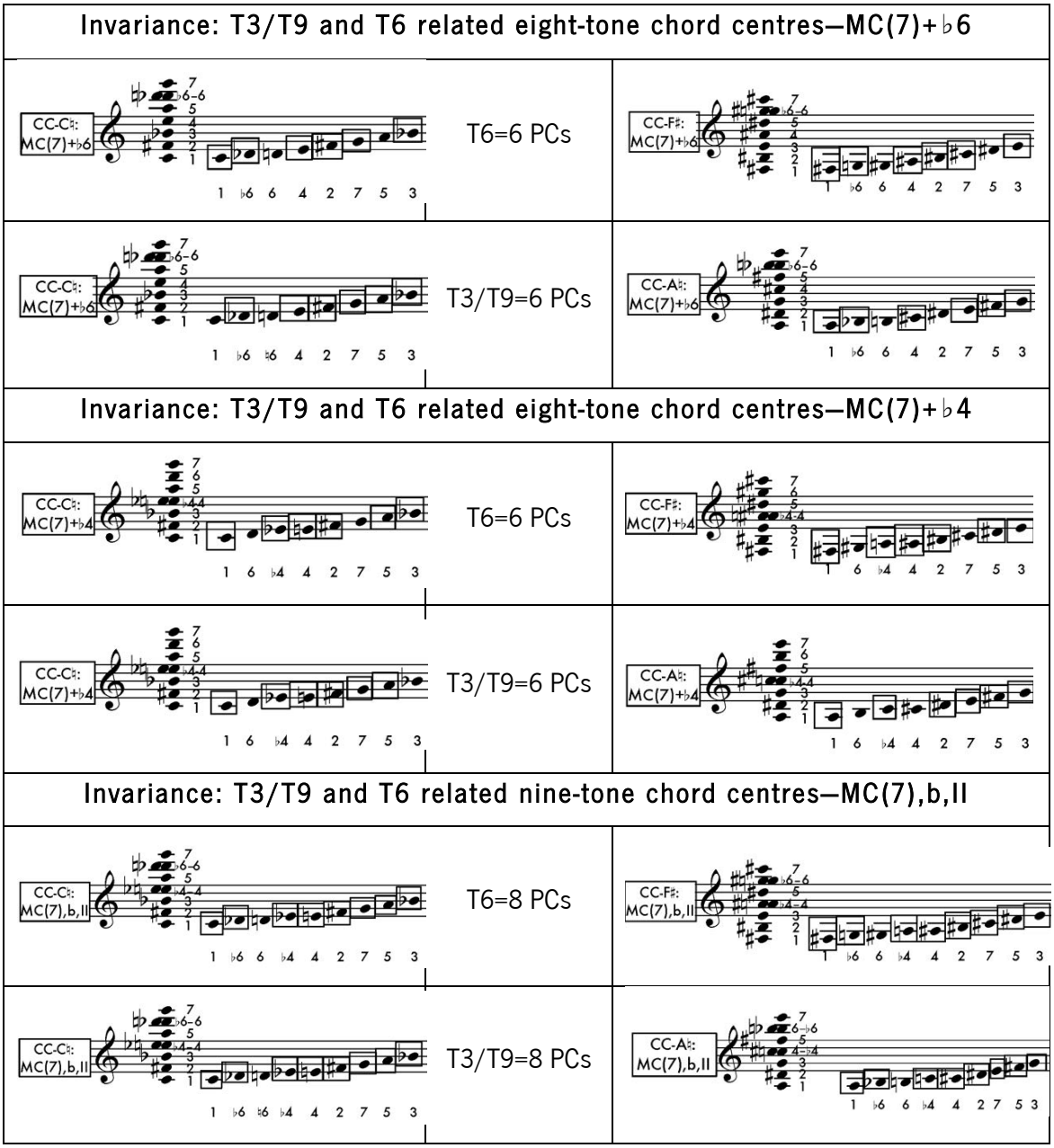
on the same three partials in each one of the four Mystic Chords of the cycle, partials 1, 2 and 5, which thus become the structural axis, the ontological nucleus, of the Mystic Chord and of the Chord Centre. Partials 1, 2 and 5 remain for this reason unchanged in all different configurations of the Chord Centre—this is the first and main reason for the intervallic stability of partials 1, 2 and 5 within any given Mystic Chord.

As Table 1 shows, all morphologic changes to the basic form of the Mystic Chord, whether changing or incrementing the initial pitch-class content, increase invariance within the T3 transposition cycle. Considering the heptatonic form of the Mystic Chord, partials ♭6 and ♭4 are the modifications to the initial set with more invariant potential, since their correspondent pitch-classes belong simultaneously to all other three members of the T3 transposition cycle, while hypothetically lowering partials 1, 2 and 5 would only increase invariance with one other member of the T3 transpositional cycle. Lowering partials 3 and 7 of the heptatonic Mystic Chord would be redundant, by merely duplicating already existent pitch-classes. The low invariance potential of hypothetically lowered partials 1, 2 and 5 is a second, though indirect reason, for their overall stability within Scriabin's chord centre.

Table 1. Invariance within the T3 transposition cycle

Invariance between T3/T9 and T6 related Mystic Chords		
	T6=4 PCs	
	T3/T9=2 PCs	
Invariance between T3/T9 and T6 related Mystic Chords b		
	T6=4 PCs	
	T3/T9=4 PCs	

Invariance between T3/T9 and T6 related Mystic Chords II		
	T6=4 PCs	
	T3/T9=4 PCs	
Invariance: T3/T9 and T6 related heptatonic Mystic Chords		
	T6=4 PCs	
	T3/T9=4 PCs	
Invariance: T3/T9 and T6 related heptatonic Mystic Chords b		
	T6=6 PCs	
	T3/T9=6 PCs	
Invariance: T3/T9 and T6 related heptatonic Mystic Chords II		
	T6=4 PCs	
	T3/T9=5 PCs	



6 Transpositional consequences

Different configurations of the Chord Centre result in different invariance relations between the four members of one T3 transposition cycle and may induce the prevalence of a particular transposition level over the other. This is particularly true in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, which stages conflict between the hexaphonic Mystic Chord and the heptatonic Mystic Chord II—precisely the only two configurations that feature different invariance levels between T3/T9 and T6 transpositionally related chord centres. As Table 1 shows, invariance is two times greater within T6 than within T3/T9 transpositionally related

hexaphonic Mystic Chords. The heptatonic Mystic Chord II, on the contrary, features greater invariance when transposed at T3/T9 than at T6. Those facts result, in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, in a massive prevalence of T3/T9 transpositions, when the heptatonic Mystic Chord II is deployed, as Baker (1986) perceptively noticed (p. 140), while T6 transpositions only exist under the governance of the hexaphonic Mystic Chord.[12]

7 The T3 transposition cycle as pan-chord centre

The intrinsic relations of the very structure of Scriabin's chord centre with the T3 transposition cycle confirm this last as a stable entity in itself, constituting what could be defined as a pan-chord centre. Scriabin's new sound space is structured by three such entities, which, interestingly, correspond to the three subdivisions of Bàrtok's axis system, as Lendvai has described it (2011, p. 3). Thanks to the particular nature of the Mystic Chord and of the chord centre, its function in Scriabin's new sound space is, however, quite different. Bàrtok's sound space divides the total chromatic into three different functional areas, which correspond, respectively, to the tonic, the dominant and the subdominant; on its turn, each one of Scriabin's T3 transposition cycles comprehends all new functional relations in itself, amplifying into a tonal area—the pan-chord centre—the functional relations the Mystic Chord and the chord centre carry in themselves.

The T3 transposition cycle is massively predominant in three of the four pieces analysed in the present study—all but *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58. *Promethée* op. 60 features, simultaneously, two main different transposition cycles: the T3 transposition cycle, to which all transpositions of the foreground relate, and the whole-tone transposition cycle from F♯ to F♯, which, defining seven Colour Stages[13] signalled by the slow line of *Luce,* governs the large-scale transposition plan and determine the main T3 transposition cycle of each one of those stages.[14]

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12 The correlation between T6 transpositions and the original form of the Mystic Chord is not established by Baker because of the absolute prevalence of pitch-class set theory technics in his analysis of the piece. Baker (1986) considers that "the most important sets in Op. 59/2 are related to 4–28 [seventh diminished chord] and 8–28 [octatonic mode]" (p. 144).

13 This expression, taken from Gawboy (2010, p. 216), will be systematically used in the present study.

14 The slow line of *Luce* features a whole tone scale from F♯ to F♯, defining a total of seven different stages.

As we shall discuss in the next chapter, *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, which features a whole tone transposition cycle, seems to have been a small-scale study for *Promethée* op. 60, foreshadowing its large-scale transposition plan.

8 Scriabin and Theosophy

Helena Blavatsky's Theosophy seems to have played a significant role in the constitution of Scriabin's new musical system. His first known reference to Theosophy was made in April 1905, when, in a letter addressed to Tatiana Schloezer, he wrote: "'the Key of Theosophy' is a remarkable book. You would be amazed how close it is to me" (Scriabin, 1988, p. 232). One year later, Boris de Schloezer found Scriabin "Deeply engaged in reading the works by Mme. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, and other theosophists" (1987, p.67). According to de Schloezer (idem), Scriabin "used [theosophical] terms volubly as if they were familiar to all and as if they reflected incontrovertible truths" (p.67), an idea corroborated by Leonid Sabaneev, who wrote Scriabin "believed in Blavatsky as a child on his parents" (2005, p. 99).

According to Boris de Schloezer, even when Scriabin "no longer interpreted it in a literal sense" (1987, p. 68), Blavatsky's "Seven Races attracted [him] with its psychological ramifications" (idem).

> Each race, according to his interpretation, reflects a certain phase in the evolution of man's spiritual life, so that the history of the races becomes a history of the human psyche, which acquires senses and desires vested in the flesh and then gradually denudes itself, abandoning its belongings and returning to the simplicity of the primordial oneness. (...) This phase of Scriabin's spiritual development owed most to Theosophy, which supplied him with the necessary formulas and schemes, particularly in the notion of Seven Races, which incarnated in space and time the gradual descent of psyche into matter. (...) He felt tremendous admiration for Mme Blavatsky to the end of his life. He was particularly fascinated by her courage in essaying a grandiose synthesis and by the breadth and depth of her concepts, which he likened to the grandeur of Wagner's music dramas (Schloezer, 1987, p. 68)

The influence of Blatavsky's ideas in Scriabin's worldview had a profound impact in his work as well. In his own words (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005), *Promethée* op. 60 was meant "to reflect the

evolution of the Races" (p. 290).[15] The myth of Prometheus is itself repeatedly referred in Blavatsky's "The Secret Doctrine" (1888). At an even deeper level, Blavatksy's concept of oneness seems to have significantly influenced the very structure of Scriabin's new sound space. For Blavatsky,

> "The 'Manifested Universe' (...) is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as 'manifestation.' But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested universe, there is 'that' which links spirit to matter, subject to object". Blavatsky, (1888, pp. 15–16)

That influence can be specifically found in

1. The functional role of the basic chord as the representative of oneness, outside of which nothing is conceivable—hence the radical refusal of non-functional tones.
2. The references to melody and harmony as "two sides of the same coin", merged in oneness "as everything else".
3. The nature of the new polarity, defined by two transpositions of the basic chord that are the most distant within the octave's range, while very close in pitch-class content.

[15] One of the most well known facts about *Promethée* op. 60 is the inclusion of a part for a *Tastiera per Luce*—light-keyboard—in the score. This part features two different lines. Scriabin described the second to Sabaneev as it follows: it "corresponds to the whole-tone scale, starting by F♯ and going back to F♯... This second line corresponds to the involution and evolution of the [Theosophical] races. In the beginning we have the spiritual, the colour blue, which then moves through other colours to red, the colour of the material, and then it moves again back to blue" (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 290).

II. THREE PIANO MINIATURES: *FEUILLET D'ALBUM* OP. 58, *POÈME* OP. 59, N°1 AND *PRÉLUDE* OP. 59, N°2

1 *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58

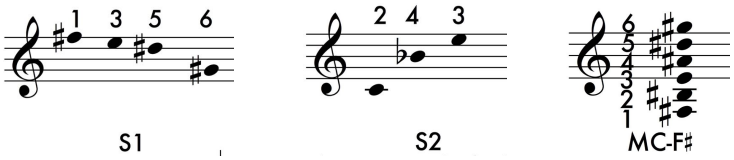
1.1 Introductory note

Premiered by Scriabin himself on February 20, 1910 (Bowers, 1996, III, p. 212), *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 was most likely written in 1909 as a preparatory study to *Promethée* op. 60. Despite the enormous difference of proportions, the two works are closely related in several ways. The first similarity is the whole-tone transposition cycle, which, structuring *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, defines the slow line of *Luce* of *Promethée* op. 60 as well. The large scope transpositional route of this last—from CC-F♯, to CC-C♮, and back to CC-F♯—is also outlined in the 23 bars of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58. Finally, and no less significantly, the main musical event of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 seems also to have prepared a similar procedure of critical structural significance in *Promethée* op. 60.

1.2 Specific sound material

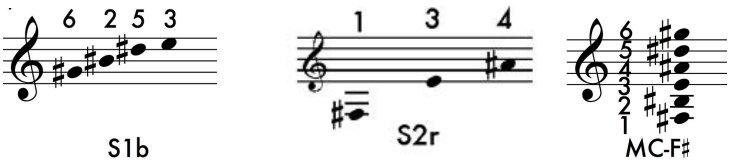
The first seven notes of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 introduce that which, in the context of the Mystic Chord, will be the basis for its specific sound material. From that basic chord, Scriabin extracts two asymmetrical segments, S1 and S2, with four and three pitches, respectively, which, whilst having one common partial, divide amongst themselves all the remaining ones:

Example 15. S1 and S2 within MC-F♯



Through the interchange of partials 1 and 2, two new segments are deduced from S1 and S2:

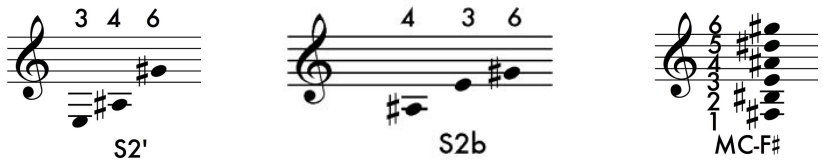
Example 16. S1b and S2r within MC-F♯



Although set class and morphologically equivalent to S2, S2r—which includes the root note of the Mystic Chord instead of its partial 2—is consistently treated as an independent segment in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and will thus be differentiated in the analysis of the piece.

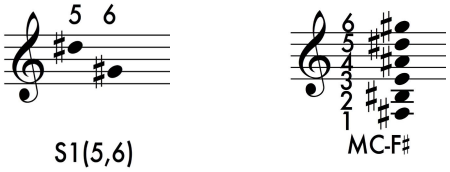
All S2r occurrences in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 are associated either with its symmetrically corresponding segment within the MC—S2'—or with the set class equivalent S2b: all forms of S2 are set class (0,2,6).

Example 17. S2' and S2b within MC-F♯



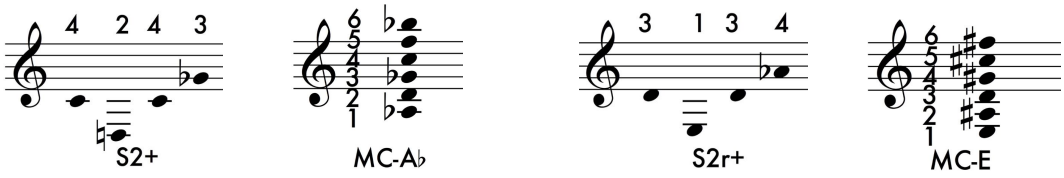
The last two partials of S1 are used as an independent segment—S1(5,6).

Example 18. S1(5,6) within MC-F♯



Two new segments result of extending S2 and S2r to four-note segments: S2+ and S2r+.

Example 19. S2+ and S2r+ within MC-A♭ and MC-E ♮



As we shall see, all different forms of S2 are harmonically related to S1(6,5), thus making the two groups of segments very close to one another. This is a fundamental aspect in the structure of the piece: the sets of pitches, the intersections and the permutations to be established between S1 and S2 originate its melodic and harmonic substrate.

1.3 Form

The "rows of empty measures with only a designation as to their tonality or supporting harmonies", found by musicologist Bykov in the manuscript autographs of the composer (Bowers, 1974, p.149), reveal that establishing form was one of the first steps in Scriabin's creative process. *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 seems to be a clear example of this method. The work is written in ternary form and is constructed according to the proportions of the golden section. Its 23 bars are divided into three sections of 8 (4+4), 6 and 9 (5+4) bars. The beginning of the third section is the culminating point of the piece and corresponds with its golden section—23÷1.618=14.215[16]—, which is rhythmically emphasised by a dotted half note on every one of the bar's six pitches. Every appearance of the golden ratio in each of the piece's sections—or, in the case of the first section, in each one of its two phrases—is also rhythmically emphasized, this time by a syncopated triplet. A regular triplet featuring two chromatic intervals highlights all transitions between two phrases and/or sections. Both the syncopated and the regular chromatic triplet are only used in these specific contexts.

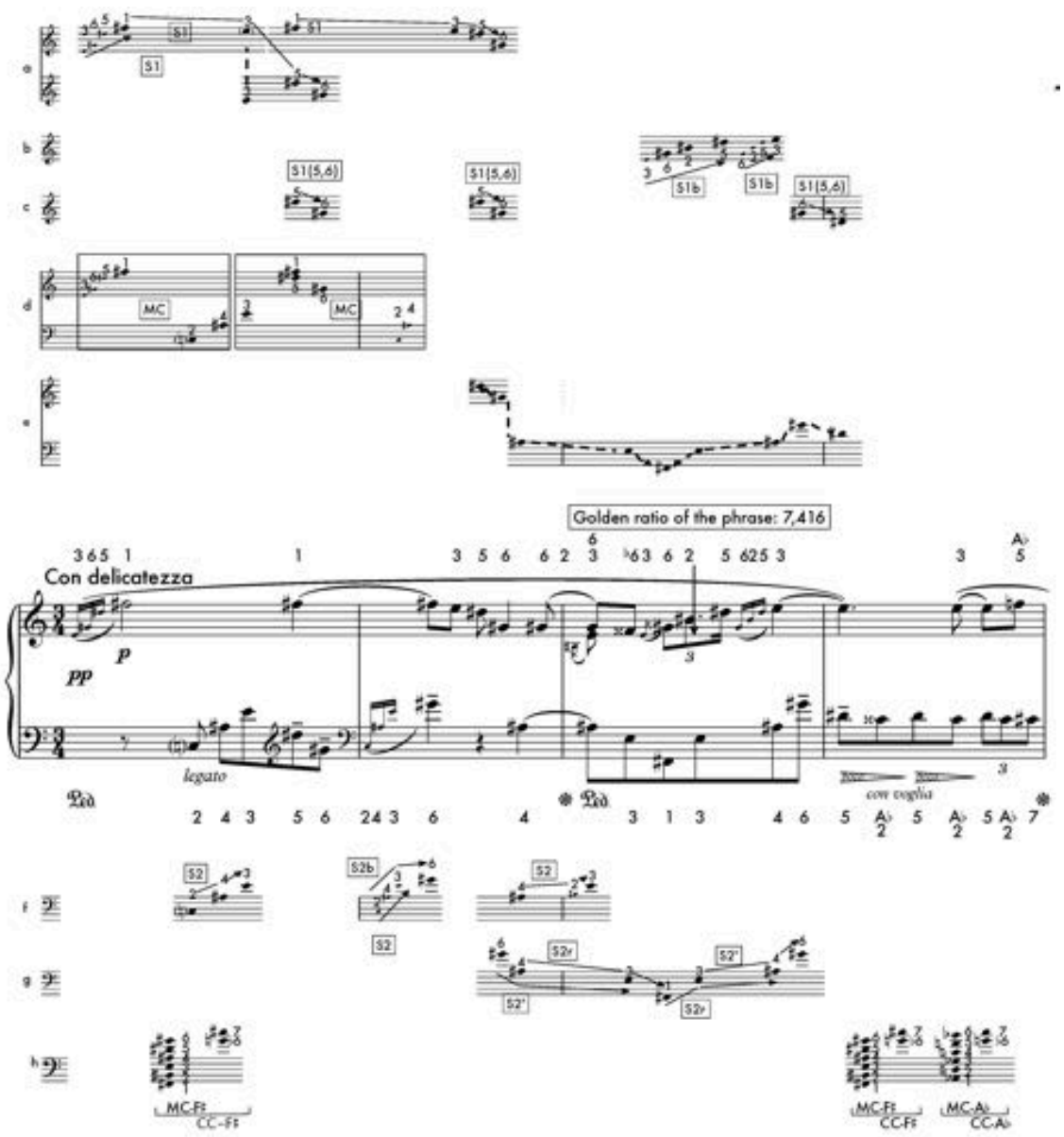
1.4 First section, bars 1–8

1.4.1 First phrase, bars 1–4

The first 12 notes of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 are a double presentation of the six partials of MC-F♯, without any of them being omitted or repeated before all the remaining ones have been stated—Example 20-d. They all maintain the same register in both occurrences of the chord. F♯, the root note of the Mystic Chord, occupies the first beat of the upper part and is the highest pitch in the entire phrase. The second partial, C♮, is the first note in the lower voice and the lowest note of the double presentation of the Mystic Chord. Thanks to both of these circumstances, the interval that separates them—an augmented fourth—is clearly emphasized, thus introducing within the context of MC-F♯ Scriabin's new ♯IV-I polarity. This set of initial procedures represents a clear affirmation of the Mystic Chord as the core element of the new sound space it is introducing.

[16] The downbeat of bar 15, the first of the third section, is in fact slightly delayed—as we shall see on Section 1.5.2, thus matching even more precisely the golden section of the piece.

Example 20. Bars 1–4



The first seven notes of the phrase represent, at the same time, the first occurrences of S1 and S2, still perceived as a mere division of MC-F♯–S1 will acquire a melodic value that will differentiate it from S2 only from the second recurrence on–Example 20-a/f. The initial F♯ will be the only one of those seven notes that also carries out a melodic function–the E♮ in S2 will have that function in a purely implicit form. The F♯ is the axis of a double occurrence of S1. In an initial harmonic presentation it is prepared by the remaining three pitches of S1, thereafter as a continuous act, it is the first pitch of a canon that will reuse those same pitches melodically.

The presentation of the canon is divided between the two voices and follows with the articulation of E♮, the first pitch of the second recurrence of the Mystic Chord and the last one of S2—Example 20-a. This E♮ is not in itself part of the canon, but allows the listener to deduce E♮4, which will be made explicit after the imitation as its second pitch. The presentation finishes with D♯ and two articulations of G♯ in the lower voice. The *tenuto* identifies D♯ and G♯ as a subgroup of S1, S1(5,6)—Example 20-c—, with which S2 will establish a harmonic relation, and as melodic notes that mark the passage of the canon to the lower voice at the very moment in which, matching the only simultaneous articulation of two notes within the first two bars, the imitation begins to appear in the upper voice.

Within the imitation in canon, occurring entirely in the upper voice, partial 3 takes its natural place in the register of the two adjacent pitches. The canon's theme is more explicit in the imitation than in its presentation, due to its register and to its polyphonic distribution. This inversion of the relative forces operating within the canon, along with the syncopated rhythm of the two voices at the end of the second bar, impels the phrase forward to the next bar, where it finds its culmination.

The syncopation in the lower voice initiates the third occurrence of S2, altering the order of its pitches: preparing the culmination of the phrase, the C♮/B♯ ascends to the same register as the A♯ and the E♮, appearing as a grace note between them. This third occurrence of S2 is again harmonically related to S1(5,6) and to the reiteration of the G♯.

In the imitation in the upper voice, S1(5,6) simultaneously initiates a pitch symmetrical movement that subsequently appears in the lower voice and finds its conclusion in the transition from the third to the fourth bar—Example 20-e. In passing from the upper to the lower voice, this movement assumes an essentially harmonic function. Thanks to the intervallic characteristics of S2, it uses what morphologically appears to be its augmented fourth transposition in order to maintain two of its pitches by permutation. Functionally speaking, though, it is a derivation of S2 instead—S2r—resulting from the interchange of the first partials of S1 and S2. S2r first appears in its symmetrical, then in its strict form—Example 20-g. Its partials 3/E♮ and 4/A♯, together with partial 6/ G♯ of S1(5,6), form, at the same time, a new segment, S2', symmetrically related to S2 in view of their intervallic relations and their sequential numeric position within the Mystic Chord—Example 20-g.

F♯ is emphasized as the axis of this symmetrical movement and as the lowest note of the first phrase—a position held hitherto by the C♮ it replaces. It is the only appearance of F♯ in the lower voice of the first phrase, but its salient position extends its influence simultaneously to the final part of the phrase and retrospectively back to its beginning. This symmetry concludes with the inversion of S1(5,6), which now forms a descending perfect fourth. The *tenuto* mark above the two members of S1(5,6)

again foreshadows the resumption of a melodic function by the lower voice, thus preparing what will occur in the fourth bar.

At the same time, in the highest voice's second eighth note of the third bar, the sound space is expanded for the first time to partial ♭6/F𝄪 of CC-F♯. The minor ascending second relating it to G♯ increases the tension caused by the above-described procedures that lead to the phrase's apogee. E♮ appears as a grace note between the two and is harmonically related to G♯, causing no impediment to their joint chromatic relation. Its presence is indispensable, however, since in the upper voice we find an inversion of what is occurring simultaneously in the lower voice: E♮, G♯ and D♯ are the three first pitches of S1; the B♯ we encounter between G♯ and D♯ replaces the original F♯, thus creating a new segment taken from S1: S1b—Example 20-b. The articulation of B♯ takes place immediately after the articulation of F♯ in the lower voice; the brief moment during which both coexist, thereby inverting their relative positions at the beginning of the piece, coincides with the phrase's golden ratio, marked by a syncopated triplet in the upper voice—the first modification of binary subdivision within the piece—which, with its centre located in B♯, underlines what is occurring with the pitches.

Between the second and the third bars, D♯ and the last articulation of G♯ are preceded, respectively, by a descending and an ascending minor second. The relation thus established between the chromaticisms linking partials 3 and 5 and partials ♭6 and 6 encompasses the perfect fifth that separates them—the relation between these two pairs of partials will play an important role as the piece unfolds.

In the fourth and last bar of the phrase we find three hitherto unenunciated pitches: C𝄪, F♮ and C♯. C♯ is partial 7 of the Mystic Chord, i.e. the eighth pitch-class completing the work's chord centre. The remaining two pitches—C𝄪 and F♮—do not belong to the CC-F♯. The explanation for the second pitch, the F♮ in the last eighth note of the upper voice, has already been provided by Eberle (1978): it anticipates the fifth partial of MC-A♭, which is the next transposition about to occur. Eberle regards the C𝄪 as a simple *ornato* below the D♯ and as a note foreign to the piece's pitch structure (p. 58). According to Eberle,

> Scriabin does not crystallize a simple repetition and mechanical transposition of a set of pitches, as serial fanatics would have wished. (...) The ambition to reach a principle of unity that replaces the system of major and minor tonalities do not turn him into a slave of an organization of self-imposed notes. (...) Primacy of inspiration, of expression and of composing options remains untouched by him" (idem).

Scriabin's own words (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005), however, do not seem to confirm this incompatibility between rigour and inspiration: "Art, finally, is nothing other than Logic in its higher expression" (p. 289). On the other hand, it does not seem very likely that, having left nothing to chance in the three previous bars, Scriabin would now use a pitch-class alien to the sound space of the piece, contrarily to his explicit purposes as well as to the internal consistency of his own musical discourse.

The reason for the C𝄪 is suggested by the very melodic context in which it occurs. The triple alternation between D♯ and C𝄪, underlined by two dynamic regulators, is musically perceived as a hesitation. That hesitation is extended to the chord centre itself: D♯ is partial 5 of CC-F♯, which governed the previous measures; on its turn, C𝄪 is partial 2 of the chord centre that will govern the following bars, CC-A♭, which is thus anticipated. The fourth bar represents the transition between two chord centres that therefore momentarily coexist.

The oscillating movement between D♯ and C𝄪 eventually leads to a regular triplet that impels the music towards the next governing chord centre. It is therefore used, in the lower voice, a descending chromatic movement that ends up on partial 4/C♮ of CC-A♭, which is articulated at the beginning of the fifth bar—the first bar governed in its entirety by the new governing CC-A♭.

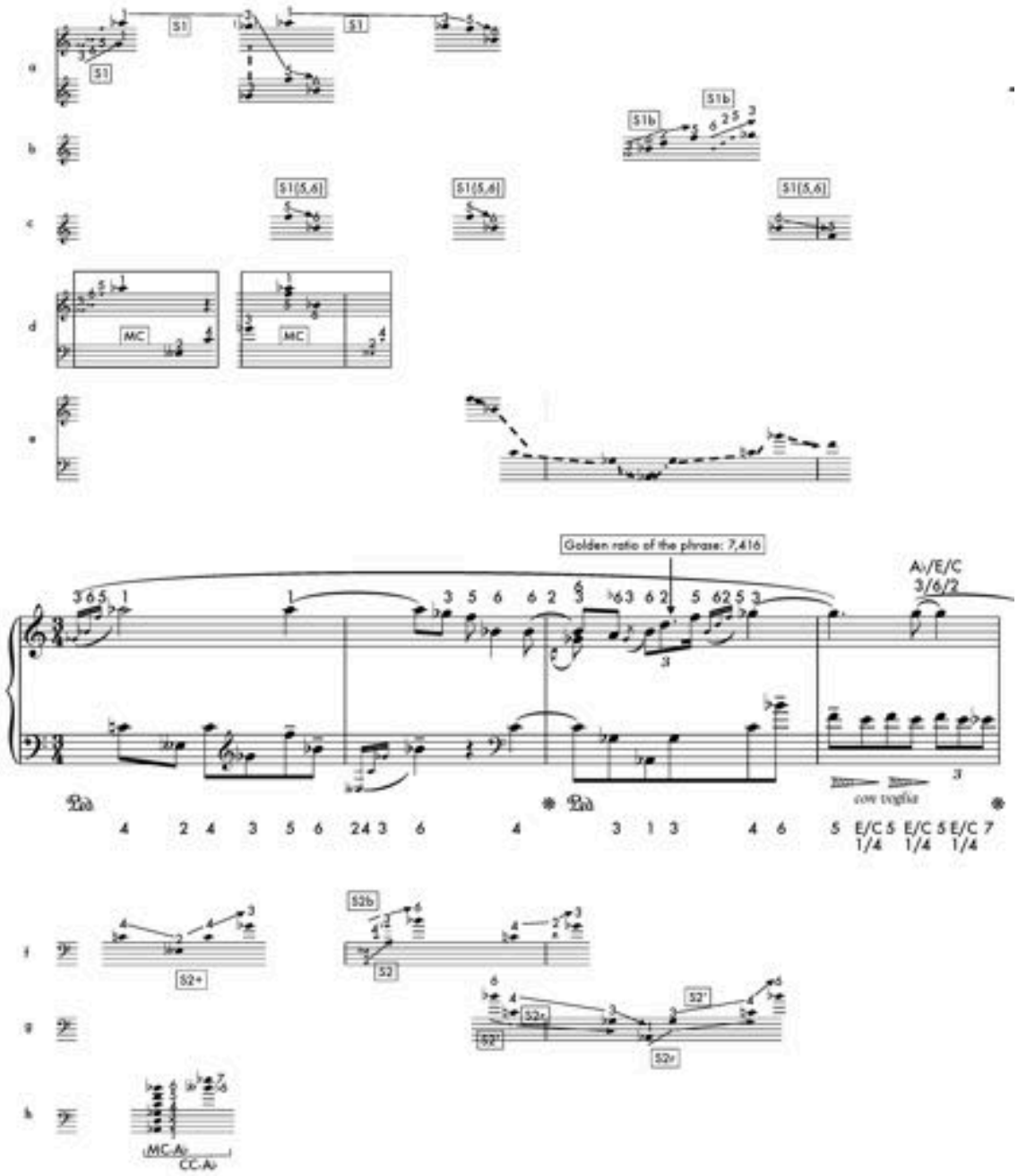
1.4.2 Bars 5–8

Bars 5–8 are a nearly exact transposition of bars 1–4 to CC-A♭. We shall focus on the minor differences between the two four-bar sets.

The use of C♮ in place of a rest, at the beginning of the fifth bar, was already explained above. It is, however, important to stress the resulting extension of S2 to S2+—Example 21.

The other difference occurs in the last bar of the phrase: it was impossible to literally transpose the fourth bar of the upper voice, since G♮, which would be expected in the last eighth note, belongs neither to the CC-A♭ that is being abandoned nor to the chord centres that will govern the next section. G♭, which belongs to both chord centres of the second section, is therefore kept unaltered. In a way, the second section fills in the entire upper voice from the preceding bar. The absence of any grace notes before the articulation of F♯ at the beginning of the second section, in contrast with what occurred before the first melodic note of the two preceding phrases, reinforces that specific enharmonic connection.

Example 21. Bars 5–8



1.5 Second section, bars 9–14

1.5.1 Chord centres

According to the prevalent perspective of the "watertightness" of Scriabin' chord centre, the first bar in the second section—bar 9—would belong to CC-E♮, and the remaining five to CC-C♮. In that case, there would be three pitches alien to the chord centres of their respective bars, within the second

section: (a) B♯ in bar 9, (b) F♮ in bars 11 to 13—whose existence, according to Eberle (1978), is perfectly justified by its association with the fundamental of CC-C♮, as the "trace of a subconscious dominant-tonic" (p. 58)—and (c) G♯ in bars 12 and 14.

If we take the succession of chord centres as just described, though, there is a striking change regarding the first eight bars of the piece that has not yet been considered. In the first section, each governing chord centre lasted four bars. In the second section, CC-E♮ would last one bar only, followed by CC-C♮ in the five following bars and subsequently by CC-F♯ in the last nine bars of the piece. Yet, there is not the slightest sign of an explanation concerning such an isolated alteration of harmonic rhythm in the ninth bar. And yet, if it were related to a contrasting B section within the spirit of a ternary form, harmonic stability would be absent over the next five bars as well.

If the analysis of a work as thorough as *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 is unable to find a justification for what is perceived, in its description, as odd, it is the very description along with its assumptions that must be questioned.

Let us consider the structure of the second section, i.e. bars 9–14. Its first six bars are subdivided into three two-bar subsections, the first two of which are to be articulated as a four-bar phrase. The third one reiterates the second half of that phrase. This subdivision is evident even in the way two of the three parts featured in the second section are systematically prolonged by slurs connecting odd and even bars. Pitch analysis must therefore take this structure into account, which doesn't go along with the idea of two chord centres lasting one and five bars, respectively—particularly in a piece constructed according to the proportions of the golden ratio.

If we regard bars 9 and 10, not as two independent entities, but as a single two-bar unit, two significant conclusions emerge:

1. All pitches in this two-bar unit belong to one of their two governing chord centres.
2. In bar 9 we find as many pitches alien to CC-E♮ as to the CC-C♮: one for each of the instances—B♯ and G♯ respectively.

Extending this analysis to the second section as a whole yields a similar conclusion. All pitches belong at least to one of the two governing chord centres and there are two pitch-classes alien to each one of them: C♮ and A♮ in relation to CC-E♮, F ♮ and G♯ in relation to CC-C♮.

From the point of view of pitch analysis, it thus appears inevitable to consider the coexistence of CC-E♮ and CC-C♮ all along the six bars of the second section. The two anticipating pitches in bar 8

belong in fact to both chord centres. The analysis of the specific sound material confirms this hypothesis, as we shall see.

Example 22. CC-E♮ and CC-C♮ in the second section

1.5.2 Detailed analysis

The six bars of the second section are subdivided, as we saw above, into three two-bar sets: the first introduces the two governing chord centres, the second intensifies their interpenetration and the third reiterates the previous one before the transition to the third section of the piece.

The first bar in the second section introduces CC-E♮ but also announces CC-C♮, which will be made explicit in the next bar. The lower voice begins with S2r+, an expansion of S2r—Example 23-d. As a result of the presence of S2r+, the fundamental of CC-E♮ now becomes the lowest pitch in the bar, thus freeing the high register to display S1(6,5), divided into two voices that will remain active until the end of the section. Partial 6, which coincides with partial 1 of the piece's main chord centre, is articulated on the first beat and lasts until the first beat of the next bar. Partial 5 is articulated on the third beat of the intermediate voice, introduced on the second beat by B♯/C, partial 1 of CC-C♮ and the only pitch in the bar alien to CC-E♮. The melodic function attributed to the first partial of CC-C♮ as first note in the intermediate voice, reproduces the melodic function of the fundamentals of the respective chord centres at the onset of the two preceding phrases, and serves as a first indication that this will be the second section's main governing chord centre. The last pitch of the lower voice, B♭, coincides morphologically with partial 2 of CC-E♮, one of the two missing partials needed to complete its Mystic Chord. The articulation of B♭—simultaneously with the other missing partial in the intermediate voice—is therefore expected. Unexpected, for that very reason, is the way in which it occurs: in syncopation with the first accent of the piece. This double accentuation, unjustified within CC-E♮, is meant to transform that B♭ into the first pitch of a new context, thus initiating the transposition from S2r+ to CC-C♮, to which it functionally relates as partial 3—Example 23-d. The second partial of CC-E♮ is, therefore, functionally absent in bar 9.

Considering that none of the pitches of bar 10 go beyond the scope of CC-C♮, it would be reasonable to assume it is governed by this chord centre alone. The bar's specific sound material

indicates, however, that we are facing a different reality. The three grace notes and the D♮ on the first beat are in fact an articulation of S1b within CC-E♮, which introduces its partial 2 at last —Example 23-c.

Ambiguities and interpenetrations between CC-E♮ and CC-C♮ constantly occur in the second section, thanks to the close pitch-class content of the two governing chord centres, which is reinforced by the omission of their respective partials 7. Each chord centre contains seven pitch-classes, five of which are invariant. Altogether, the two governing chord centres expand the sound space of the second section, which thus comprises a total of nine pitch-classes.

Example 23 shows how the specific sound material is articulated within the scope of CC-C♮ and/or CC-E♮, confirming the coexistence of these two chord centres in the second section. A circle marks the pitches exclusive to each one of them. Some other aspects should however be further stressed.

As we have already discussed, partials 6-♭6 and 3-5 had been closely related in the first section. In the second section, partials 6 and ♭6 of CC-C♮ are merged, respectively, with partials 3 and 5 of CC-E♮. This is quite evident in the intermediate voice, in both the transitions between bars 10–11 and 12–13.

The chromatic oscillation in bars 12 and 14 replicates those announcing the imminent change of Chord Centre in measures 4 and 8 of the first section. The three occurrences of this chromatic motive take place at exactly the same spot in all three phrases, namely between the tenth and eleventh beats.

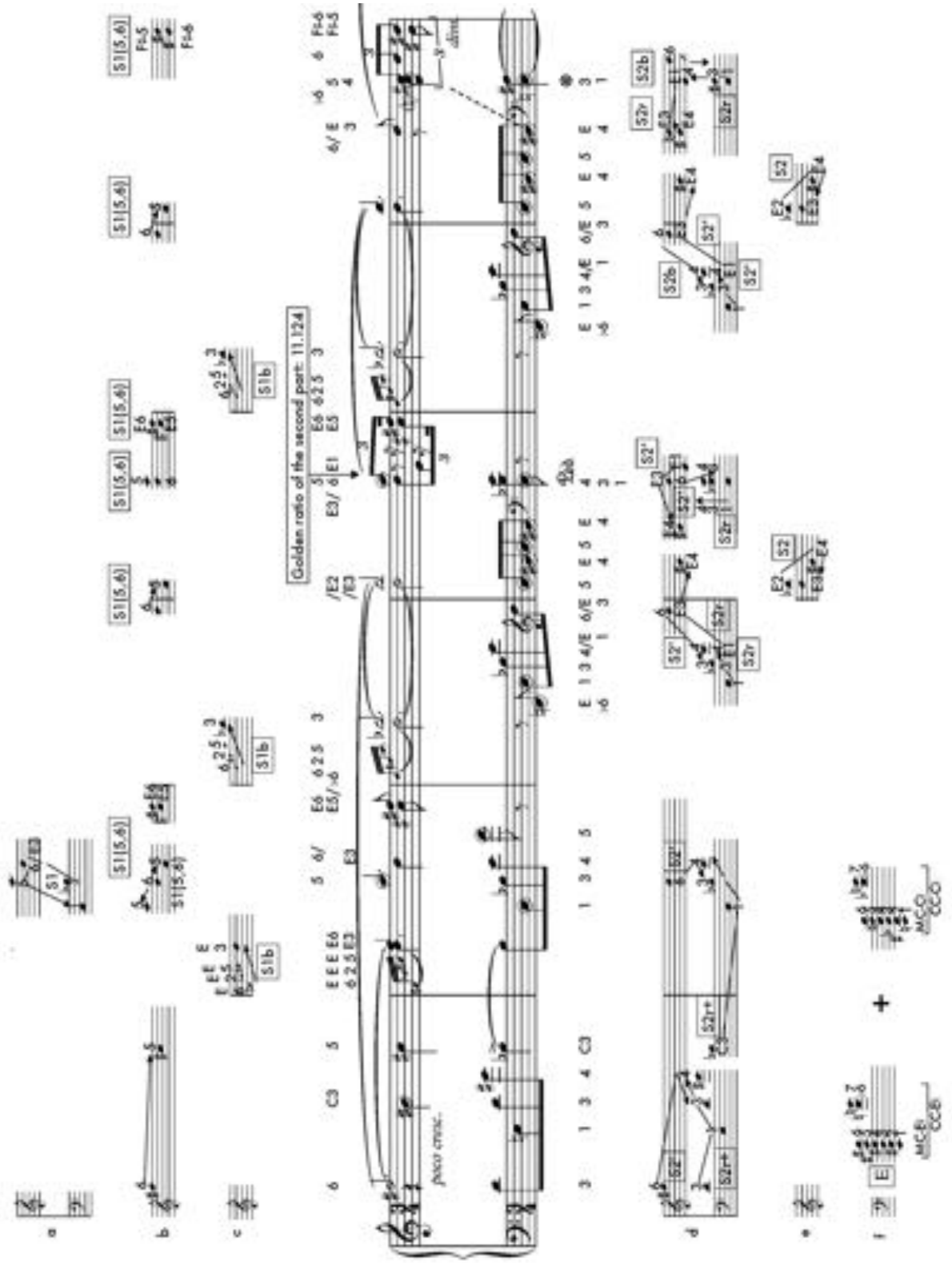
Partial ♭6 of CC-E♮, which together with the lowest pitch of the previous bar and with the following eighth note embodies the trace of the dominant-tonic relation mentioned by Eberle (1978, p. 58), is the lowest note in this section. The context of its articulation therefore differs from both its occurrences in the first section. The relation between these three occurrences of partial ♭6 is established in a different way: they all appear in the same moment within their respective phrases—exactly in the fourteenth eighth note.

The melodic structure of the intermediate voice together with the upper voice in the last beat of bar 14, as noted by de Médicis (2009)—B♯-C♯-D♮-D♯—is an augmentation and an inversion of the descending chromatic triplet in bar 4, thus contributing to emphasize the transition character of the second section in relation to both the first and the third sections.

The second section's golden ratio coincides with the first five-note chord in the piece: up to that point, never more than two have been articulated simultaneously. The A♮ in the high register interrupts the oscillating movement that dominated the two previous beats. The rhythm is once more

the syncopated triplet. In its epicentre we now find a rest that prolongs the tension lasting from the phrase's apogee right up to the beginning of bar 13.

Example 23. Bars 9–14



The second section is marked with a continuous *crescendo* emphasizing its bar structure. The whole section is geared towards the culmination of the piece, which is located, according to the proportions of the golden ratio, at the beginning of the re-exposition, in bar 15. The culmination is highlighted by a sudden preceding *diminuendo* as well as by a coextensive pianissimo.

In bar 14, the oscillating movement between A♮ and G♯ extends into the third beat: underlined by the second simultaneous five-note chord of the piece, it marks the transition between the second and the third sections. The process used for this transition derives from what had previously been applied in the last beats of bars 4 and 8. The triplet's chromaticism is now ascending. In its last eighth note, S1(5,6) of CC-F♯ is vertically articulated. D♯, partial 5, no longer belongs to any of the governing chord centres of the second section. The diminuendo accompanying the articulation of S1(5,6) marks it as the culmination of the *crescendo* that had began six bars earlier. At the same time, it underscores the return to CC-F♯, completed at the culmination of the piece with the articulation of F♯—its root note and its only missing partial. F♯, having been part of the two previous chord centres, is deliberately avoided in bar 14 in order to enhance its reappearance as partial 1 in the following bar. The combination of the three preceding grace notes with the very short *diminuendo* at the end of the previous bar necessarily delays its appearance, which is simultaneous with the reiteration of the remaining members of S1, thus making its coincidence with the golden ratio in beat 42,64 even more obvious and precise.

1.6 Third section, bars 15–23

1.6.1 Chord centres

In the first three bars of the third section all pitches belong to CC-F♯. From bar 4 onwards—just as found in the previous section with respect to CC-C♮—two pitches lie beyond its range: B♮ and C𝄪. The double relation of B♮ with F♯, considering the preceding note of the lowest voice and the lowest pitch of the previous bar, certainly bears a trace of the dominant-tonic relation once more. However, the presence of B♮ has once more a structural explanation within the context of the new sound space. The key to understanding it can be found in the previous section.

As before, a main and a secondary governing chord centres coexist—CC-F♯ and CC-B♭, respectively. CC-B♭ is not explicitly presented since that which occurs in the previous section makes its

deduction possible: it lies, just as was the case with CC-E♮ in relation to CC-C♮, a major third above main governing CC-F♯. B♮ and C𝄪/D♮ are partials ♭6 and 4 from CC-B♭, thus occupying the same relative position as F♮ and G♯ occupied in relation to CC- E♮ in the second section of the piece.

1.6.2 Detailed analysis

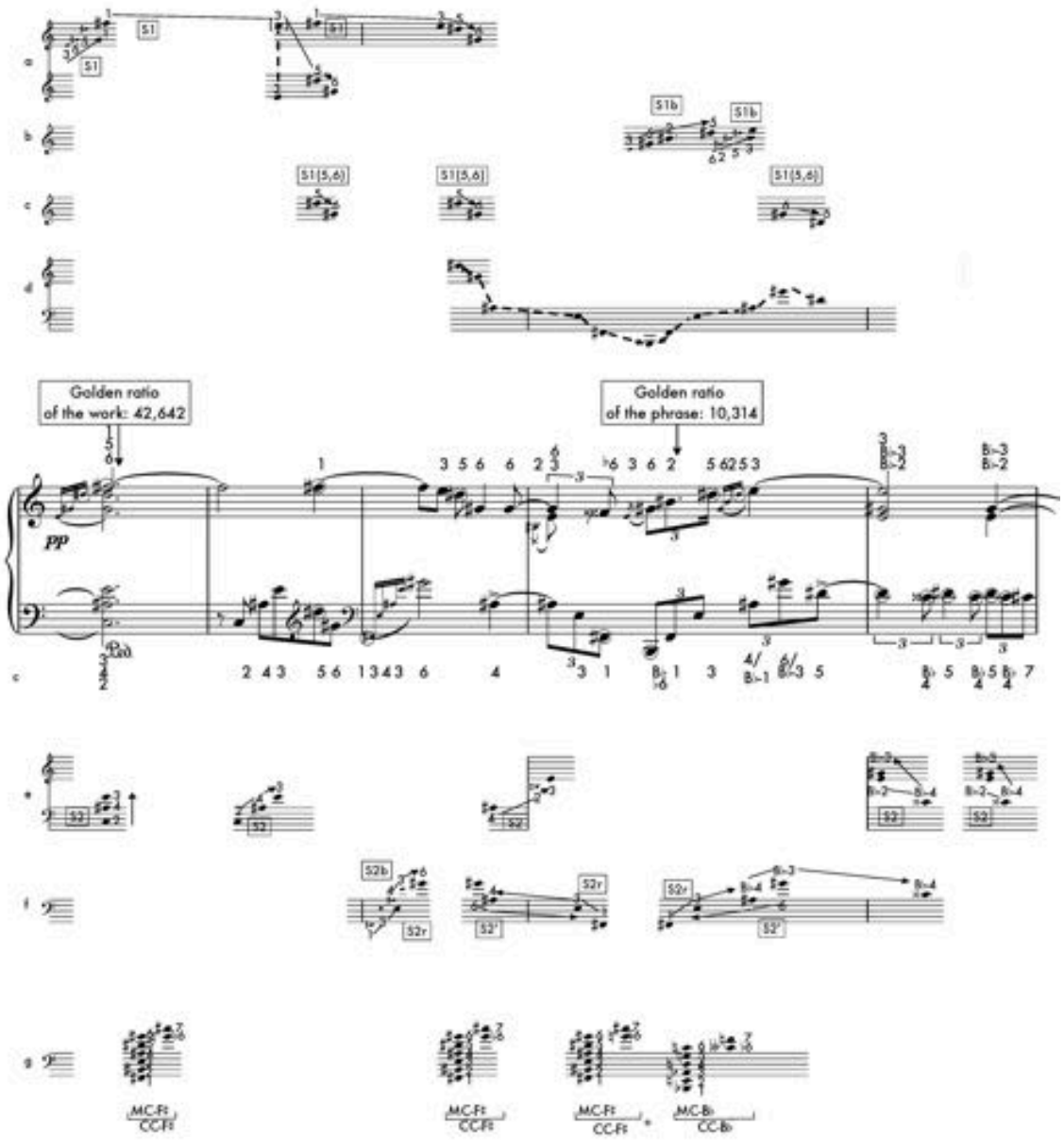
The third section is formed by a varied restatement of the first phrase, expanded to five bars, followed by a four-bar coda that dissipates the material from the fourth and the fifth bars. In spite of the novelties it introduces, it feels like *dejá vu* thanks (a) to the way the sound material is reused and (b) to the four pitches it emphasizes in the high register—F♯, E♮, G♯/A♭ and B♯/C♮—reminiscent of the root notes of the four chord centres used previously.

Further highlighting the golden ratio of the piece, the beginning of the re-exposition prolongs the resonance of the six partials of MC-F♯ in their sole overall vertical coincidence since the first bar of the piece, doubling the length of its congener bar in the first section.

All the subtle differences in bars 16 and 17 relative to the congener bars of the first section are located in the lower voice and prepare what is about to occur in bar 18.

The first of these differences is the absence of *tenuto* on the D♯ as well as on the double articulation of G♯, in the upper voice: the recollection of the first section makes the *tenuto* dispensable focusing all attention on what is about to occur. The second difference consists in the premature occurrence of S2r in bar 17, anticipating the presence of F♯ in the low register by one bar—Example 24-f. The third difference is the double length of the reiteration of G♯, in the lower voice, all the while drawing attention to the third beat of the bar where the A♯ reappears, as expected. The way in which it does so is however unexpected: although already syncopated in the first section, A♯ is now reinforced with an accent. The purpose is the same as caused by the accentuation of the same pitch in bar 9: to assign it a new function, now as fundamental of CC-B♭, thus giving the new chord centre a specific weight in the context of a re-exposition where it was not expected. All pitches articulated between A♯/B♭ and B♮ in bar 18 are common to both governing chord centres, with the exception of F♯, partial 1 of the piece's main chord centre, which is significantly perceived as dissonant in this new context.

Example 24. Bars 15–19



The ternary subdivision of bar 18 displaces the F♯ from the position it held in the first section to the third part of the previous beat. It therefore coincides with the articulation in the upper voice of F𝄪, partial ♭6 of the main governing CC-F♯, but mainly partial 5 of the CC-B♭. The symmetrical axis is now occupied by B♮, which, as Baker (1986) perceptively noticed (p.133), was the only hitherto unstated pitch-class in the piece—Example 24-d. In all its three occurrences, B♮ is articulated as the lowest pitch in the piece. Just as was the case with the F♮ in the previous section, it does not belong to the main governing CC-F♯, being partial ♭6 of the secondary CC-B♭ instead. Along with its register, its positioning as the new symmetrical axis again causes the dual relation it establishes with F♯—the lowest pitch of the previous bar but also the one that directly precedes it—to be perceived as reminiscent of the dominant-

tonic relation. Its positioning stresses that reminiscence even further: B♮ is the apex of a double symmetry that, besides relating the extremities of the set consisting of its two segments, also affects each one of them and their axis.

This recollection of the V–I is used to signal the augmented-fourth polarity, which, established between F♯ and B♯, keeps its positioning in the strong part of the syncopated triplet that marks the golden ratio of the work's third section.[17] Stressed by this procedure, CC-F♯ is confirmed as the main chord centre of the section as well as of the piece as a whole.

The ternary subdivision in the lower voice anticipates the articulation of the fifth partial/D♯ of CC-F♯ in the final part of the bar, which now appears as an accented syncopation. This double accentuation does not intend to alter its function, but rather the functional role of E♮ and G♯, articulated immediately after at the downbeat of the next bar. Thanks to syncopation, D♯ is perceived as a dissonance, thus functionally transforming E♮ and G♯, erstwhile partials 3 and 6 of CC-F♯, into partials 2 and 3 of CC-B♭. Articulated just after them in the lower voice, C𝄪 (D♮) is therefore perceived as a resolution of the D♯, constituting itself, together with the downbeat's E♮ and G♯, as S2 of CC-B♭—Example 24-f. Using D♯ as a dissonance also contributes to relate, as an S2r occurrence within the context of CC-B♭, the C𝄪 that follows to the pair A♯-G♯/B♭-A♭, which had been articulated in the last beat of the previous bar. That double function of D♯ is taken from that of A♮ in bars 11–12 and 13–14. Partials 2 and 3 were then in the high register, but S2 is now even more explicit thanks to the articulation of E♮ and G♯ in the intermediate register. Otherwise unnecessary, the triple vertical articulation of E♮ and G♯ in the third section is intended to make the CC-B♭-governed S2 more visible, stressing its role as secondary governing chord centre of the section—Example 24-e.

In the third beat of bar 19, the chromaticism in the lower voice, given its previous recurrences, generates the expectation of a new phrase and a new governing chord centre. The B♯/C♮ that should consummate the transition is this time slightly anticipated, and appears again as a grace note in the context of a permuted S2 that will end up on the first beat of bar 20—exactly as happened before in bars 3, 7 and 18. Instead of accomplishing the expected change of chord centre generated by the descending chromatic movement, the anticipation of the B♯ confirms the current governing chord centres, thus introducing a short coda.

The coda dissipates the material used in bars 18 and 19 across two successively shorter reiterations—the last one is altered, leading to the final extinction of sound. In both reiterations, the

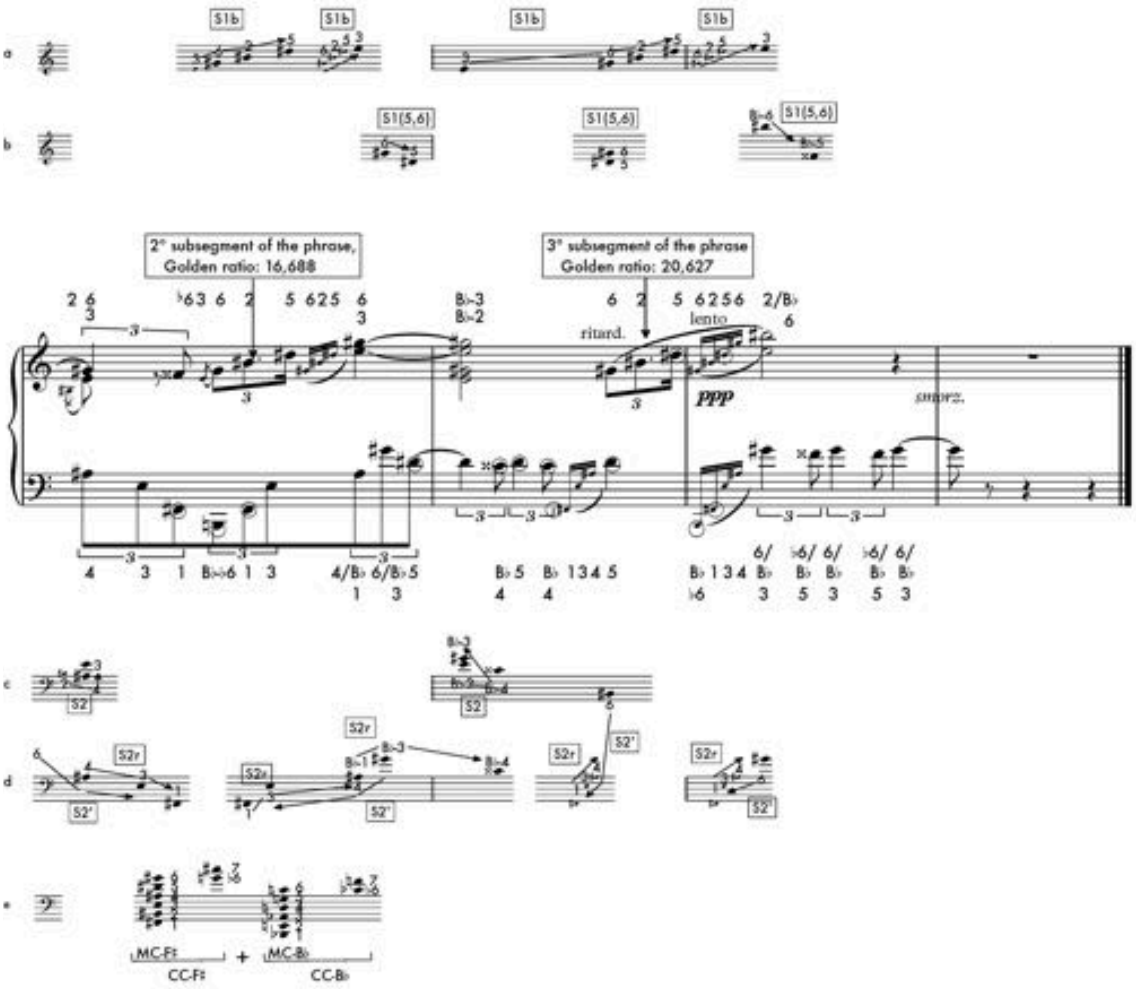
[17] Tacking place after the culmination of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 it now finds its place at the end of the shorter subdivision of the section.

syncopated triplet is again associated with the golden ratio—in the section's beats 16.290 and 20.135, respectively.

In bar 21, partial 5 of CC-F♯ terminates the chromatic oscillation between the current governing chord centres. It is the first time it does not point towards the next bar: anticipating the piece's imminent closure, it is underscored by a *ritardando* and a subsequent *lento.* The syncopated triplet in the upper voice is an incomplete statement of S1b: the grace note E♮ is missing—Example 25-a. That absence is symmetrically compensated by the occurrence of S1b in the following bar. B♯, the highest note in the whole piece, forms a major third that reverses the one missing in the previous bar with the G♯, which had just been articulated as an unprecedented fourth grace note. In the lower voice, a new recurrence of S2r prepares the articulation of G♯. S2r is preceded this time by the third appearance of B♮, the lowest pitch in the piece—introduced as the first of the four grace notes of the lower voice. Its relation with the first grace note of the previous beat, F♯, is again perceived as reminiscent of the dominant-tonic polarity. That B♮ has, however, another significant purpose: that of establishing a chromatic relation ♭6-6 in the context of the secondary CC-B♭ with the highest note in the piece—the B♯—which is at the same time partial 2 of the main CC-F♯. This chromaticism ♭6-6 of CC-B♭ anticipates the alternation between partials ♭6 and 6 of CC-F♯, which will occur immediately afterwards.

This alternation between partials ♭6 and 6 of CC-F♯—or 3 and 5 of CC-B♭ through the merging process referred to in the analysis of the second section—embodies the seventh occurrence of the chromatic oscillation initially introduced in the work's fourth bar. This time, however, it occurs between two pitches that pertain simultaneously to both governing chord centres. The previous hesitation now paves the way for harmony, enabling the suspension of musical discourse until the final silence at the end of the next bar.

Example 25. Bars 20–23



1.7 Conclusions

All transpositions of the chord centre in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 are featured within the whole tone transposition cycle of F♯. Not coincidently, all five pitch-classes that represent, as root notes, the governing chord centres of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 are also partials of MC-F♯, the core set of the work's main chord centre. Invariance between both pitch-class structures is ensured by the absence of their respective fifth constituents—partial 5/D♯ in MC-F♯ and the fifth tone/D♮ in the F♯ whole-tone scale. Therefore, MC-F♯, the core set of the sound space of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, has also a determining function in generating the work's transposition plan.

Four out of the five root notes featured in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 are also clearly underlined in the melody of the piece, (a) F♯ as the first melodic note of all sections of the piece (de Médicis, 2009) and the highest pitch in the first phrase, (b) A♭ as the highest pitch of the second phrase, (c) B♭ as

the highest pitch of the second section, thus foreshadowing its occurrence as secondary chord centre in the third section and (d) B♯/C♮ as the highest note in the third section and of the entire piece. These four pitches outline the melodic structure of Feuillet d'Album op. 58, as de Médicis (2009) perceptively noticed. They constitute, altogether, an ascending fragment of the whole tone scale circumscribed by the augmented fourth that defines the main polarity in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58: F♯-C♮. Beyond that augmented fourth, the pitch-class that corresponds to the work's fifth root note, E♮, is also melodically stressed, although at a lower level. In the first phrase of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58—and in its varied restatement of the last section—it melodically relates to the starting F♯ as the phrase's second higher note and is likewise stressed by a preceding articulation of three grace notes, as well as by rhythm. The identity of harmony and melody intended by Scriabin is therefore present not only in the definition of the sound space of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, but in its structural layout as well.

It is impossible to ignore the evident traces of the old dominant-tonic polarity in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58: the two lowest pitches in both the second and the third sections of the piece are related by a perfect fifth. The lowest pitch of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58—and the last of its bass line—is actually not the root note of the main Chord Centre, F♯, but rather B♮—with which F♯ would have related as dominant within the context of the old V–I polarity. This trace is so evident that certain analyses (Baker 1986, p. 134; de Médicis, 2009) claim that the piece is in fact written within the old tonal system. However, the massive significance of ♯IV–I polarity in the work's harmonic and transpositional structure and its systematic vicinity with those V–I relations suggest these last have a completely different purpose: they stage the designation of the new augmented-fourth polarity by the old V-I polarity. This procedure, which will be repeatedly featured in *Poème* op. 59, n°1 and in *Promethée* op. 60, can be seen as the ultimate motivation of the very structure of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58.

2 *Poème* op. 59, n°1

2.1 The specific sound material

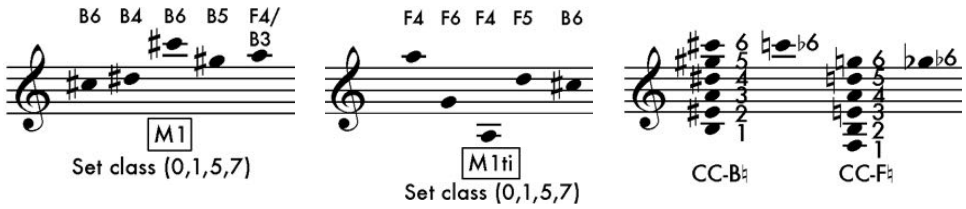
Harmonic rhythm in *Poème* op. 59, n°1 is considerably more rapid than it was in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58. This significant difference, which surely has something to do with the *Allegretto* tempo of *Poème* op. 59, n°1, has logical consequences that affect the work's specific sound material.

All segments of *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 maintained their functional stability throughout the piece. Individually taken, those segments were formed by partials of just one chord centre—which, nevertheless, still allowed the coexistence or the intersection of segments pertaining to different chord centres, as we have seen. These were all purely monochromatic segments that could be superposed in order to create polychromatic textures.

In *Poème* op. 59, n°1, however, the motifs and segments that constitute its specific sound material can be polychromatic themselves and either functionally stable or merely morphologically equivalent in their different occurrences throughout the piece. Set-class equivalency, which had been significant in the S2 related segments of *Feuillet d'Album op.58,* will therefore be particularly taken into account in the analysis of *Poème* op. 59, n°1.

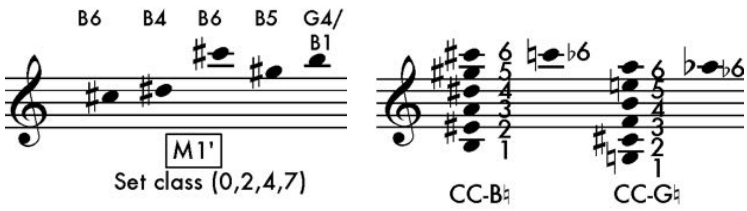
The upper voice of the first two bars, governed respectively by the chord centres of B♮ and F♮, introduces the main motive (M1) of *Poème* op. 59, n°1, from which all the remaining motifs or segments are deduced or extracted: set class (0,1,5,7). The last note of M1 is also the first of its transposed inversion, considering octave equivalence (M1ti).

Example 26. M1 and M1ti within CC-B♮ and CC-F♮



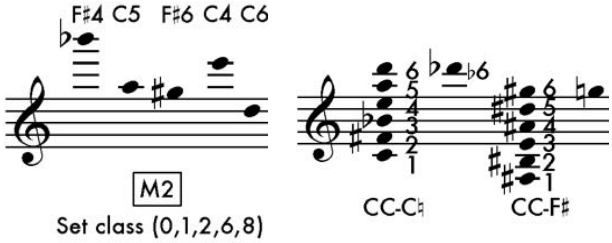
That last note of M1, which would have been the 3rd partial of the previous CC-B♮, is articulated in the second bar as the 4th partial of the new chord centre, CC-F♮. Bars 3 and 4 feature a different transpositional relation between the two respective governing chord centres—CC-B♮ and CC-G♮. Amongst the partials of M1, the numeric nexus prevails over the intervallic one, leading to a variant—M1'—that will be preponderant in the last five bars of the piece. Thanks to invariance, the last note of M1', which would have been partial 1 of the previous chord centre, is thus functionally articulated as partial 4 of the new governing CC-G♮:

Example 27. M1' within CC-B♮ and CC-G♮



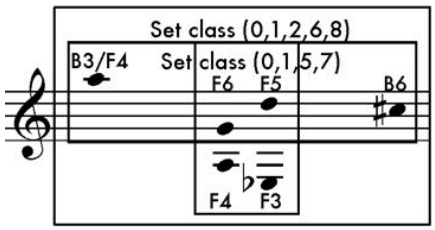
Bar 7 of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 is governed both by CC-C♮ and CC-F♯, which are respectively its main and its associated chord centres; these roles are interchanged in bar 8. Within these two bars, the interpenetration between those chord centres has also consequences in the treatment of motifs. Via retrogradation and, simultaneously, via the substitution of its third pitch—the second occurrence of partial 6—by the one holding the same function in the context of the associated CC-F♯, M1 is transformed into the second motif of the piece, M2:

Example 28. M2 within CC-C♮ and CC-F♯



A foreshadowing of M2 is, in fact, already present in bar 2: two coexistent articulations of set class (0,1,5,7)—one of them being the aforementioned M1ti occurrence—form between themselves a set class (0,1,2,6,8), which is not yet perceived as an independent motif:

Example 29. Set class (0,1,2,6,8) in Bar 2

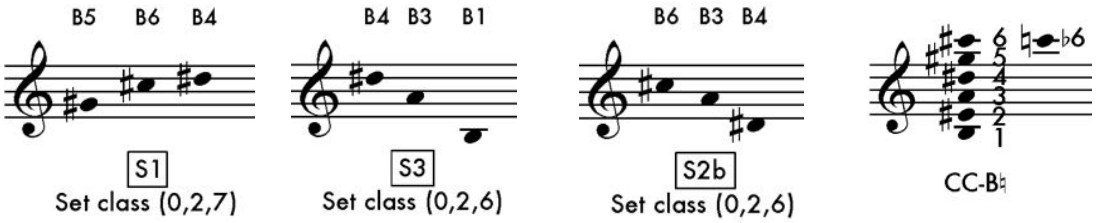


M2 is preponderant in the second part of the first two phrases, and in the entire second section of *Poème* op. 59, n°1.

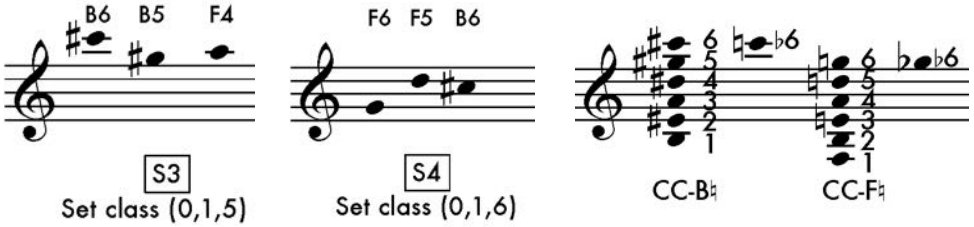
All possible three-pitch set classes are also extracted out of M1—set class (0,2,7), set class (0,1,6), set class (0,1,5) and set class (0,2,6).

Set class (0,2,5), with an important role in the last five bars of the piece, is extracted from the varied version of M1—M1'. All segments that complete the specific sound material of *Poème* op.59, n°1 belong to one of these five set class:

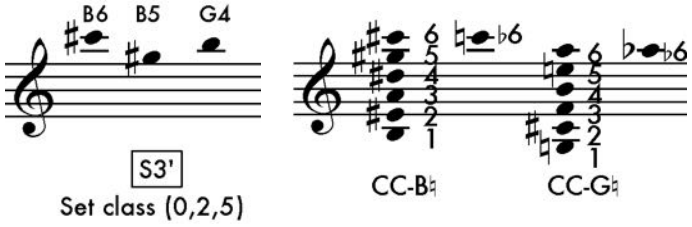
Example 30. S1, S2 and S2b within CC-B♮



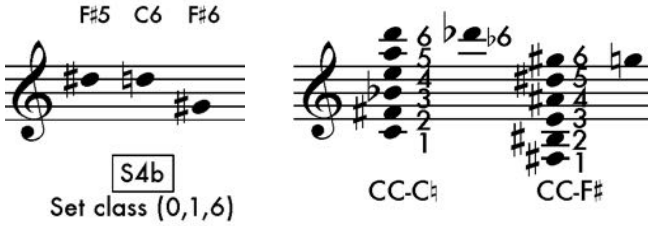
Example 31. S3, S4 within CC-B♮, CC-F♮



Example 32. S3' within CC-B♮/CC-G♮



Example 33. S4b within CC-C♮/CC-F♯



2.2 Form

The 39 bars of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 are divided into three sections of 12 [6+6], 12 [6+6], and 15 [8(6+2)+7) bars respectively. The piece is made up of two-bar sets with the exception of bars 35–37, which, as we shall see, are organized in 1+2 bars. The form of the piece reflects a progression from the symmetric appearance of its first section to the asymmetry that dominates not just its third section, but also the piece as a whole. As already occurred in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, *Poème* op. 59, n°1 features a perfect congruence between the beginning of its third section and the golden ratio of the piece, in bar 24,103.

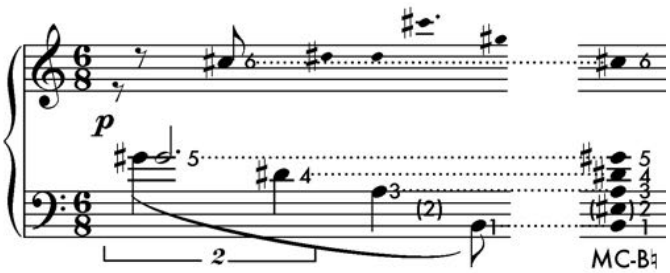
2.3 First section, bars 1–12

2.3.1 Bars 1–4

The five lower pitches in the first bar of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 introduce five out of six partials of the Mystic Chord—the minimum number of partials required to identify it as MC-B♮. The only missing partial, the second, is altogether absent, not only from the first bar, but also from the work's specific sound material.

The absence of partial 2 would always have been noticeable, since this weakens the very core of Scriabin's newly created sound space, i.e. the polarity of the augmented fourth within the context of the Mystic Chord. This becomes even more obvious if we observe the morphology of the Mystic Chord in its first occurrence in *Poème* op. 59, n°1: far from being concealed, the absence of partial 2 is deliberately exposed. The direct correspondence between the higher digit and the higher pitch, and the strict respect of the basic superposed-fourths structure of the Mystic Chord in its fundamental position both serve to emphasize its only fissure: the minor seventh between partials 1 and 3, specifically due to the absence of partial 2.

Example 34. MC-B♮, first statement.



The extent of that absence throughout the piece makes its deliberate nature unquestionable: indeed, it will reveal itself as a key event of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 altogether.

Example 35 shows how M1, M1ti and the four three-note set classes are articulated within the first set of two bars. Nevertheless, certain other aspects deserve to be emphasized.

To avoid jeopardizing the fundamental polarity of the augmented fourth, counterbalancing the systematic absence of partial 2 was a critical necessity. This could be achieved either by emphasizing the second augmented fourth within the Mystic Chord—between its partials 3 and 4—or by a widespread use of augmented fourth transpositions to chain successive chord centres together. Scriabin does both.

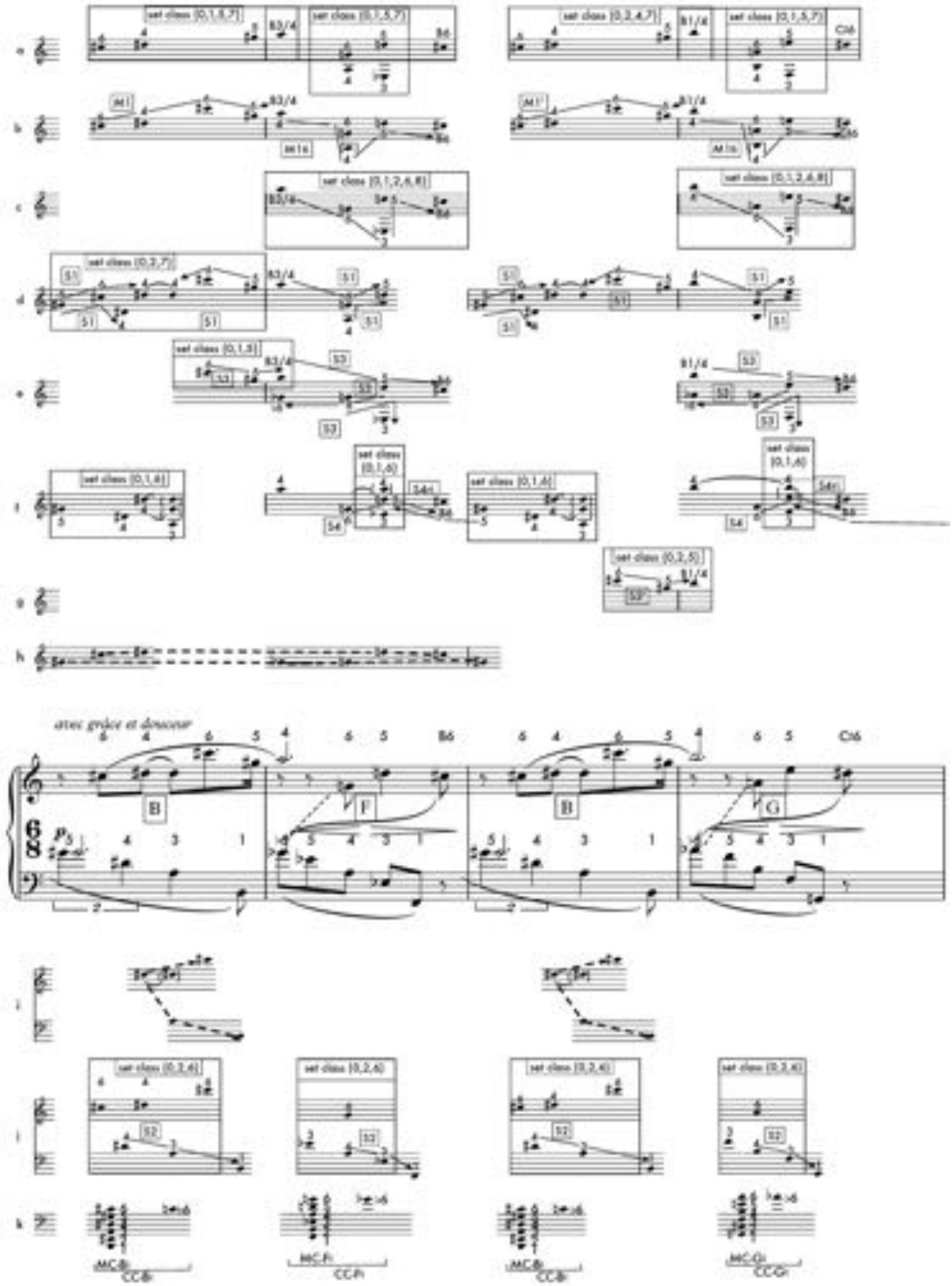
In bar 1—the same will happen in bar 2—the augmented fourth between partials 4 and 3 is reached on the second beat in two different ways: horizontally in the lower voice, and vertically between the two extreme voices. In both cases its vertical coincidence with the middle voice originates a set class (0,1,6)—Example 35-f. In bar 1, the vertical coincidence of partials 4 and 3 is additionally underscored by

1. Their occurrence on the strong part of the bar's syncopated rhythm.
2. Their role as an axis of pitch symmetry between the two extreme voices—the augmented fourth interval they form between each other is resolved through a minor seventh movement articulated in opposite directions, first in the upper, then in the lower voice.

The relation of an augmented fourth between partials 4 and 3 is further emphasized if the first two bars are taken as a two-bar set: in the upper voice of bar 1, partial 4/D♯ of MC-B♮, occupies the central position in the syncope, as we have seen, its instability being resolved both rhythmically and melodically by the articulation of A♮ on the first beat of bar 2, as the sole note of its upper voice. A♮ holds a double function as partial 4 of MC-F♮ and, secondarily, as partial 3 of the previous chord centre, CC-B♮; it is further highlighted as the axial note between the first occurrences of M1 and M1ti.

Finally, by means of rhythm and register, a symmetry of pitches—Example 35-h—is perceived as belonging to a fourth and a fifth immanent voice, encompassing the augmented fourth interval between the initial pitch of *Poème* op. 59, n°1—G♯—and the D♮, which, emphasized by a hairpin mark, serves as the axis of all the occurrences of S3 and S4 in the second bar—Example 35-e/f. The articulation of partial ♭6 at the beginning of bar 2, as well as the anticipation of partial 6 of CC-B♮ at its end, are both necessary conditions for the symmetry of pitches and the occurrences of S3 and S4 to be possible.

Example 35. Bars 1–4



Several further aspects should be pointed out within the first two bars:

1. Both at the beginning and end of each one of the two first bars, one of the three voices functions as the axis of a similar intervallic relation between itself and the other two.
2. In the transition between the first two bars, complementary intervals are used—the major sixth at the end of bar 1, and the minor third at the beginning of bar 2. Considering the use of unrelated intervals between the end of bar 2 and the beginning of bar 3—a minor sixth and perfect fourth are used instead—that fact strongly contributes to define the first two bars as a two-bar set.
3. The regular subdivision on the first beat of bar 2, which replaces the tuplet featured on the congener beat of bar 1, enables the transposed inversion of M1, M1ti—Example 35-b—and the lower voice to both a) keep the pitches and register of the previous augmented fourth—D♯/E♭-A♮—unchanged and b) transpose S2 to the new governing CC-F♮.

Bars 3 and 4 of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 constitute its second two-bar set. Bar 3 is an exact restatement of the first bar of the work, and bar 4 an exact transposition of the second bar to CC-G♮, with the minimal adjustments required by the new chord centre—the transformation of M1 into M1' and the corresponding disappearance of the symmetry shown in Example 35-h. Bars 3 and 4 are therefore predictable in terms of motif treatment, but unexpected in terms of their transpositional relation. The expected augmented fourth transposition of the chord centre is postponed to bars 4 and 5. This contradiction between motif treatment and transpositional relation creates a new inner tension within the second two-bar unit, a tension that propulses the section towards its middle bars, where the climax will be reached.

2.3.2 Bars 5–8

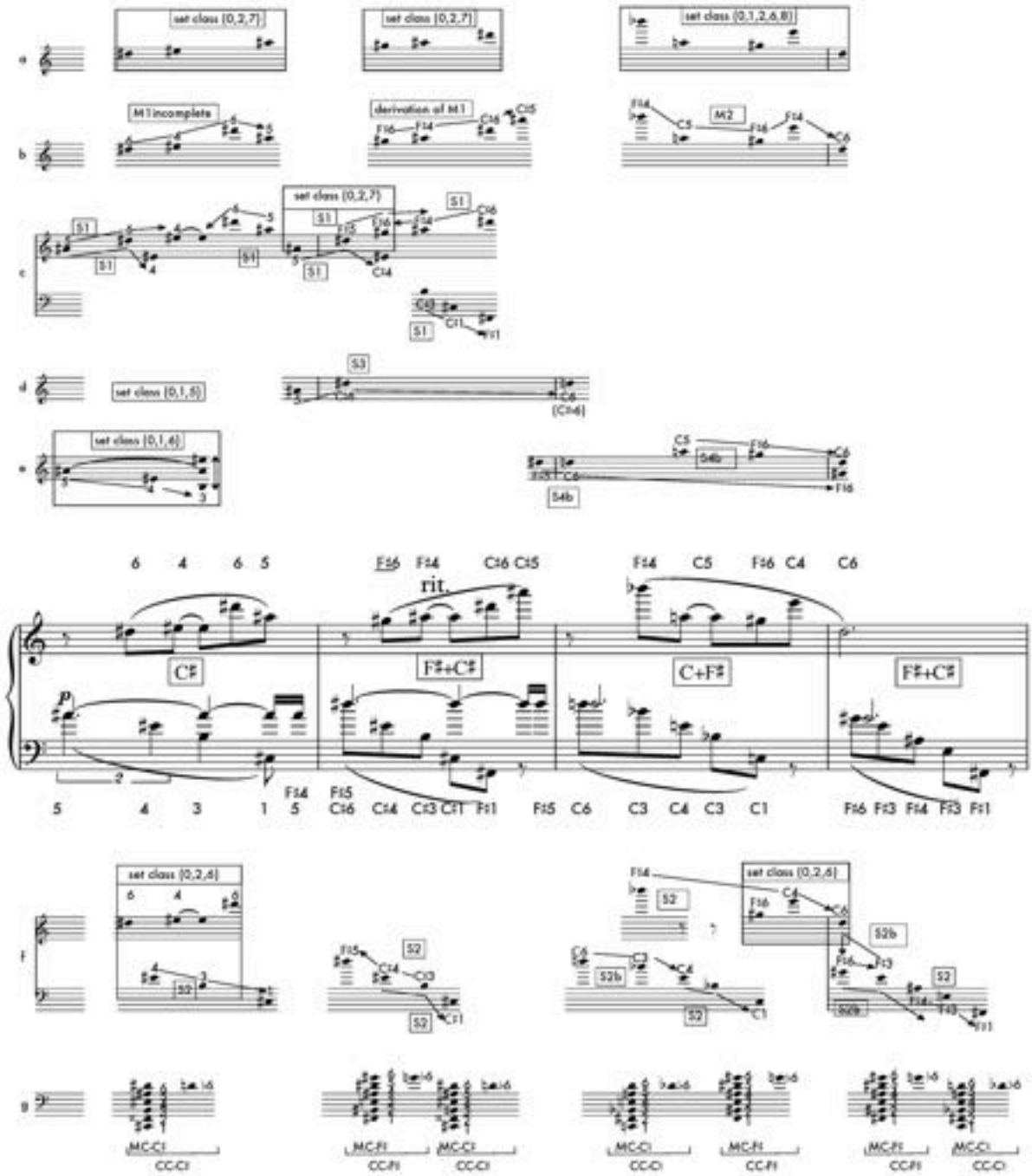
Bar 5 is an almost exact transposition of bar 1 to CC-C♯: all pitches remain unaltered within the new harmonic context. After the governance of chord-centre CC-G♮ in the previous bar, CC-C♯ comes up as absolutely predictable in bar 5: both bars consubstantiate the transition between the second and the third two-bar sets of *Poème* op. 59, n°1, and their transpositional relation of an augmented fourth merely restates the one applied in the equivalent context of bars 2 and 3.

The only unexpected event in the fifth bar is the subtle but significant rhythmic change in the last eighth note of its second beat. The upper voice's dotted rhythm in bars 1 and 3 is transformed into a steady eighth note rhythm in bar 5, thus making partial 5/A♯ occur earlier than in the two preceding cases. Far from sounding unexpected, though, this slightly anticipated articulation of partial 5 in the upper voice is perceived as a momentary decrease in speed and direction that strengthens its connection with the previous notes, while at the same time cancelling its role as an anacrusis of the upcoming bar. In fact, instead of being concluded, M1 is interrupted by a rest on the first beat of bar 6—Example 36-b. In bar 5, immediately after its earlier appearance in the upper voice, partial 5 is unexpectedly rearticulated in the middle voice—paradoxically at the exact moment when it would have been expected, thereby impelling the musical discourse onward to the events of the next bar. At the same time, this second appearance of partial 5 introduces an extended deployment of S3, the second element of which is restated, thereby introducing the first occurrence of S4b within the piece—Example 36-d/e. The outcome of these overlapping occurrences of S3 and S4b is a wider segment that groups the third and fourth two-bar sets together to form a larger set of four bars. Their axial node—the transition between bars 6 and 7—will be highlighted even further, as we shall see.

The events occurring in bar 6 fully justify the sudden acceleration of musical discourse at the end of bar 5. A traditional pitch analysis would regard the latter as governed by the CC-C♯, along with two non-harmonic pitches, F♯ and G♯—or only F♯ if a 7th partial of the CC-C♯ is also taken into consideration. To resume the words applied by Eberle (1978) to *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, the "trace of a subconscious dominant-tonic" (p.58) would be enough to explain F♯ in the context of CC-C♯.

Although the analysis of the specific sound material reveals a different explanation of the events of bar 6 in the context of Scriabin's new sound space, that "dominant-tonic trace" cannot be ignored. It is in fact so salient within the context of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 that, far from being a mere Freudian slip, it seems to result from an absolutely deliberate procedure. To fully understand its context and significance, though, it is indispensable to acquire a full overview of the piece. Before returning to the subject we shall therefore proceed with the detailed analysis of the piece.

Example 36. Bars 5–8



Rhythmically, bar 6 combines characteristics of the odd and the even bars articulated so far, represented respectively in its two upper voices and in its lower voice. Its concrete sound material is taken from bars 1, 3 and 5 and adapted to the new context of two governing chord centres—CC-C♯ and CC-F♯. We shall see how.

The last sixteenth note of bar 5—the anacrusis of bar 6—introduces an occurrence of S1 that is rhythmically symmetrical to the first S1 occurrence in the previous bar, maintaining its pitches and registers unchanged—Example 36-c. The second element of that S1 occurrence, the D♯ on the first beat

of bar 6, fulfils a double function since it also introduces an exact transposition to CC-F♯ of the S1 occurrence stated in the first three eight notes of bar 1.

The second, third and fourth eight notes of the lower voice in bar 6 embody S2 in the context of CC-C♯: they restate the same pitches of the previous S2 occurrence from bar 5 with no change of register—Example 36-g.

In the upper voice, a peculiar derivation of the incomplete M1 occurrence from bar 5 summarizes the events of the sixth bar. It takes that incomplete M1 occurrence's numeric sequence of partials and intersects it with the two governing chord centres of the bar. As a result, the first two partials—partials 6 and 4—are assigned to CC-F♯, thus being articulated as G♯-A♯. The second pair of partials—the second occurrence of partial 6 and partial 5—is played out as D♯-A♯, within the context of the CC-C♯. The morphological transformation undergone by M1 in bar 6 is the inevitable outcome of this procedure—Example 36-b.

The intervallic relation of the pair G♯-A♯ with the lowest note of the bar—partial 1 of CC-F♯—is identical to the relation between their equivalent counterparts and partial 1 of the respective chord centres in all previous occurrences of M1. A similar congruence relates the pair D♯-A♯ and partial 1 of CC-C♯, which is now the second lowest note of the bar, to the congener pitch-classes of all uneven bars thus far. What is more, in both cases G♯-A♯ and D♯-A♯ are stated in the same order as their equivalent counterparts in all previous M1 occurrences. These facts are particularly noticeable in the case of D♯-A♯, since the two notes have just been used in the previous bar, within the same context and transposition level. As noted earlier, in bars 1, 3 and 5 an intervallic relation of a major sixth is established between the root notes of each respective chord centre and the pitch that both starts and ends the bar. The same intervallic relation is now established, on the one hand, between partial 1 of CC-C♯ and the pitch-class stated both as the anacrusis and as the penultimate note of bar 6—A♯, partial 5 of CC-C♯—and, on the other hand, between partial 1 of CC-F♯ and the first and last notes of the bar—in both cases D♯, partial 5 of CC-F♯.

Bar 6 transposes to the context of its governing chord centres all the pitches of bar 5 with their registers unaltered, apart from two exceptions: the bar's lowest and highest notes, partial 1 of CC-F♯ and partial 5 of CC-C♯. Between the two of them, these notes expand the phrase's range to its widest extension, thereby pointing to the section's climax in the transition to bar 7.

As a result of adjusting the specific sound material to the context of two different governing chord centres, the pitches they have in common—A♯ and D♯—acquire particular prominence in bar 6 as

the only two elements stated more than once. These two pitches are additionally highlighted by means of rhythm and register: on the one hand, they occupy the bar's first beat and the syncope of its second beat respectively; on the other hand, they occupy the bar's two highest frequencies in a symmetric response to the perfect fifth formed by the two lower ones, the root notes of the two governing chord centres.

Apart from pointing to the first section's axial node, the *ritardando* mark written in bar 6 over the first occurrence of A♯ in the upper voice also highlights the coexistence of the two chord centres: on the one hand, it reinforces the syncope that puts the highest note of CC-F♯ in the upper voice in relation with the bottom note of S2 and partial 1 of CC-C♯ in the lower voice. On the other hand, it also highlights the interchange of chord centres that is about to occur between the extreme outer voices.

In their upper voice, bars 7 and 8 present the first occurrence of M2, the derived retrograde version of M1—Example 36-b. In the lower voice of bar 7, set class (0,2,6) forms a new segment through the first articulation of S2b, within the context of CC-C♮—Example 36-f. S2b will occur extensively in the second part of the first two sections and in the third section of the piece and will always be associated with the articulation of S2 that has been taking place since the beginning of the piece. Their common partial 4 forms the axis of this joint S2b-S2 articulation—Example 36-f.

After the striking occurrence of the perfect fifth in bar 6, the augmented fourth is emphasized once more in bars 7 and 8 by means of

1. The intervallic relation between both governing chord centres.
2. The occurrence of partial 6 of the respective main governing chord centres on the first beat of bar 7 and bar 8.
3. The relation established between those same two partials, now in the opposite order, which results from the interchange of partials 6 between the two governing chord centres within M2: partials 3, 4 and 5 belong to the main governing chord centre of the bar, whereas both occurrences of partial 6 belong to the subordinate chord centre, CC-F♯, in the first case, and CC-C♮ in the second—Example 36-b.
4. The simultaneous articulation of the sixth partials of both chord centres on bar 8(1).

2.3.3 Bars 9–12

Bars 9 and 10 are an exact restatement of bars 7 and 8, except for the last two sixteenth notes of bar 10. In the first of them, in the upper voice, partial ♭6/C♯ of the subordinate CC-C♮ is brought into

relation with partial 6—the previous D♮—forming together with the G♯ of the middle voice an inverted occurrence of S4b—Example 37-e. On the bar's last sixteenth note, the second articulation of G♯ is perceived as an anacrusis of bar 11—not only due to the concrete musical situation, but also in view of the wider context of the work: in all its previous occurrences, this particular rhythm had inexorably led to the next bar. But in its role as a mere restatement of bar 10, bar 11 frustrates the anacrusical function of that G♯ and attenuates the listener's expectation of the following bar, whose unforeseen events therefore arrive with a particularly striking effect.

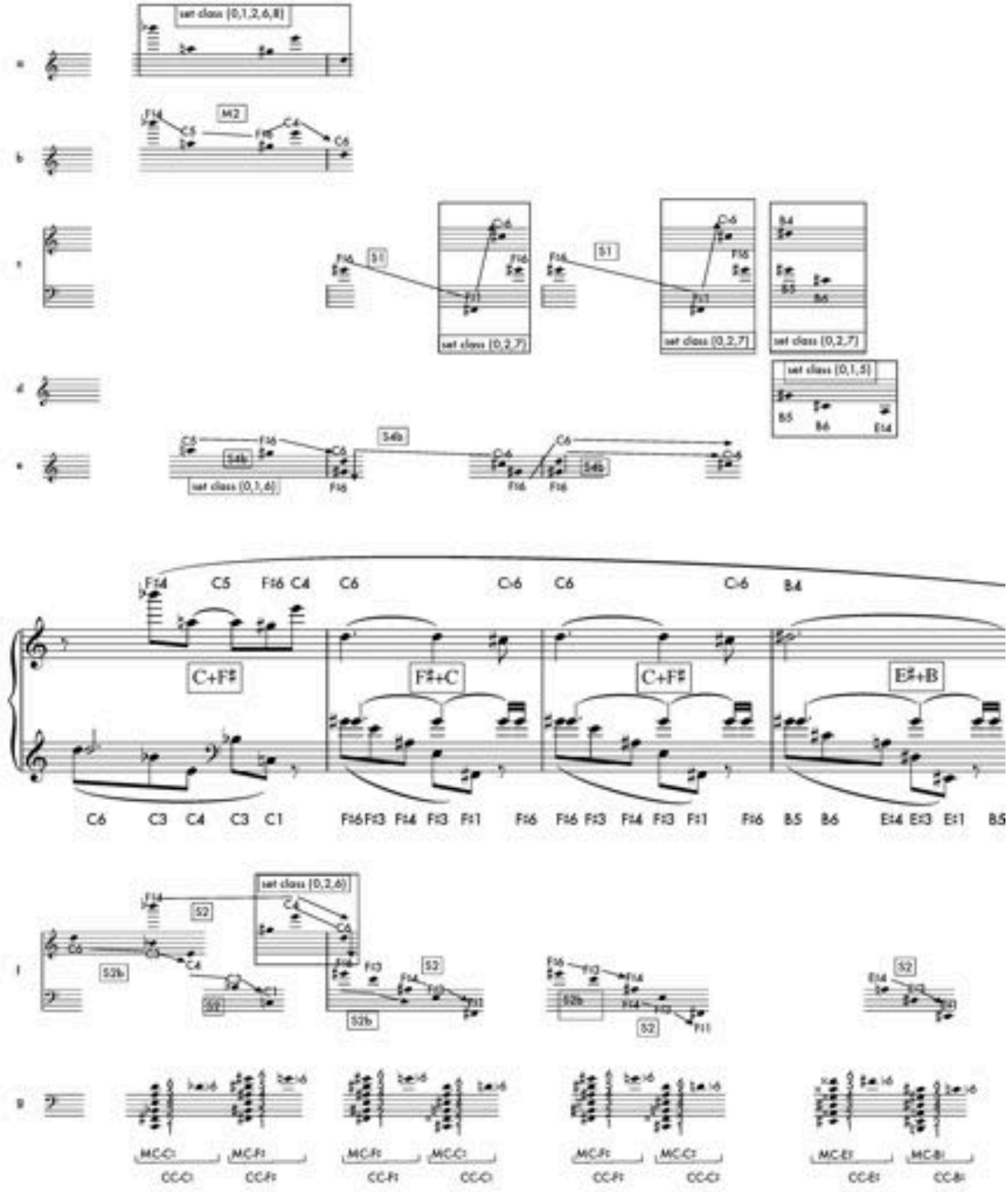
The articulation of D♯ as the highest pitch of bar 12 seems to complete CC-F♯ by introducing its partial 5, which had been the only one missing throughout the five previous bars—apart from partial 2, which was absent from the piece from the very beginning. The simultaneous articulation of G♯—in the same register as the previous bars—enhances that initial impression of consummation. However, the articulation of C♯ in the bar's second eighth note soon reveals that the chord centre context has changed with respect to the five previous bars. Thus, in bar 12 CC-F♯ is abandoned just at the moment when the D♯ seemed to have finally been articulated as its missing fifth partial. Apart from being unexpected, bar 12 is deliberately ambiguous, providing clues leading to two mutually exclusive interpretations.

In view of its pitch material, one would inevitably conclude that all its five pitch-classes morphologically pertain to the work's main chord centre, CC-B♮—five is the minimum amount of partials necessary to define a chord centre, as we have already seen. It would thereby seem obvious to conclude that bar 12 belongs to that chord centre alone. Within that context, the first three pitches of the bar—its highest ones—would constitute a set class (0,2,7) within the context of CC-B♮, still in the vicinity of the initial occurrence of S1 and maintaining, with respect to the beginning of the work, G♯4 as the axial note of an otherwise inverted occurrence—Example 37-b. The bar's last three pitches—its lowest ones—would constitute a derived, morphologically equivalent form of S2 built on partial 2 instead of partial 1[18]—Example 37-f. The very first occurrence of partial 2 in the piece would surely deserve to be highlighted in such a way.

The musical spelling in bar 12 also seems to confirm this line of analysis, for when S2 had been stated with the exact same pitches in bar 2 in the different context of the CC-F♮, its three constituents had been notated with the enharmonic notes F♮, E♭, and A♮—Example 37-i.

[18] As we have already seen, a similar procedure has been used in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, although in a different context.

Example 37. Bars 9–12



However, if we take the specific sound material of bar 12 as point of departure, we are drawn to a quite different conclusion. Considering the systematic coincidence, in each bar so far, between the bottom note of S2 and partial 1 of the respective governing chord centres, it would seem natural to consider bar 12 as being governed by both CC-E♯ and CC- B♮, respectively, as its main and its subordinate chord centres. The three lowest pitches of the bar would articulate S2 in the context of CC-E♯—Example 37-f—while the three highest pitches would state the aforementioned set class (0,2,7)

within the context of CC-B♮, anticipating both the articulation of S1 and the governing chord centre of the upcoming bar. Bar 12, the last bar of the piece's first section, would thus concentrate in itself the two chord centres of the initial two-bar unit of *Poème* op. 59, n°1—precisely the two that represent the polarity of Scriabin's new sound space within the context of the piece—reproducing in the transition between the two first sections of the piece the same augmented-fourth transposition of its two first bars.

The omission of partial 1 of CC-B♮ in bar 12 seems to represent a strong argument for this second line of analysis. Such an absence—which would have been striking at any rate—becomes particularly difficult to explain, considering that it would isolate bar 12 as the only bar in the whole piece lacking the explicit presence of the root note of either its subordinate or its main governing chord centre. Such an absence would inevitably jeopardize the significance of partial 2—due mostly to the augmented-fourth relation it establishes with its fundamental within the Mystic Chord—in the exact moment when partial 2 was supposedly being emphasized.

The orthography of bar 12 is certainly not circumstantial, however. In the context of a co-existence of the CC-E♯ and CC-B♮, it would thus be inevitable to conclude that the composer has deliberately chosen to conceal rather than to reveal, enhancing the ambiguity of a bar which, by simulating an unprecedented occurrence of partial 2, would end up increasing the tension caused by its continued absence.

Bars 23–24 and 36–38 will present new developments in this dilemma, which will only be solved in the last bar of *Poème* op. 59, n°1.

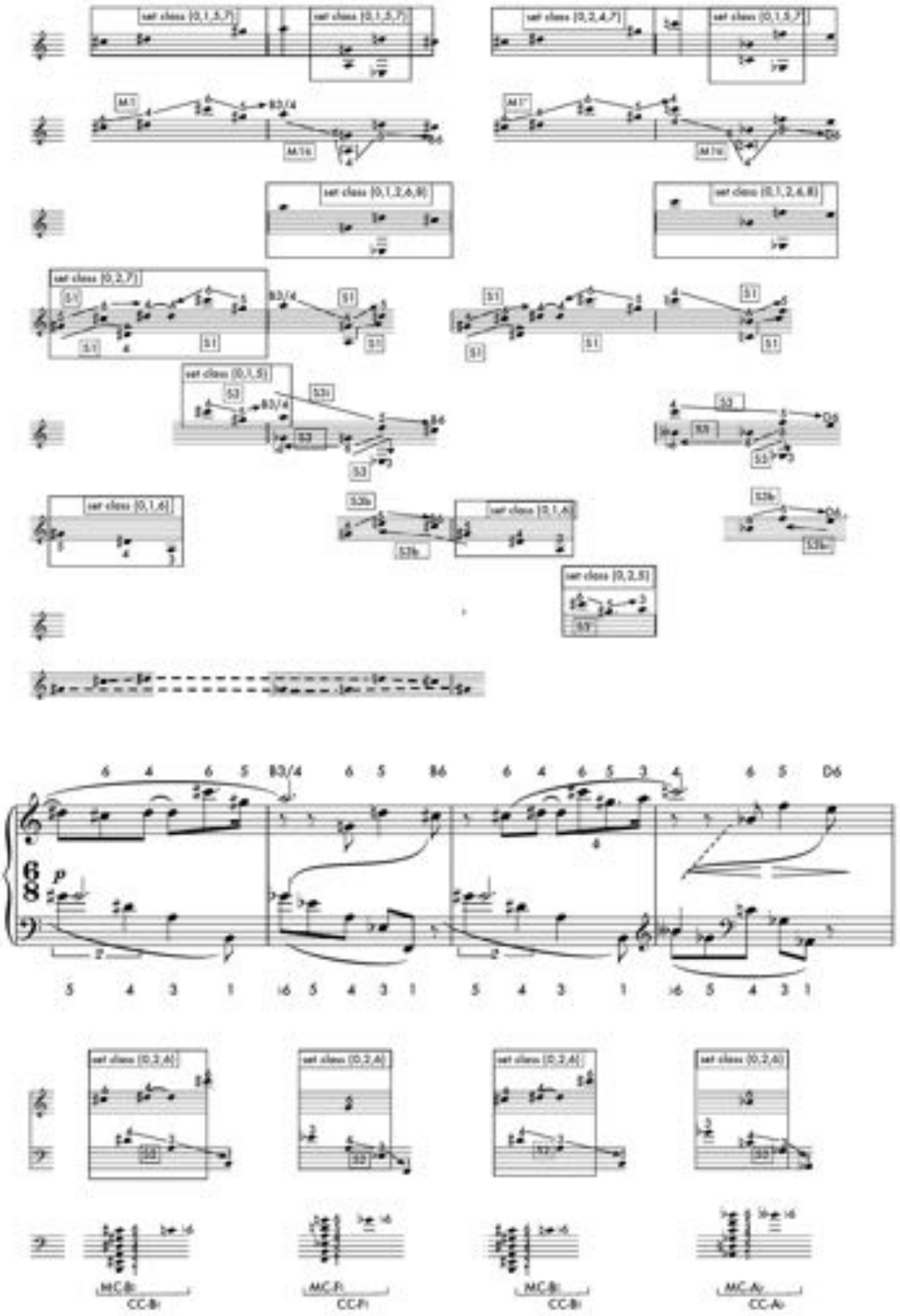
2.4 Second section, bars 13–24

2.4.1 Bars 13–16

In terms of form and specific sound material, the second section of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 is very similar to the first one, and most of its variants are directly related to its different transposition plan.

Except for the first eighth note of the upper voice, which prolongs the last melodic note of the previous section, bars 13 and 14 are an exact restatement of the work's first two bars.

Example 38. Bars 13–16



In comparison with its counterpart in the first section, bar 15 owes the slight variation on the second beat to the different transposition level of the following bar, governed by CC-A♭. In order to

maintain, in a different transposition context, (a) the two mirror occurrences of S1 in the upper voice, and (b) to establish with bar 16 the same melodic relation of a minor third that had related bars 3 and 4, Scriabin uses a simple but ingenious procedure. As we have seen, the last element of M1, in its first occurrence, had been articulated in bar 2 as A♮, i.e. partial 4 of the governing CC-F♮. But A♮ was not outside the range of the previous CC-B♮ either: there, it would have been partial 3. Within the new transpositional relation between their respective chord centres, bars 15 and 16 apply those two numeric functions, articulating A♮ at the end of bar 15 as partial 3 of CC-B♮ and C♮ at the beginning of bar 16 as partial 4 of CC-A♭, thus summarizing the previously featured melodic transitions in the piece's first and second two-bar sets.

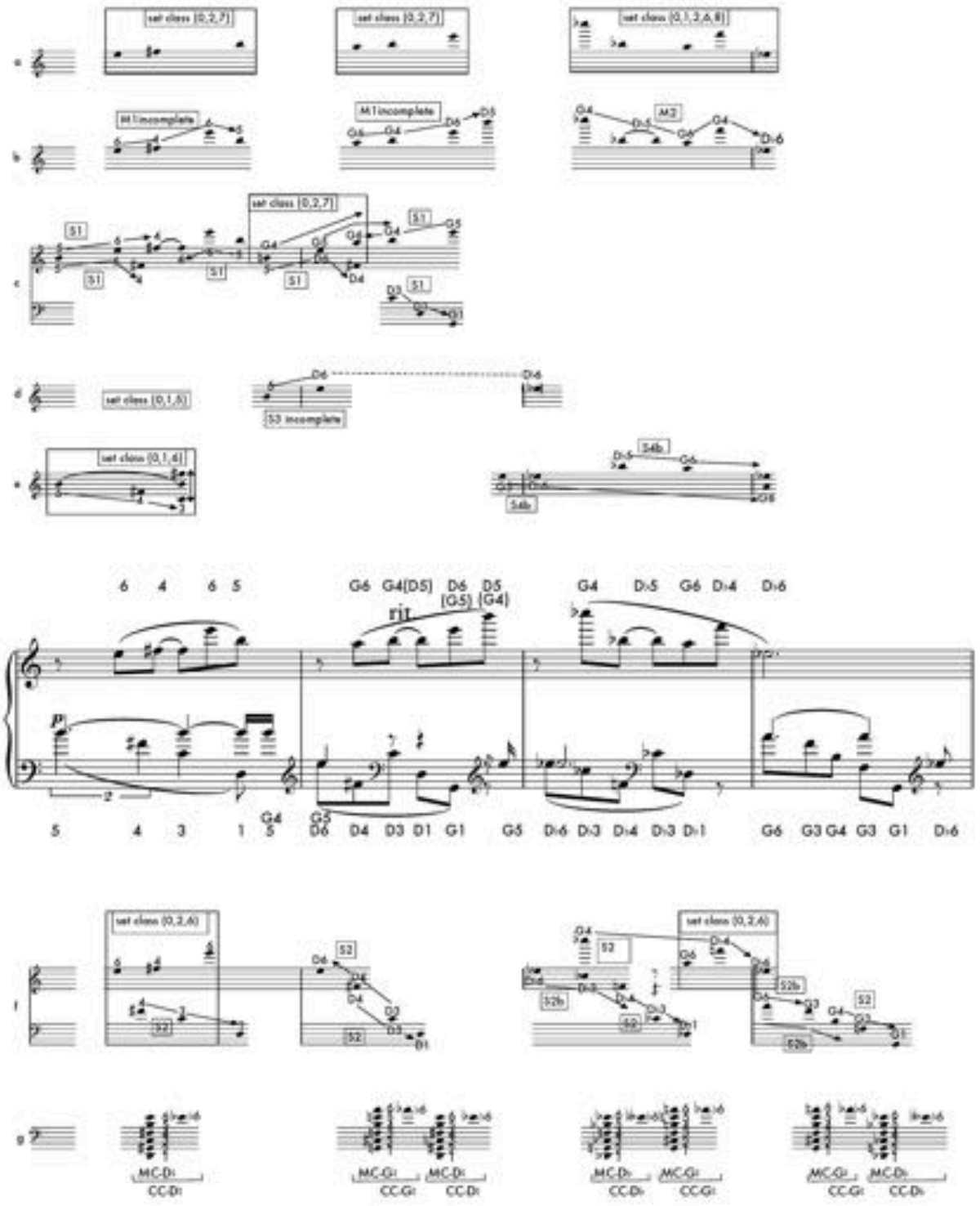
2.4.2 Bars 17–20

After the unexpected chord centre in bar 16 occurring a minor second higher than its equivalent in the first part of the piece, bars 17–20 are perceived as absolutely predictable at first glance, for they merely seem to be transposing bars 5–8, maintaining the same minor second transposition introduced in bar 16.

However, two subtle and interrelated differences between these equivalent bars in the first two sections of the piece should be pointed out.

The first of them is the rest in the middle voice, on the third eighth note of bar 18. It could easily be taken as a mere orthographic inconsistency in comparison with bar 6, and can remain unnoticed in performance if the pedal is used indistinctly. This rest, however, is significant in itself, foreshadowing the events of bars 21–24. By interrupting the articulation of S3, it underscores the beginning of S4b articulated in the last semiquaver of the bar as the anacrusis of bar 19—Example 39-d/e—, thus relating it to the second difference between bars 17–20 with respect to bars 5–8: the unexpected articulation of E♭ which, holding a similar anacrusis function vis-à-vis bar 21, initiates the unexpected half-step transposition movement—of S4b and of bars 19–20 as a whole—that will lead bars 21–22 to the culmination of the second section in bars 23 and 24.

Example 39. Bars 17–20



2.4.3 Bars 21–24

Bars 21–22 are an exact transposition of the two previous bars to CC-C♮ and CC-F♯—exactly the same chord centres that governed their equivalent counterparts in the first section of the piece. Yet

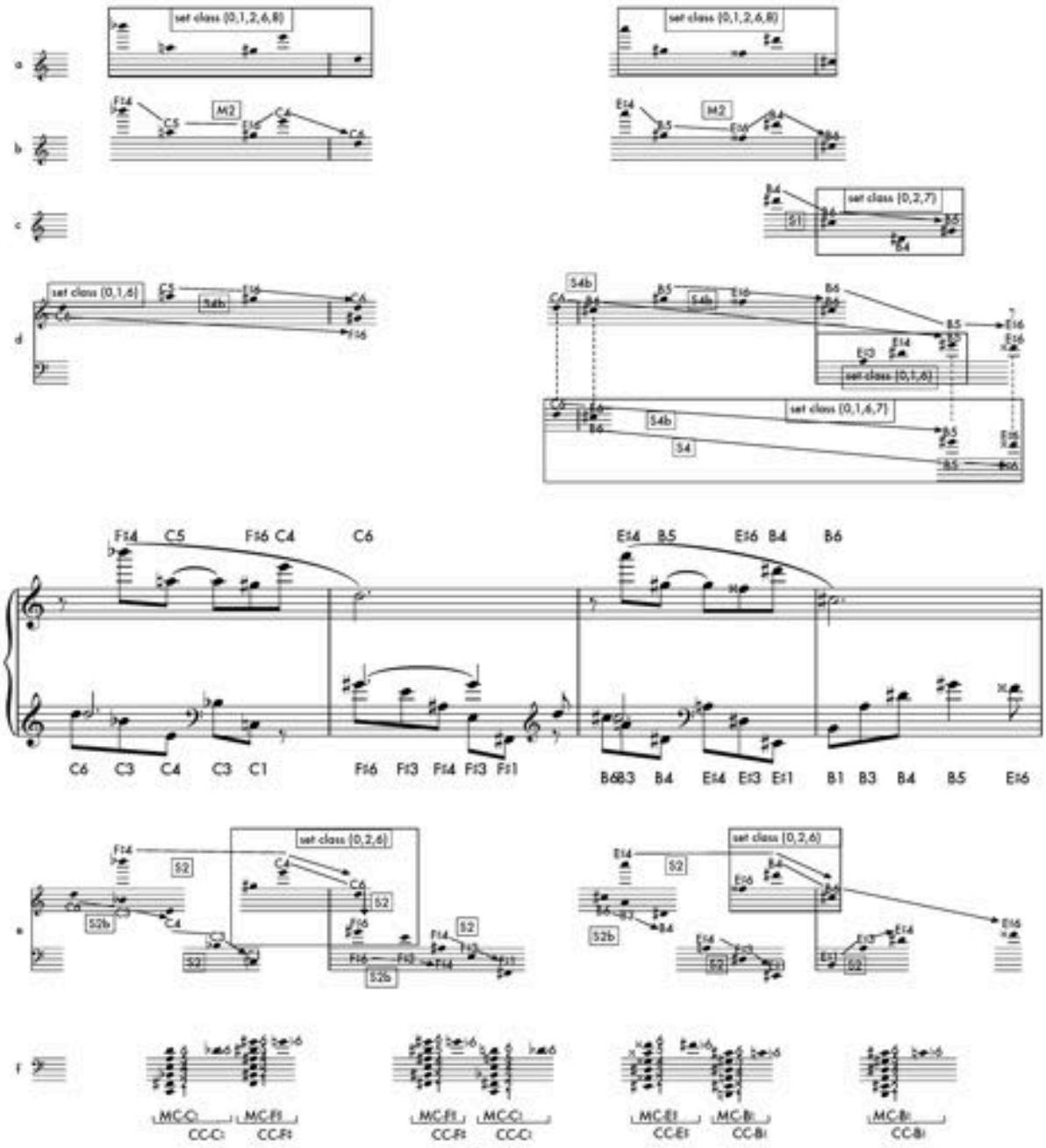
here their context is different, forming part of a dynamic progression that contrasts with the first section's relative stasis.

Bar 23, at its start, appears to be just one more stage within the transposition progression originated four bars earlier. Its predictability is suddenly interrupted, however, in the fifth and sixth eighth notes of the lower voice.

Considering the previous events in *Poème* op. 59, n°1—and most particularly those of the previous four bars—the fifth and sixth eighth notes of the lower voice were expected to articulate, respectively, a B♮ and a pause. The B♮ would have formed a minor seventh with the preceding A♮, completing S2 as the root note of the bar's main governing chord centre. En lieu of this, a new and unprecedented augmented fourth is introduced by a second articulation of D♯ in the bar's fifth eighth note. Then the minor seventh is established in its sixth eighth note with the articulation of E♯, completing an unexpected occurrence of S2 which, rather than starting on the last pitch of the previous S2b, begins an augmented fourth below it—Example 40-e. Through this procedure, B♮ and E♯ interchange the relative functions they should have assumed in bar 23: the B♮, expected as fundamental of the main chord centre, is avoided as its partial 2, while the E♯ carries out exactly the opposite movement, becoming the root note of the main chord centre just when it was expected to be avoided as its partial 2. Both C♯ and G♯—along with the complete occurrence of S2b in the lower voice—pertain to the subordinate chord centre, whose root note, B♮, would have been identical with partial 2 of the main chord centre and is therefore once again omitted from the bar.

Bar 24 takes as its partial 1, and as the lowest note of a new S2 occurrence, the pitch that would have constituted the missing partial 2 of the previous bar—a common procedure in *Poème* op. 59, n°1. What is unprecedented is its positioning on the first beat, thereby establishing a direct relation of an augmented fourth with the E♯ articulated at the end of bar 23. This highlights Scriabin's new polarity, which in this particular occurrence fulfils a formal function quite similar to the traditional V-I cadence. The new functional relation established by the upper voice with the two governing chord centres also enhances that formal similarity: the sixth partials of both governing chord centres, as we have seen, are the third and fifth constituents of M2. As a result of the unexpected events in the lower voice—without any morphological change within M2—those third and fifth constituents have their functional relation with the two governing chord centres interchanged: each of them is now articulated as part of the main governing chord centre of its own bar, rather than pertaining to the subordinate one.

Example 40. Bars 21–24



The first five pitches of bar 24 match the lowest five pitches in the work's very first bar. Just as then, they all belong to the main chord centre of the piece—CC-B♮—stating five out of six partials of the Mystic Chord: all except for the second partial. The direct correspondence higher numeral / higher pitch and the strict adherence to the basic superposed-fourths structure of the Mystic Chord in its fundamental position are both maintained, along with the original register of each one of those five pitches. The articulation of partials 1, 3, 4 and 5 is now symmetrical to that of the first bar. Just as before, partial 6 is the only one stated outside of its numeric order: its articulation is now simultaneous with that of partial 1. Considering the set formed by the last note of the upper voice in bar 23—D♯—and

the C♯ and the G♯ articulated respectively on the first and second beats of bar 24, S1 is also reversed—Example 40-b. Finally, in the upper voice of bars 23–24, the last two notes of M2 inevitably reverse not just the first two of the initial occurrences of M1 in bar 1, but also the very last two notes of the piece's first section. Due to all these symmetrical procedures, bar 24 is perceived in a conclusive manner, thus enhancing the almost cadential nature of its relation with the previous bar and concluding the set formed by the first two sections of the piece.

The last note of bar 24, F𝄪, anticipates the main chord centre of bar 25, CC-E♯, as its partial 6, articulating together with the previous G♯ and with the first note of bar 25—C♯—an S4b occurrence that establishes a connection between the second and third sections of the piece. Viewed within the two-bar set formed by bars 23–24, the F𝄪 is also the last note of the S4b occurrence initiated in the anacrusis of bar 23—closing simultaneously, if the previous G♯ is considered, its extension to a set class (0,1,6,7) resulting from a symmetrical superposition of two occurrences of S4, the first of which is subjected to retrogradation and inversion—Example 40-d.

Bars 23 and 24 constitute the first hint of an answer to the dilemma posed in bar 12, pointing clearly towards the second hypothesis raised by its events: the coexistence of CC-E♯ and CC-B♮, respectively as its main and subordinate governing chord centres. The S2 occurrence previously stated in bar 12 is repeated in bar 23 with its orthography unchanged. Bar 23 also restates the five pitches that were present in bar 12, but adds a sixth pitch to the set. The latter, however, rather than constituting the missing partial 1 of CC-B♮—as could have been expected, considering the hypothesis of one sole governing chord centre—is actually the 6th partial of CC-E♯—F𝄪—making its governance as main chord centre of the bar explicit. CC-B♮ is thereby relegated to the role of subordinate chord centre, with its first partial once more omitted.

2.5 Third section

2.5.1 First phrase, bars 25–32

Bars 25 and 26—the first two-bar set of the third section of *Poème* op. 59, n°1—hark back, questioningly, to the unexpected events of bars 23 and 24: they resume their specific sound material, but this time without resolving their chord centre context.

In Bar 25 the two lower voices exactly restate those of bar 23, defining once more CC-E♯ as the main chord centre of the bar. The upper voice uses a rhythmical variation similar to the one employed in bar 15 in order to compress the M2 transposition of the previous two bars so that it fits into bar 25 alone—Example 41-b. Through this procedure, the last constituent of M2—C♯—reverts to the instability of all its occurrences prior to bar 24, regaining its function as partial 6 of the subordinate chord centre, rather than being associated with the main one.

Bar 26 twice articulates a statement, one octave lower, of the first four constituents of M2, the previous register content of which is now diffracted into two different voices—this procedure leads to the first explicit four-voice texture in the piece so far. In the first of these articulations, M2 is completed in the third voice by partial 6/C♯ of the bar's subordinate CC-B♮, imparting a new sense, in hindsight, to its systematic equivalence in the middle voice with all previous M2 statements in the upper voice—Example 41-b. The relative registers of all five constituents within that first articulation of M2 in bar 26 remain unchanged with respect to their original occurrence. The diffraction of the upper voice into two simultaneous parts also makes explicit the S4 articulation, which hitherto had been only immanent, between the second and third constituents of M2 and partial 6 of the subordinate chord centre, in the middle voice—Example 41-c.

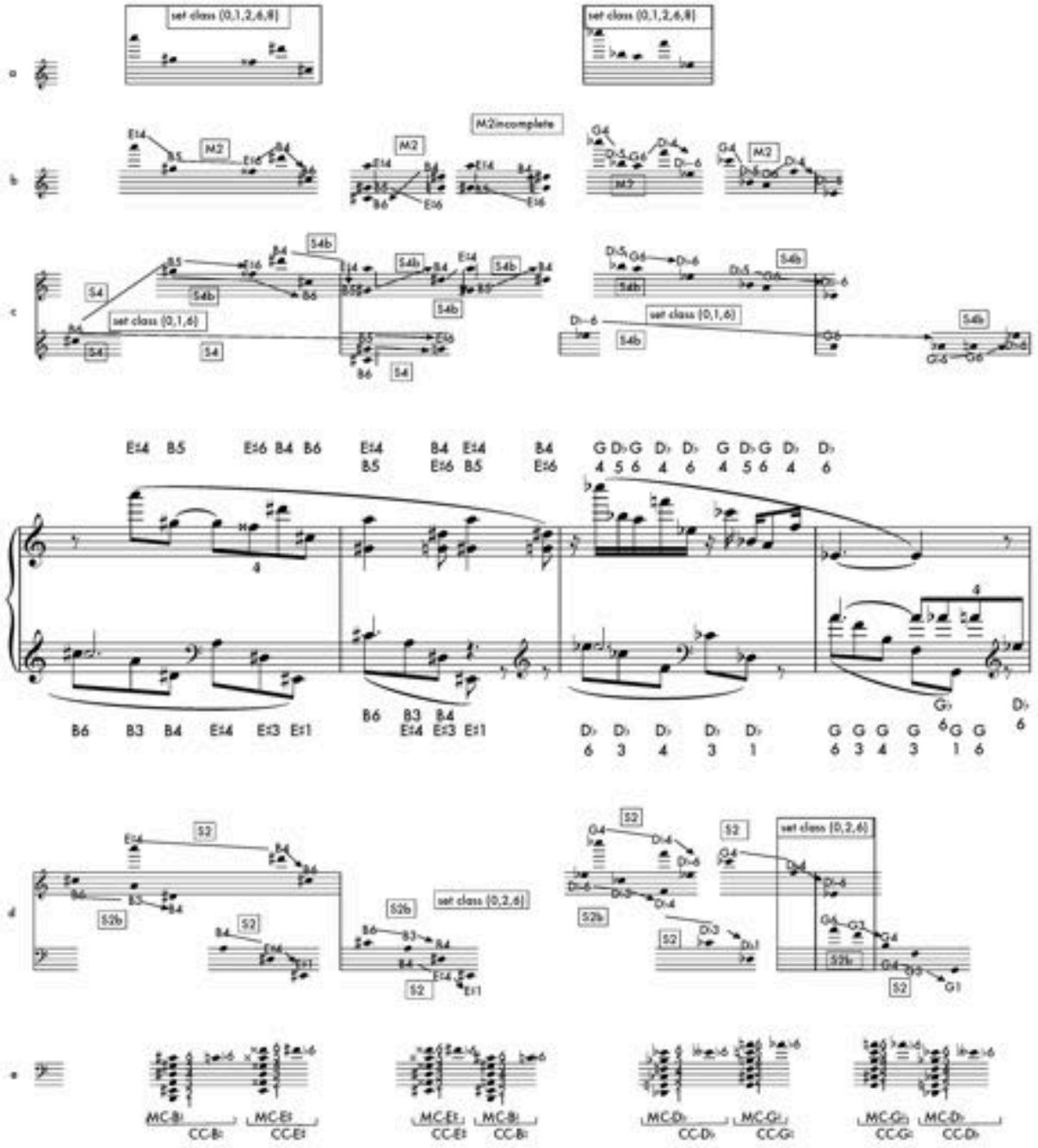
After the questioning nature of the two previous bars, bars 27–32 revisit the last 6 bars of the second section of the piece, varying them for purposes of fluidity and in order to underscore the dual relation between each M2 occurrence and its respective two governing chord centres. Since no further changes are introduced in bars 29–32 with relation to bars 21–24, we shall now focus our attention on bars 27 and 28.

The upper voice of bars 27–28 introduces two different rhythmical variations of M2. The first of them changes the previous eighth notes into sixteenth notes and eliminates the original syncopated rhythm, so that M2 fits into the bar's first beat. The second variation—the upper voice in bar 29—maintains the sixteenth notes but restores the syncope, which this time affects the third constituent of M2, partial 6 of the CC-G♮; the return of the syncopated rhythm in this occurrence of M2 shoves its last constituent forward to the first beat of the following bar—Example 41-b.

Since the lower voice in bars 27–28 is an exact restatement of the lower voice of bars 19–20, these two rhythmic variations once more fulfil the purpose of modifying the way the two M2 occurrences relate to the main governing chord centre of their respective bars, as had already occurred with the previous M2 variation in bar 25. This time, the two new variations move in opposite directions. The first one takes that relation back to the state of its turning point in bar 24. The second one goes

further back and causes that relation to reassume its original nature as stated in bars 7–11 and 19–22. Here, the third constituent of M2—first partial 6 within the motif—is additionally displaced by syncope, and thus its non-coincidence with the bar's main governing chord centre is more profoundly emphasized.

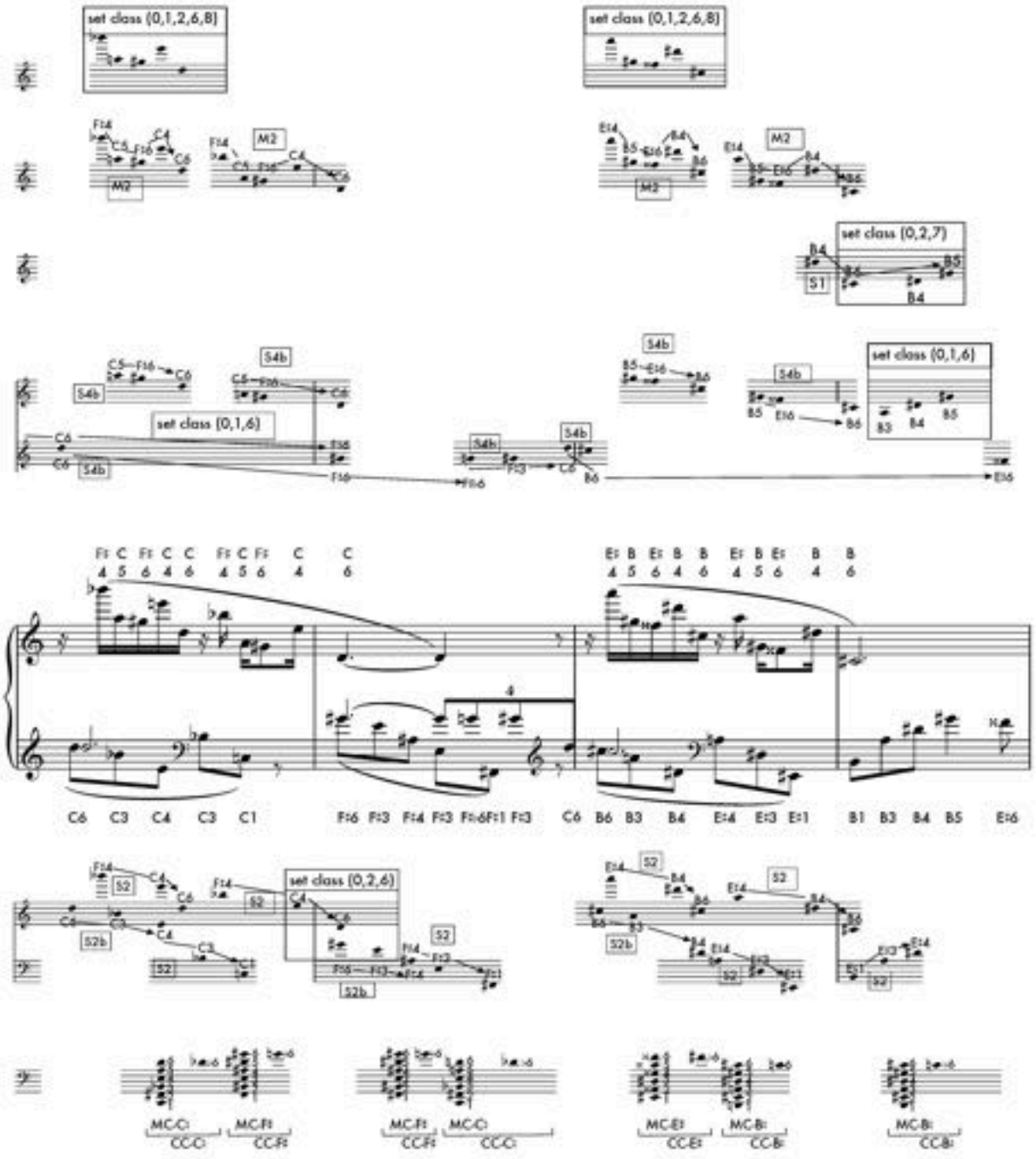
Example 41. Bars 25–28



The last variation within this two-bar set is featured in the middle voice of bar 28: a new chromatic fluctuation occurs in its second beat with the introduction of partial ♭6 of CC-G♮, as usual, in

direct relation with partial 6 of the same chord centre. Partial ♭6 is the axis of two symmetrical inversions of S4b—Example 41-c—that compensate for the disappearance of the S4b occurrence—considering the corresponding bar of the second section—, a disappearance caused by the lack of an anacrusis to bar 27. The last note of bar 28—E♭—serves as an axis between bars 28 and 29, since it is simultaneously the last note of that second inversion of S4b and the first of a new occurrence of S4b. Viewed together, these two segments start and end with the same pitch, A♭/G♯, dividing the octave into two symmetrical parts with their axial note.

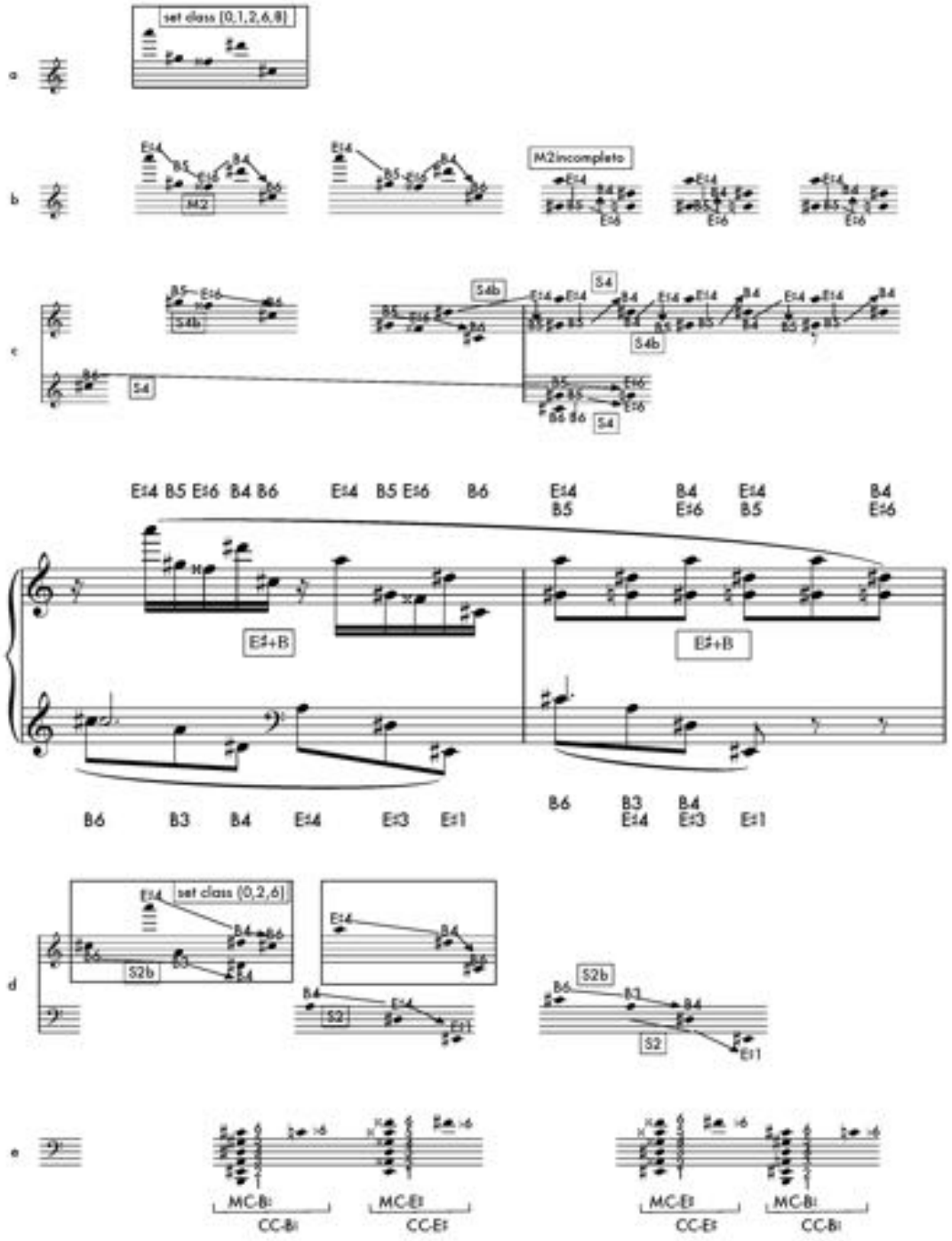
Example 42. Bars 29–32



2.5.2 Second phrase, bars 33–39

After the varied restatement of bars 19–24 in bars 27–32, bars 33–34 treat bars 25–26 in the same manner. The variations they introduce in the right hand allow M2 to be articulated twice, in bar 33, and three times in bar 34—two of them incomplete. These variations relate to bars 31–32 in the exact same way bars 25–26 related to bars 23–24, for they do not introduce any further changes in the relation of M2 with the main governing chord centre but merely emphasize their questioning nature.

Example 43. Bars 33–34



The analysis of the second phrase of the third section will therefore focus on the final five bars of *Poème* op. 59, n°1

The content of bar 35 is equivalent, as far as pitches and registers are concerned, to that of the very first bar. The five defining pitches of MC-B♮ are stated once more as the bar's five lowest pitches, but now directly corresponding with the order of their numerals: thanks to the *arpeggiato* chord, the lower voice's four partials are stated symmetrically with relation to the first bar, while the G♯ again coincides with the downbeat. The upper voice once more recalls the piece's main motif, stated this time in its second form as M1'—completed by the articulation of the B♮ on the first beat of the following bar—Example 44-b.

As we have already seen, the last constituents of both M1 and M1' always played a dual role within the context of the chord centre: in bars 2 and 4 they both constituted partial 4 of their respective governing chord centres, relating simultaneously to the previous CC-B♮ through their congruence with its partial 3 and its partial 1, respectively. In the case of the last element of M1, that dual relation was already unfolded in bars 15–16, as previously noted. This time, the first beat of bar 36 takes a note previously relegated to a secondary role—B♮, the last constituent of M1'—and now articulates it in the upper voice as partial 1 of the piece's main chord centre.

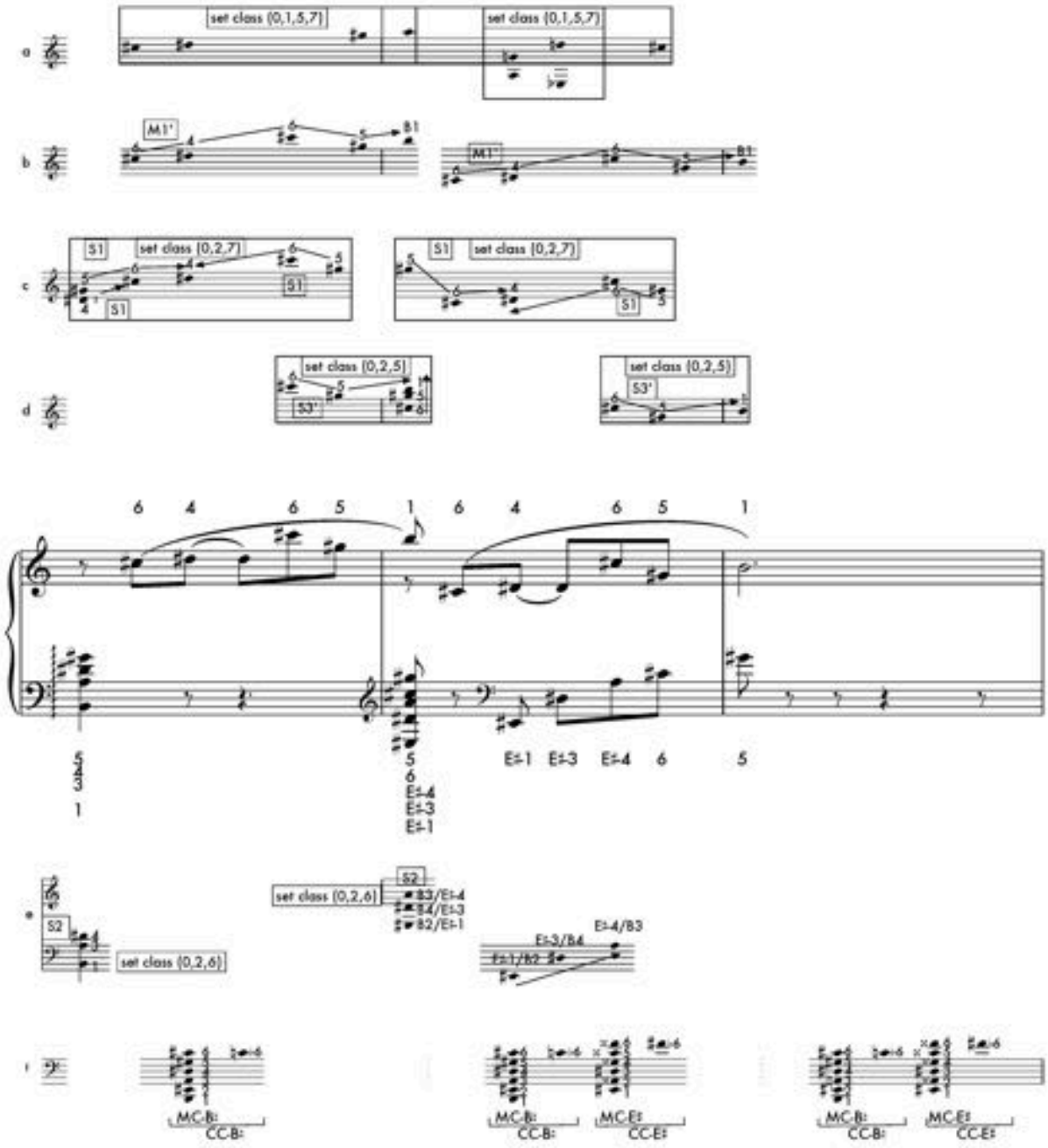
The unprecedented statement of a partial 1 as the bar's highest note in the upper voice is accompanied, in the lower voice, by the articulation of an *arpeggiato* chord that retrogrades the pitches featured in the lower voice of bar 12, relating them to it with a procedure quite similar to that which related the previous bar's *arpeggiato* chord to the lower voice of bar 1. In bar 12 we noted that the only missing partial of MC-B♮ was precisely its partial 1. Its articulation in the upper voice of bar 36 seems to provide a different answer than that of bars 23–24 to the dilemma posed by the crucial last bar of the piece's first section. Now, for the first time in *Poème* op. 59, n°1, a morphologically complete form of the Mystic Chord is indisputably enunciated—within CC-B♮, the piece's main chord centre. Moreover, the interval that defines the polarity of Scriabin's new sound space is clearly underscored by the B♮'s extreme position in the upper voice as the higher note of an S3' statement and by the E♯ as the bottom note of the *arpeggiato* chord and of an S2 statement—Example 44-d/e. Its register, one octave higher than the lower voice of bar 12, reinforces all these signs that point to the first undisputed articulation of partial 2 in the whole piece, embodied by the E♯.

This last statement must be further explained.

As noted earlier, *Poème* op. 59, n°1 had begun with the tightest possible root position of MC-B♮—excluding its partial 2 and articulating its partial 1 in the octave 2 of the piano as B♮-2. The

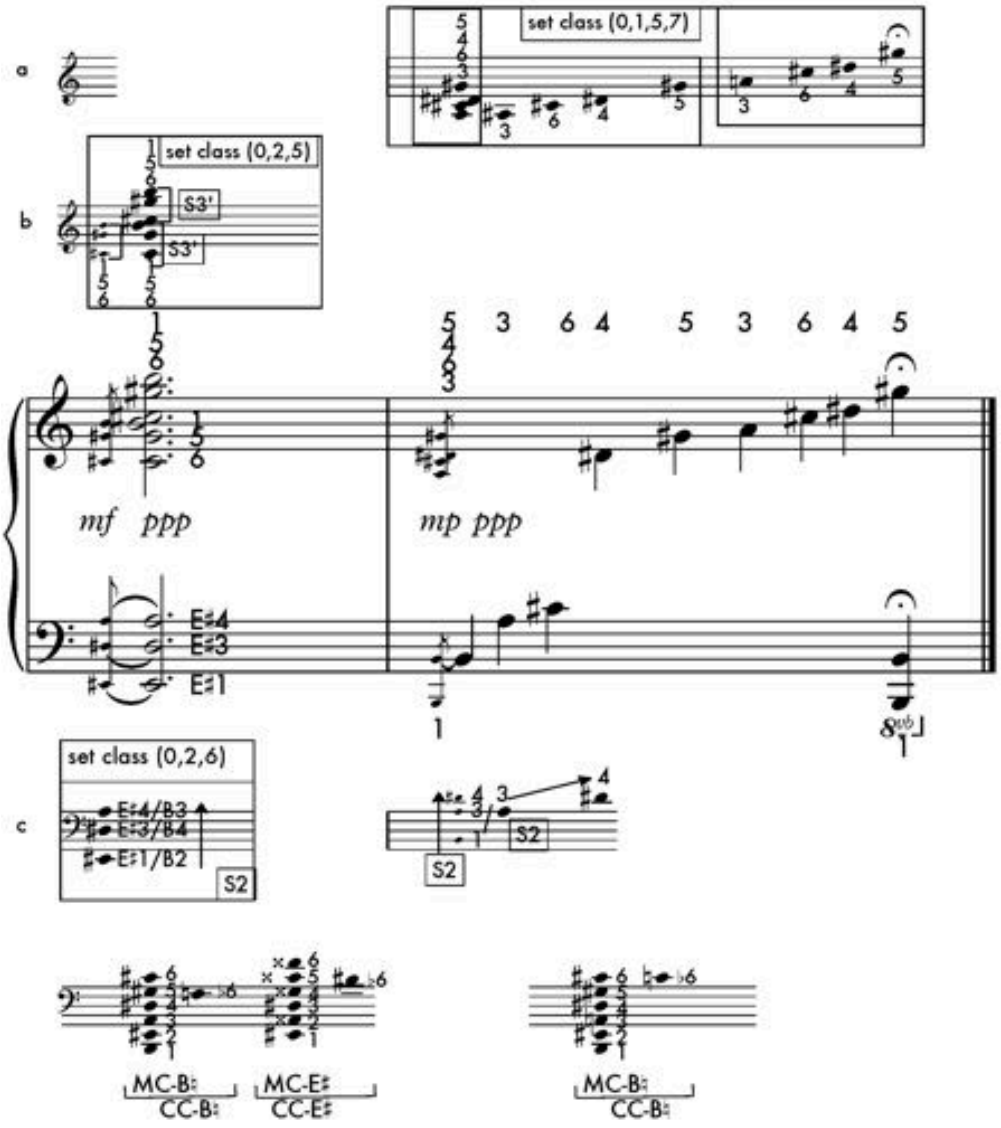
missing partial 2 was therefore expected as E♯-3. In all its other occurrences as the bottom note of S2, both the E♯ and the F♮ were always articulated as E♯-2 or F♮-2, thus lying beyond the register they were expected to present within all occurrences of the incomplete MC-B♮, so far. This was also the case when E♯ occurred in bars 12 and 23. This fact should not be trivialized, considering the overall stability of registers throughout the piece, particularly in its bass line: each one of the eight pitches articulated as a bottom note of S2 remains unchanged in register in all occurrences between bars 1 and 35—the more frequent one being precisely E♯/F♮, articulated nine times in that context.

Example 44. Bars 35–37



For the same reason, the transposition of both M1' and the pitch material of the *arpeggiato* chord to the lower octave immediately afterwards cannot but rekindle the recipient's doubt concerning the functional role of E♯. This uncertainty, which is further underscored by the suspension of discourse that follows that octave transposition, will be resolved in the last two bars of the piece.

Example 45. Bars 38–39

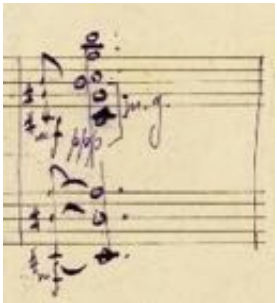


Bar 38 starts once more with a morphologically complete form of MC-B♮. Its six pitches are articulated as grace notes in the exact same disposition and register of its previous occurrence—the previous five notes in the lower voice, and the last one in the upper voice. The lower half of the chord is again S2 and the upper half S3'—Example 45 b/c; S3' is restated immediately thereafter, in a double vertical articulation that juxtaposes the two registers it featured in bars 35–37, inserting the first instead of the second articulation of C♯ within M1'.

This occurrence of the Mystic Chord is absolutely unique in the context of *Poème* op. 59, n°1, considering that it is the only simultaneous articulation of six different pitches in the whole piece—no more than three simultaneous pitches had been articulated so far—and hence the only vertical articulation of a morphologically complete Mystic Chord anywhere in the piece. It is therefore underscored with *mezzo forte* dynamics—the loudest dynamics in the whole piece—while the subsequent double articulation of S3' is to be played in *triple piano*, so that it fits into the resonance of that completely stated Mystic Chord. These two indications of dynamics are a quite dramatic gesture, considering that the only dynamic indicated so far had been *piano* at the beginning of the piece. They strongly suggest that the grace-note chord should be played on the downbeat of the bar.

Since this complete occurrence of the Mystic Chord is again articulated beyond the range it was expected to present within CC-B♮, the *mezzo forte* seems intended to reinforce the quasi-dominant role of the E♯ as partial 1 of an autonomous chord centre—very similarly to its previous role in bar 23. That intention becomes even clearer if we study the autograph of *Poème* op. 59, n°1: instead of indicating a general *mezzo forte* dynamic for the complete Mystic Chord statement, it presents two simultaneous *mezzo forte* indications under S3' and S2, respectively—while the *triple piano* is written only once, affecting the double S3' statement alone. This particular orthography of the bar strongly suggests that S3' and S2 are still regarded as two independent entities.

Figure 1. *Poème* op, 59, n° 1, autograph: bar 38 (Scriabin, 1910)



A fundamental particularity of S3' should be stressed at this point of the analysis: it will be explained within the context of MC-B♮.

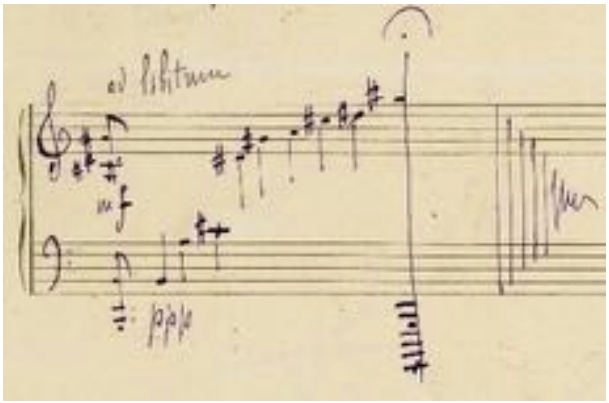
Within one same subset of pitches, S3' brings together partial 1 and the only two partials of MC-B♮ that are not also members of CC-E♯: partials 5 and 6—G♯ and C♯, respectively. On the other hand, S2 typically consists of the 1st, 3rd and 4th partial of its respective chord centre. In *Poème* op. 59, n°1 the only hypothetical exceptions to this are precisely the S2 occurrences in bars 12, 23 and, particularly, those in bars 36–38.

For all these reasons, the third complete statement of the MC-B♮ so far in the piece—including the long-missing partial 2, articulated for the first time just two bars earlier—is simultaneously treated as a superposition of two independent subsets of pitch-classes, each of them functionally subsumed under a different chord centre—CC-E♯ and CC-B♮, respectively.

The last bar of the piece will confirm this functional overlap within E♯.

Just like the previous bar, bar 39 states a vertical six-note chord at its onset. Both its articulation as a grace note and the *mezzo piano* dynamics briefly interrupting the *triple piano* put it in direct relation with the six-pitch chord in the previous bar. The dynamic relation between the two chords becomes even clearer in the autograph, which presents the six-pitch chord of bar 39 with *mezzo forte* dynamics, instead of the *mezzo piano* published in the first edition.

Figure 2. *Poème* op, 59, n° 1, autograph: bar 39 (Scriabin, 1910)



The proximity of register between the two chords further enhances that relation.

In this six-note chord, the right hand articulates a set class (0,1,5,7)—Example 45-a—with the same four pitches that had served as row material of M1 at the beginning of the piece: A♮, C♯, D♯, G♯. This set class (0,1,5,7) is then put in relation with the previous S3' by means of two restatements that are similar to each one of them in both register and dynamics. The fact of being horizontally articulated does not jeopardize the relation between set class (0,1,5,7) and these articulations of S3': instead, this constitutes an expressive Example of the vertical/horizontal equivalence that Scriabin is aiming for. Just like the *triple piano* articulation of S3' in the previous bar, this double set class (0,1,5,7) should fit into the resonance of the previous six-note chord, as the unravelled harmony it truly is—and the same holds true for the B♮ which, at the end of the bar, merely expands the chord's previous range. For that purpose, apart from the *triple piano,* Scriabin writes "*ad libitum*", enabling these last ten notes of

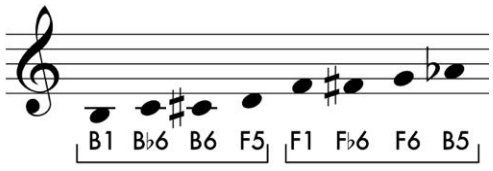
Poéme op. 59, n° 1 to find the appropriate moment to be sounded out within the resonance of the previous chord.

After having been articulated as the highest pitch in each one of the three previous bars, partial 1 regains its natural position as B♮-2. The morphology of this articulation, however, is unprecedented, since the B♮ is now doubled at the lower octave—octave 1. This fact provides the previous bar with a new retrospective context: E♯-2, its lowest note, now matches the range partial 2 was expected to present within the last bar of the piece. Brought back into the range of MC-B♮, the E♯ of bar 38 is thus confirmed as its partial 2. The space it occupied in bar 38 is left empty in bar 39, though. The quasi-dominant relation that E♯ simultaneously maintains with the lowest pitch of bar 39 is underscored instead, since bar 39, reappropriated by the governing CC-B♮ alone, establishes a deliberate harmonic contrast with the four previous bars, by stating only five out of six partials of the Mystic Chord—all but its second.

2.6 Conclusions

Viewed as a set, the root notes of the eight chord centres of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 form a symmetrical octachord that brings together the root notes of the two axial chord centres of the piece—B♮ / E♯—and the six pitch-classes that within their range belong exclusively to one of those two chord centres. This octachord could delimit no other pair of augmented fourth related chord centres in the same way.

Example 46. Root notes of the governing chord centres and its relation to CC- B♮ and CC-E♯



All three T3 transposition cycles are present in *Poème* op. 59, n°1, but only the main T3 transposition cycle of the piece—B♮, D♮, E♯, A♭—is complete, delimiting the two chromatic subsets present in that octachord. The T6 related pairs of chord centres within this T3 transposition cycle—E♯-

B♮ and A♭-D♮—also represent the lower and upper extremes of the interrelated augmented-fourth transpositions that are predominant in *Poème* op. 59, n°1.[19]

The two axial chord centres of the piece and their T3 transposition cycle are by all these reasons preeminent, not only as the core sets of its sound space, but also as the generators of its transposition plan.

It is now time to explain the aforementioned fundamental significance of the trace of a dominant-tonic relation in *Poème* op. 59, n°1.

Along with the systematic absence of the second partial of the chord centre until the last four bars of the piece, the striking coexistence of V-I-related chord centres in bars 6 and 18 is the other main outstanding trait in *Poème* op. 59, n°1. As will be shown, the two events are intrinsically related.

The coexistence of two perfect-fifth-related chord centres in bar 6 represents the turning point in the transposition plan of the first section of *Poème* op. 59, n°1. After having attained its highest point between bars 4 and 5, the governing chord centre descends a half step with respect to the new chord centre introduced in bar 6 and to the augmented fourth relation it maintains with the main governing CC- C♮ of bar 7. Triggered by the perfect-fifth-related chord centres of bar 6, bar 7 is the first where T6 transpositionally related chord centres coexist. The old V-I and the new ♯IV-I polarities are thereby directly confronted with one another in the axial bars of the first section of the piece.

Due to that axial position within the first section of the piece, bars 6 and 7 indirectly establish a second perfect-fifth relation, respectively with the lowest note of bar 1—B♮, partial 1 of the piece's main chord centre—and with the lowest note of bar 12—E♯, partial 1 of the chord centre representing the core of the new polarity of Scriabin's sound space alongside the piece's main governing chord centre. That perfect-fifth relation between the axis of the first part of the piece and its first and last bars is then extended, in bars 8–11, by maintaining the static governance of the two chord centres F♯ and C♮—whilst alternating them respectively as main and subordinate governing chord centre.[20] The transposition plan of the first section of *Poème* op. 59, n°1 is designed to set up these V-I/♯IV-I relations: the second of the three existing T6 transposition relations— G♮-C♯— is the necessary condition for the other two—E♯-B♮ and F♯-C♮—to be framed by direct or indirect perfect-fifth transpositional

[19] Especially considering that each bar of the piece holds an augmented-fourth relation with either the preceding bar alone, or with both the preceding and the following bars in each case. All other existing transpositional relations are only used, in fact, to transpose pairs of augmented-fourth-related chord centres. This is true even in the extreme cases of bars 5–6 and 17–18, where the perfect fifth transposition is underscored by the first coexistence of chord centres in the piece—or by its second occurrence, in the case of bars 17–18.

[20] The restatement of bar 10 articulated in bar 11 is precisely intended to avoid a new direct perfect fifth relation between its lowest note and the lowest note of bar 12: the V-I direct relation is confined to the axis of the section.

relations. The unprecedented harmonic stasis of bars 7–11 is precisely intended to extend those V-I/♯IV-I relations.

Everything previously said about bars 6–7 applies to the corresponding bars 18–19 as well, except for the suppression of the previous perfect fifth relation between those axial bars and the first and last bars of the second section, due to the ascending half-step transposition initiated in bar 16 of the corresponding bars in the first section. Liberated from the previous V-I influence that had been the reason for harmonic stasis in bars 7–11, bars 19–23 initiate a dynamic transpositional progression leading to the climax of bars 23–24.[21]

The V-I relation that had been thus weakened in the second section of the piece is structurally absent in the piece's third section, the exclusive domain of the new augmented-fourth polarity.

The growing impact of augmented-fourth polarity throughout *Poème* op. 59, n°1 is therefore inversely proportional to the influence of V-I. Its progress is particularly evident in the evolution that takes place between the interrelated bars 12, 23–24 and 36–38 and leads to the growing presence of bars governed by the two Chord Centres of E♯ and B♮, the chord centres that represent the core of that new polarity within the context of the piece: 1 out of 12 bars in the first section, 2 out of 12 in the second section and 8 out of 15 in the third section of the piece.

The most eloquent expression of that evolution is to be found, however, in bars 6 and 18, on the one hand, and in bars 36 and 38, on the other. These four bars are related by a shared feature that is unique to them: each of them articulates the root notes of both of their respective governing chord centres. In bars 6 and 18 alike, a perfect-fifth relation is established between those two root notes. Placed at the end of the third section of the piece, far removed from the V-I relation present in the previous two, bars 36 and 38 simultaneously state their two root notes—B♮ and E♯—in order to finally establish within themselves the core interval of the augmented fourth. The overlapping functions of the E♯ in those two bars assign the augmented fourth a quasi-dominant role, thus defining the polarity of Scriabin's new sound space.

For all these reasons it seems inevitable to conclude that, rather than being a Freudian slip, the trace of a V-I relation, in the context of a new sound space that dispossesses it of its previous functional role, is the raison d'être of *Poème* op. 59, n°1. The piece has a subliminal program coinciding with its own structure: the symbolical handover between the old V-I and the new augmented-fourth polarity, leading the V-I polarity to its final disappearance.

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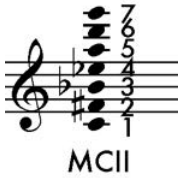
[21] Bars 19–20 and 21–22 are structured as two bar sets, and their transpositional relations are thus established between alternate bars—at T11.

3 *Prélude* op. 59, n°2

3.1 The chord centre in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2

The Mystic Chord was the undisputed nuclear set of the chord centre in both *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and *Poém* op. 59, n°1, expanded to the seventh partial of its heptatonic form, in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, and to the distinctive partial ♭6 of the Mystic Chord b in both cases. *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 substitutes the alternative Mystic Chord b by a new varied form of the original Mystic Chord—the Mystic Chord II—which, as it was discussed in chapter I, lowers one half step the fourth partial of the original Mystic Chord. The Mystic Chord II is consistently deployed in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 as a heptatonic chord.

Example 47. Mystic Chord II



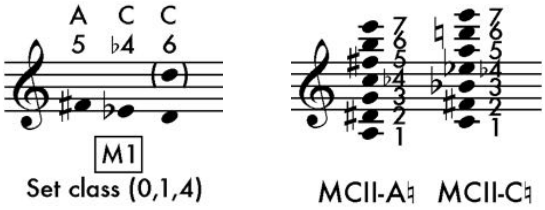
Just as it happens with partials 6 and ♭6 in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and in *Poėm* op. 59, n°1, the partials that differentiate the Mystic Chord and the Mystic Chord II—partials 4 and ♭4—are never simultaneously used in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2. However, the structural function of the Mystic Chord II in *Prélude* op. 59, n°1 goes far beyond that of the Mystic Chord b in the two previous works. In *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 both the original form of the Mystic Chord and the Mystic Chord II are used as basic chords, each one governing different moments of the piece: in the first 23 bars and in bars 28–52, the Mystic Chord II replaces the original Mystic Chord as the core set of the chord centre, whilst the original Mystic Chord seems to be displaced to the secondary function hold by the Mystic Chord b in the two previous pieces; in bars 24–27 and 53–61 the original Mystic Chord takes back its role as the core set of the chord centre. As Eberle (1978) perceptively noticed, "after a vigorous confrontation, the triumph that the harmonic change at the end of the piece probably signals as a programmatic idea, is a retreat to safe land" (p. 82). The final overcoming of the Mystic Chord II by the original form of the Mystic Chord is indeed the main event of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, bringing the conflict suggested by the score's header—"*sauvage, belliqueux"*— to the very core of the work's chord centre.

3.2 Specific sound material

As Baker (1986) rightly stated, the "segments of material [in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2] are all part of the same basic subject mater" (p.135). The first two beats of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 are the basis for all its specific sound material, in the context of the newly expanded chord centre.

The three first notes of the upper voice introduce a three-pitch-class segment, which is also the main motif of the piece—M1.

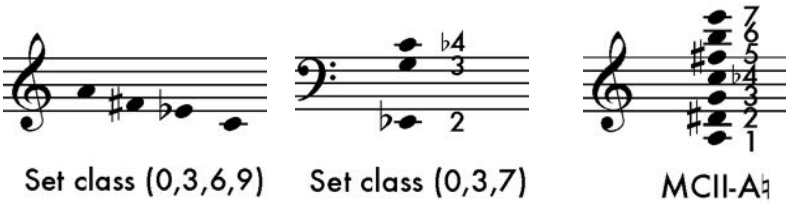
Example 48. M1 within MCII-A♮ and MCII-C♮



Both (a) the two augmented fourths at the extreme registers of the upbeat of bar 1 and (b) the four extreme pitches, considering both the upbeat and the downbeat of bar 1—F♯, A♮, C♮, E♭—form a set class (0,3,6,9) that, within the newly expanded chord centre, belongs to the Mystic Chord II. Contrarily to Baker's (1986) assertion (p.139), this set class will be broadly used in the MC-II governed bars.

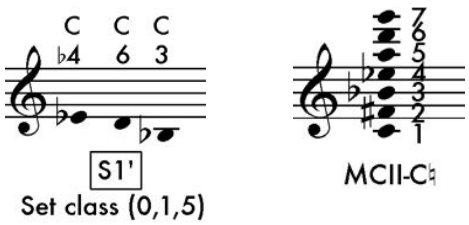
Partials 2, 3 and ♭4 of the Mystic Chord II form a set class (0,3,7)—the old minor triad— that will play an important role in the second part of both the first and the second sections.

Example 49. Set class (0,3,6,9) and set class (0,3,7) within MCII-A♮



Belonging to set class (0,1,5), a new related three-pitch segment—S1'—is deduced by tacking as its two first pitch-classes the second and third constituents of M1, E♭ and D♮, before inverting the intervallic relation of this last with F♯, which had been the first constituent of M1.

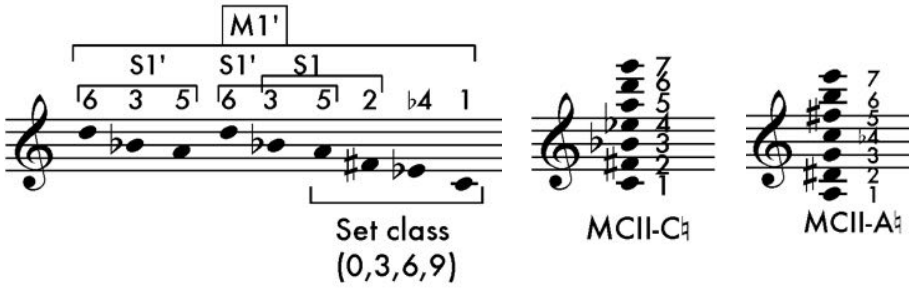
Example 50. S1' within MCII-C♮



Set class (0,1,5) is firstly stated within the first beat of bar 1—considering either its upper two voices or the whole five notes articulated in its second crochet.

Bars 2 and 3 state the second motif of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2: M1'. M1', which implicitly contains S1, groups a double occurrence of S1' and, starting out of their last note, a set class (0,3,6,9).

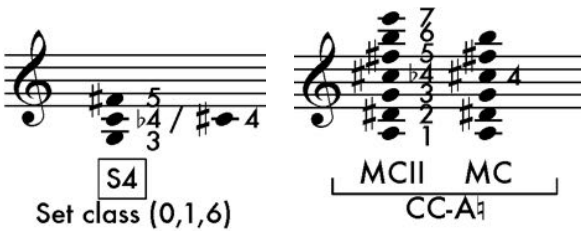
Example 51. M1' within MCII-C♮ and MCII-A♮



Firstly perceived as a mere melodic expansion of the last note of M1, M1' will end up by replacing M1 in its motivic function in the second parts of both sections and in the last bars of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2.

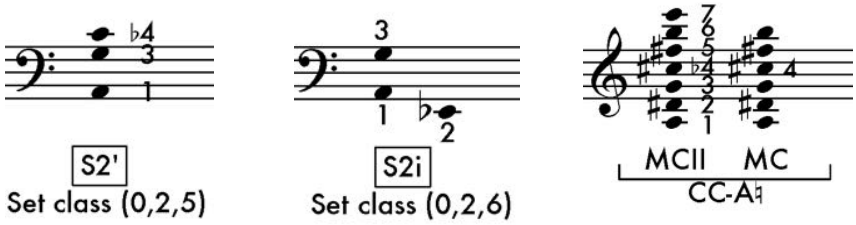
The three upper voices of the upbeat in bar 1 form a set class (0,1,6) segment: S4. The interplay between the work's two basic chords, foreshadowing the final triumph of the original Mystic Chord, occurs always within S4 without affecting its intervallic content, through the chromatic fluctuation between partial ♭4 and partial 4.

Example 52. S4 within MCII-A♮ and MC-A♮



Both *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and *Poėm* op. 59, n°1 had widely used a three-pitch segment—S2— in their lower registers, to functionally replace that which would have been, in the old tonal system, the harmonic base of the musical discourse. In *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 this functional use of S2 is replicated in the bars governed by the original Mystic Chord. In the 48 bars governed by the Mystic Chord II, however, the articulation of S2 is only possible when intersecting the chromatic interplay between the two basic chords, within S4, since partial 4—a defining constituent of S2—is beyond the range of the Mystic Chord II. In order to replace the functional role of S2 in those 48 bars two new segments are deducted out of the Mystic Chord II. The first of them, S2', maintains the same relative sequence of partials by simply replacing partial 4 of the original Mystic Chord by the distinctive ♭4 of the Mystic Chord II. S2' is a set class (0,2,5) that keeps the major seventh between partials 1 and 3 at its bottom, but changes into the perfect fourth that separates partials 3 and ♭4 the previous augmented fourth interval between partials 3 and 4. The second segment, S2i keeps the same intervallic content of S2 by using the first three partials of the chord centre—common to all three forms of the Mystic Chord:

Example 53. S2' and S2i within MCII-A♮ and MC-A♮



3.3Form

Prélude op.59, n° 2 is a binary form whose 61,5 bars are structured in (a) one section of 10,5+17 bars, (b) its almost literal T6 transposition and (c) a coda of 6,5 bars.

The proportional relation between those subsets of bars is once again governed by the golden ratio:

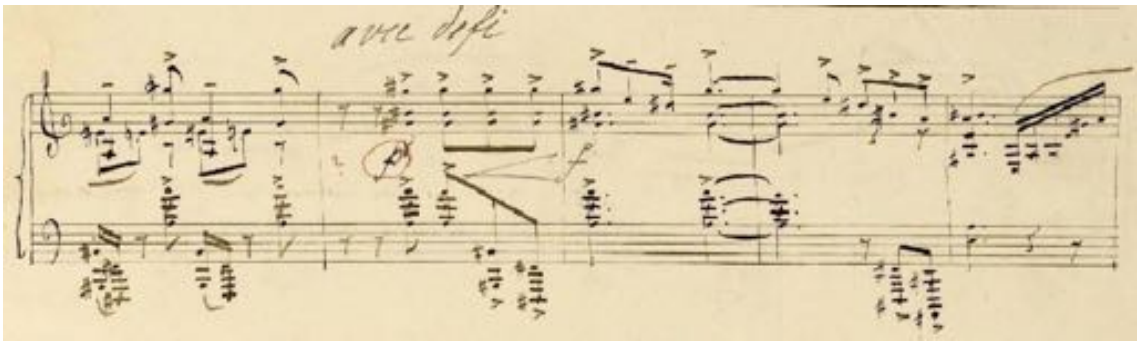
27,5 x 0,618 = 17 (16,99)

17 x 0,618 = 10,5

10,5 x 0,618 = 6,5 (6,48)

The inverted golden ratio has a significant role in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, contributing to stress its *"Sauvage, belliqueux"* character by bringing some peaks closer to the beginning of the work. The maximal tension of the first section, matching the starting pause of bar 11, is a good example of the significance of the inverted golden ratio in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2—it is underscored by an *"avec défi"* marking, which in the autograph matches precisely the pause:

Figure 3. *Prélude* op. 59, n°1, autograph: bars 10–14 (Scriabin, 1910)



Matching the inverted golden ratio of the piece, bar 23,5 unprecedentedly articulates the original form of the Mystic Chord, foreshadowing its triumph in the last bars of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 by momentarily replacing the Mystic Chord II as the core element of the piece's chord centre.

61,5 x 0,382 = ±23,5 (23,49)

In a work whose "Sauvage, belliqueux" character is evident from the very beginning, with two early intermediate peaks at bar 10,5 and 23,5, the general climax had to be conveniently emphasized, in order to be properly perceived. This is ensured by

1. The climax's coincidence with the final gesture of the metric *accelerando* that affects the higher pitch of the whole piece—D♮, on the second beat of bar 38.
2. The extension of the climax, which, through the reiteration of the D♮, is prolonged until the syncopation at the beginning of the thirteenth bar of the section—in bar 41.

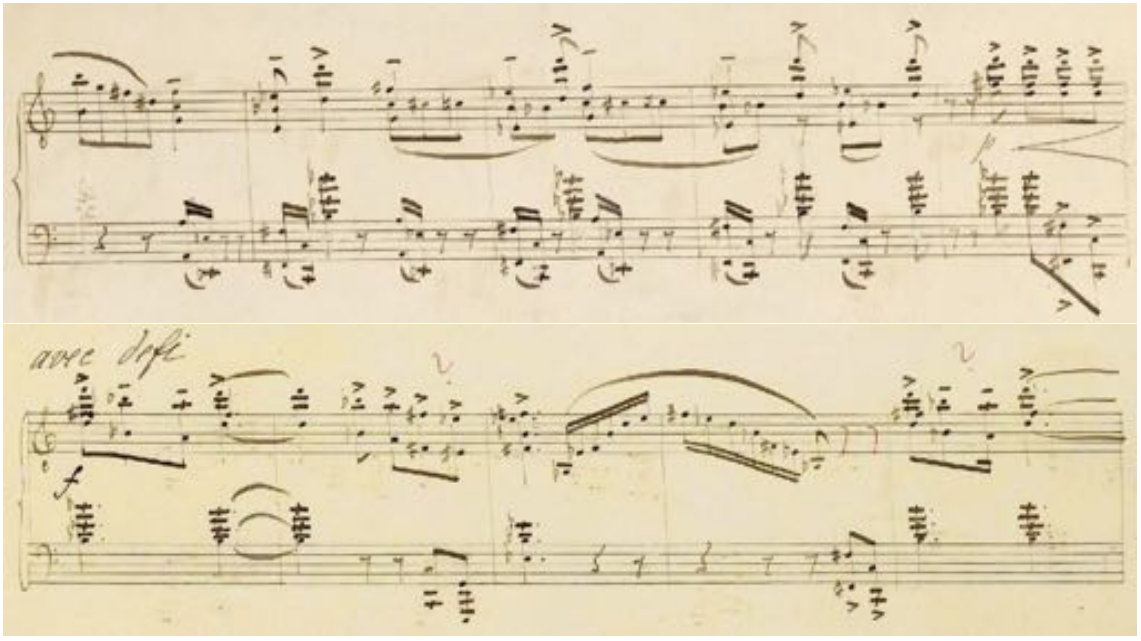
Those two moments are, respectively, the golden ratio of the piece and the inverted golden ratio of the piece's second section.

61,5 x 0,618 = 38

34 x 0,382 = 13

Considering that bar 10,5 had been the peak of the first section, the coincidence of the golden section of the piece with that same bar in the second section further enhances the main climax of the piece. Being dynamic, by matching the final gesture of the *accelerando* instead of the breaking pause of the following bar as it had happened in the first section, the climax of the piece points to its own extension. The displacement of *"avec défi"* marking, in the autograph, underscores that intention.

Figure 4. *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, autograph: bars 35-44 (Scriabin, 1910)



Two final facts concerning the proportional structure of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 and its relation to the golden ratio should be stressed:

1. The second section of the piece doubles exactly the number of bars of first section's second part.
2. The golden ratio of the second section divides it in 13 and 21 bars respectively; the first subset of bars thus obtained doubles exactly the 6,5 bars of the coda, while the second is similarly related to the 10,5 bars of the first section's first part.

3.4 First section, bars 1–27

3.4.1 First part, bars 1–10: chord centres

Eberle (1978) considers beats 1–10 to be governed by CC-C♮ alone, in spite of "a certain feeling of harmonic change in the transition from the upbeat to the downbeat of the first bar" (p. 82). Having admitted the existence of non-harmonic notes in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, Eberle feels unnecessary to explain the B♮ that, according to his analysis, would fall outside the governing chord centre. Paradoxically, an impression of harmonic stability is produced in the transition to beat 11, in which Eberle identifies the beginning of the four-beats governance of CC-E♭, before its replacement by CC-F♯, which would be the governing chord centre in beats 15–21.

Kallis, (2008) who proposes a different analytical frame to Scriabin's early post-tonal pitch-organization method,[22] expresses a similar view:

> Decorative 'non-diatonic' chromatic tones (pitches that fall outside the domain of 9-10) are deployed sparingly [;] one such instance occurs in Op. 59, n°2, where the passing tone B at the downbeat of measure 2 resolves to B♭, a member of the governing 9-10 on C. (2008)

The present study will propose a different explanation for the B♮ articulated at the downbeat of bar 2. Eberle was not very far from it, when he mentioned "a certain feeling of a harmonic change" between the upbeat and the downbeat of bar 1, for a harmonic change indeed happens between those two beats: the upbeat of bar 1 is governed by CC-A♮, while the second belongs to the main chord centre of the phrase—CC-C♮. In this context, B♮ belongs to CC-A♮: it is articulated already in the CC-C♮-governed downbeat of bar 2, and is indeed perceived as a "dissonance", before being resolved to the neighbour B♭, partial 3 of the governing CC-C♮. The "sauvage, belliqueux" character of the piece is musically accomplished not only by the overall conflict between the Mystic Chord II and the original Mystic Chord, but also, in a smaller scale, through the fast interchange of chord centres in the first part of both sections.

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[22] Kallis (2008) divides Scriabin's "late style into two periods: early, from Op. 58 to Op. 69 inclusive; and late, from op. 70 to the final creation, Op. 74". According to Kallis, "during his early post-tonal period, Scriabin developed a pitch organization method based on the interaction between the acoustic and octatonic scales within the constraints of their nonachordal common superset 9–10." (idem)

3.4.2 First part, bars 1–10: detailed analysis

Prélude op. 59, n°2 features [a] a basic gesture in its first two beats, [b] a varied recurrence in beats 3 and 4, and [c] an expansion of its last element[23] in beats 5 and 6. Beats 7–10 restate [b] and [c], which are then T3 transposed in beats 11–14. Beats 15–18 feature a T6 transposition of [a] and [b], before frustrating the expected transposition of [c]: one complete and one partial restatement of [b] are articulated instead, producing a metric acceleration that boosts the musical discourse to the climax of the first section, at the beginning of bar 11. Examples 54 and 55 show how the specific sound material is articulated within the first 10,5 bars of *Prélude* op. 59, n° 1.

Some aspects should however be further explained.

All five pitches articulated in the upbeat of bar 1, partials 1–5 of MCII-A♮, belong simultaneously to the explicit chord centre of the downbeat and main chord centre of the piece: CC-C♮. This maximal invariance is enhanced by the orthography of partial 2 of MCII-A♮—written as E♭, rather than D♯—and is surely the reason for Eberle's assumption of an unique governing chord centre in the work's first two beats. The change of chord centre becomes quite clear, however, if the specific sound material is considered.

The upbeat and the downbeat of bar 1 are directly related by a T3 transposition of S2' that keeps unchanged the functional relation and the relative registers of its three constituents within each respective governing chord centre. The second and third constituents of S2'—G♮ and C♮—are also the two lower constituents of S4, at the upbeat. In the transition to the downbeat they are object of an opposite procedure, keeping the same pitch-class while having the register and functional relation with the new governing chord centres changed. The inverted articulation of S2' is symmetrical to the partially merged T3 transposed occurrence—they share the two common constituents. E♭, member of S2i, is also the lowest note of the upbeat; on the downbeat it becomes the highest, holding a double function, as partial ♭4 of the new governing CC-C♮ and, secondarily, as partial 2 of the previous governing CC-A♮. Inversely, F♯—the highest note of the upbeat—is partial 5 of the governing CC-A♮, but also, secondarily, partial 2 of next beat's CC-C♮. S2i is the only set class of the upbeat that produces no consequences on the downbeat of bar 1. As we shall see, that potential is reserved to the varied T_6 transposition of bars 7 and 8.

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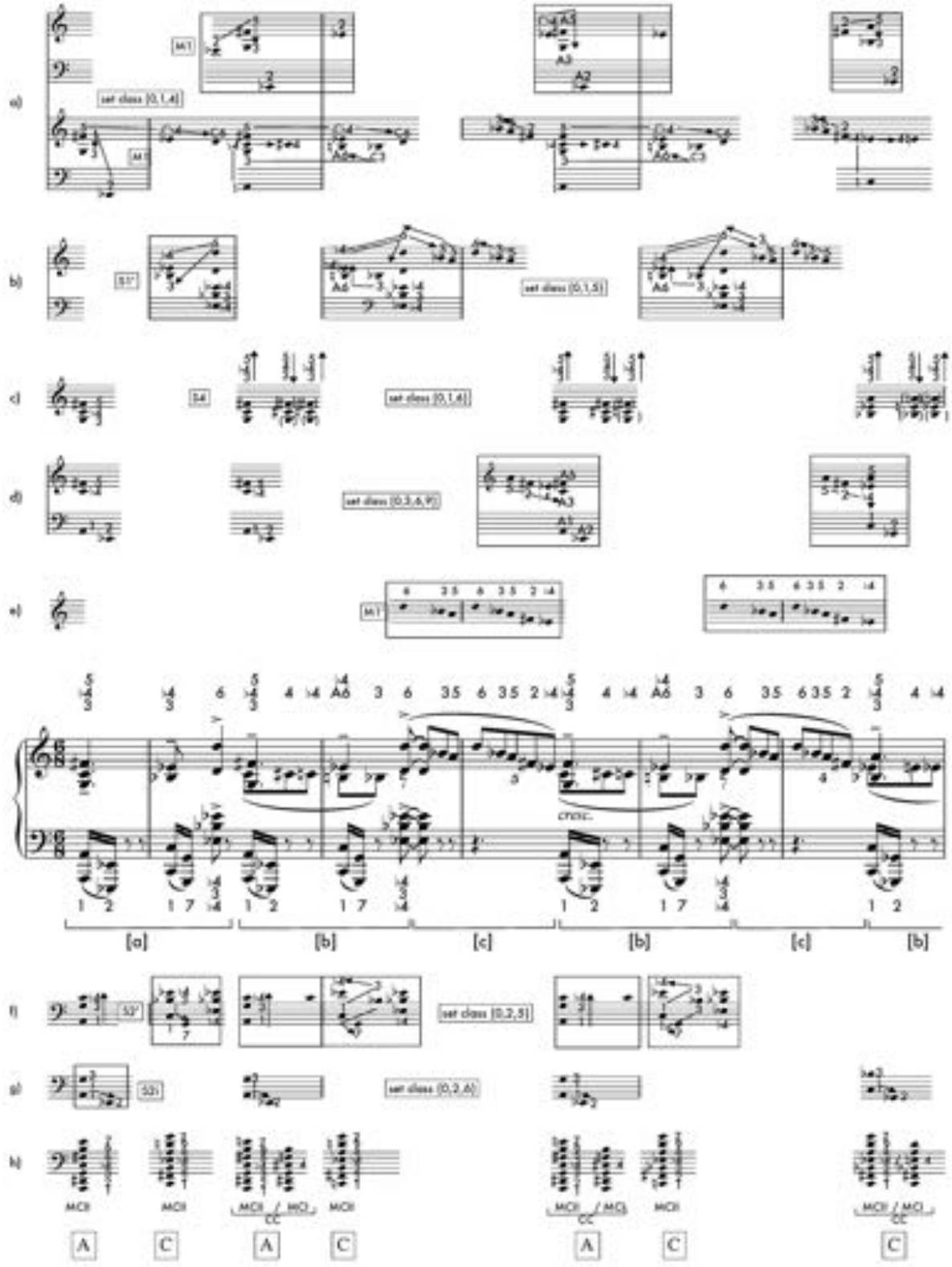
[23] This grouping is taken from Baker (1986), who, however, provides a different description of its content: he classifies as embellished the recurrence of the basic gesture, considering that its upbeat constitutes a new set class—6–30 [set class (0,1,3,6,7,9)] (pp. 136–138). As it will be discussed, though, two different basic chords–the Mystic Chord II and the Mystic Chord—are in fact made explicit on the second beat of the first bar, thus announcing that which will be the main plot of the whole piece.

The absence of partial 6/B♮ of MCII-A♮ in the upbeat of bar 1 is meant to produce maximal invariance with the governing CC-C♮ of the downbeat, to which the B♮ does not belong. Since all pitches of the downbeat are deduced out of the upbeat, as we have seen, they also do not include partial 6 of the governing CC-C♮. The accented syncopation on D♮, and the major seventh ascending jump that precedes it, in bar 1, are precisely meant to emphasize the hitherto missing partial 6, thereby asserting the governance of CC-C♮. At the downbeat of bar 2, in its first occurrence so far, partial 6 of CC-A♮—B♮—is also emphasized: as it was already discussed, it is the only pitch within bar 2 beyond the range of CC-C♮ and is indeed perceived as a striking dissonance, resolved chromatically to partial 3/B♭—of the bar's governing chord centre. In *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 the coexistence of different chord centres happens only in this particular context: the *"sauvage belliquex"* character of the piece is materialized by confrontation rather than interpenetration between its different governing chord centres.

Before that, on the second beat of bar 1, the chromatic interchange within S4 allows the original form of the Mystic Chord to be shortly glimpsed. In the bars governed by the Mystic Chord II its functional relation with the original form of the Mystic Chord is very similar to the relation of the Mystic Chord and the Mystic Chord b in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and in *Poème* op. 59, n°1, although, in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, it additionally introduces a conflict that did not exist in the previous pieces.

The final gesture of the first period, [c], restates the vertical S1' occurrence of the previous bar, before articulating M1', which completes CC-C♮ by articulating its two missing partials so far: partial 5/A♮ and partial 2/F♯.

Example 54. Bars 1–5



Beats 7–10 restate [b] and [c], which are transposed at T3 in beats 11–14. At this particular transposition level, the starting chord centre of [b]+[c] in the upbeat of bar 6, CC-C♮, is coincident with the main chord centre of their original statement, in bars 1–3, or of their restatement in bars 3–5. S2'

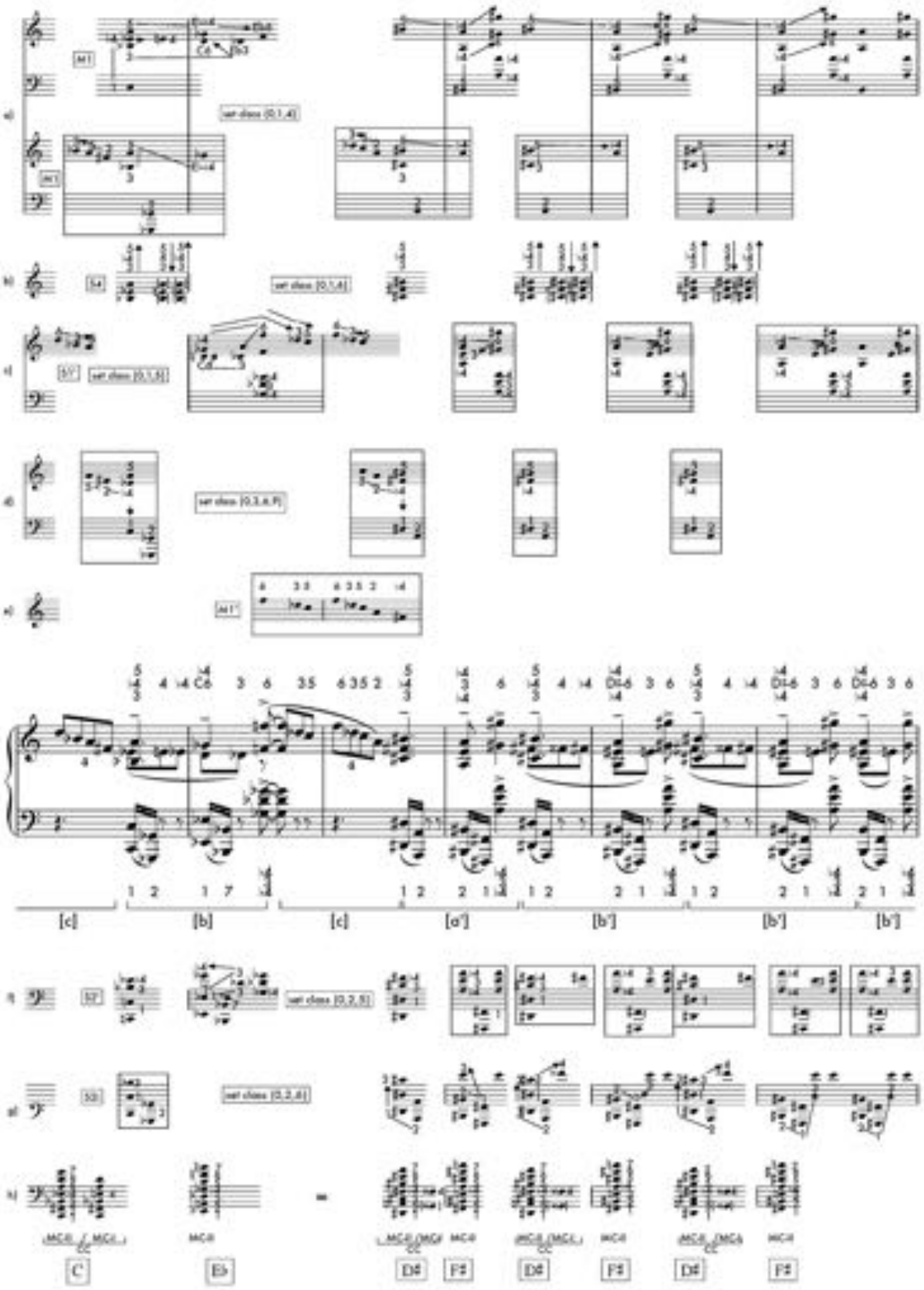
makes this coincidence particularly obvious, since it articulates exactly the same pitches in the upbeat of bar 6 and on the downbeats of bars 1,2 and 4. The impression of harmonic stability between the transitional beats 10 and 11, far from paradoxical, is rather the obvious outcome of their real harmonic content. On the other hand, it forces the M1' statement of beats 9–11 to change. The sixth note within the original statement of bars 2–3, A♮, had also been the first of a set class (0,3,6,9), whose last two notes, E♭ and C♮, were respectively, partial ♭4 of CC-C♮ and partial ♭4 of CC-A♮. Since no change of chord centre occurs between beats 10 and 11 that function is now held by one pitch-class alone: E♭. Within the M1' statement of bars 4–5 the E♭ is therefore rhythmically displaced, intersecting the S4 occurrence of beat 11 in order to take the place C♮ had in the original S4 occurrence, as partial ♭4 of its governing chord centre. This is the ultimate reason for the altered subdivision of M1' on the first beat of bar 5. Set class (0,3,6,9) within M1' is not left uncompleted, though: intersecting S2', it is vertically completed on the second beat of bar 5 by the articulation of C♮ at the lower register.

Thanks to its particular morphology and transposition level, the second beat of bar 5 has also a significant premonitory role as far as the final outcome of the piece is concerned. It states a CC-C♮-governed Mystic Chord II, but also enables a glimpse on the original form of the Mystic Chord, through the chromatic E♭-E♮-E♭ interchange within S4. At that brief moment its six pitches are exactly the same of the triumphant statements of the Mystic Chord in bars 54–55 and 56–57. This morphological similarity is premonitory of the undisputed governance of CC-C♮ in the piece's final bars, as it was already discussed. Those final bars, reversely, confirm CC-C♮ as the governing chord centre of the upbeat of bar 6.

The second beat of bar 7 starts what seems to be an exact augmented fourth transposition of [a]. Although confirming that transposition level, the downbeat of bar 8 presents two obvious differences, which reveal a deliberate compromise between similarity and change:

1. The two extreme voices are related through a direct instead of an opposite movement;
2. An augmented fourth interval replaces the previous perfect fourth between the two sixteenth notes, in the lower register.

Example 55. Bars 5–10



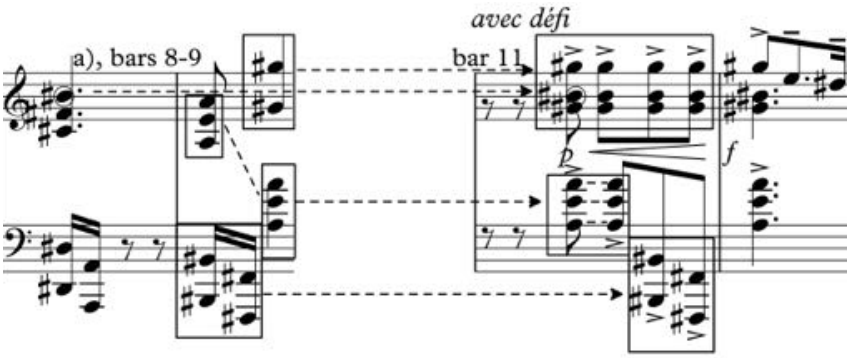
Both changes result of a single procedure: on the first beat of bar 8 the two sixteenth notes take the two upper instead of the two lower pitch-classes of S4 out of the upbeat, leading to a significant functional change within the Mystic Chord II: the partial 1 of the new governing CC-F♯ is displaced to the second sixteenth note to take the position previously held by partial 7, while partial 2, that had been absent from the main chord centre—CC-C♮—in the original occurrence of [a], matches now its downbeat. Once more the symbolic substitution of the old V-I polarity— articulated this time as a weaker I-V relation—by the new ♯IV-I polarity is thus staged: it is, in fact, what justifies the alternate relation between partials 1-2 and partials 1-7, in the first seven bars of the piece. The articulation of partial 2 in the lower register of the downbeats of bars 8–10 is then offset by the articulation of partial 1 in an even lower position, immediately after. As a result of the changed bass line, S2i and S2' are featured at the downbeat of bar 8. Its higher pitch—A♮—is doubled, one octave lower, in order to keep the relation between the lower note of the upper stave and the second sixteenth note of the lower stave unchanged, in both the original statement and the T6 varied transposition. Doubling A♮ also avoids an open major tenth distance between both staves, which would have undesirably brightened the dark colour of the chord.

After the varied T6 transposition of [a] no further changes are introduced in the T6 transposition of [b] of bars 8–9. Instead of [c], as it would have been expected, bars 9–10 articulate one complete and one incomplete recurrences of [b]. These recurrences produce a metrical *accelerando* that boosts the tension towards the section's apex: the pause on the first beat of bar 11, which matching the inverted golden ratio of the piece's first section, concentrates in itself all the previously generated tension—it will be released in successive waves, in the second part of the first section, with [c] as its central element.

3.4.3 Second part, bars 11–27

The starting pause of bar 11 and the climax of the metric *accelerando* that follows trigger the arrival of [c] in bars 12–13—after its double postponement in bars 9–10. The climax of the metric *accelerando,* underscored by an abrupt hairpin, is achieved by (a) compressing the horizontal M1 and the vertical S1' [a], into one vertical super-segment—M1+S1'—which is then frantically repeated, and (b) the rhythmical augmentation of the two lower notes of [a]—B♯ and F♯: previously perceived as a horizontal harmony, they are thus transformed into the directional upbeat of bar 12.

Example 56. Bars 8–9 and bar 11: relations

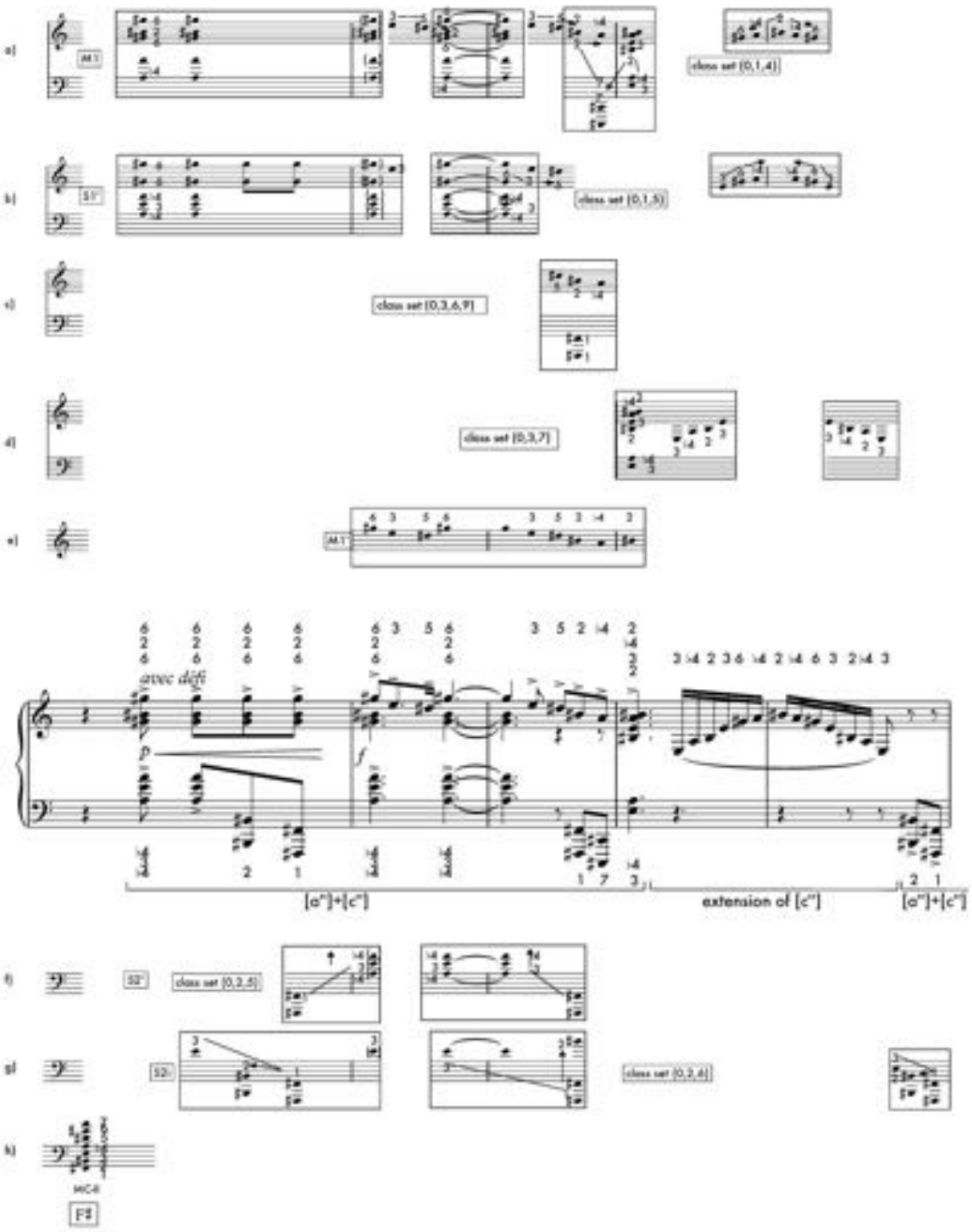


After the articulation of M1' in bars 12–13, all pitches on the first beat of bar 14 belong to set class (0,3,7), the minor triad of the old tonal system, which is used to release the explosive tension of the previous bars. The rising arpeggio on the second beat of bar 14, and its retrogradation in the first of bar 15, horizontally restate the previous set class (0,3,7), before articulating M1+S1', through the addiction of G♯: tacking B♯ as its axis, this combined segment is symmetrical to the M1+S1' occurrence within M1' of bar 13. After the articulation of set class (0,3,7) in the first beat of bar 14, both its morphology and specific sound material result on a brief recrudescence of the explosive atmosphere of the previous bars.

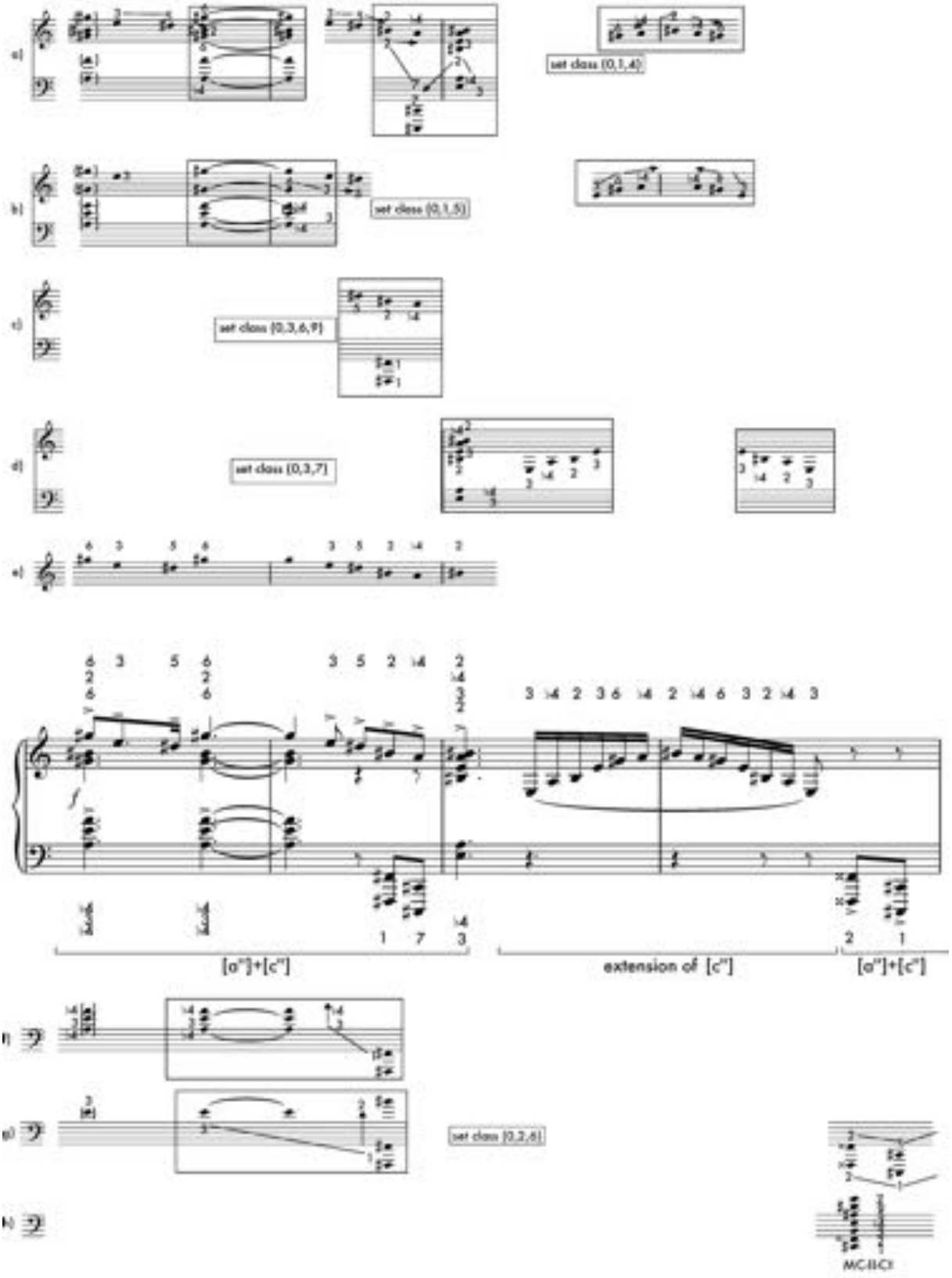
Bars 16–19 are an exact restatement of the previous four bars, except for last beat of bar 19, which, functioning as the upbeat of bar 20, introduces the new governing chord centre: CC-C♯.

Bars 20–21 lower the congener bars of the two previous sentences by transposing them at T5. The perfect fourth distant octaves of the lower stave, in bar 21, are articulated one octave higher than expected, to avoid surpassing the limit of the piano's lower range. Bar 22 and bar 23, two shortened and narrowed restatements of bars 14–15, or 18–19, slightly and shortly appease the tumultuous character of the section.

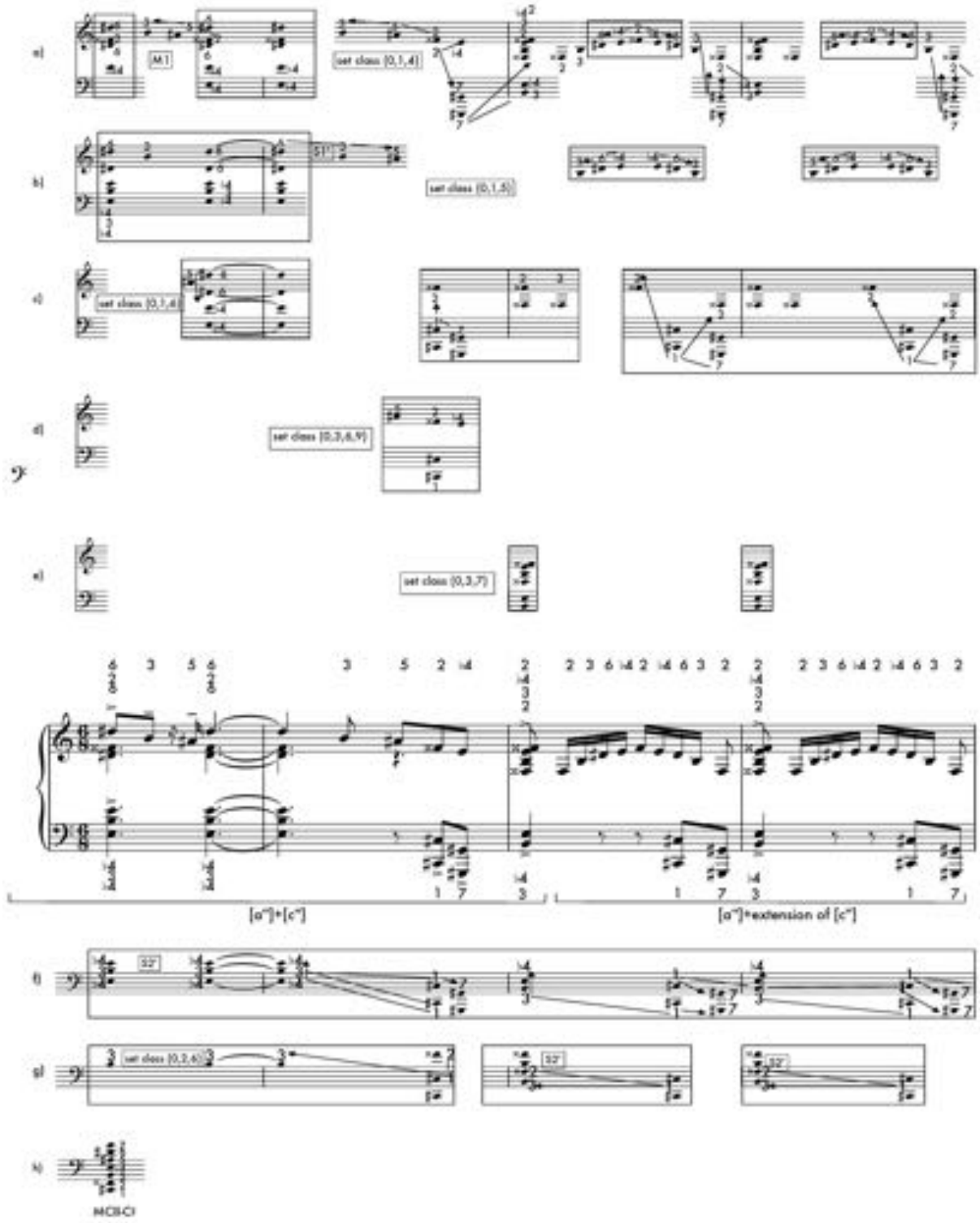
Example 57. Bars 11–15



Example 58. Bars 16–19



Example 59. Bars 20–23



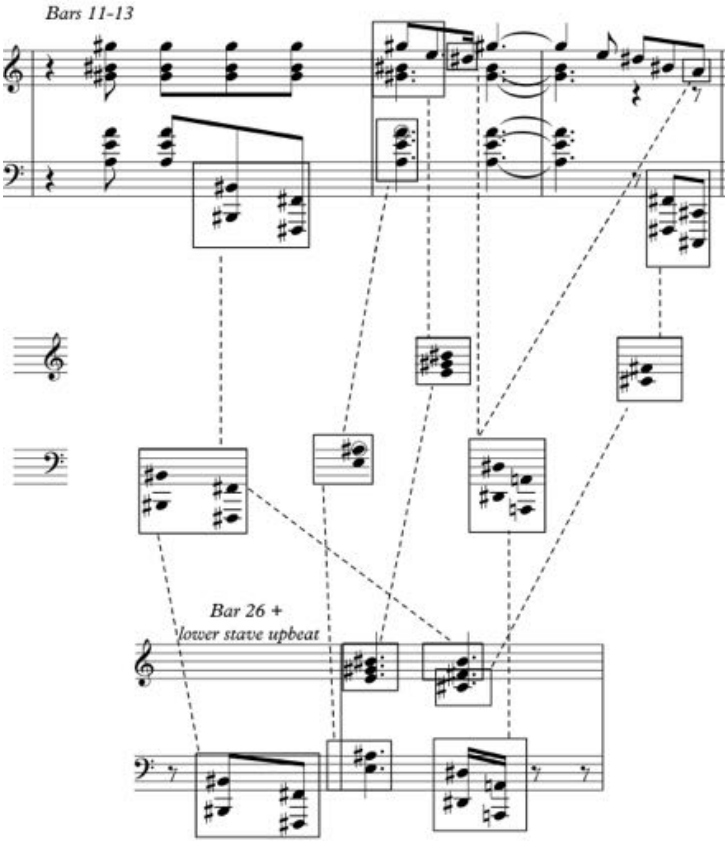
The golden ratio of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 defines a subset of 38 bars. The golden ration of this subset, at the beginning of bar 24[24]—61,5x0,618x0,618=23,48—, is in its turn stressed, by the unexpected replacement of partial ♭4 by partial 4, which brings the original form of the Mystic Chord to

[24] The beginning of bar 24 occurs 23,5 bars after the starting moment of the piece: the upbeat of bar 1.

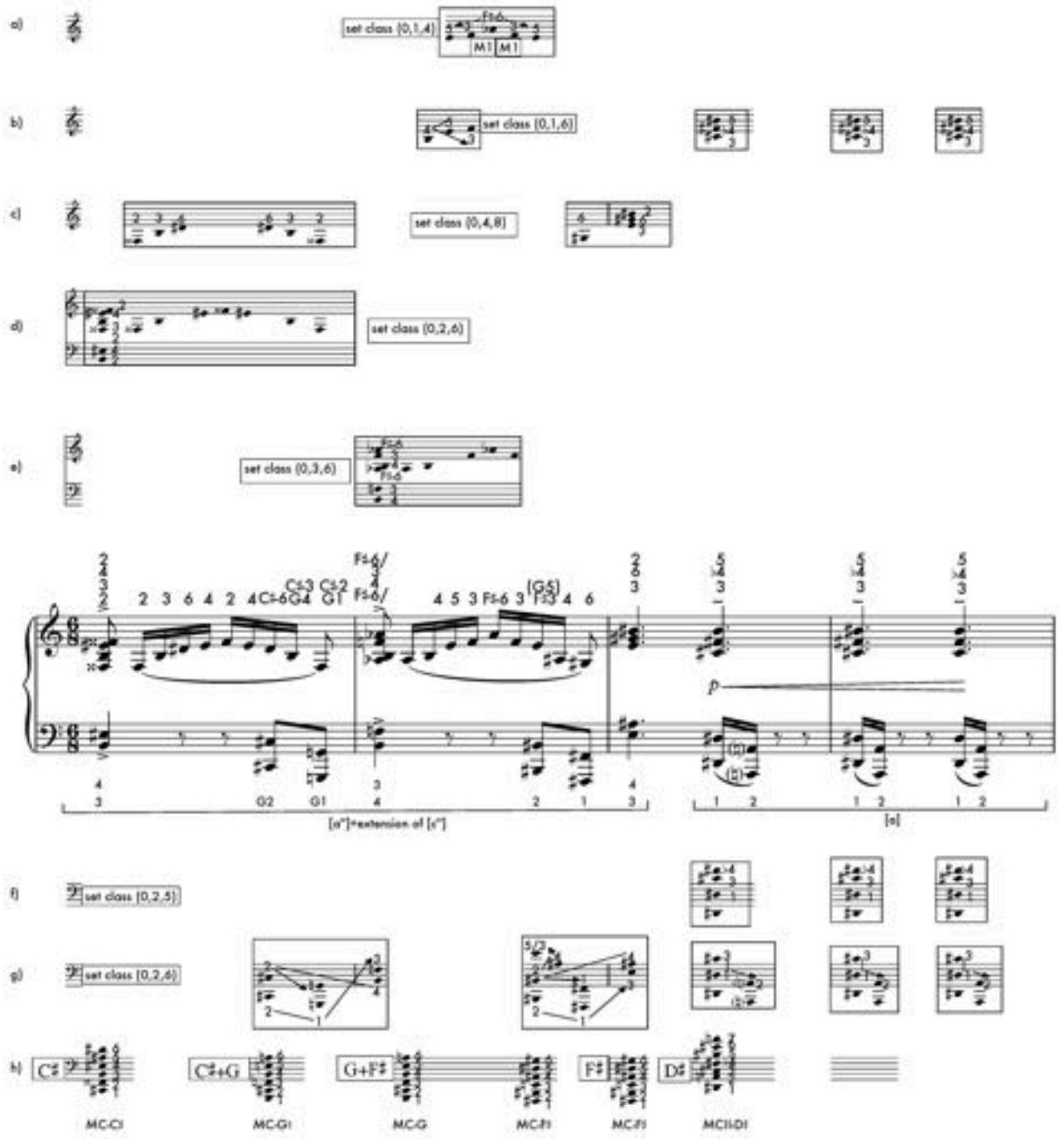
the core of the piece's chord centre, for the first time so far: foreshadowing its final triumph in the last bars of the piece, the original form of the Mystic Chord will supplant the Mystic Chord II in that function during the following two and a half bars.

Example 60 illustrates the relations of bars 11–13 with bars 25–26, respectively the climactic bars of the first section and those that momentarily feature a CC-F♯-governed Mystic Chord. In its turn, example 61 makes explicit the governing chord centres of bars 24–27, as well as the inevitable changes within the specific sound material of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 transitorily caused by the replacement of the Mystic Chord II by the original Mystic Chord.

Example 60. Bars 11–13 and bar 26: relations



Example 61. Bars 24–27



The brief moments in which two governing chord centres coexist within these four bars will be shortly explained.

The introduction of CC-G♮, in the fifth eighth note of the lower stave, is briefly coexistent with the previous governing CC-C♮—represented by D♯ of the upper stave. At the beginning of the bar 25, A♭ could in itself be explained within Scriabin's new sound space as partial ♭6 of CC-G♮—the distinctive partial of the Mystic Chord b. Such an interpretation, however, does not seem to be consistent with the plot of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, which focus on confrontation between two basic chords other than the

Mystic Chord b. The actual function of the A♭ is that of anticipating the enharmonic partial 6/G♯ of CC-F♯, whose governance is introduced in the bar's fifth eight note.

The hastening of the harmonic rhythm in bars 24–26 propels the section towards its end. Transposed at T6, the three consecutive articulations of the piece's starting gesture are underscored by a crescendo, preparing the almost literal T6 transposition of the first 27,5 bars of the piece that begins on the second beat of bar 28. Bars 24–27 are therefore a bridge between the first and the second sections of *Prélude* op. 59, n° 1.

3.5 Second section, bars 28–61

3.5.1 Bars 28–55

Bars 28–55 of *Prélude* op. 59, n° 1, which are basically a T6 transposition of the piece's first section, feature however some minor differences.

Both the one step louder dynamics of bar 28 and the octave duplication of the higher note on the first beats of bars 30, 32 and 34 are meant to underscore the T6 higher transposition of the section, thus contributing to establish a sense of progress between these two otherwise very similar sections, in view of the piece's overall climax of bars 38(2)–41.[25]

Making explicit its third minor relation with the next governing of CC-F♯, the enharmonic transformation of CC-E♭ into CC-D♯, in bar 7, signalled the precise moment in which of CC-E♭/CC-D♯ ceased being the main governing chord centre, to become the subordinate chord centre of CC-F♯. That orthographic procedure is unnecessary in the congener bar 35, since CC-A♮ has an explicit third minor relation with both the previous governing CC-F♯ and the next governing CC-C♮.

In bar 36 the varied T6 transposition of [a] features a different voicing, considering the congener bar 8 of the first section. This subtle change, object of the same compositional procedures used in the homologue bars of the first section,[26] enables bars 52 and 53—which otherwise exactly transpose bars 24 and 25 at T6[27]—to share with both of them the same two pitches—B♮ and F♮/E♯—at

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[25] The octave duplication will be extended to the whole [c] element, in bars 40–41, contributing to extend the piece's climax from bar 38 to bar 41.

[26] Even the articulation of three notes in the lower stave on the first beat of bars 42, 46, 50–54, instead of two as in the congener bars of the first section, results of one similar procedure: the articulation all pitch-classes corresponding to partials 3 and ♭4 of the respective governing chord centres within the range of the extreme notes, considering both staves.

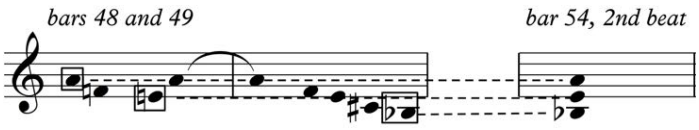
[27] The change of register on the second beat of bars 21–26 is due to the physical limits of the piano's lower range, as we have seen.

the bottom of their respective downbeats. This absolutely unique coincidence, considering all congener bars in the first and second section of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, relates the two pairs of bars that firstly put the original Mystic Chord form at the core of the work's sound space, respectively in its first and second sections. The two pitches thus underscored materialize, precisely, the defining partial 4—E♯ in bars 24 and 53 and B♮ in bars 25 and 52.

The downbeat of bar 54, although transposing the governing chord centre of the congener bar 26(1) at T6, as predicted, unexpectedly features partial 6/D♮ as its top note. As we have seen, the accented syncopation of partial 6 as the highest note of bar 1 was meant to assertively confirm the governance of CC-C♮ in the context of conflict—all similar articulations of partial 6 throughout the piece had always had that same purpose. By concealing its articulation in a middle voice, bar 26(1) showed that the prevalence of the original Mystic Chord was only momentary: its precariousness was immediately confirmed by the reintroduction of the Mystic Chord II in the following beat. The presence of partial 6 as the accented top note of the downbeat of bar 54, further stressed by the octave ascending jump that precedes it, signals, on the contrary, the final triumph of the original Mystic Chord and of CC-C♮. The three beats that follow confirm it by keeping, contrarily to the congener bars of the first section, both the prevalence of the original Mystic Chord and the transpositional level unchanged.

On the other hand, the three pitch-classes— B♭, E♮ and A♮—articulated within the *marcato* chords in the upper stave of those three beats provide a new retrospective meaning to M1', by reproducing the intervallic relations that circumscribe its limits. This newly established relation between S4 and M1' is enabled by the triumph of the original form of the Mystic Chord, materialized by the replacement of partial ♭4 by partial 4. This is particularly clearly considering the articulation of [c] in bars 48–49, within the same transposition level—Example 62.

Example 62. Vertical outline of bars 48–49 on the second beat of bar 54



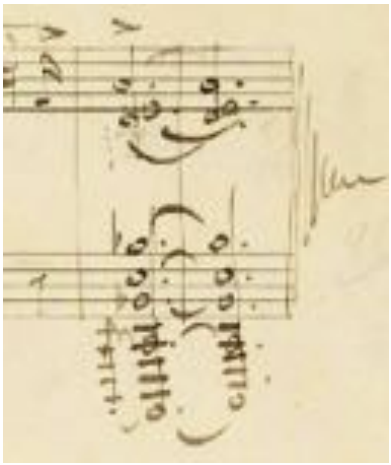
3.6 Coda, bars 55,5–61

At the fourth eighth note of the lower stave, in bar 55, an unexpected pause replaces the two augmented fourth related octaves featured in the congener bar of the first section, thus introducing the coda. Bars 56–57 restate exactly bars 54–55: in both cases, the original statement of [a] is adapted to

the Mystic Chord and reduced to its opening and final moments—its upbeat and the downbeat's second eighth note. The middle gesture was previously meant to introduce the governance of a second chord centre within [a]: considering the sole governance of CC-C♮ in the final bars of the piece, that gesture has now lost it purpose. The same reason explains the absence of [b] in the final bars of the piece. The articulation of [b] was no longer possible, in any case, because its distinctive feature, the interchange between partials ♭4 and 4, would fall outside the range of a sound space that is now delimited by the original Mystic Chord alone, to which partial ♭4 does not belong. Bars 58–61, the four last bars of *Prèlude* op. 59, n° 1, articulate [c]: governed by just one chord centre, it was the solely element of the work's first phrase that carried no conflict in itself. Coincident with the final triumph of the Mystic Chord, [c] articulates now the distinctive partial 4, instead of the ♭4 that had been present in all its previous occurrences. The final chord of the piece is precisely coincident with the moment partial 4 is horizontally reached, merging into the recurrence of its vertical statements of the previous six bars. Partials 2/ F♯ and 1/C♮ are articulated just before the downbeat, keeping the some sequence of their previous articulations on the upbeats of bars 54, 56 and 58—their relation is further highlighted by the new register of the F♯, which magnifies their relative distance in this occasion.

In the printed score, the downbeat of bar 60 articulates the distinctive partial ♭6/D♭, instead of the expected D♮. The hypothesis of a typo, suggested by the previous harmonic context of the work, is indeed confirmed by the autograph, in which a D♮ is written instead[28]—figure 5.

Figure 5. *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, autograph: final two bars with upbeat (Scriabin, 1910)



[28] There is, actually, an almost indistinct trace of what could have been a ♭, in the upper stave, but it was quite obviously part of an erased preliminary version. Its positioning seems in any case to exclude the possibility of having affected the D, even in a preliminary version. The missing sharp before the F♯ of bar 59, on the other hand, has been rightly corrected in the printed score.

3.7 Conclusions

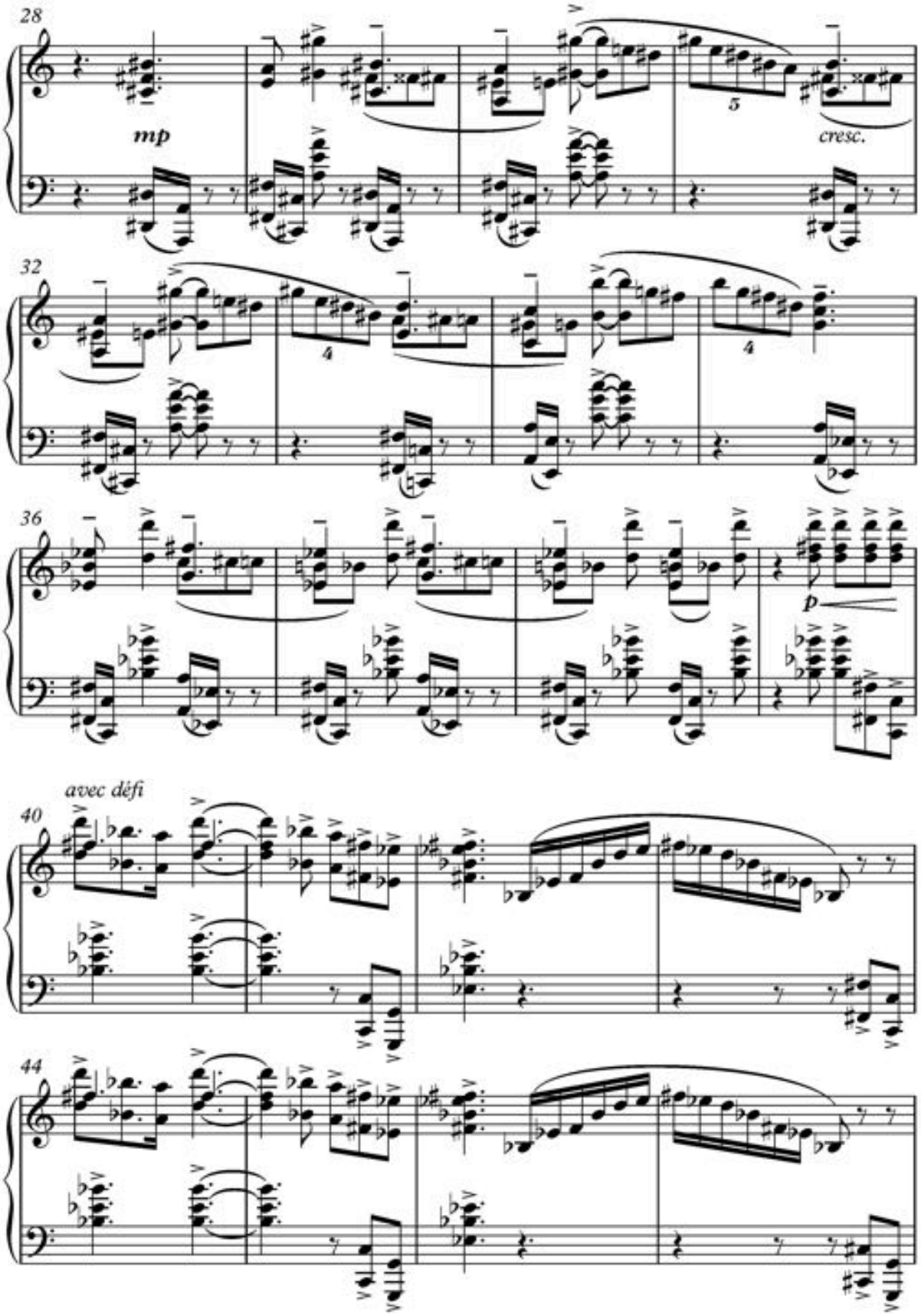
Prélude op. 59, n°2 features a transpositional route from CC-A♮/CC-C♮ to CC-D♯ /CC-F♯, in the first part of the first section, before switching from the hitherto prevailing Mystic Chord II to the original form of the Mystic Chord at the end of the section's second part, within the governance of CC-C♯ and CC-G♮. The second section repeats the Mystic Chord II/Mystic Chord plot of the first, featuring an inverse transpositional route with precisely the same six governing chord centres. Finally, in the coda, the configuration of the chord centre stabilizes with the final triumph of the original Mystic Chord and the exclusive governance of the main chord centre of the piece: CC-C♮.

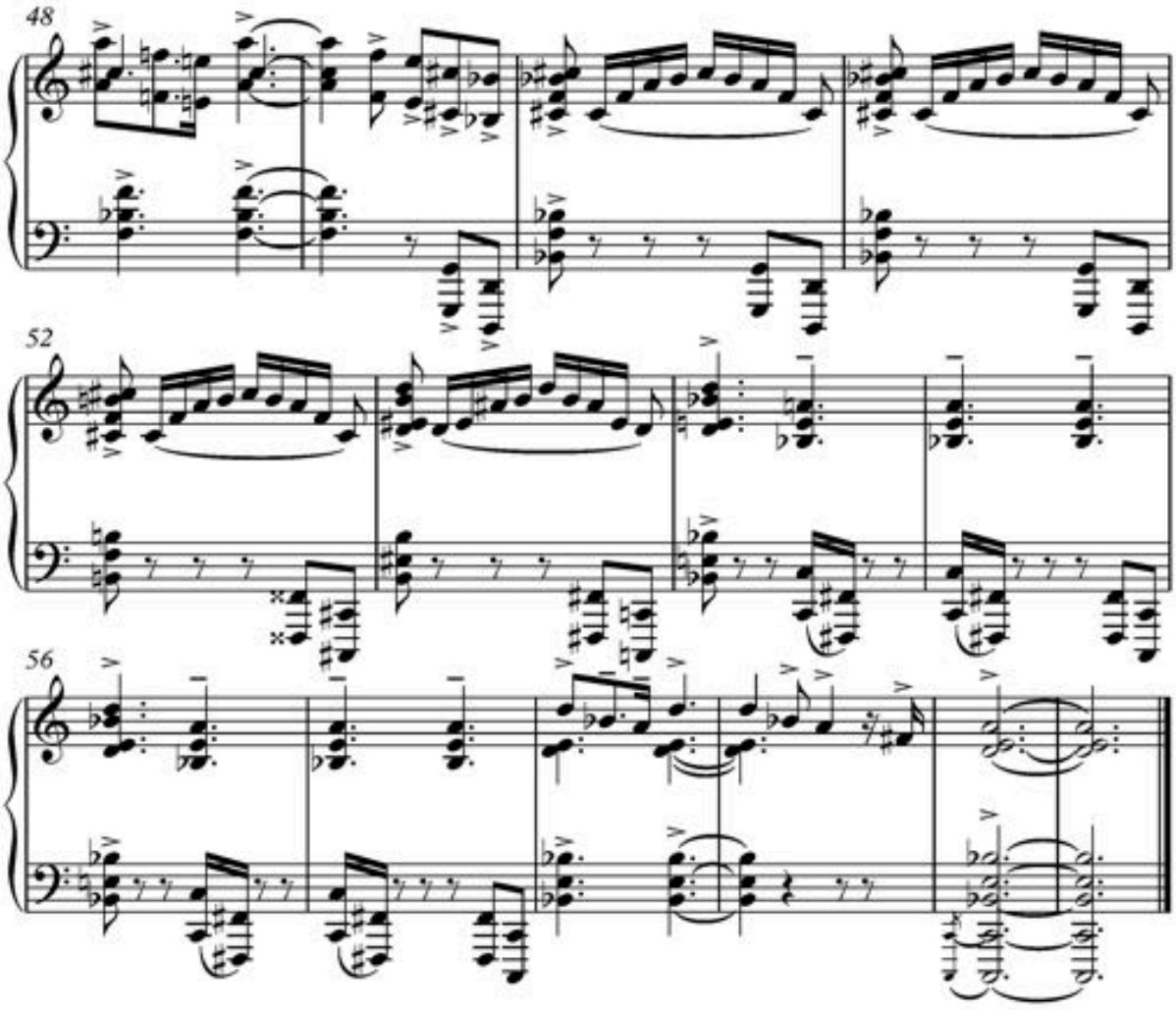
The six chord centres deployed constitute two different transposition cycles: the T3 transposition cycle of C♮–D♯/E♭–F♯–A♮, the work's main transposition cycle, and the T6 transposition cycle of C♯–G♮, which is, in fact, a subset of the T3 transposition cycle of C♯–E♮–G♮–B♭. If complete, these T3 transposition cycles together would constitute a symmetrical octatonic mode—identical to Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition. The root notes of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 are therefore a subset of this octatonic mode.

Both the completeness of the main T3 transposition cycle and the reduction of the second to a T6 transposition cycle have invariance of transpositionally related chord centres as their common structural origin. *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 stages conflict between the hexaphonic Mystic Chord and the heptatonic Mystic Chord II. As it was said in chapter I, these are the only two configurations of the basic chord that feature different invariance levels between T3/T9 and T6 transpositionally related chord centres: transpositionally related Mystic Chords II have a greater invariance when transposed at T3/T9 than at T6; contrarily, hexaphonic Mystic Chords have a two times grater invariance when related by T6 than by T3/T9 transpositions. Hence, the transposition plan of *Prélude* op. 59, n°2 strongly suggests that invariance was a significant concept for Scriabin. In the bars in which the Mystic Chord II prevails, T3 transpositional relations between successive governing chord centres are massively predominant,[29] while T6 transpositions are altogether inexistent. The only two T6 transpositions of the chord centre in the whole piece occur, precisely after the replacement of the Mystic Chord II by the original form of Mystic Chord, in the first section's bars 24–25 and in the congener bars 52–53 of the second section. Both occur within the T3 transposition cycle of C♯–E♮–G♮-–B♭, which is for that reason reduced to a T6 transpositional cycle.

[29] As it was already discussed in chapter I, Baker (1986) perceptively noticed this relation between 7–32—the Mystic Chord II—and the prevalence of T3 transpositions, but not the relation between the original Mystic Chord and the T6 transposition level. Because o the exclusive use of pitch-class set analytic tools, he assigns only a small role to the original Mystic Chord in *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, considering, in fact, that the main its "most important sets are 4–28 and 8–28" (p. 144)–the diminished seventh chord and the octatonic mode.

Figure 6. *Prélude* op. 59, n°2: bars 28–61




48
52
56

III. PROMETHÉE OP.60

1 Light and form

1.1 *Tastiera per Luce* / Colour Keyboard

> *I want to write light-symphonies... Promethée is a Poème du Feu*
>
> —Scriabin, as cited in Sabaneev, 2005

Scriabin wanted light to "penetrate the whole air down to its very individual atoms" during the performance of *Promethée* op. 60, so that it could submerge the entire hall and the music (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 71). To achieve it, he included as the top stave of the orchestra's score a part written for a *Tastiera per Luce—colour keyboard.* Featuring two simultaneous lines written in regular musical notation, each one of its silent notes stands for a specific chord centre as its representative root note, and is to be transformed into a precise colour by the light-keyboard, according to a pre-determined pitch-class/colour table of correspondences.[30] Scriabin did not include that table in the score of *Promethée* op. 60, but it has arrived to us thanks to Leonid Sabaneev, who published it in several occasions. The first of them was his article on *Promethée* op. 60 for the *Muzika* journal of January of 1911, written, most certainly with Scriabin's permission,[31] at the time of the work's premiere. He referred to it again one year later, in his article on the same subject for *der Blaue Reiter*, and the French translation of 1987 includes it as a footnote:

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[30] In Scriabin's words, "for each tone there is a correspondence in colour (...), actually not for each tone, but for each tonality [chord centre]" (as cited in Sabaneev,2005, p. 54).

[31] Scriabin wrote to Sabaneev, on September 12, 1912, with the purpose of asking him to send his article on *Promethée* op. 60 and his analysis of the work to Rosa Newmarch, a London critic who wanted to write a article on *Promethée* op. 60 herself, on the occasion of the work's premiere in England. (Scriabin, 1988, pp. 326–327)

Table 2. Table of pitch-class/colour correspondence in *Promethée* op. 60
(Sabaneev (1911), as cited in Kandinsky & Marc [1987, p. 172, footnote by K. Kankheit])

C ♮	Red	F♯	Indigo
G ♮	Orange	D ♭	Violet
D ♮	Yellow	A ♭	Purple
A ♮	Green	E ♭	Silver
E ♮	Azure	B ♭	Same as E♭
B ♮	Same as E	F ♮	Dark red

On March 16, 1913 (Lobanova, 2015, p. 314), during an evening in the restaurant *Praga,* Scriabin dictated his detailed instructions for *Luce* to Sabaneev, who took his score of the work for the occasion. Sabaneev, described what for him was "one of the most memorable events of [his] relation with Scriabin" (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 257) as it follows:

> Alexandre Nikolayevich (...) began to dictate me, starting by the first chord (...), the light with its colours and intensity. At first he remained somewhat abstract, while I was writing the correspondent annotations (...) in the score. Then his imagination got more and more inflamed: his language was artistic, pictorial [and] increasingly excited. (...) He was no longer (...) [limited] to the colours, [mentioning] (...) all types of "lights", lightening, flashes, mists and clouds. Moreover—and this happened pretty soon—he grabbed my pencil and [began to write himself], with an ever-increasing enthusiasm and excitement. The whole-huge score become covered with a verbal description of the light symphony in its characteristic steep handwriting. At the end he was a little exhausted but feeling very well. (...) 'We should order for another beer on the occasion' [, he said]. When the beer arrived, after pouring himself, he continued:
>
> You are now the owner of a document (...), which is of interest even to myself. I have to copy it one day" (Sabaneev 2005, p. 263–264).

The destiny of this annotated copy of *Promethée* op. 60 remained unknown until 1978, when the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* acquired it as part of Sabaneev's estate (Lobanova, 2015, p. 314). The document includes a table, which, more detailed than *Muzyca's* table, has now

become the best possible source for *Luce's* sound/colour correspondences in *Promethée* op. 60. Lobanova's (2015, p. 315) German version is translated to English in table 3.[32]

Table 3. Scriabin's table of sound/colour correspondence in *Promethée* op. 60

C ♮	Red, simple	F♯	Blue turning violet
G ♮	Orange (red-yellow) fiery	D ♭	Pure violet
D ♮	Sunny yellow	A ♭	Lila (reddish)
A ♮	Green, grass green	E ♭	Bluish Steel, metallic
E ♮	Blue-greenish (sky blue)	B ♭	Metallic grey, leaden
B ♮	Blue with the blueness	F ♮	Red-violet

1.1.1 *Luce's* two lines

Scriabin provided a quite clear description of the functional roles of the two lines of *Luce,* by stating that

> Throughout the whole Poème [*Promethée* op. 60] there are two light lines. The first corresponds to music and its chords, in such a way that it is often based in the harmonic bass. The second corresponds to the whole-tone scale, starting by F♯ and going back to F♯... This second line corresponds to the involution and evolution of the [Theosophical] races. At the beginning we have the spiritual colour, blue, which, passing by other colours, then moves to red, the colour of the material, and then moves again back to blue" (Scriabin, as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 290).

Scriabin's above quoted description has been systematically misunderstood, in what refers to the fast line of *Luce,* while the slow line was too often disregarded as little more than a curiosity. And yet, they both constitute, not only a priceless analytical instrument provided by the composer himself, but also a fundamental actor in the structure and plot of *Promethée* op. 60.

[32] Lobanova (2015) published all Scriabin's handwritten annotations in *Mystiker. Magier. Theosophy. Theurg: Alexander Skrjabin und seine Zeit.* All references to Scriabin's specific colours and light effects included in the present study are translated into English from Lobanova's German version.

1.1.1.1 The fast line of *Luce*

Unconformities between the chord centres pointed by the fast line of *Luce* and the successive governing chord centres featured in *Promethée* op. 60 have been mostly treated as accidental inconsistencies.[33] This fact is surely the result of successive simplifications and misreadings of Scriabin's above quoted statement on the function of *Luce's* fast line. And yet, even if Scriabin naturally emphasized its most common function, by explaining that "it is often based in the harmonic bass", it is no lesser true that, by using the word "often", he specifically excluded any mechanic procedure.

Correspondence between the fast *Luce* line and the governing chord centres is indeed massively predominant in *Promethée* op. 60. Unconformities are, however, quite common.[34] Far from mere inconsistences, they should be regarded as signs of a more complex reality underneath the surface of the work: as in every other case in *Promethée* op. 60, seemingly exceptions constitute the best breakthrough opportunities for understanding the work's sophisticated procedures.

The analysis of *Promethée* op. 60 reveals that, if it is true that the fast line of *Luce* always parallels the musical action, it can relate to it in different ways, by

1. Highlighting successive governing chord centres as a "type of continuo"(Baker, 1986, p. 259).
2. Providing different insights over otherwise repeated passages.
3. Triggering functional changes in otherwise similar harmonic contexts.

The score includes several examples of the less common second and third types of correlation.

Bars 53 and 63 are a good example of the second: in bar 53 the fast line of *Luce* does not reflect the fleeting governance of CC-E♮ over the third eighth note within the *avec langueur* triplet,

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[33] Von Gleich (1963) establishes, as a general rule that "each note in the upper voice corresponds to the root of the prevailing chord centre" (p. 70), without referring to the quite frequent exceptions, thus implicitly treated as mere inconsistences. Baker (1986) refers to Von Gleich's general rule, and considers that "despite flaws in his analysis, his thesis is correct. (...) The colour organ is a type of continuo, providing a fundamental bass-analysis for the entire work" (p. 259). He avoids dismissing the numerous exceptions to that rule as mere inconsistencies, by admitting that from them "even more questions arise about the logic of the harmonic progression in this work" (p. 260); however, he does not provide the phenomenon with any alternative frame. Pople (1989) writes that "slight inconsistencies in the *Luce* part (compare bars 328 and 336, for example) suggest that it should not be adopted uncritically as a representation of the middleground structure of the work" (p. 226), conceding that those inconsistencies do not "seriously undermine [Luce's] value as a basis for the middleground analysis" (idem). Sabbagh (2003) states that, in the analysis of "each chord (...) [in relation] to its key note [,] (...) 'Luce'-part is very helpful as an orientation, because it nearly always plays the note of the corresponding harmony (unfortunately not always, so one cannot help but analyse the whole work in detail)" (p. 72). Gawboy (2010) sustains that "pitches in the fast *luce* part do not always match the fundamental of the [Mystic Chord]: on the downbeat of [bars] 88 and 92, the *luce* should indicate [MC-]B[♮] instead of a sustained F[♮]; [bar] 90 should be [MC-]A[♮] instead of B[♮]; the downbeat of [bar9 96 should be [MC-]G[♮], not sustained C♯." (p. 263).

[34] This statement does obviously not exclude the existence of punctual typos, in *Luce.*

focusing on the main governing CC-C♯ alone—Example 77—, while in the congener bar 63 it highlights the governance of CC-E♮ as well—Example 78. An even more expressive example stands out of *Luce's* different focuses on Theme B-21: in bars 21, 23 and 24 *Luce* highlights the governing chord centre of the theme's second quartel triad, CC-A♮; in bar 328, differently, *Luce* underscores both chord centres of the theme's T6 related quartel triads, successively, by replicating their sixteenth-note rhythm; finally, in bar 336, both chord centres are simultaneously highlighted, thanks to the coincidence of the first, CC-D♮, with *Luce's* slow light, while the fast line highlights the second.

Bar 96 is an expressive example of the third type of correlation between *Luce's* fast line and the work's governing chord centres: the fast line of *Luce* sustains the C♯ firstly introduced in bar 94, in spite of the governance of CC-G♮ over the bar's downbeat, repeating a procedure already used in the congener bars 88 and 92; after the return of CC-C♯ on the second beat of bar 96, the third unexpectedly reintroduces the governance of CC-G♮, which the fast line of *Luce* highlights, thus signalling its new functional significance, not just as the chord centre that will govern the following bar, but also the pivotal chord centre of the next change of transposition cycle, in bar 98—Examples 87–89.

All described procedures show that parallelism between sound and *Luce's* fast light is, in *Promethée* op. 60, a sophisticated procedure. Some time later, referring to his never finished *Mysterium,* Scriabin declared his intension of creating

> Counterpoints of light... Light and sound must both follow their own melodies. Generally speaking, both individual arts must be counterpointistically related...
>
> It is even conceivable that a melody (...) begins in one artistic genre and finishes in the other. Also by orchestrating, a theme of the clarinet, for instance, can be taken over by the violins. (...) [With sound and light] it is the same, but in a larger scale: Melody begins in tones and continues in a symphony of light, or in one of its lines (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p.265).

Unconformities between harmony and the fast line of *Luce* in *Promethée* op. 60—and, as we shall see, interaction between slow line of *Luce* and sonata form—are in the genesis of those projected counterpoints of light.

1.1.1.2 The slow line of *Luce*

After having explained the purpose of each line of *Luce,* Scriabin focused on the F♯ whole tone scale featured in *Luce's* slow line:

> I had to reflect the evolution of the Races in this light line. There must be a total of seven Races. Following the circle of fifths I would get twelve colours instead. Which of them would correspond to spiritual Race type? That is why I have chosen the F♯ whole tone scale, because the colour of matter, red, stands exactly halfway between two spiritual colours, namely in the fourth place, exactly as it should be. I have therefore resolved simultaneously an algebra problem. A system had to be found that, starting and ending with a spiritual colour, had a material colour in the middle and a total of seven steps. The whole tone scale is that system" (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 290)

Luce's evolutionary arc was thus intended to represent Blavatsky's racial evolution, with red in the "Middle racial point [,] occurred during the Fourth Root Race (...). From that time, *i.e.,* from the end of the three and a half races [,] humanity and nature entered on the ascending arc of their racial cycle" (Blavatsky, 1888, p. 308, footnote). For Blavatsky,

> On the descending arc it is the spiritual, which is gradually transformed into the material. On the middle line of the base, Spirit and Matter are equilibrized in Man. On the ascending arc, Spirit is slowly re-asserting itself at the expense of the physical, or matter, so that, at the close of the seventh Race of the Seventh round, the Monad[35] will find itself as free from mater and all its qualities as it was in the beginning; having gained in addition the experience and wisdom, the fruition of all its personal lives, without their evil temptations. (Blavatsky, Vol. II, pp. 180–181)

Figure 7 reproduces Blavatsky's suggestive, though imprecise, graphic representation of the evolution of the theosophical Root Races.[36]

Scriabin's description of the slow line of Luce was for a long time undervalued. Surely misled by the interruption of the slow line in bars 149(2)–164, 167–168 and 305–308, and by an

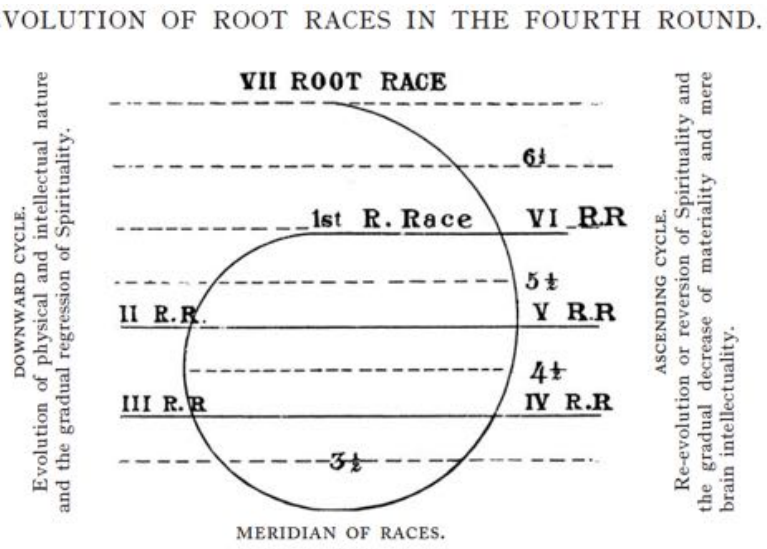
---

[35] "The Unity, the *one,* but in Occultism it often means the unified triad, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, or the duad, Atma-Buddhi, that imortal part of man which reincarnates in the lower kingdoms, and gradual progresses through them to Man and then to the final goal—Nirvâna" (Blavatsky. 1892, p. 216)

[36] There is an evident confusion between Roman numerals, which she uses as cardinal numbers, and Arabic numerals, corresponding to ordinal numbers, but mistakenly placed one Root Race too soon, as the first of the above quoted statement reveals

unexplainable E♯ in its bar 459, Von Gleich described it as an "almost whole tone scale" (1963, p. 71),[37] adding to its seven ascending steps (a) a B♮ and an interspersed C♮[38] in bars 149–164, (b) a recurrence of B♮ in bars 167–168, (c) a D♭ in bars 305–308 and (d) an E♯ in bar 459.

Figure 7. Evolution of the seven Theosophical Root Races according to Blavatsky (1888, p. 300)



As Lobanova (2015) has showed, neither B♮, nor D♭ "belong (...) to the static [slow] line, but rather to the moving [fast] line of *Luce*"[39] (p. 351). She considers that "difficulties to distinguish these two lines [have been] mostly caused by a not completely consequent notation technic: each line is sometimes notated as 'upper' [line] and other times as 'under' [line]" (idem). This is only true, however, in what concerns to the unproblematic F♯-stages—the first and the last stages of the work: in each one of the remaining five stages both voices keep their relative positions all the way through.[40] The first interruption of *Luce's* slow line, in bar 149(2), is actually very clearly notated, in spite of a typo affecting the B♮:[41] in the slow line of *Luce*, B♭ is featured as a slurred upper line from bar 111 until its interruption, in bar 149(2), while both B♮, introduced in bar 149(1), and C♮, the

[37] Von Gleich's description was for a long time prevailing. Pople, for instance, states that "as several writers have noted, [the slow line of *Luce]* essentially traces a whole-tome ascent from F♯ to F♯" (1989, p. 231), naming Von Gleich in the correspondent bibliographic notes (1989, p. 250).

[38] The interspersed C♮ of bars 160–161 is included as well because it would contradict the overall ascending movement of the slow line of *Luce,* even if it belongs to the whole tone scale of F♯.

[39] Lobanova's reasoning is applicable to the C♮ of bars 160–161 as well.

[40] The slurs binding *Luce's* D♮ in bars 309–312 show that the up-stem in both bars 309 and 311 is most certainly a typo. *Luce's* standard procedure of interrupting its fast line, whenever the governing chord centre and the stage's representative chord centre are coincident, is also consistent with such an explanation.

[41] The slur mistakenly binds it together with the previous G♯.

two pitch-classes articulated by the fast line of *Luce* during the interruption of its slow line, are consistently kept as lower voice. In what concerns to bar 459, Lobanova (2015) is right when she considers it the starting bar of the final F♯-Colour Stage, but not so when she argues that *Luce's* E♯ belongs to the fast line of *Luce* (p. 315): besides inconsistent with a CC-D♭-governed bar, her argument has been proven wrong by Gawboy (2010), who found that "Scriabin crossed out the E♯ between E♮ and F♯" (p. 314), in Sabaneev's copy that now belongs to *Bibliothèque Nationale de France.*[42]

The combined contributions of Lobanova and Gawboy have clarified all doubts concerning line's distribution within the *Luce* part, even if only Lobanova has limited its content to the seven-stepped whole tone scale described by Scriabin, which, by defining seven successive Colour Stages,[43] represents each one of Blavatsky's seven Root Races. This scale has a fundamental function on structuring the work's harmonic and formal plan, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Table 4. The seven Colour Stages defined by the slow line of *Luce* in *Promethée* op. 60

Stage	Colour	Pitch-class	Bars	Number of bars
First	Blue turning violet	F ♯	1–86	86
Second	Lila (reddish)	A ♭	87–110	24
Third	Metallic grey, leaden	B♭	111–183(1)	72
Fourth	Red, simple	C♮	183(1)–304	122
Transition			305–308	4
Fifth	Sunny yellow	D♮	309–408	100
Sixth	Blue-greenish (sky blue)	E♮	409–458	50
Seventh	Blue turning violet	F♯	459–606	148

[42] Gawboy is not right, though, when she considers bar 459 as the last from the E♮/sixth stage. The matter will be further discussed in the detailed analysis of *Promethée* op. 60.

[43] Similarly to Von Gleich, Gawboy (2010) wrongly places some pitch-classes of the fast line of *Luce* within the seven that define a whole tone scale from F♯ to F♯ in the slow *Luce* line (p. 230). However, she only assigns a structural role to those seven, considering that each one defines a different Colour Stage, which altogether represent Blavatsky's seven Root-Races (pp. 216–218).

1.2 Form

1.2.1 A short bibliographic survey

The formal structure of *Promethée* op. 60 has always been a controversial matter. Described in terms of sonata form by most scholars,[44] not even its main formal divisions were ever object of consensus—mostly limited, in fact, to dismissing any formal function of the slow line of *Luce*.

For Pople (1989) and Gawboy (2010) lack of consensus amongst sonata-form analysts is due to the inadequacy of the proposed formal frame, which for Pople "certainly fits uneasily over the contours of Prometheus" (p. 215). Gawboy claims that the abundance of "musical gestures which are developed and transformed throughout the work, reappearing in unexpected locations and novel juxtapositions (...) clearly suggests a closer musical relationship to Wagnerian leitmotivic technic than to classical architectonics" (2010, p. 213). Little doubts concerning Scriabin's use of leitmotifs were left, in fact, after Sabaneev's (1932) statement, pointing that "of recent composers Scriabin alone was a 'leitmotifist', and therefore a romantic and a believer in thought and idea; his leitmotifs are abstract mystical or philosophical concepts, conventionally expressed by themes" (p. 206). Sabaneev has also described the form of *Promethée* op. 60, however, as "close to the sonata, although considerably expanded" (as cited in Gawboy, 2010, pp. 218–219), leading Gawboy to concede that "the dramatic function of the three main sections may be loosely realigned with a very abstract sonata narrative" (2010, p. 219). Gawboy nevertheless insists that, "given the ambiguity of the formal design" (2010), it is

> The slow *Luce* part [that] performs [the] necessary musical function [of] automatically imposing a high-level grouping scheme upon the unruly texture. In a way, the slow *Luce* may be seen as freeing Scriabin from the demands of tightly-knit formal architectonics, allowing him greater flexibility in thematic alteration and the introduction of new material. The slowly-changing background colours provide a sense of stability for each section on the large scale, unifying the thematic diversity of the musical surface within each sustained Colour Stage (p. 216).

[44] Von Gleich (1963, pp. 72–79), Baker (1986, pp. 239·244) and Kelkel (1999, p. 266), amongst others.

Pople gave a significant contribution in explaining the structural function of the slow line of *Luce*, when he found that "a comparison between the pitch-structures of the larger sections in their original and repeated forms shows a precise correlation with the changes in the [slow line of] *Luce"* (1989, p. 243). He provided several examples of that correlation, such as

1. Bars 26(3)–46, which occur "originally against a background colour of deep blue [F♯]", while its "reprise, in bars 370(2)–390 is transposed with t=8, corresponding to the 'interval' between deep blue and the new background colour [D♮]" (idem)
2. Bars 115–130(2), which, firstly articulated "in a metallic grey light [B♭]", are T4 transposed in bars 309–324, "when the background colour is yellow, (...) corresponding again to the intervallic change in the [slow part of] *Luce"* (ibidem).

By pointing that, "in general, these precise correlations apply only to the larger repeating sections" (ibidem), he excludes of that general procedure both the restatement of bars 115–121 in bars 215–221 and that of bars 115–122 in bars 451–458, none of which strictly follows the described transpositional pattern. Pople refuses, however, to provide any larger-scale grouping for *Promethée* op. 60.

Refusal to define any larger-scale grouping in *Promethée,* to concede any formal significance to the slow line of *Luce,* and to identify in *Promethée* op. 60 a sonata form have actually the same ultimate reason: no explanation of the formal plan of *Promethée* op. 60 was ever provided, which relates it as sonata-form with the slow line of *Luce*. And yet, such an explanation is a necessary condition for a comprehensive understanding of the sophisticated form of *Promethée* op. 60.

1.2.2 Slow line of *Luce* and sonata form: an intrinsic relation

1.2.2.1 Establishing sonata form

In is article for the "New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians", Webster writes that "sonata form is not a mould into which the composer has poured the contents (2001. Vol. 23, p. 688), before quoting Dahlhaus, who considers it to be "at most an'ideal type'" (idem).

In the preface to the revised edition of his "Sonata Forms", Rosen (1988) goes even farther, when, in explaining the plural of the title, he quotes Stephen Jay Gould:

> ...There are no essences, there is no such a thing as "the chimpanzee". You can't bring a few into a laboratory, make some measurements, calculate an average, and find out, thereby, what chimpness is. There are no shortcuts. Individuality does more than matter (...). You must learn to recognize individual chimps and follow them for years, recording their peculiarities, their differences, and their interactions...
>
> When you understand why nature's complexity can only be unravelled this way, why individuality matters so crucially, then you are in a position to understand what the sciences of history are all about (as cited in Rosen, 1988, preface to the revised edition).

As Rosen says, "sonatas are like chimpanzees" (idem).

In spite of so expressively refusing the idea of a single sonata form, Rosen (1988) does consider "the extension of dissonance to the level of the large structure" as "largely the invention of sonata style (p. 244), pointing "the dramatic tension of the prolongation of this dissonance with its balancing resolution" as "the quality common to all the various sonata forms" (idem). He further explains that

> The establishment of V as a new tonic opposed to the first constitutes a relation of dissonance, which therefore needs affirmation within the work. The dominant is conceived as a *dissonant tonality* in the exposition. (...)
>
> The polarization, in fact, leads to the concept of a *dissonant section,* which raises the dissonant interval or chord to a higher power; that is, a simple reintroduction of the tonic key will no longer serve as resolution, but the section outside the tonic needs to be resolved as a whole. The exposition is therefore conceived in terms of its eventual recapitulation in fully developed sonata style, and the modulation is a dynamic movement that establishes the dissonance of what follows (Rosen, 1988, p. 244).

Promethée op. 60 entirely matches Rosen's description. Within Scriabin's new polarity, the second part of its exposition has in the introduction of a ♯IV dissonant tonality/chord centre its main event; the tension thus produced is then stressed throughout the whole development, before its resolution in the second part of the recapitulation, thanks to a potential already inscribed in the exposition, to which the recapitulation naturally relates.

1.2.2.2 Correlation between sonata form and the slow line of *Luce*

Table 5. Sonata-form subdivisions and the seven Colour Stages

FORM		BARS		COLOUR STAGE	BARS
INTRO	Introduction: **A**	1 ↓ 26	1–26	1st: F#	1–86 (86)
EXPOSITION	1st Part: **B**	27 ↓ 192	27–86		
	2nd Part: **C** (transition)		87–114	2nd: A♭	87–110 (24)
	3rd Part: **D**		115–162	3rd: B♭	111–182 (72)
	Close: **E** (includes [T10 Rest. of 58(3)–66)		163–192		
DEVELOPMENT	1st Part: **F** (includes [T4] restatement of 115–121)	193 ↓ 370	193–308	4th: C♮	183–304 (122)
				Undetermined Colour Stage	
	2nd Part: **G** (includes [T4] restatement of 115–138')		309–370	5th: D♮	309–408 (100)
RECAPITULATION	1st part: **B** [T8]: (bars 47–66 elided)	371 ↓ 511	371–404		
	2nd Part: **H** (secondary development)		405–450	6th: E♮	409–458 (50)
	3rd Part: **D'** [T8, T2]		451–511	7th: F#	459–606 (148)
RECAP+CODA	**D'** [T2] (Continuation)	512 ↓ 606	512–521		
	Coda: I		522–541		
	D' [T2] (conclusion)		542–549		
	Coda: I		550–573		
	Codetta: I		574–606		

Formal oddities such as those adduced by Gawboy in her refusal to describe *Promethée* op. 60 in terms of sonata form seem thus too little of a base to deny that formal frame.

Table 5 sows a close temporal relation between each change in the slow line of *Luce* and change of group in the sonata form structure, strongly suggesting a structural correlation between both formal frames. As we shall see, this structural correlation is indeed be crucial in defining the work's formal plan.

1.2.2.3 Representing Blavatsky's seven Root Races

The articulation of F♯ at both ends of the slow line of *Luce* signals CC-F♯ as the main chord centre of *Promethée* op. 60, concomitantly turning its T3 transposition cycle, in Gawboy's (2010) fine expression, into the work's main "'home' F♯-A♮-C♮-E♭ constellation"(p. 257). That condition is however not extensive to each one of the seven Colour Stages of the piece: each change in the slow line of *Luce* signals a new Colour Stage, but also a new main governing chord centre and a new main T3 transposition cycle: represented in the slow line of *Luce,* as pointed by Scriabin himself, Blavatsky's seven Root Races are thus represented in harmony as well.

Each transitional moment between one Root Race and the following is further stressed with change of group in the sonata form structure, with an exact match between the beginnings of (a) the exposition's second part and the second Colour Stage and (b) the development's second part and the fifth Colour Stage. However, if such an exact coincidence leaves little doubt about a correlation between those two formal frames, Blavatsky's writings have to be referred in explaining the asynchronies at the beginning of the third, fourth, sixth and seventh Colour Stages.

According to Blavatsky (1888), each Root Race lived in a continent of its own. Its emergence and final collapse followed the birth and disappearance of its particular Root Race[45] (Vol. II, p. 330). However, Blavatsky points that, "just as in the case of Race-evolution, so in that of the shifting and re-shifting of continental masses, no hard and fast line can be drawn where a new order ends and another begins. Continuity in natural processes is never broken" (1888, Vol. II, p. 333).

Transitions between successive Colour Stages, in *Promethée* op. 60, had thereby to be smooth. They are represented by three-dimensional changes, which close in time, affect colour, harmony and formal articulation. Table 6 shows the particular sequencing of these three-dimensional transitions, in each one of the seven Colour Stages, detailing, as far as harmony is concerned, the introduction of each stage's main T3 transposition cycle and main chord centre.

---

[45] Blavatsky (1888) named the continent of the first Root Race, precisely, "The Imperishable Sacred Land". The second Root Race lived in "Hyperborean", the third in "Lemuria", the fourth in "Atlantis" and our present fifth Root Race in "Europe" (Vol. II, pp. 6–8)

Table 6. Colour, harmony and form: correlated transitions in *Promethée* op. 60

	FIRST COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal Articulation
	F♯	CC- F♯	T3 cycle:F♯–A–C–E♭	Introduction
Bar	1	19 (1)	1	1
	SECOND COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal articulation
	A♭	CC-A♭	T3 cycle B–D–F–A♭	Exposition: 2nd part
Bar	87	107	86	87
	THIRD COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal articulation
	B♭	CC-B♭	T3 cycle D♭–E–G–B♭	Exposition: 3rd part
Bar	111	115	113	115
	FOURTH COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal articulation
	C	CC-C	T3 cycle C– E♭–F♯–A	Development: 1st part
Bar	183	183	183	193
	FIFTH COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal articulation
	D	CC-D	T3 cycle D–F–A♭–B	Development: 2nd part
Bar	309	309	309	309
	SIXTH COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Formal articulation
	E	CC-E	T3 cycle E–G–B♭–D♭	Recapitulation: 2nd part
Bar	409	409	408	405

	SEVENTH COLOUR STAGE			
	Slow Luce	Harmony		Form
	F♯	CC- F♯	T3 cycle F♯–A–C–E♭	Recapitulation: 3rd part
Bar	459	451	441	451

The sole simultaneous change of all three representative dimensions in the whole work happens, not by chance, at the beginning of the fifth Colour Stage: it is meant to stress the birth of that which for Blavatsky is our present Root Race (1888, Vol. II, p. 411). Four absolutely unique bars precede that simultaneous change. With the slow line of *Luce* paused all the way through, those bars do not belong to any precise evolutionary stage, summarizing and thus recalling all previous four instead. The simultaneous governance of CC-D♭, CC-F♮ and CC-A♮, which, by representing a different T3 transposition cycle each, symbolize all T3 transposition cycles previously featured, ensures such a recollection. The fast line of *Luce* significantly corresponds to the simultaneous governance of those three chord centres by featuring their representative pitch-classes together, in the sole occasion it articulates more than one pitch-class at the same time.

1.2.2.4 The transposition factor of the recapitulation

The relation of the slow line of *Luce* with the sonata form frame goes far beyond a coordinate representative function of the replacement of a Root Race by the following. It is as deep as to determining the transposition level of the recapitulation, which, within the fifth and seventh Colour Stages, parallels the T8 transpositional relation of *Luce* with respect to the exposition's congener first and third Colour Stages. The recapitulation starts in the fifth Colour Stage within CC-D♮, in order to match the governance of the stage's main chord centre signalled by the slow line of *Luce*. It thus parallels the functional role of CC-F♯ in the congener bars of the exposition, within the first Colour Stage. After the interspersed sixth Colour Stage, the recapitulation is resumed within CC-F♯, in bar 451, because CC-F♯ is the main chord centre of the seventh Colour Stage, paralleling the function of CC-B♭ in the exposition's congener third Colour Stage.

The reason for a recapitulation outside the work's main chord centre is once more related with Blavatsky's Root Races. Representing return to oneness, the reintroduction of CC-F♯ at a so early stage would contradict Blavatsky's racial evolution, according to which oneness will only be

reached at the seventh Root Race. In the fifth, that of our actual mankind, "the lower passions [still] chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter" (Blavatsky, 1888, Vol. II, p. 422).

By instituting a new main chord centre for each Colour Stage, the slow line of *Luce* is thus crucial to enable parallelism between the exposition and the recapitulation–both similarly related to their stage's respective main chord centres–while simultaneously preventing the return of CC-F♯ at such an early stage.

1.2.2.5 Introducing a dissonant section

The slow line of *Luce* has still one third and even more significant formal function: it is determinant in constituting and resolving the work's dissonant section.

The function of dissonant tonality/chord centre is played in *Promethée* op. 60 by CC-C♮–the polar chord centre with respect to the main CC-F♯. To ensure that formal function, it was indispensable to give it a significant weight in the third part of the work's exposition, still within the third colour stage. However, it was also necessary to ensure a too early introduction of CC-C♮ would not jeopardize its simultaneous role as the representative chord centre of the fourth Colour Stage—which formally corresponds to the work's development.

To ensure both structural functions Scriabin finds a remarkable solution.

Bars 139–142, the climatic bars of the exposition and of the third Colour Stage, recall the old dominant–tonic polarity by assertively introducing a V–I relation in the bass line—Example 63. The two bars that follow transform that V–I relation in Scriabin's new ♯IV-I polarity—a procedure that the following bars will repeat in several different ways.[46]

The B♭ featured at the lower end of Bar 145 as partial 3 of CC-C♮—the chord centre pointed by the fast line of *Luce*—is simultaneously partial 1 of the stage's main chord centre, CC-B♭. Above it, two successive vertical perfect fifths are produced as result of articulating F♮—which that does not belong to CC-C♮[47]—and its partial 1/C♮.

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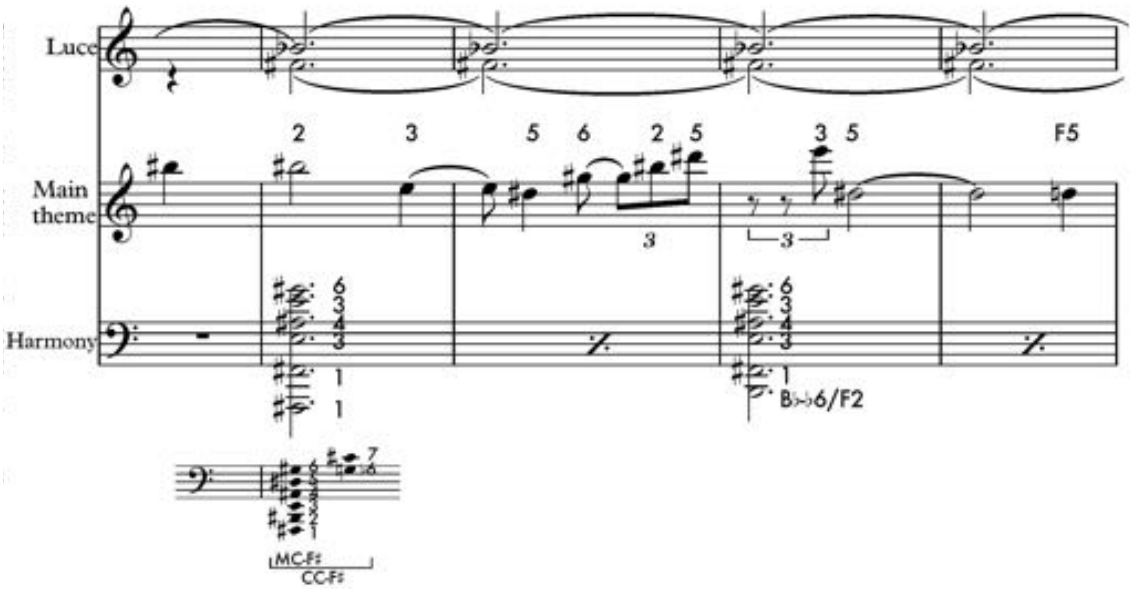
[46] All specific procedures within that general gesture will be explained in the detailed analysis of *Promethée* op. 60.

[47] F, which is partial 7♮ of CC-B♭—the stage's main chord centre—could also be considered as a secondary governing chord centre, particularly if the partial's content of the violins is considered—Example 64, orchestra's middle stave.

Example 63. Bars 138(3)–142: main theme and harmonic outline



After the T6 restatement of bars 143–144 in bars 147–148, a T6 transposition of bar 145 was expected to introduce the governance of the its polar CC-F♯ in bar 149. Its two lower pitches are consistent with that expectation. However, that which had been the third lower pitch of bar 145 is not transposed in bar 149. This is a most significant absence, for the missing pitch would have precisely corresponded to partial 1 of the bar's expected governing chord centre, CC-F♯, which would have established with the CC-C♮-governed bar 145 the work's main ♯IV-I polarity. The governance of CC- F♯ is also not confirmed by the fast line of *Luce*, in bar 149: keeping the same transposition level of the previous two bars instead, it points to an unpredicted T11 transpositional relation between the CC-C♮-governed bars 145–146 and the CC-B♮-governed bars 149–150.

The T11 transposition of the chord centre, in bar 149, combined with the T6 transposition of the bar's two lower pitches has a surprising outcome, by enabling a new insight on the functional role of the pitches articulated beyond the limits of its main governing chord centre, but also of those previously articulated beyond the limits of the governing chord centre of its correlated bar 145. In fact, the two lower pitches of bar 149 switch the functions their congeners had in bar 145: the second lowest pitch of bar 149, B♮, which transposes at T6 a pitch alien to the main governing chord centre of bar 145, F♮, becomes in bar 149 partial 1 of the main governing chord centre,

while the T6 transposition of B♭, E♮, which was expected as partial 3 of CC-F♯, is now articulated beyond the range of the bar's main governing chord centre, CC-B♮.[48]

These very sophisticated procedures have the clear purpose of preparing the introduction, in bar 149, of a long lasting E♮ pedal note. This pedal note establishes an augmented fourth polar relation with the representative pitch-class of the third Colour Stage, B♭, which

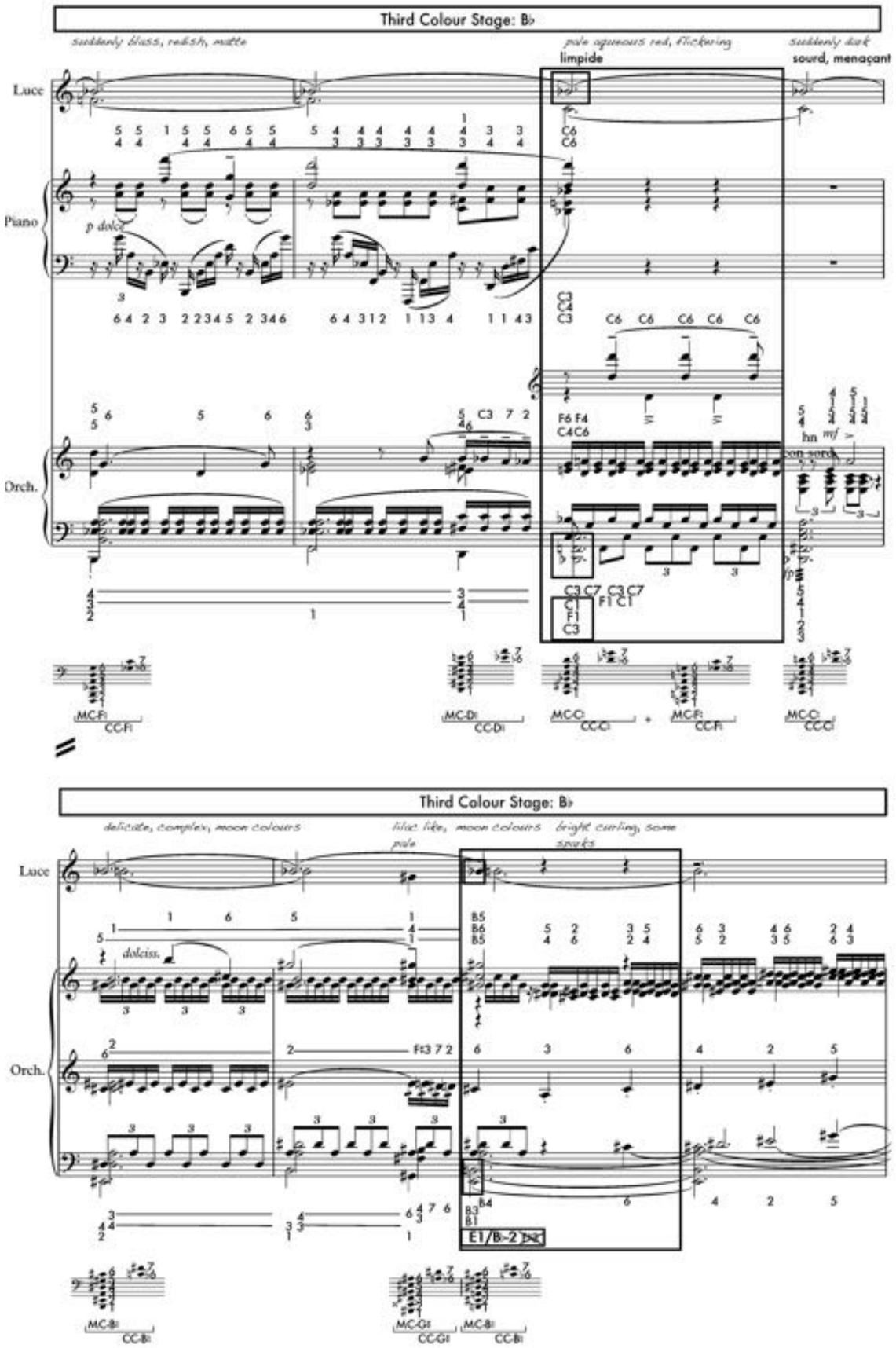
1. Precedes it, as the lowest pitch of the congener bars 145–146.
2. Succeeds it, within its repeated restatements of bars 183–192.
3. Matches it, as the stage's representative chord centre.

The tension between *Luce's* B♭ and the E♮ pedal note leads to the first hitherto interruption in the slow line of *Luce*—Scriabin's handwritten annotation describes a "bright curling and some sparks" (Lobanova, 2015, p. 319). That interruption will last until bar 165 and will be repeated in bars 167–168.

The ♯IV function of the E♮ pedal note is signalled by the simultaneous old V–I polarity—suggested by the articulation of partial 1 of CC-B♮ one perfect fifth above—and, most particularly, by the work's main polarity, whose accomplishment the E♮ pedal note suggests in the precise moment it is in fact replacing it.

[48] The arrival of CC-B♮ triggers an interruption of the slow *Luce* line, in bar 149: B♮ will shine alone in the fast *Luce* line, until bar 160, without reflecting the governing chord centres of bars 153–156 and 159–160. B♮ will be similarly highlighted in bars 163–164 and 167–168, in which it matches the governing CC-B♮. This momentary prominence of CC-B♮ foreshadows its key role in the transition to the Fourth Colour stage, which is itself foreshadowed in *Luce's* bars 160–161, by featuring its representative C♮ alone.

Example 64. Bars 143–150



The following thirty bars consistently keep the E♮ pedal note and, by featuring only three main governed chord centres, stress the polar relations introduced in bars 143–150 all the way through:

1. The old V–I polarity is featured at the bottom of the harmony in all CC-B♮-governed bars between partial 1/B♮ and the E♮ pedal note.
2. The work's main ♯IV-I polarity is featured in all CC-C♮–CC-F♯ governed bars.
3. The stage's ♯IV-I polarity, represented by the E♮ pedal note all the way through, is further stressed by the reintroduction of the slow *Luce's* B♭, in bars 165–166 and 169–178.

The last six of those thirty bars and the two bars that follow—bars 172(3)–180—feature a T10 transposed restatement of bars 58(3)–66. This restatement has two purposes, each one related with one of the two themes it reintroduces:

1. Bars 172(3)–178 relate the E♮ pedal note, firstly introduced in bar 149, with the F♯ pedal note introduced in their original statement, articulated within the first colour stage. The recollection of that stable F♯ sound–colour relation stresses even further the function of E♮ as dissonant chord centre, with respect to the B♭ featured by the slow line of *Luce* in the third Colour Stage.
2. Bars 179–180 interrupt the E♮ pedal note, concomitantly stopping the V–I relation of the first partial of CC-B♮ with the extinguished E♮ pedal note. To replace it, a new ♯IV-I relation is featured, successively, between the lower pitch of bars 179–180 and that of bar 181, and between this last and the lower pitch of bar 182.

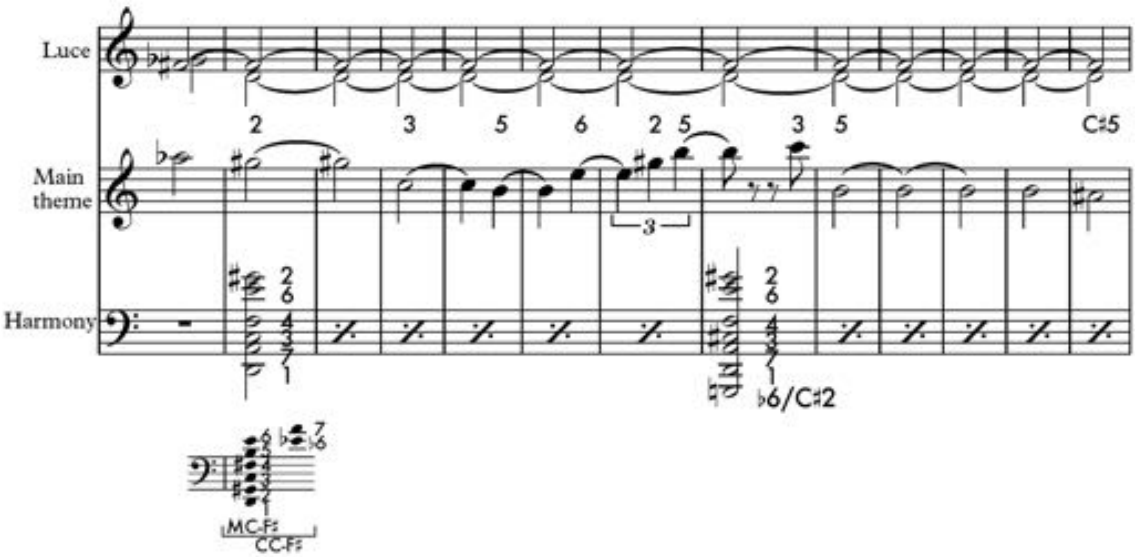
Reversely to bars 143–146, which had prepared the introduction of the E♮ pedal note, in bar 149, as representative of the momentary dissonant tonality/chord centre within the third Colour Stage, their restatement in bars 181–184 signals the end of that function and its immediate assumption by CC-C♮.

All described procedures are deployed in order to introduce a dissonant section in the third part of the exposition of *Promethée* op. 60, which, without jeopardizing the role of CC-C♮ as representative chord centre of the fourth Colour Stage, will become, to retake Rosen's (1988)

expression, "the generating force of [the] entire movement" (p. 229). This dissonant section had to be conveniently resolved in the recapitulation. With a great formal artistry, Scriabin achieves it by wrong-footing the sequential expectations of the recapitulation.

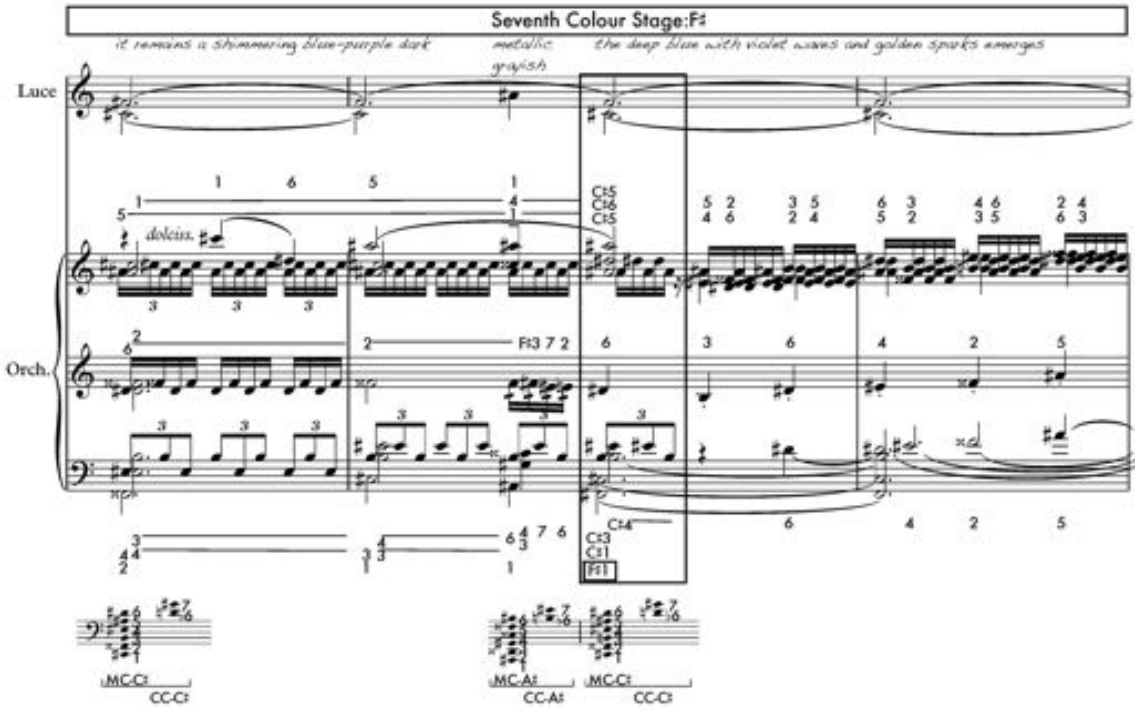
After the secondary development featured within the sixth Colour Stage, bar 451 is the first of the recapitulation's third part, resuming the T8 transposed restatement of the exposition—namely of its third part, started at bar 115. The recapitulation's bars 504–505 seem thus to be the expected T8 transposition of bars 143–144, inducing a similar prospect for bars 506–507—the last two bars of the four-bar set. Wrong-footing those expectations, bars 505–506 unexpectedly transpose bars 149–150 at T2 instead. The context of the previous two bars is thus retrospectively changed as well: firstly perceived as a T8 transposition of bars 143–144, bars 504–505 were in fact eliding them, transposing bars 147–148 at T2, in their place. The purpose of such an elision, which smoothly changed the hitherto transposition factor of the recapitulation from T8 to T2,[49] was to enable the unexpected introduction in bar 506 of the root note of the representative chord centre of the seventh/F♯ Colour Stage as pedal note, instead of its expected polar C♮. The unexpected turnover that results of the coincidence between the *Luce's* slow line and the pedal note resolves the previous tension. Extraordinarily, the resolution of the exposition's dissonant section is exclusively dependent on the relation between the pedal note and the slow line of *Luce,* both featuring partial 1/F♯ of the works' main chord centre, in a remarkable synesthetic sound–colour structural relation.

Example 65. Bars 491–503: main theme and harmonic outline



[49] The orchestration of bars 504–505, even if, by itself, insufficient to change the way they are firstly perceived, provides a subtle but clear insight towards their true relation with the exposition's bars: it diverges from the orchestration of bars 143–144, but is absolutely identical to that of bars 147–148.

Example 66. Bars 503–506



1.2.2.6 Elision, substitution and displaced formal restatements

Formal oddities within *Promethée* op. 60, even if they would not contradict a sonata form frame by themselves, have always produced perplexity.[50] As we shall discuss, all of them are consistent with the second formal frame of *Promethée* op. 60, the slow line of *Luce* and its representative role of Blavatsky's seven Root Races.

The second section of the exposition's first part, bars 47–66, is elided in the recapitulation. We have already discussed that its original statement, and the incomplete T10 restatement of bars 173(3)-180, had confront between their respective pedal notes as main formal purpose. A T8 restatement of bars 47–66 in the recapitulation within the fifth/D♮ colour stage would have introduced a D♮ pedal note, repeating the coincidence featured between the F♯ pedal note and the slow line of *Luce,* within the first Colour Stage. Such a procedure, albeit consistent with the sonata form frame, was just as undesirable as the untransposed restatement of the exposition's first part, which had just been avoided: besides staging the end of conflict in a too early stage, it would have resolved it within the governance of a chord centre other than CC-F♯—the chord centre that, for Scriabin, represents oneness.

[50] They were adduced by Gawboy (2010), for instance, to dismiss *Promethée* op. 60 as a sonata form (p. 215) .

To avoid this undesired outcome, the fifth Colour Stage elides the sound/colour consonance that would have corresponded to the introduction of its partial 1 as pedal note, deferring to the seventh Colour Stage the resolution of the work's conflict, with the above described introduction of the F♯ pedal note in bar 506.

To balance this necessary elision, the expanded restatement of Theme B-65 that follows, in bars 514–519, introduces a rhythmic variation, which takes its pattern from the *joyeux* episode featured in four of the elided bars—those that would have corresponded to the exposition's bars 47–50.

The transitional second part of the exposition, corresponding to the second Colour Stage, is substituted by a secondary development in the second part of the recapitulation, which represents the sixth Colour Stage. The material of the *voluputueux, presque avec douleur* second part of the exposition, conceived to represent the evolutionary process between Blavatsky's first and second Root Races,[51] as we shall discuss in the detailed analysis of the work, was surely inadequate to represent Blavatsky's highly advanced sixth Root Race.

Scriabin therefore introduces a secondary development, which, marked *de plus en plus lumineux et flamboyant,* represents the acceleration of time towards the final dematerialization by means of fast tempo, quick succession of vivid former themes and, particularly within the two sets of bars marked *flot lumineux*, by a very fast harmonic rhythm.

Both the first and the second parts of the development, corresponding respectively to the fourth and fifth Blavatsky's Root Races introduce T4 restatements of the starting bars of the exposition's third part. The first of them, between bars 215 and 221 does not correspond to the transposition level defined by its Colour Stage with respect to the original section. Instead of transposing at T2 the original bars, it features the T4 transposition level that corresponds to the fifth Colour Stage, thus foreshadowing its considerably longer restatement of the same section. Featuring four interspersed bars in an otherwise sequential restatement, that restatement opens the fifth Colour Stage, between bars 309 and 336.

These restated bars within the development are entirely alien to the intrinsic needs of the sonata plot and, although consistent with Blavatsky's racial evolution as we shall see, were not strictly indispensable in representing the conflictive fourth and fifth Root Races. On other hand, it does not exist any testimonial information concerning their likely leitmotivic function: besides his previously quoted statement defining Scriabin as a leitmotifist, Sabaneev provided information about

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[51] According to the *Book of Dzyan* the First Race "evolved the second unconsciously, as do some plants", as "living cells reproducing their like by growth and subsequent subdivision"((Blavatsky, 1888, vol. II, p. 117).

the leitmotivic content of only three themes of *Promethée:* Theme of Will (2005, p. 81), Theme of Reason (2005, p. 289), and Theme of Motion (2005, p. 284). By all these reasons, the explanation for these displaced restatements, even if seemingly likely, is necessarily more interpretative than those provided for elision and substitution procedures.

The periods that correspond to the fourth and fifth Root Races—the most material of Blavatsky's Root Races—are marked by generalized conflict. By restating bars 115–121, bars 215–221 suggest a recollection of its origins, before the stage's widespread conflict that will follow. Its transposition level foreshadows the considerable longer restatement of the starting bars of the third Colour Stage within the fifth Colour Stage, in bars 305–336. This longer restatement leads to three consecutive attempts of inverting the descent into matter stressed by the main theme of bars 139–142, in the exposition: by means of thematic transformation and elision the last of those attempts succeeds, in the *Victorieux* bars 361–368, triggering the beginning of the recapitulation in bar 370.

We should now go back to the starting bars of the exposition's third part. Formally confirming the beginning of the third Colour Stage they feature an unprecedented combination of previous thematic material, with an independent statement of Theme B-5c as leading theme. Later stages will broadly restate them, either in their complete combined form, either by repeating the precise morphology of each one of their leading themes. The detailed analysis of *Promethée* op. 60, considering the different contexts in which that particular combination of thematic material is featured as leading theme, suggests it was probably intended as the representative leitmotiv for the Human.

2. *Promethée* op. 60—analysis

2.1 Introduction, bars 1–26

2.1.1 Outline

The introduction of *Promethée* op. 60, bars 1–26, is subdivided into four proportionally related subsections, of four, eight, eight and six bars, respectively. The sum of its first two parts is twice the length of the fourth; the third, by including two 4/4 bars in an otherwise ternary context, matches in number of beats—e.g. twenty-six—the whole section's number of bars.

The first subsection, the non-thematic bars 1–4, features the harmony of MC-A♮ alone.

The second subsection, bars 5–12, introduces the first theme of *Promethée* op. 60—Theme B-5.

The third subsection, bars 13–20, raises the theme's second part in successive T9 transpositions within the T3 cycle of CC-F♯: from CC-A♮ to CC–E♭, at T6, and then, successively, to CC-C♮, CC-A♮, CC-F♯, to finally resume the section's initial CC-E♭.

The fourth and last subsection of the introduction, bars 21–26, introduces two new themes in its first two bars—Theme B-21 and Theme of Will—before an appeasing movement that restores a non-thematic statement of MC-A♮ in bar 26.

The entire introduction belongs to the first Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60, featuring the representative F♯ in the slow *Luce* line.

2.1.2 Detailed analysis

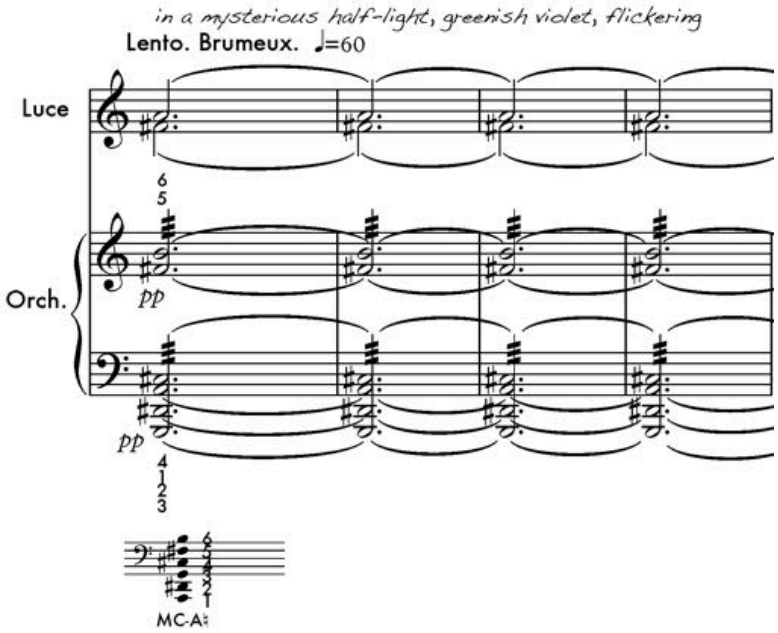
2.1.2.1 Bars 1–12

> *Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration;(...) the visible that was, and the invisible that is, rested in eternal non-being—the one being. (...) Alone the one form of existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep; and life pulsated unconscious in universal space. (...) The Universe was still concealed in the Divine thought and the divine Bosom...*
>
> —Blavatsky, Book of Dzyan, 1888

In a "mysterious half-light, greenish-violet, flickering",[52] according to Scriabin's handwritten annotation (Lobanova, 2015, p. 317), *Promethée* op. 60 begins with an extending, almost indistinguishble pianissimo chord.

[52] All Scriabin's handwritten annotations were made in the edited copy that now belongs to the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France.* They were published in German in Lobanova's (2015) *Mystiker. Magier. Theosoph. Theurg: Alexander Skrjabin und seine Zeit.* All references to Scriabin's specific colours and light effects of the present study were translated into English from Lobanova's German version.

Example 67. Bars 1–4



This initial chord, which the fast line of Luce confirms to be MC-A♮,[53] is particularly obscured by means of voicing and orchestration. Concealed in the middle register, the determining augmented fourth polarity between the first two partials of MC-A♮, A♮ and D♯, is replaced in the orchestra's extreme lower and upper registers by the major third formed by partials 3/G♮ and 6/B♮. The intervallic content of MC-A♮ likewise prevents any perception of an old G major centricity.[54] The chord's extreme length[55] and obscured centricity, the absence of any rhythm or even of an intelligible pulse, the pianissimo dynamics and the orchestral tremolo-texture all help to create the feeling of a primordial, steady-flickering timelessness. Sabaneev described it as a "mystic harmony [floating] in the mauve of a twilight that brings the main theme, played by the hunting horns" (Sabaneev, 1987, p.178).

[53] Equidistant from the representative chord centres of spirit and matter—CC-F♯ and CC-C♮, respectively—MC-A♮ is certainly meant to represent the theosophical idea of a primordial oneness between both.

[54] Quoting a paper by Boelza, Taruskin (2000) writes that" Rachmaninoff, stunned at the sound of it, asked Scriabin, 'What are you using here?'"(pp. 340–341)

[55] Sabaneev reports that Scriabin once asked: "don't you feel, Leonid Leonidovitch, that music is capable of enchanting time and produce a complete standstill?" (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 58). Scriabin wanted unprecedented slower tempi, in *Promethée* op. 60, which should, in Scriabin's own words, "last as long as eternity" (idem).

2.1.2.1.1 Theme B-5; concealed CC-F# centricity

> *...The last vibration of the seventh eternity thrills through infinitude. The mother swells, expanding from within to without, like the bud of the lotus.*
>
> — Blavatsky, Book of Dzyan, 1888

In bars 5–12, the horns introduce the first theme of *Promethée* op. 60—Theme B-5. Theme B-5 is subdivided into three different parts, all of which appear independently throughout the work:

1. The first part—Theme B-5a—introduces partials 5/F♯, 2/D♯ and 3/G♮, performing a self-embracing movement that wraps itself around its initial pitch. Either as a set class (0,1,4), or as a particular collection of partials, its initial three pitches will be in the genesis of most of the other themes.
2. The second part—Theme B5-b—is formed by two ascending impulses: the first rearticulates, from the lowest to the highest, partials 2/D♯, 5/F♯, and 3/G♮; the second replaces the later one, which had been the theme's uppermost pitch thus far, with its definitely highest note, B♮. The new intervallic relation thus established—the perfect fourth between partials 5/F♯ and 6/B♮ of the governing CC-A♮—will become the second generating element of *Promethée* op. 60.
3. The third part—Theme B-5c—takes as its first note the last of Theme B5-b, before expanding the chord centre—hitherto confined to the six partials of MC-A♮—by introducing partial ♭6/B♭ of CC A♮ as the first step of a descendent movement back to D♯, the lowest pitch of the phrase. All different combinations of three successive notes, within the third part of the theme, are different expressions of set class (0,1,4).

The ascending impulses within Theme B-5 outline a symmetrical subdivision of the octave in major thirds—set class (0,4,8)—defined by D♯, G♮, (D♯) and B♮. This symmetric subdivision will become the third generating element of *Promethée* op. 60.

In the original statement of Theme B-5 as a whole, it is significant to note the strong feeling of an F♯ centricity. F♯ is (a) the initial and most recurrent note of the theme, (b) the axis of the self-embracing melodic movement of the theme's first part and (c) establishes with B♮ the perfect fourth that defines the theme's apex. The predominance of F♯ within the original statement of Theme B-5 is further stressed by the utter absence of the first partial of CC-A♮, which, as was already noted, is also concealed in the middle voices of the supporting harmony. As a representative of the centricity of CC-A♮, it is replaced by partial 2/D♯, which is (a) the theme's second most recurrent pitch, (b) the initial note of its second part and (c) the encompassing pitch of its second and third parts put together. In conjunction with each other, F♯ and D♯ are further highlighted within the Theme B-5: an encompassing intervallic relation is established by the theme's first and last notes. Their relation (a) reproduces the theme's first and last intervals and (b) retrogrades the first interval of its second part. The reason for the choice F♯ and D♯ as representative pitch-classes of the theme's two centricities can be found in the pitch content of their core sets, MC-A♮ and MC-F♯: F♯ and D♯ are their sole invariant pitches.

All these reasons point to the simultaneous participation of the two chord centres highlighted in *Luce* in Theme B-5: it belongs explicitly to CC-A♮—to which all five pitches belong—and it belongs covertly to CC-F♯. The theme's only non-harmonic pitch, if the context of CC-F♯ is considered, is B♮, and it is indeed perceived as a tension.

In a surprisingly hitherto neglected statement, Scriabin himself is reported to have said he "[mixed] the tonalities of A and F♯, at the beginning of Promethée, which is why the colours of pink and blue [are] involved " (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 54). Both affiliations of Theme B-5 will be alternatively used in deducting later themes.

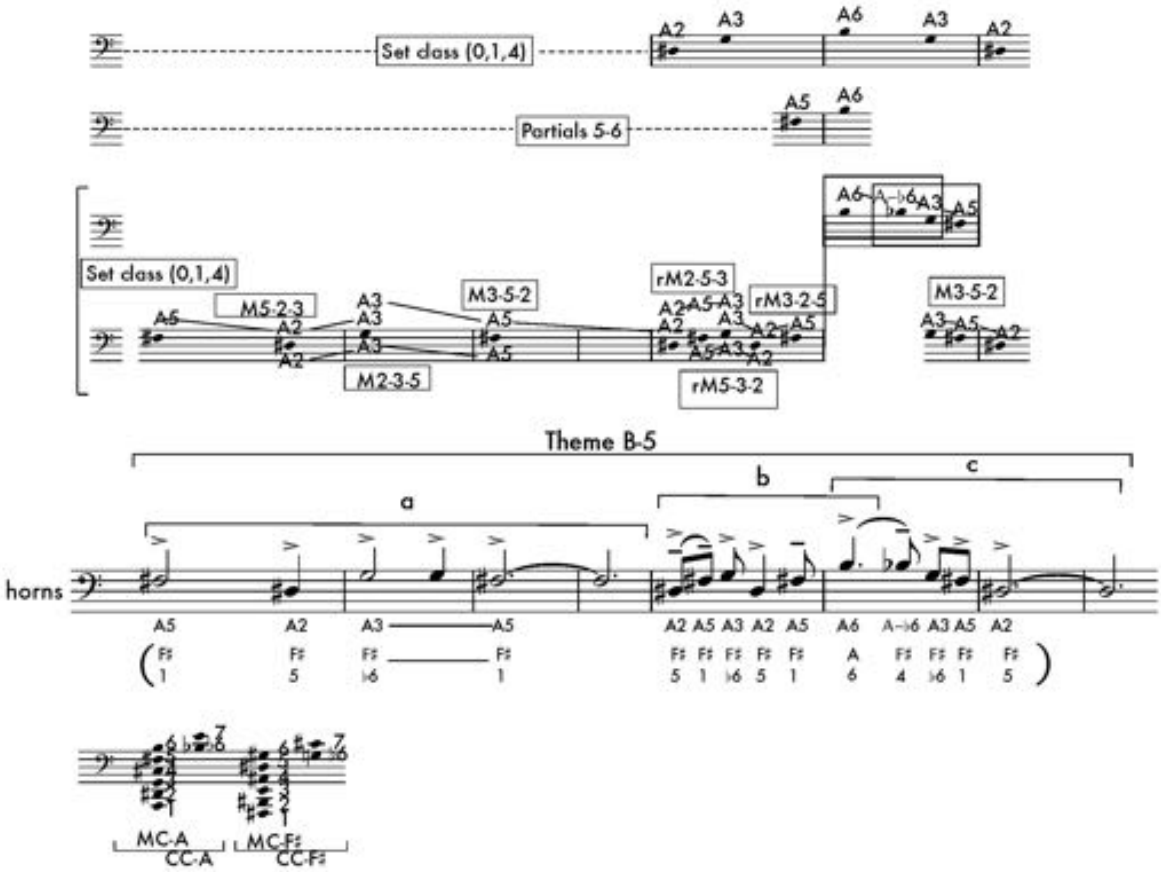
Two other features of Theme B-5 should be pointed out.

The first is the strict correspondence between pitches and pitch-classes throughout the theme. The second, its rich symmetric content, is detailed below:

1. The first note of the theme's second part is the axis of a pitch-symmetry that binds its first and second parts together, featuring all possible rotations of partials 2, 5 and 3—Motif 5-2-3, Motif 2-3-5 and Motif 3-5-2—and their respective retrogradations.
2. The last three notes of Theme B-5c mirror the initial three notes of Theme B-5b.
3. Within theme B-5c, each one of the three Set class (0,1,4) statements shares its last two notes with the next, turning B♭-G♮ and G♮-F♯ into the axis of two

symmetric relations, each one merging two set class (0,1,4), thus turned into a wider set class (0,1,4,5).

Example 68. Theme B-5



1.1.2.2 Bars 13–20

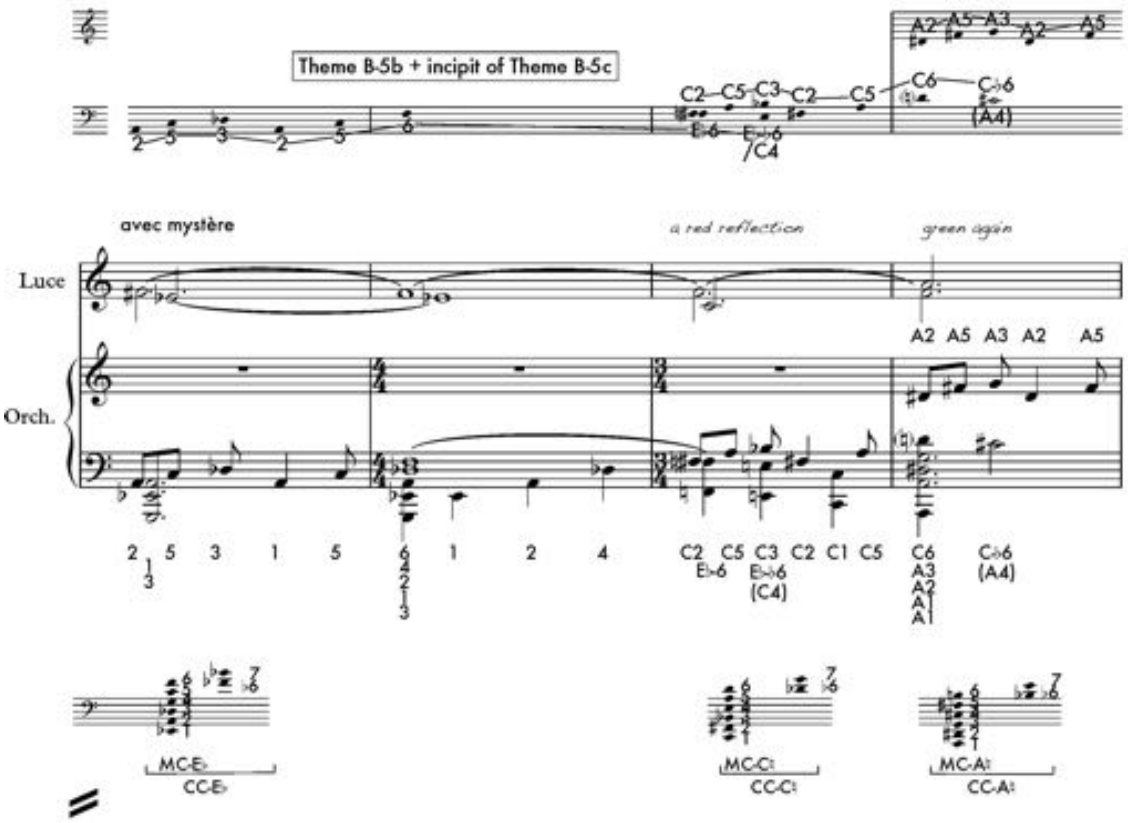
...The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the germ that dwelleth in darkness: the darkness that breaths over the slumbering waters of life.

Blavatsky, Book of Dzyan, 1888

The chord centre smoothly evolves from CC-A♮ to CC–E♭, in bar 13. The underlying harmony adjusts to the new chord centre by merely discarding its upper pitches, while double basses, cellos and timpani maintain their sustained notes. The three lower pitches of the previous

harmony, G♮, E♭, A♮, are thus sustained, before bar 14 restores the fourth, C♯/D♭. G♮, E♭, A♮ and C♯/D♭ are precisely the invariant pitches common to MC–E♭ and MC-A♮. A♮ and D♯ interchange their previous melodic and harmonic functions: D♯/E♭ becomes partial 1 of the new governing chord centre, while A♮ is articulated as the initial note of the first independent statement of Theme B-5b in the piece.

Example 69. Bars 13–16

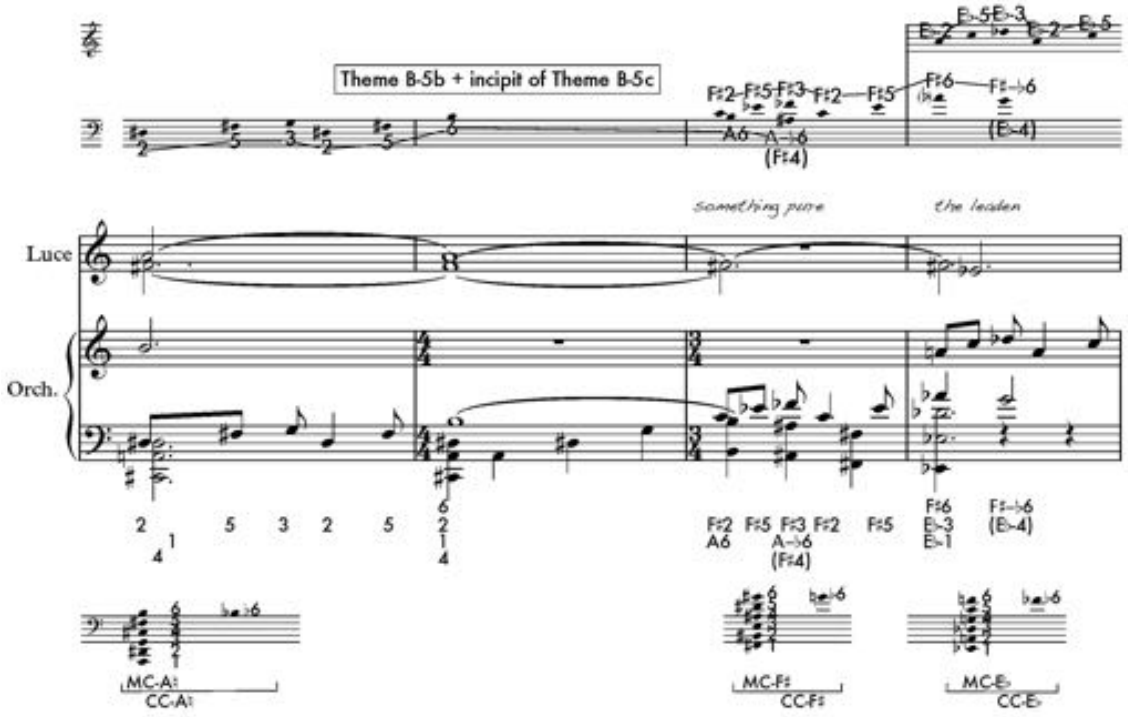


As a whole, bars 13–20 form an eight-bar phrase that, with CC-A♮ as its axis, completes in two steps a T3 transposition cycle from and back to CC-E♭. The sole thematic material is Theme B-5b, which is expanded to the first descending note of Theme B-5c in bars 16 and 20 by the fifth horn *con sordina*—and less obviously by cellos and double basses in bars 15 and 19.

Theme B-5b is articulated six times, each of them starting one half step higher than the simultaneously sounding last note of the previous. The overall rising movement thus produced is enhanced, at the same time, by a metrical accelerando that results from the growing frequency of the theme's occurrences. The only exception to the described pattern, between bars 16–17, defines a four-bar set within the eight-bar subsection: after the initial CC–A♮ is regained, in bar 16, bar 17

extends it further, by merely transposing the theme to the lower octave with a softened dynamic, as if the overall ascension had intermittently lost its momentum before being resumed in bar 19.

Example 70. Bars 17–20



2.1.2.2.1 Unveiling the concealed centricity of Theme B-5

The double centricity implicit in the original statement of Theme B-5 is systematically unfolded in the third subsection of the introduction.

As we have seen, in the original statement of Theme B-5, the second note of its second part, F♯— partial 5 of the theme's explicit governing chord centre—was also the representative pitch of the concealed centricity of CC-F♯. In bar 13 the congener position is hold by C♮, analogously evoking the centricity of the CC-C♮, whose governance will become explicit in the following transposition of the chord centre, in the CC-C♮-governed bar 15. All new transpositions of Theme B5-b within the third subsection of the introduction will be similarly related to the transposition of the chord centre that will follow.

In the transition from bar 15 to bar 16, the unveiling process goes one step further. The last note of the third independent statement of Theme B-5b—partial 6/D♮ of CC-C♮—is articulated on the downbeat of bar 16 as retardation, considering the simultaneous change from CC-C♮ to CC-A♮, to which D♮ does not belong. The response of the fifth horn *con sordina* enhances that feeling of

retardation, by resolving D♮ to C♯. Functionally, C♯ is partial 4 of the bar's governing CC-A♮ and, concomitantly, partial ♭6 of the previous CC-C♮, corresponding, at that transposition level, to the second note of Theme B-5c.[56] The double functional relation of the horn's C♯, in bar 16, with the governing and the previously governing chord centre unfolds the double functional relation of the congener B♭, within the theme's original statement, as both partial ♭6 of the explicit governing CC-A♮, and partial 4 of the concealed CC-F♯ centricity.

2.1.2.3 Bars 21–26: Theme B-21 and Theme of Will

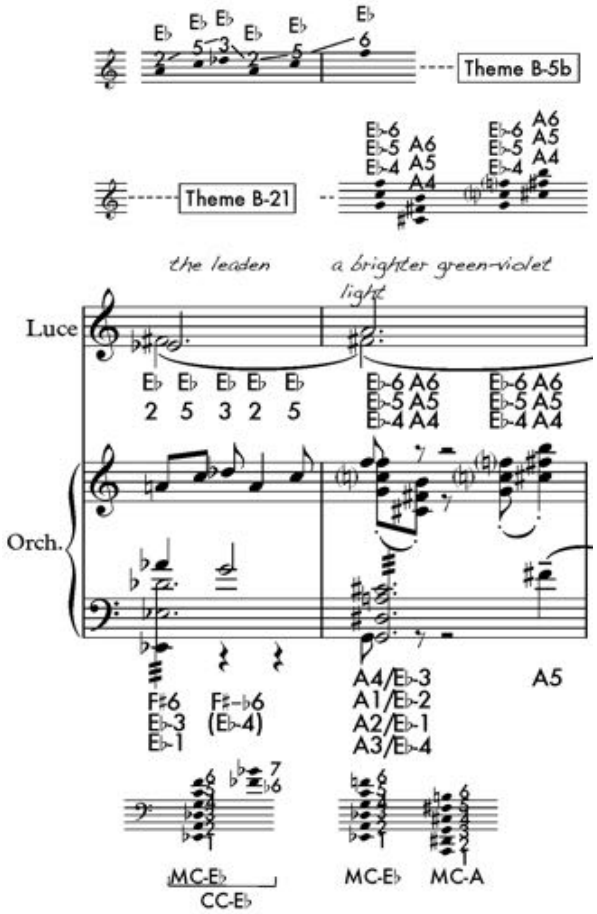
> *...Darkness radiates light, and light drops one solitary ray into the mother-deep. The ray shoots through the virgin egg [;] the ray causes the eternal egg to thrill, and drop the non-eternal germ, which condenses into the world-egg.*
>
> —Blavatsky, Book of Dzyan, 1888,

The mysterious atmosphere of the previous bars is interrupted by the combined irruption of two new themes, in bars 21 and 22.

In "a brighter green-violet light", according to Scriabin's annotation (Lobanova, 2015, p. 317), the *plus animé* bar 21 introduces Theme B-21, played by the trumpets: one descendent and one ascending statements of two sequential quartal triads formed by partials 4, 5 and 6 of two T6-related chord centres—CC-E♭ and CC-A♮, in this first occurrence of the theme. In spite of its contrasting character, the cornerstone of Theme B-21, the quartal triad, is derived from Theme B-5b: it takes the distinctive perfect fourth between its fifth and sixth notes—partials 5 and 6 of CC-A♮—and, with partial 5 as the axis, symmetrically replicates it by adding partial 4 to the set. This procedure is particularly clear in the transition from bar 20 to bar 21, as Example 71 shows: the first quartel triad of Theme B-21 keeps the chord centre of the previous bar unchanged, vertically restating C♮ and F♮—the exact pitches that had just been played by the flute and the oboe as the two last notes of Theme B-5b.

[56] Although less noticeably, due to orchestration, the same already happens in bars 13–15, considering the bassoon's Theme B-5b and the descent of cellos and double basses of bar 15.

Example 71. Bars 20–21

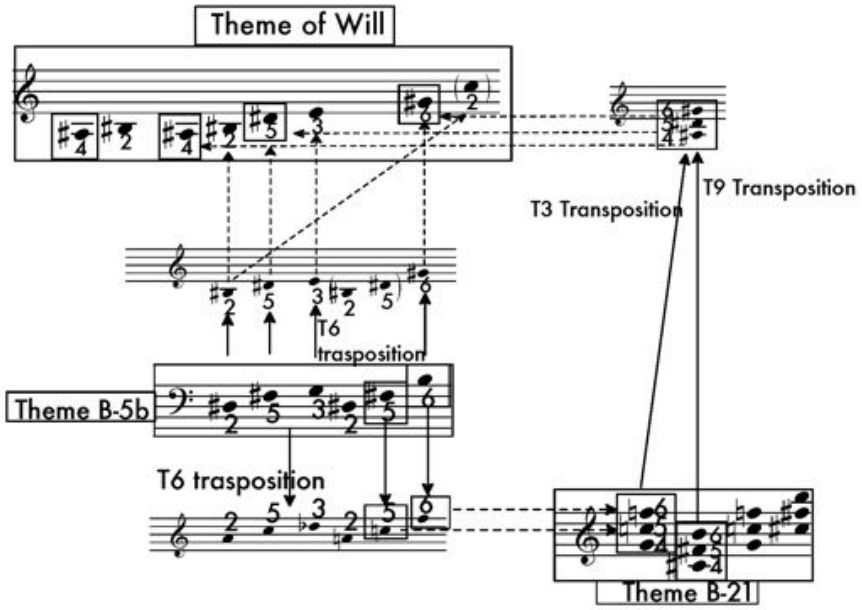


The ominous character of Theme B-21 does not affect the harmonic content of bar 21. In a very similar procedure to the one used in the transition between bars 12 and 13, the sustaining harmony of bar 21 features exclusively the pitch-classes common to CC-E♭ and CC-A♮, both reduced to their respective Mystic Chords, so that no audible overlap between the two governing chord centres actually occurs. It happens briefly between light and sound, though, since the fast voice in *Luce* does not follow the momentarily governance of CC-E♭ in the first and fourth eighth notes, maintaining a sustained A♮ instead.

The two T6-related triads that formed Theme B-21, in bar 21, converge in the CC-F♯-governed bar 22 in an equidistantly transposed restatement that features A♯, D♯ and G♯. They are horizontally diployed in order to become the frame of a new theme. Scriabin himself named it Theme of Will (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 81), doubtlessly based on the theosophical postulate according to which "separation from the *Primal Source* [between Spirit and Matter] having once occurred, Re-union can only be achieved by *Will—Effort*—which is [a] distinctly *Satanic* [concept]*"* (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. II, p, 248). The Theme of Will is introduced by the solo trumpet and results from intersecting the

aforementioned horizontal derivation of Theme B-21 with the sequence of partials of Theme B-5b, expunged of the repeated ones. The sequence of partials is not the only common feature between Theme of Will and Theme B-5b, however: Theme of Will includes the three generator elements that were part of Theme B-5b, replicating its characteristic double upward impulse as well.

Example 72. Theme B-5b, Theme B-21 and Theme of Will: relations



The last note of Theme of Will—B♯/C♮, in spite of being played on the downbeat of the CC-A♮-governed bar 23, is functionally partial 2 of the governing chord centre of the previous bar. The same pitch is simultaneously played by the fanfare of trumpets, but with a different function: as part of Theme B-21, it is partial 5 of the briefly governing CC-E♭ instead. In its restatements throughout the piece, Theme of Will shall be featured both with and without its last constituent.

Example 72 illustrates the relations between Theme of Will, Theme B-5b and Theme B-21.

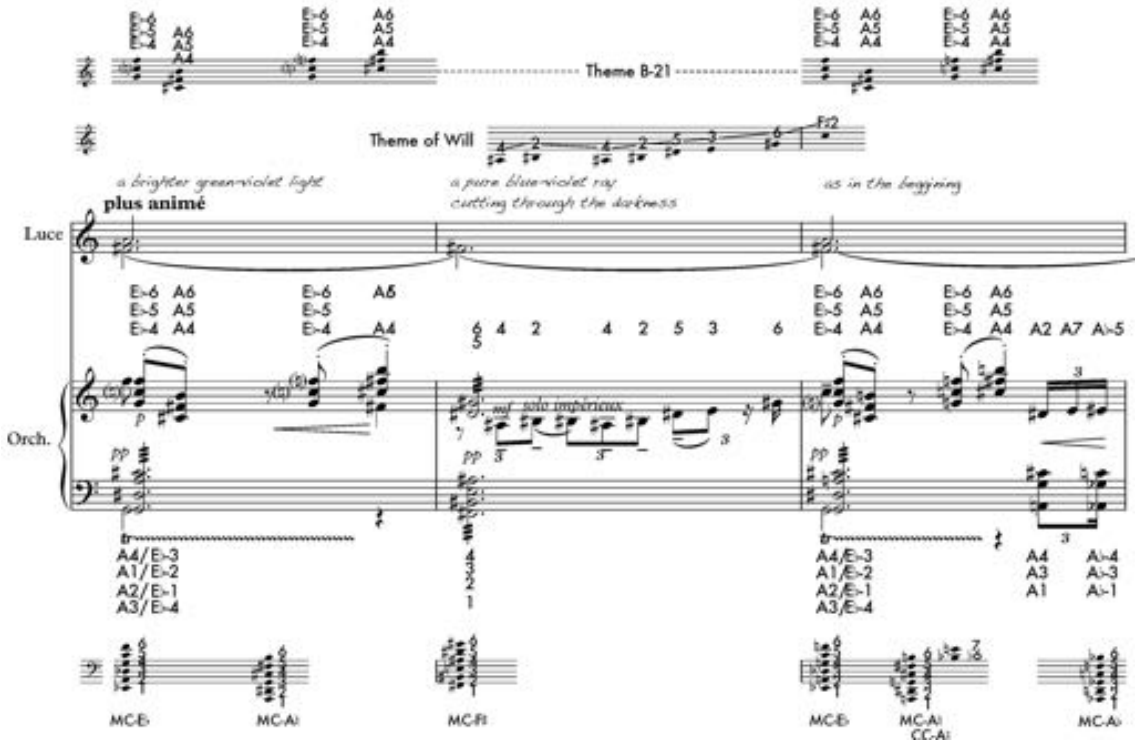
The disruptive character of Theme of Will corresponds to a dramatic change in the harmonic context of bar 22 as well.

The bar's governing CC-F♯, matches the one pointed in the slow *Luce* part as the main chord centre of the first Colour Stage.[57] However, as opposed to the systematic procedure thus far, it is the distinctive content of CC-F♯, rather than its invariance, which is enhanced in this passage. To maximize its contrast with the harmonic content of the CC-A♮-governed bars 21 and 23,

[57] The fast Luce is interrupted by a pause, since it would otherwise be coincident with the slow Luce F♯—the same had happened before, in bar 19. This will be the standard procedure, when one bar's chord centre coincides with the stage's chord centre signaled in slow *Luce*.

1. CC-A♮ and CC-F♯ are limited to the six partials of the Mystic Chord, thus reducing invariance.
2. All active instruments play different pitch-classes in both transitions: that from bar 21 to 22 and from 22 to 23.
3. The two invariant pitch-classes in MC-F♯ and MC-A♮, F♯ and D♯, are deployed as different pitches in bar 22 with respect to the adjacent bars 21 and 23.

Example 73. Bars 21–23



The singularity of bar 22 within the introduction is further stressed by the inner distribution of the six partials of MC-F♯, which are featured with strict correspondence between the upper partial and the higher pitch, for the first time insofar. Scriabin's handwritten annotation for *Luce*, particularly close to the passage of the *Book of Dzyan* quoted in the above epigraph, confirms that singularity, by describing "a pure blue-violet ray cutting through the darkness" (Lobanova, 2015, P. 317).

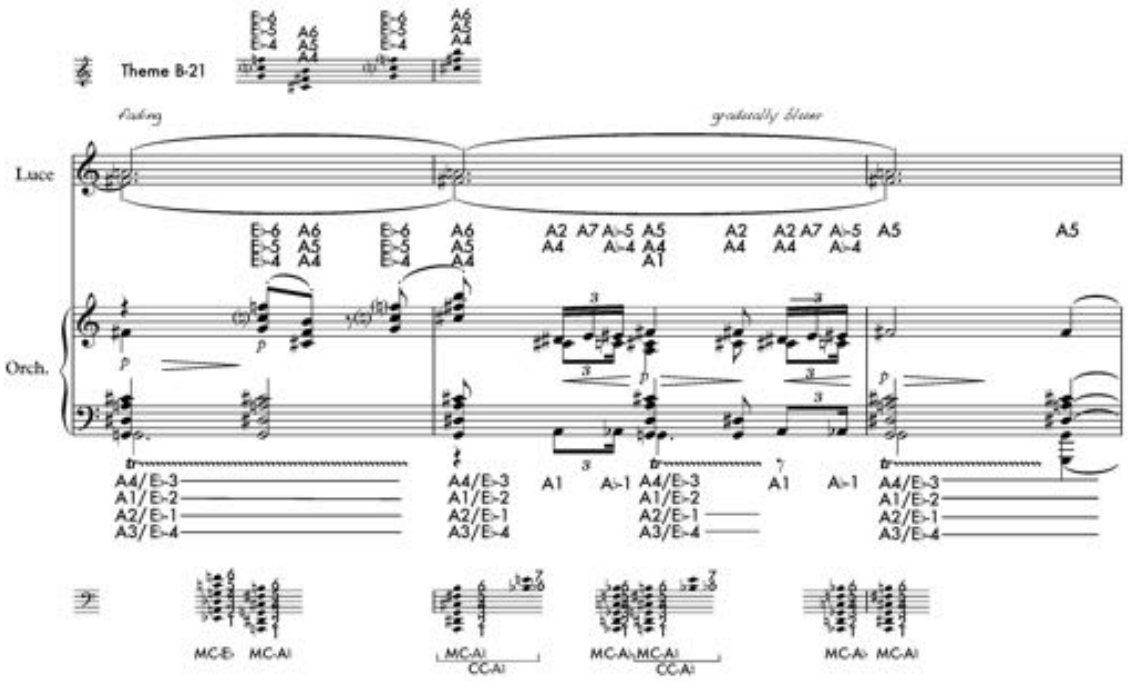
The formal significance of bar 22 is the ultimate reason for all described procedures: its disruptive nature foreshadows the piano's entrance at the upbeat of bar 31, with the same thematic content and harmonic context.

2.1.2.3.1 Bars 23–26: a short glimpse on the second Colour Stage

The remaining four bars of the introduction reduce the momentum of bar 22 by means of two intercalated statements of Theme B-21 as well as a chromatic figure that binds together D♯ and F♯– the two main pitches of the piece's initial theme. The main governing chord centre is again CC-A♮: its governance is only interrupted (a) by the short getaways within Theme B-21 and (b) by the last sixteenth-note triplet chord in each occurrence of the chromatic figure, which introduces the brief governance of MC-A♭.

As the introduction's sole exception to the governance of the T3 transposition cycle of CC- F♯, the presence of MC-A♭—as fleeting as it might be—should not be neglected, particularly in view of its deliberate character. In fact, any possible overlap with the core element of the main governing chord centre, MC-A♮, is carefully avoided—the kettledrum's sustained G♮, alien to MC-A♭/CC-A♭, is systematically interrupted with that purpose. On the other hand, those MC-A♭-governed sixteenth-notes make up a pitch-collection that could belong to no other Mystic Chord. The presence of MC-A♭ in the introduction of *Promethée* op. 60 must be therefore of structural significance: it is, in fact, a first glimpse of the piece's second Colour Stage, foreshadowing the change to A♭ in the slow *Luce* line, which will take place in bar 87.

Example 74. Bars 24–26



2.2 Exposition, bars 27—192

2.2.1 First part, bars 27—86: outline

The first part of the exposition closes the first Colour Stage, and is subdivided into three sections of 20 bars each.

The first section, bars 27–46, which is still under the governance of chord centres that belong to the T3 cycle of F♯, introduces a new theme—the Theme of Reason. The section is subdivided into two transpositionally related eight-bar sets and a four-bar set, which, by means of a metric accelerando, boosts the musical discourse towards the second section of the exposition's first part.

The second section, bars 47 and 66, is proportionally similar to the first. It is subdivided into two eight-bar sets—the second of which is a varied restatement of the first—preceding a four-bar set that appeases the musical discourse to ensure contrast with the upcoming third section. For the first time so far, the T3 transposition cycle of CC-F♯ is abandoned in bars 49–54 and 57–66. The influence of CC-F♯ is extended to the whole section, though, by means of a long lasting F♯ pedal note. In bars 53–54 a significant variant of Theme of Will—Circular Theme of Will—is introduced.

The third section, bars 67–86, shifts the chord centre back to the T3 cycle of CC-F♯ and introduces a new theme—Theme of Motion. It is subdivided into one eight-bar set and two six-bar sets. Its last bar closes both the exposition's first part and the first Colour Stage. Its governing chord centre, CC-D♮, belongs already to the main T3 transposition cycle of the second stage, which is thus musically anticipated.

2.2.2 First part, bars 27—86: detailed analysis

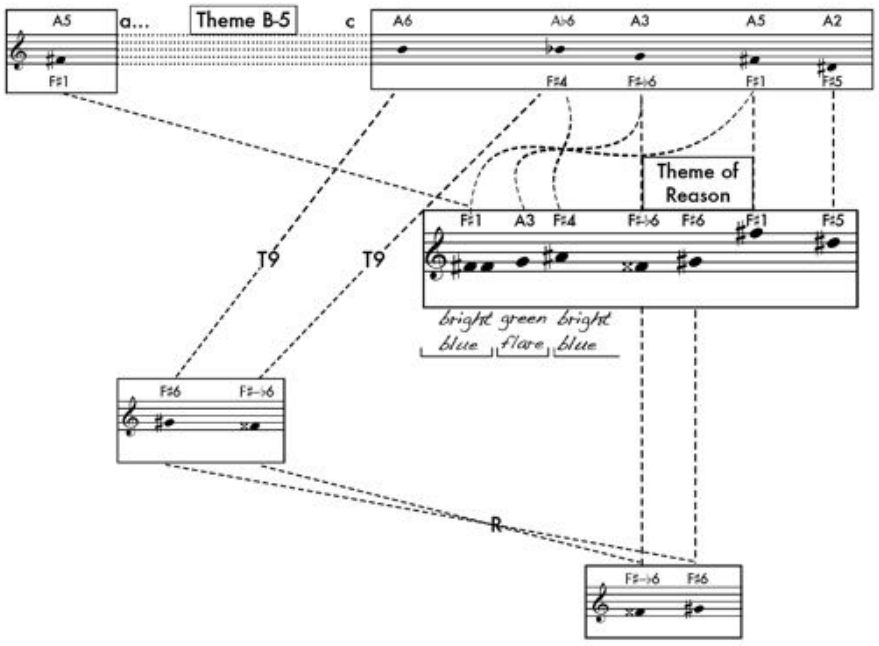
2.2.2.1 Bars 27–46: Theme of Reason

On the upbeat of bar 27, the flute introduces a new theme. Sabaneev (2005) called it "Theme of Reason"—name that, considering the context in which he mentioned it, most likely stemmed from Scriabin himself:

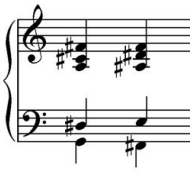
> [Scriabin] had some favourite passages (...) [such as] the immediate beginning, the 'original chaos' that outlines the chaotic calls, from which the 'Theme of Reason' is crystalized, then the quick episode of the first theme and the mysterious harmonies of the ending section, which he called himself 'black magic'"(p.69).[58]

The Theme of Reason, which shares the same starting pitch-class with Theme B-5, is entirely derived from its third part, Theme B-5c, either from reworking its pitch-class content or its partial content as it follows: B♭/A♯, G♮ and F♯ are retrograded to become the first three pitch-classes of Theme of Reason; G♮, F♯ and D♯ are rearticulated as its fourth, sixth and seventh notes. The fifth note of Theme of Reason, the intercaleted G♯, forms, along with the previous G♮, a sequence of partials, ♭6–6, that inverts the first two partials of Theme B-5c, now within the context of CC-F♯.

Example 75. Theme B-5 and Theme of Reason



[58] Surely mislead by Sabaneev's disorderly description, Gawboy (2010)—who prefers a "Blavatskian translation", "ideation", to the literal meaning of the Russian word *разума,* reason, or mind (p. 243)—assumes that the first theme and the Theme of Reason are one and the same theme. Sabaneev's later passage invalidates that assumption, though: after once more naming the Theme of Reason, he dispels any possible doubt concerning its identity by writing down its incipit (2005, p. 289), which unquestionably corresponds to the theme introduced in bar 27:



The theme's last three pitches—G♯, F♯ and D♯—are partials 6, 1 and 5, of the governing chord centre. This set of partials will be reordered in bar 65 as part of a new theme, before becoming an independent motif—Motif 1-6-5—in bars 143–144, of great significance at the final steps of third Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60.

The Theme of Reason also derives from Theme B-5 the dual relation with CC-F♯ and CC-A♮. However, as opposed to the work's first theme, that dual relation is made explicit in the Theme of Reason's harmonization, which alternates the two chord centres without any overlap. The theme's F♯ is firstly harmonized as partial 5 of MC-A♮, in the upbeat of bar 27, and stabilizes as partial 1 of MC-F♯, on the downbeat of bar 27. The same happens with G♮, harmonized as partial 3 of MC-A♮, in the third beat of bar 27, and as partial ♭6 of CC-F♯, in its following articulation as the first triplet note of next bar's third beat. All the remaining pitch-classes of Theme of Reason are harmonized within CC-F♯. Just as in Theme B-5, F♯ and D♯ are again the theme's first and last notes, thereby further enhancing the relation between the two themes.[59] All the exchanges between CC-A♮ and CC-F♯ are accurately underscored in Luce: it holds the stage's F♯ in the slow voice, and articulates an A♮ in the otherwise paused fast voice only when the theme's harmony switches to CC-A♮.

Theme of Reason inverts the relative roles of the work's two initial centricities: the previously concealed CC-F♯ is now the theme's main governing chord centre, while the presence of CC-A♮ is now limited to few brief flashes that merely recall its previous predominance. Scriabin's handwriting annotations for *Luce* seem to confirm this inversion: the "mysterious half-light, greenish-violet, flickering" of the first bars is replaced, in bar 27, by "bright blue" with only one last "green flare"[60] in the CC-A♮-governed bar's third beat (Lobanova, 2015, p.317).

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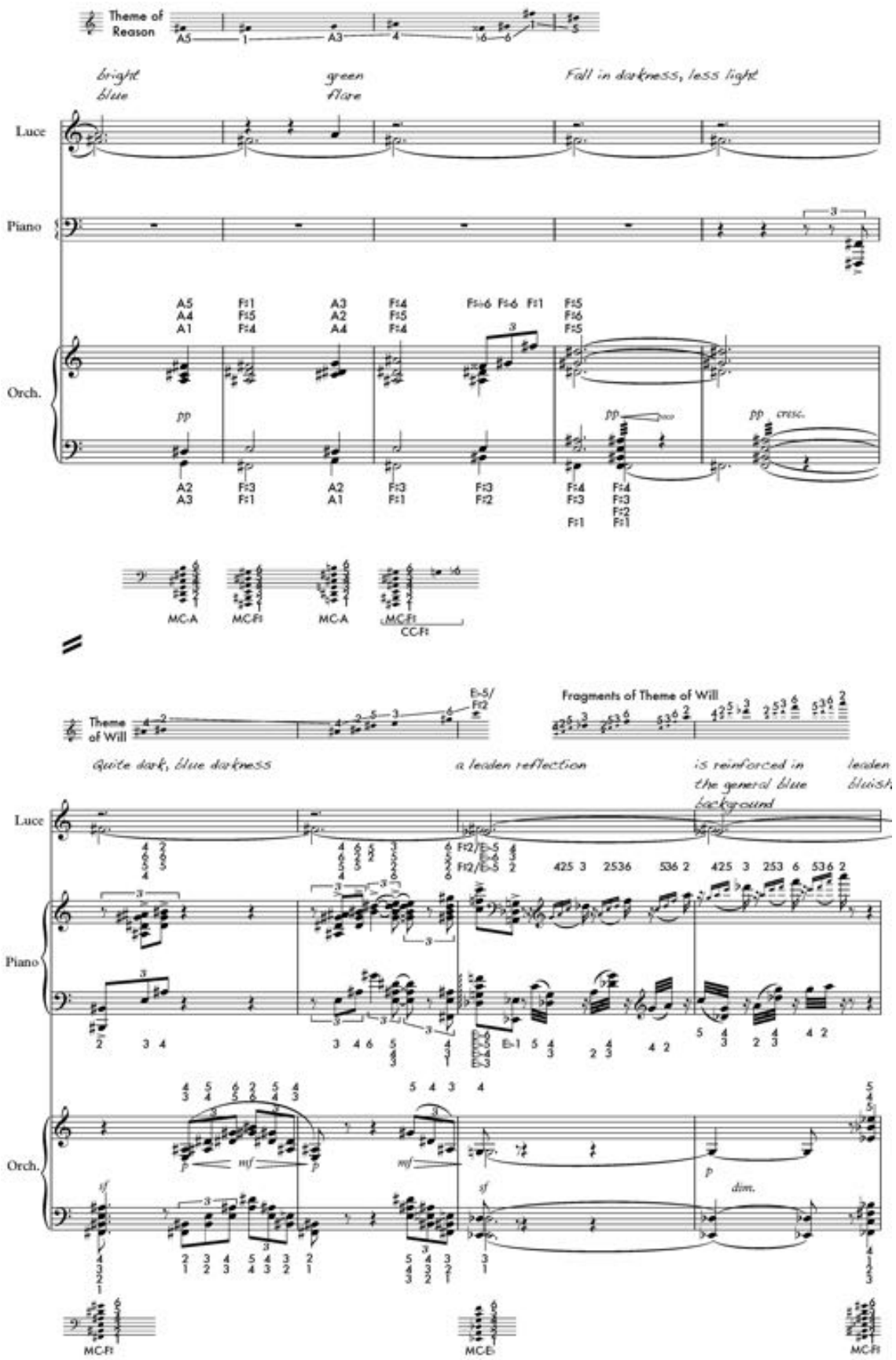
[59] For Baker (1986) "this motive forms a strikingly different set, 5–11, which is not closely related to many other motives and thus appears to be the 'contrasting theme'" (p. 237), while for Gawboy (2010) it is "a taming of the Theme of Will through a reduction of its characteristic intervals" (p. 249).

[60] Violet and bright blue are indicative of F♯, while green corresponds to A♮.

Example 76. Bars 26(3)–30



The orchestra's two brief crescendos, in bars 29 and 30, marked *peu a peu animé,* create a general expectation that culminates with the irruption of the solo piano, on the upbeat of bar 31. In its first entrance, the piano plays a harmonized version of Theme of Will, marked *Impérieux,* just like the theme's original statement of bar 22. Governed by CC-F♯, this harmonized version of Theme of Will repeats the transposition level of its original statement in bar 22, and is once more reduced to the core set that forms the Mystic Chord. MC-F♯ is emphatically asserted in the piano part: the left hand sequentially plays partials 1/F♯, 2/B♯, 3/E♮ and 4/A♯—the first two of them in accented octaves—and partials 1/F♯ and 2/B♯ are further highlighted as the lowest and highest notes of this two-bar statement of Theme of Will.[61]

In bars 33–34, the piano takes Theme of Will as an archetypal sequence of partials, rotating three different four-partial fragments twice in an arpeggiato cadenza-like gesture. Considering these three fragments together, the piano features the theme's complete sequence of partials, eliding only the repetition of the first two. Similar procedures will be used throughout the work—their extension of bars 53–54 is the most significant example, as we shall see.

Bars 35–42 transpose the previous eight bars at T9, with the sole exception of *Luce,* which does not follow the fluctuation between the two governing chord centres of Theme of Reason, as previously. CC-F♯, whose role within this T9 transposition of Theme of Reason is similar to that of CC-A♮ in the original statement, matches the stage's representative pitch-class, which shines uninterruptedly in the slow *Luce* line during the entire first Colour Stage. Interrupting E♭ in the fast line of *Luce* would therefore contradict its function as main governing chord centre of the theme's second statement.

The last four bars of the section, bars 43–46, thrust the musical discourse towards the *joyeux* episode of bar 47 by means of a metric accelerando. The first half of the previous eight-bar set is elided, in bars 43–44, which feature a new T9 transposition of Theme of Will instead. Finally, in the subsequent two bars, Theme of Will is successively played by the solo trumpet, within CC-F♯, and by the horns, within CC-C♮, thus summarizing its previous transpositional route initiated in bar 31.

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[61] The last note of this first statement of the Theme of Will, on the first beat of bar 33, is coincident with the transposition of the chord centre to CC-E♭, thereby keeping the same transposition level of the first quartel triad within the Theme B-21 of bar 23.

2.2.2.2 Bars 47–66

Bars 47–66 extend and rework the thematic material of the *contemplatif/peu a peu animé* section. Its metric structure is similar to that of the previous 20 bars, with two subsections of eight bars each and one subsection of four bars. The second subsection is a varied restatement of the first.

The hemiolic bars 47–50—marked *plus animé, joyeux*—are a rhythmical variation of the last four notes of Theme of Reason. The new figure is firstly articulated within their original context of CC-F♯, in bars 47–48, and then transposed to CC-D♮ in bars 49–50. In bar 50(3), the transposition of the chord centre to CC-E♮ leaves the previous figure unfinished: instead of the piano's expected B♮, the flute plays C♯ as the upbeat of a new complete statement of Theme of Reason, which the piano supports in paralell by playing an arpeggiated version. The interruption of the Theme of Reason's four-pitch fragment, before its last note, is balanced by the numeric relation of its three constituents with the flute's C♯, which is functionally partial 5 of CC-E♮, just as the expected B♮ would have been in relation to the previous governing CC-D♮.

The transposition of the chord centre to CC-D♮ in bar 49, and to CC-E♮ in bar 50(3), constitutes the first hitherto interruption of the main T3 transposition cycle of the stage—the purpose of such an interruption will be discussed later.

The ties with the main chord centre of the current Colour Stage are nevertheless not broken: an F♯ pedal note is uninterruptedly maintained at the bottom of the harmony until the return of the T3 cycle of CC-F♯ at the beginning of next section, in bar 67. Its influence will in fact last until the beginning of the second Colour Stage: its massive predominance in the bass line will only be shortly interrupted (a) in the transitional bars 65–66 and their restatement of bars 81–82, and (b) by brief interspersed articulations of its polar pitch-class, B♯. The introduction of the F♯ pedal note takes place by means of a gradual procedure in four-steps:

1. F♯ is articulated as partial 1 of the governing chord centre of bars 47–48, affixing its most natural position at the bottom of the harmony. The piano's left hand, in fact, articulates partials 1–5 of MC-F♯, in strict respect of a lower digit-lower height correspondence within the basic superposed-fourths structure of the Mystic Chord.
2. Transposing bars 47–48 at T8, bars 49–50 nevertheless introduce two significant differences: the contrary motion between the piano's left and right hands and the

displacement of the material of the piano's left hand material to the previous eighth note. These changes enable the piano to meet up with the cellos sustained note by articulating F♯ as its lowest pitch, without any further modifying its previous pitch-class material—thanks to the simultaneous articulation of partial 5 by both hands in the previous two bars, its suppression in the left hand of bars 49-50 is irrelevant as far as pitch-class material is concerned. By surpassing partial 1 of CC-D♮ as the lowest pitch of bars 49–50, both in the orchestra and in the piano, F♯, which belongs to CC-D♮ as partial 4, is suggested as a pedal note of CC-F♯ as well.

3. The upbeat of bar 51, introducing the short governance of CC-E♮, starts a complete statement of Theme of Reason, which will have CC-C♯ as its main governing chord centre. Unsurpassed by any other pitch-class at the bottom of the harmony, the F♯ of the previous bar is prolonged by the cellos. Its steadiness, in a context of harmonic change, reinforces the impression of a pedal note. This has its effect even if F♯ still belongs to the governing CC-E♮, of which it is the 6th partial—not by coincidence, that partial had been the only one missing in the congener bar 26(3).
4. Finally, at the downbeat of bar 51, the transposition to CC-C♯, to which the sustained F♯ does not belong, turns it into an explicit pedal note of the stage's main chord centre.

This last step, which extends the influence of CC-F♯ to the whole subsection, cannot but be perceived as a concomitant reminiscence of what in the old tonal system would have been a dominant over tonic. Just as in the piano miniatures previously analysed, Scriabin carefully stages this reminiscence of the old V–I relation, in order to maintain it within the range of the chord centre technic. As noted within the formal explanation of *Promethée* op. 60, this recollection will have a significant function in stressing the tension the work's dissonant section will introduce.

2.2.2.2.1 The premonitory function of CC-D♮, CC-E♮ and CC-C♯,

Except for the fleeting glimpses of CC-A♭ in the introduction, the CC-D♮-governed bar 49 constitutes the first interruption, until now, of the T3 transposition cycle of CC-F♯. Apart from the varied restatement of bar 49 in the congener bar of the next subsection, the governance of CC-D♮ will only be again resumed in bar 86. Bar 86 is featured as the last bar of the first Colour Stage, but

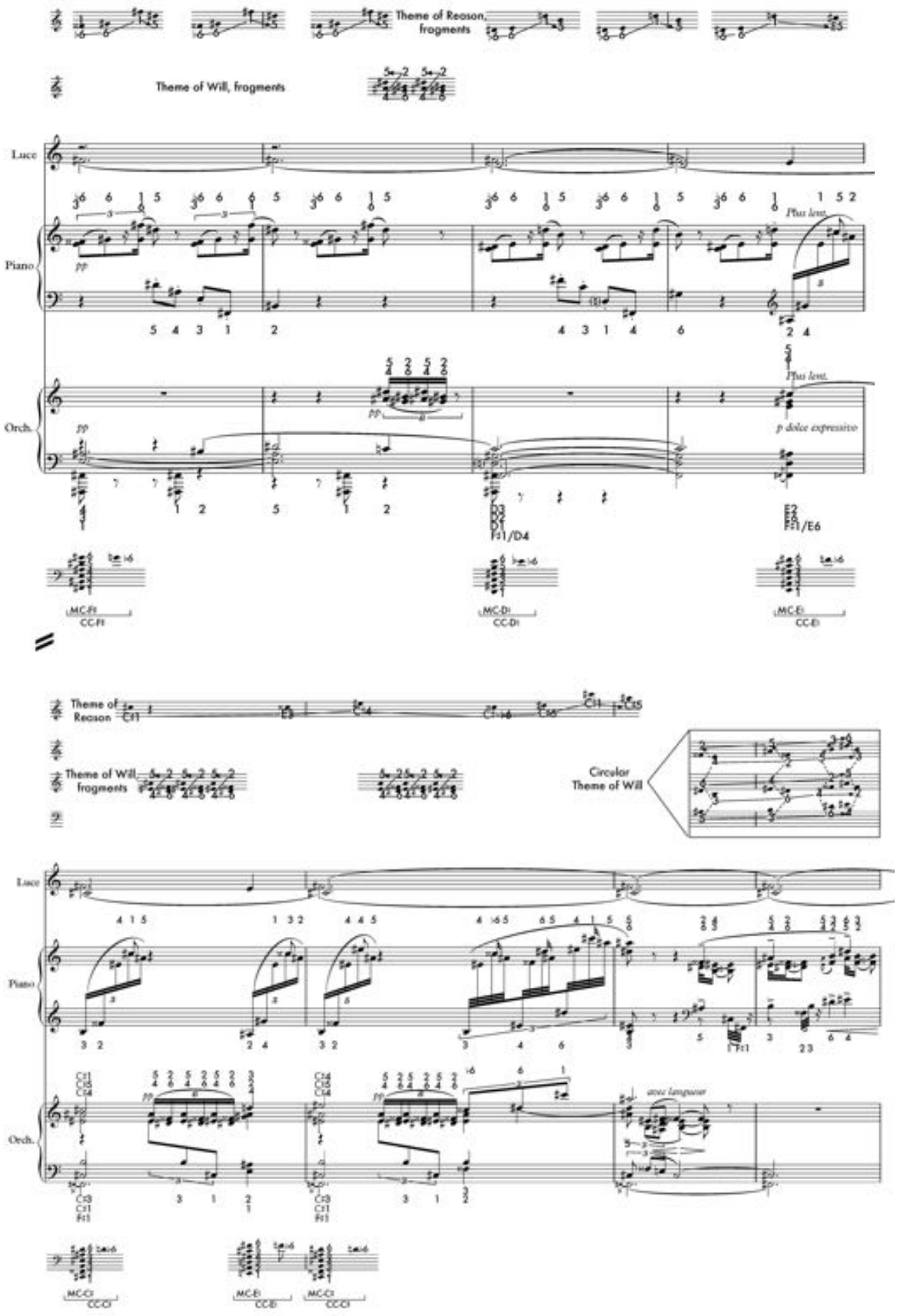
harmonically signals the beginning of the second, because, by featuring CC-D♮ precisely, it introduces an eight bar-long governance of the T3 transposition cycle of CC-A♭—the representative T3 transposition cycle of the second Colour Stage. The obvious similarity of voicing in bars 49 and 86— they feature the same four lower pitch-classes in the same order —shows a deliberate will to relate both moments with one another, thereby also revealing the premonitory function of the CC-D♮-governed bars 49–50.

The two governing chord centres of bars 50(3)–54, on other hand, foreshadow the third Colour Stage, by similarly introducing its representative T3 transposition cycle—that of CC-B♭—in a similar manner. Apart from the harmonic connexion, established by the fact that they pertain to the same T3 transposition cycle, these four bars establish a thematic connexion with the beginning of the third Colour Stage by introducing a short motivic element—the *avec langueur* triplets of bar 53—related to the premonitory triplets of the Introduction's bars 23 and 25. The *avec langueur* triplets will be again restated at the beginning of the third Colour Stage: every two bars within its first eight-bar set. Significantly, the only articulation of the *avec langueur* triplets in between takes place in the CC-D♮-governed bar 86, further relating the premonitory bars 49–54 to the beginning of the next two Colour Stages.

Proportionally close as they are to the relative lengths of the second and third Colour Stages they foreshadow, the relative lengths of the T3 transpositional cycles of CC-A♭ and CC-B♭ in bars 49–54 seems also to be deliberate. That proportion is close to a perfect match, if it is considered that (a) the initial four bars of the third Colour Stage are actually transitional bars between the second and the third Colour Stages and (b) the invariance of the three last notes of the piano's right hand in bar 50(2), featuring the pitch-classes that correspond to partials 1 of both CC-D♮ and CC-E♮, suggests a transition between CC-D♮ and CC-E♮.

The CC-F♯-governed bar 48 and the CC-D♮-governed bar 49 are members of the same T4 transposition cycle, thus used to switch between the representative T3 transposition cycles of the first and the second Colour Stages. The systematic use of similar procedures will have a central role within the second Colour Stage. The transposition of the chord centre that follows, between the second and third beats of bar 50, respectively governed by CC-D♮ and CC-E♮, turn the subdivision of that transitional T4 transposition cycle, into a whole tone transposition cycle.

Example 77. Bars 47–54



2.2.2.2.2 A quasi-serial procedure: the Circular Theme of Will.

> *...Listen, ye Sons of the Earth, to your instructors—the Sons of the Fire. Learn, there is neither first or last, for all is one"*
>
> Blavatsky, Book of Dzyan, 1888

In bars 53(3)–54 the piano articulates a most remarkable version of Theme of Will—the Circular Theme of Will. In a procedure already used in the piano's episode of bars 33–34, a five-partial sequence of partials is extracted from the Theme of Will, featuring the theme's unrepeated partials— partials 4, 2, 5, 3 and 6. The *marcato* line, in the left hand, and the *portato* line, in the right, take two different four-partial rotations from that five-partial sequence—which is treated as a circular archetype. Between both lines, all five partials are articulated in such a way that the missing partial within the *marcato* line corresponds to the first one articulated in the *portato* line.

The passage's full degree of refinement goes far beyond this, though.

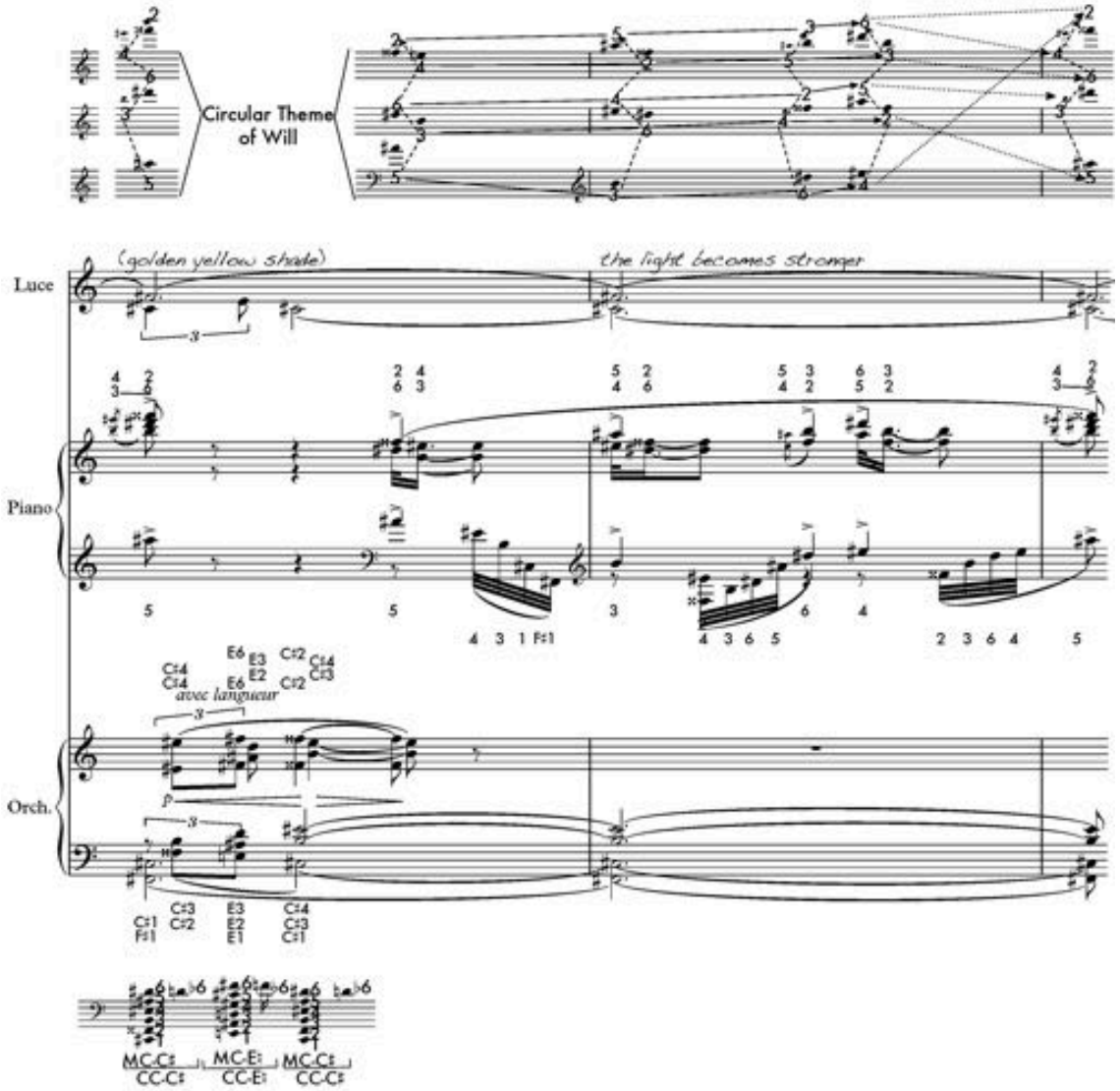
In each one of the four beats, three notes seem to merely densify the sound space between the *marcato* and the *portato* line. Each one of those three notes, however, is actually part of an independent new voice, which, tacking the four beats as a whole, are horizontally defined by their relative position and beat coincidence. Each one of the three voices thus defined articulates a new four-partial rotation taken from the five-partial sequential archetype: considering the five voices together, all its four-partial rotations are thus stated.

Vertically considered, on the other hand, the five voices articulate in each beat a different rotation of the complete five-partial sequence, forming, four vertical melodies themselves.

In its two similar restatements of bars 61–63 and 63–65, a fifth beat is added to the Circular Theme of Will. As an octave transposition of the first beat, this fifth beat transforms the previous four-partial rotations into closed four-partial circular sequences themselves. However, the change in the right-hand accentuation with respect to bars 53–54—instead of the previous *portato,* it now matches the left hand's *marcato*—suggests a simultaneous complete five-partial rotation, relating the first four notes of the accented left hand's voice and the last of the right hand's accented voice. The extension of this procedure, by relating beats 1–4 of each one of the remaining four voices to the last beat of the next lower voice, reveals a horizontal statement of all five rotations within the five-partial sequential archetype, as the dotted arrows of Example 78 illustrate.

In Example 78, the solid and the dashed arrows respectively represent the horizontal four-partial and the vertical five-partial rotations. All sequential subsets of Theme of Will featured within the Circular Theme of Will are shown, including those combining different voices, if one considers all drawn arrows together.

Example 78. Bars 63–64: Circular Theme of Will



The Circular Theme of Will is, for all these reasons, an extreme example of Scriabin's intended correspondence between horizontal and vertical lines—or, in Scriabin's own words, of "melody [as] (...) unfolded harmony and harmony [as] (...) 'condensed' melody" (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 289).

George Perle rightly points that "Scriabin may be considered the first to exploit a set systematically, as a mean of compensating for the loss of the traditional tonal functions" (1991,

p.41). He adds, however, that, “since (...) the set is not ordered, the concept of adjacency does not appear, but only that of content” (1991, p. 84). The later statement is certainly also true, but only as far as the definition of the sound space is concerned. The systematic use of thematic sequences to densify the orchestral texture already indicated the significance of adjacency in Scriabin’s composing technique. However localized the Circular Theme of Will might be, it unquestionably proves that it could occasionally become his central concern. Moreover, it shows that Scriabin was experimenting quasi-serial techniques, with a five-tone set, as early as in 1909–1910.

Two new themes will result from the sophisticated procedures concerning the circular Theme of Will, as we shall see.

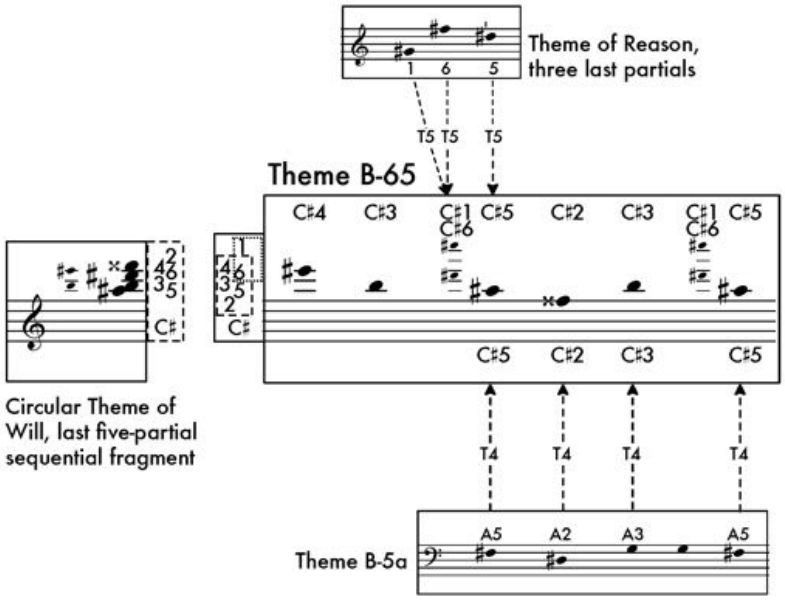
2.2.2.2.3 Theme B-65

Bars 65–66 feature the first of those themes: Theme B-65. Theme B-65 maintains four out of five pitches articulated within the last five-partial vertical rotation of the Circular Theme of Will unchanged. By lowering the fifth—F𝄪/partial 2—by one octave, Theme B-65, if vertically considered, features the only five-partial rotation that had not been vertically articulated within the Circular Theme of Will. Theme B-65, extends this five-partial sequence to all six partials of MC-C♯—with the articulation of partial 1/C♯, as the theme’s upper grace note. This fact will have posterior consequences in the partials’ content of some fragments of Theme of Will, as we shall see.

The articulation of partials 6/D♯ and 1/C♯ as grace notes, within Theme B-65, has a second significant purpose: it indicates those two partials could be removed or displaced, without jeopardizing the theme’s melodic individuality—as it will happen in the theme’s expanded statement of bars 151–154.

Besides the described relations with the Circular Theme of Will, Theme B-65 is also closely related to Theme of Reason and Theme B-5. After unfolding the augmented fourth formed by the grace notes of the bar’s downbeat—B♮ and the E♯—Theme B-65, in this first fragmentary statement, transposes at T7 the last three partials of Theme of Reason—the first two, D♯ and C♯, overlapped as grace notes of the third, A♯. The A♯, initiates at the same time a rhythmic variation of Theme B-5a—transposed at T4, if the original statement is considered.

Example 79. Theme B-65: relation with previous themes



2.2.2.3 Bars 67–86: Theme of Motion

Marked *très animé, étincelant,* bars 67–68, feature the work's fastest harmonic rhythm up to this point, assertively tacking the chord centre back to the T3 cycle of CC-F♯: five one-beat long T3 transpositions of the chord centre, which both start and end in CC-A♮, are successively deployed both in the orchestra and in *Luce*, before the chord centre stabilizes, with the return of CC-F♯, at the beginning of bar 69.

Bar 69 introduces the second theme that results of the sophisticated procedures used within the Circular theme of Will. Called the "Theme of Motion" by Leonid Sabaneev (2005, p. 284),[62] its "conceptual focus", according to Scriabin's description, "...is [the] ninth downward jump: the whole theme is meant to present this idea of a downward leap (...) related to the idea of materialization, of the fall of spirit into matter" (idem).

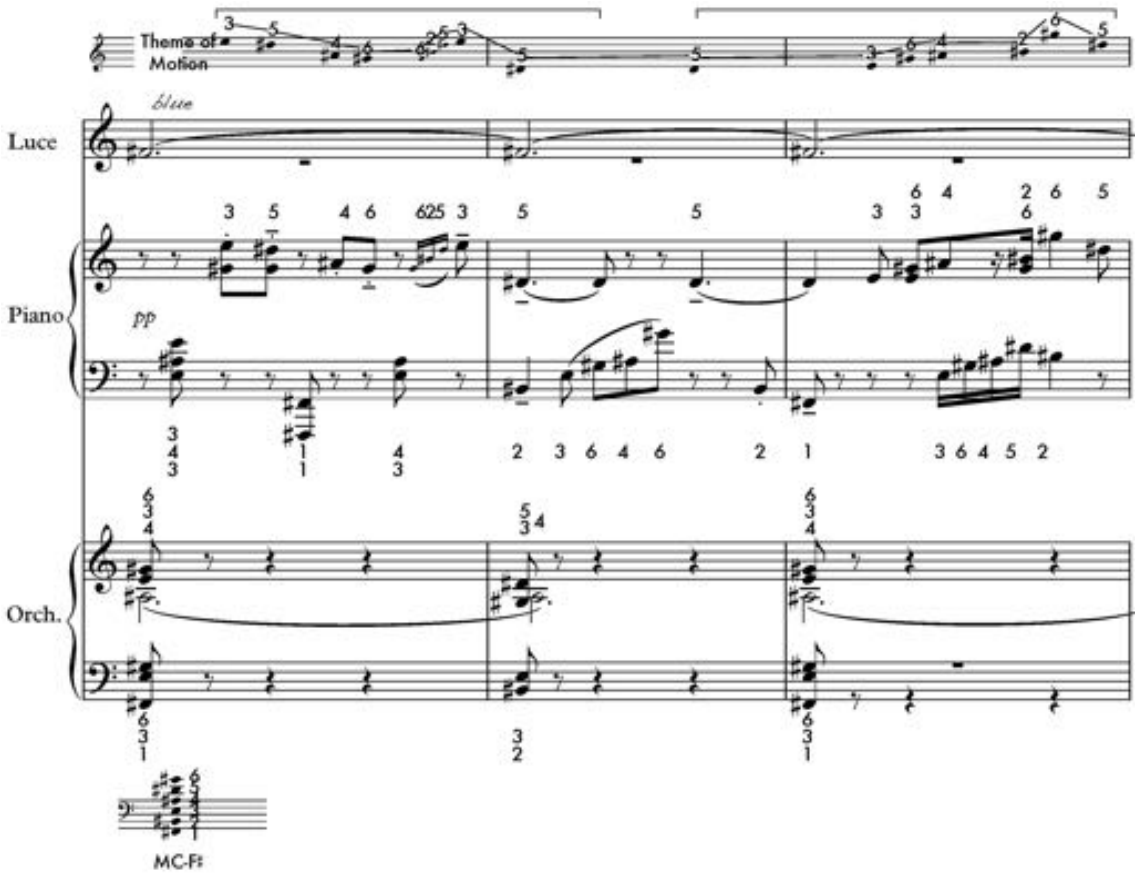
In Scriabin's own words (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005), the "principle of motion", "the principle of activity"—was embodied by the "Spirit of Evil [,] the driving force of the universe [that prevented] any standstill" (p. 151). Sabaneev further explains that,

> For Scriabin that Spirit of Evil was not a negative one, it had actually a sympathetic connotation in itself. It was (...) the 'spirit of creativity', from which everything came, from the world itself to his own [Scriabin's] *Poème de l'Extase.* This fact alone was

[62] Considering the context in which Sabaneev mentions it, that name came most likely from Scriabin himself.

> sufficient cause for Scriabin's sympathy. And it [the Spirit of evil] had the most varied names: 'Satan', 'Lucifer', 'Prometheus' and 'Spirit of Fire'(idem).

Example 80. Bars 69–71

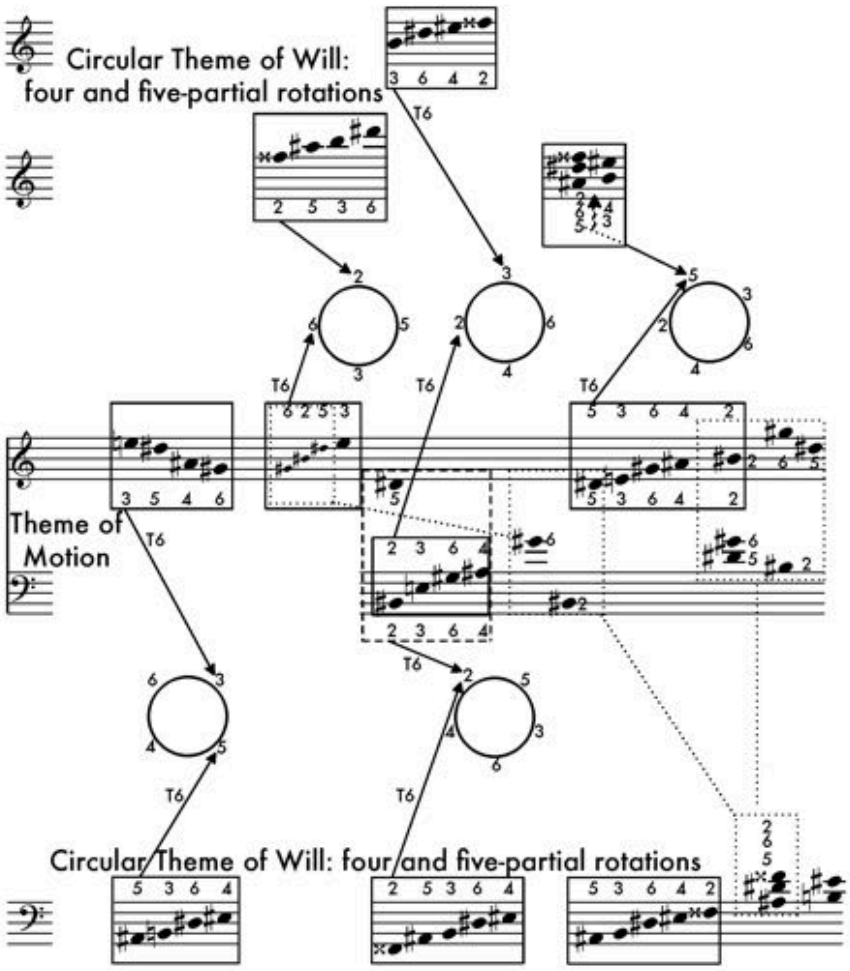


In its four initial notes, Theme of Motion is a retrograded rotation of the four-partial segment defined by the left hand's accented voice of bars 61–63; the theme's fifth to eighth notes—the three grace notes and the following main note—are likewise related to those three bars, as a rotation of their right hand's accented voice. The eighth and ninth notes of Theme of Motion, in bars 69(3) and 70(1), rearticulate the theme's first two partials, partials 3 and 5—the second is transposed to the lower octave, thus materializing the theme's "conceptual focus": the ninth downwards leap that represents "the fall of spirit into matter". The sequential restatement of partials 3 and 5 within the ninth's fall is also a turning point within Theme of Motion: at the downbeat of bar 70, partial 5/D♯ is the last note of the theme's first part; rearticulated on the last beat of bar 70, it becomes the starting note of a sequential fragment of Theme of Will that retrogrades the previous four partials[63]—

[63] Interestingly, the first part of the theme, based on sequences of four partials, closes with a four eighth-note-long D♯, while, on the other hand, the theme's second part, based in five partial sequences, opens a five eighth-note-long D♯.

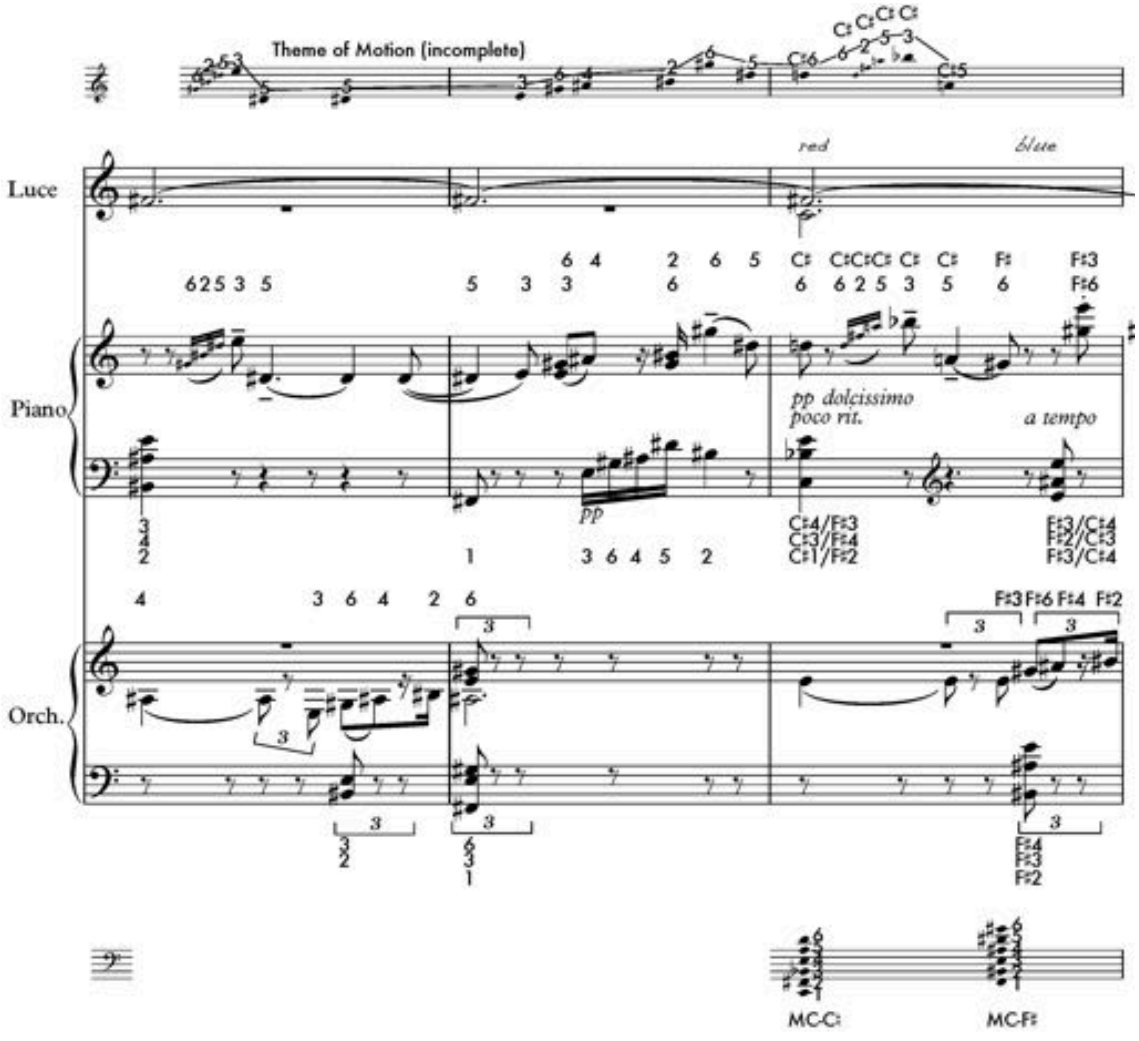
excluding those that had been articulated as grace notes—and finishes with partial 2, the partial needed to complete a full-five partial rotation. This particular five-partial rotation is the same that had been (a) vertically stated, from the lowest note to the highest, in the first beat of the Circular Theme of Will, in bar 53—or at both ends of the theme's statements, in bars 61–63 and 63–65—and (b) horizontally stated in bars 61–63 and 63–65, considering the five partial segment formed by the first four notes of left hand's and the last one of right hand's accented voices. The last three partials of Theme of Motion, partials 2, 6 and 5, resume the first three vertically stated, from the highest note to the lowest, in all previous statements of the Circular Theme of Will. These three partials had already been placed in relation with one another—albeit not melodically—in the last three notes of bar 70, whose first five notes, viewing the right and the left hand together, form still another five-partial rotation of the Circular Theme of Will—the same occurs with the last five notes of the left hand, in bar 71. Example 81 illustrates the rotational procedures that relate Theme of Motion and the sequential segments of the Circular Theme of Will.

Example 81. From the Circular Theme of Will to the Theme of Motion: rotational procedures



With imitative procedures between the piano and the woodwinds, Theme of Motion is object of several fragmentary articulations, in bars 72–78. In bars 74–78 two different T6-related chord centres intersect each one of those fragments,[64] pointing to the imminent beginning of the second Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60. This premonitory function is particularly clear in the CC-C♮-governed bar 74: the second defining note of the ninth downward leap, partial 5/A♮ of the governing chord centre, is followed by a minor second that results of adding partial 6 of CC-F♯—a procedure that bar 87 will repeat.[65]

Example 82. Bars 72–74

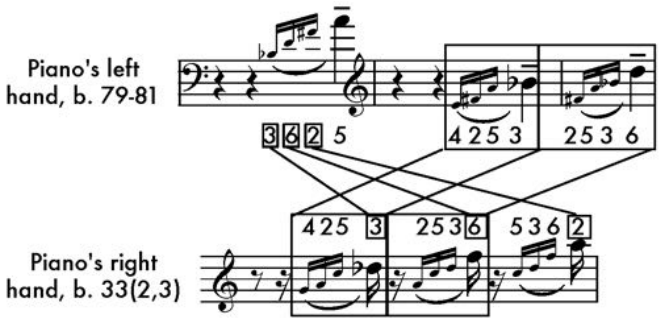


64 In bars 74–76 and 76–78, the first part of the theme is articulated within CC-F♯ and the second within CC-C♮.

65 The origin of this procedure is to be found in the theme's original statement. In bars 67–69, the sole intersection of the piano's right hand by the left hand takes place between the articulation of partial 5/D♯ as the second defining note of the ninth downward leap, in bar 70(1), and its re-articulation at the bar's third beat. The intersecting note features the perfect-fourth distant partial 6/G♯of CC-F♯. Bar 74 will reproduce the same sequence of partials, 5–6, featuring a different intervallic relation between the two notes that that materialize them by transposing the governing chord centre of the second.

Bars 79–81(3) fragmentarily transpose the musical content of bars 61–63 at T11, once more taking up the flourid writing of the cadenza-like Theme of Will of bars 33–34 in the left hand's added grace notes. In view of the equivalency with the material of bars 33–34, the first group of grace notes in the piano's left hand in bar 79(3) should feature partials 4-2-5, instead of 3-6-2. This difference, however, is neither a mistake nor due to chance. The downbeat notes, which—as opposed to what had occurred in bars 33–34—belong to the Circular Theme of Will, form an independent three-partial rotation. To avoid an undesired repetition of partial 5 between the last auxiliary note and the main note, Scriabin uses as grace notes the partials that had been articulated as main notes in bars 33–34—partials 3-6-2. This procedure is no longer necessary in bars 80 and 81, which thereby match the first two gestures of the cadenza-like Theme of Will in the piano right hand in bar 33.

Example 83. Cadenza-like Theme of Will in bars 79–81 and 33(2,3)



After the exact restatement of Bars 67(2)–71 featured in bars 81(2)–85, the transitional bar 86—the last bar of the first Colour Stage—shifts the chord centre to the T3 cycle of CC-A♭, as it was previously discussed, thus anticipating the shift from F♯ to A♭ in next bar's slow line of *Luce* and the beginning of the second stage of *Promethée* op. 60. Bar 86's chromatic figure transposes he figure of bar 53 to CC-D♮ with the short governance of CC-B♮ in its last triplet note. D♮ joins, as second pedal note, the F♯ that was uninterruptedly maintained since bar 47. Both pitch-classes of *Luce* are thus represented at the bottom of the harmony as well: D♮ represents the T3 transposition cycle that is about to come, and F♯ the main chord centre of the Colour Stage that is about to finish.

2.2.3 Second part of the exposition and second Colour Stage, bars 86 (87)–114 (110): outline

As already noted in the formal analysis of *Promethée* op. 60, the second Colour Stage, although signalled by the slow line of *Luce* between bars 87–110, is in fact harmonically introduced in bar 86. On the other hand—in spite of shifting to B♭ in the slow line of —bars 111–114 still belong to the second Colour Stage, as far as formal grouping is concerned.

Subdivided into one section of twelve bars, and two sections of eight bars each, the second part of the exposition/second Colour Stage, as the transitional section within the exposition it is, will be elided in the recapitulation.

The first section of the second Colour Stage, bars 87–98, is itself subdivided into three four-bar subsections. The section expands the core element of the Theme of Motion, the ninth downward leap, before introducing a new thematic element—Subtheme B-89.

The second section, bars 99 to 106, features Theme B-5a for the first time since the Introduction—accompanied in this occasion by several rotated segments of Theme of Will

The third and final section—bars 107 to 114—brings Subtheme B-89 back. In bar 111, the shift to B♭ in the slow *Luce* triggers four transitional bars towards the next formal articulation, which, in bar 115, confirms the beginning of the third Colour Stage.

2.2.4 Bars 86 (87)–114 (110): detailed analysis

2.2.4.1 The core of Theme of Motion; Subtheme B-89

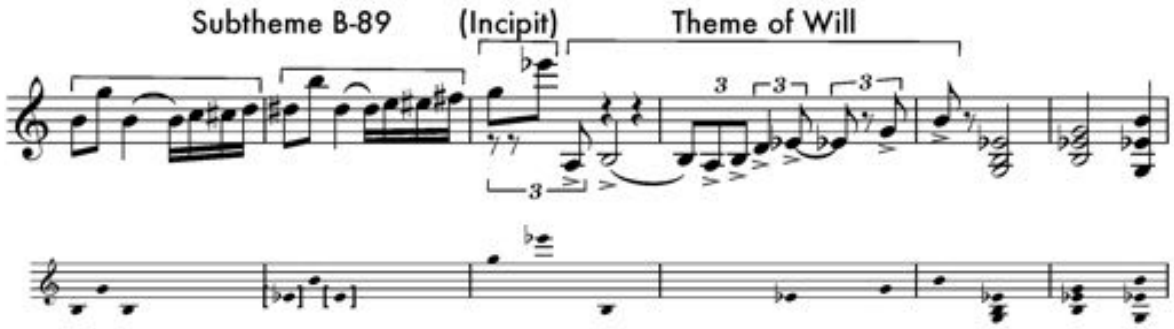
Repeating a procedure firstly introduced in bar 74, bars 87–88 focus on the core element of Theme of Motion, intersecting it with two T6 related chord centres—CC-F♮ and CC-B♮ in this occasion. The significance of CC-B♮, in bars 87–88, is clearly enhanced with respect to its equivalent of bar 74: its core set, MC-B♮, is assertively stated by featuring its six partials in strict respect of a lower digit-lower height correspondence, within the chord's basic superposed-fourths structure. In its return, in the fifth eighth note of bar 88, CC-F♮ has a very similar treatment: likewise reduced to its Mystic Chord, it articulates partials 3–6 in a strict lower digit-lower height correspondence as well, using invariance to share, rather than rearticulating, the first two partials with the previous governing CC-B♮. Both chord centres belong to the stage's main T3 transpositional cycle. Their particularly assertive presence in the first bars of the stage is meant to counterbalance the stage's exceptional harmonic complexity.

In bar 89, as a response to the expanded fragment of Theme of Motion, the flute introduces a new thematic element—Subtheme B-89. By articulating two interscalated minor sixths, E♭–B♮ and G♮–E♭, Subtheme B-89 symmetrically divides the octave into three major thirds, the first of which is symmetrically subdivided into four half steps itself. Significantly, the starting notes of each one of those minor sixths retake the same pitch-classes featured by the encompassing main notes of bars 87–88, E♭ and G♮, highlighted then by three grace notes each.

The origin of the Subtheme B-89 goes further back, though. Its third major content already belonged to Theme of Will and, before that, to Theme B-5, whose original statement, in spite of its different chord centre context, had featured precisely the same three pitch-classes.

The relation between Subtheme B-89 and Theme of Will becomes particularly obvious in the last six bars of the section, as Example 84 illustrates. After the successive articulations of Subtheme B-89 and Theme of Will, in bars 109–110 and 111–112, their common third major archetypal content is unveiled in bars 113–114. Both the archetypal statement of bars 113–114 and its two materialisations of bars 109–110 and 111–112 share the same pitch-classes—B♮, E♭ and G♮, once more.

Example 84. Bars 109–114: major third common content of Subtheme B-89 and Theme of Will



In spite of its relevance within the second Colour Stage, Subtheme B-89 is completely confined to its limits. On the other hand, it seems to have a particularly loose functional relation to the successive governing chord centres pointed in the fast *Luce* line: if they were to be considered as the stage's sole harmonic frame, the partials' content of Subtheme B-89 would depend on the transposition level of each statement—contrarily to the systematic procedure of all main themes of *Promethée* op. 60. Moreover, while the limits of the successive chord centres pointed by the fast *Luce* line are, in each case, respected by the subtheme's third major pillars, some of its chromatic pitches are beyond that harmonic frame. It is the case of E♮, in bars 89–90, or of its T6 transposition, in bar 98: they would have both to be considered non-functional tones.

Both circumstances have the same structural reason. As it had already happened in the first Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60, there is a massive predominance of T3 related chord centres in the second Colour Stage, and different transposition factors are basically used to switch from one T3 transposition cycle to another. The T3 transposition cycle divides the octave in four parts of equal size, while the very morphology of Subtheme B-89 induces its transposition within a T4 transposition cycle, subdividing the octave in three equivalent parts, instead. The intersection between both transposition cycles was thus bound to be unstable.

The reason for the uncommon set of procedures, which have just been described—and particularly of those concerning Subtheme B-89—is to be found in the symbolic content of *Promethée* op. 60.

2.2.4.2 Musically representing Blavatsky's second Root Race

Two of Scriabin's reported references concerning the work's symbolism are specifically applicable to its second Colour Stage:

1. The core element of Theme of Motion, which, marked *voluptueux, presque avec douleur* at the beginning of the stage, represents "the fall of spirit into matter".
2. The correspondence between the seven Colour Stages pointed by the slow line of *Luce* and Blavatsky's seven Root Races: as previously noted, the slow line of *Luce*, represents, the evolution of the Races.

The events of the second Colour Stage seem, indeed, to be particularly adequate to musically represent Blavatsky's second Root Race.

Subtheme B-89 is the most striking example of this adequacy. Morphologically characterized by successively subdividing the octave into major thirds and half steps, Subtheme B-89 is as close as a musical representation could be of the evolutionary process between Blavatsky's first and second Root Races. The second Race, according to the *Book of Dzyan*, was "product of budding and expansion" (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. II, p. 117). The First Race "evolved the second unconsciously, as do some plants", as "living cells reproducing their like by growth and subsequent subdivision"(idem).

In bars 109–114, the transitional bars between the second and the third Colour Stages just before the beginning of the exposition's third section, the genealogical relations previously discussed, and particularly the third major archetypal statement of bars 113–114, also fit a musical recollection

of “the material of the first forms—shadowy, ethereal, and negative—[...] drawn or absorbed into [...] the Second Race” to form its “body and even [its] lower principles” (Blavatsky, 1888, vol. II, p. 121).

As it will be discussed in 2.2.4.2., the very transpositions used throughout the second Colour Stage are indissociable of its metatextual context.

2.2.4.3 A strict composing method

Even considering the symbolic content of the second Colour Stage, which could certainly explain exceptional procedures, determining if it would be enough to justify a momentary abandon of the sound space delimited by the chord centre is a crucial question. Contradictory with the composing praxis of the first Colour Stage, such a procedure would also contradict Scriabin’s own words: “in Prometheus all figurations belong [...] to this basic scale [the Mystic Chord], there are no superfluous notes. It is therefore a strict composing method” (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 285). The analysis of the work proves how far that strict method was taken, by revealing that most of the figurations, besides belonging to that basic scale, articulate thematic sequences of partials themselves. Another Scriabin’s statement is particularly revealing of his mental frame, and seems to rule out the hypothesis of any momentary compromise as part of his composing method: “I often spend days or weeks with any small passage, yes, literally with a single note, without managing to find a solution to the problem. Everything else is already done, and all depends on just this one thing. (...) As long as I don’t get completely satisfied, I can’t regard the composition as completed” (Sabaneev, 2005, p.131). However, to the present day, no comprehensive structural explanation was given to the events of the second Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60.

Pople (1989), who perceptively relates the stage’s fourth bar, bar 90, with bars 305–308[66] (pp. 222–223), considers both passages to be framed by the whole tone scale rather than the Mystic Chord (1989, pp. 222–223). This specific frame, though, would still exclude both the E♮ and the F♯/G♭ of bars 90–91, which would have to be “interpreted as passing-notes between the whole tone pitches” (idem). Gawboy (2010), on the other hand, points bar 90 as an example of unconformity between the fast line of *Luce* and the “fundamental of the Pleroma [Mystic Chord]

[66] Several features relate these two moments:

1. Both Subtheme B-89 and bars 305–308 successively divide the octave into major thirds and these last into half steps—bars 305–308 extend the chromatic subdivision of the major third to the whole octave.
2. The violins reveal, in bars 305–308, the same third major pillars as Subtheme B–89—materialized in both cases by the same three pitch-classes

Extending these similarities to the whole second section of the exposition, bars 305–308 are an exact T4 transposition of the pitch content of bars 113–114, if the solo piano and the chromatic line of the violins are excluded.

Finally, the sixteen bars that follow bars 305–308, the first of the fifth Colour Stage, are an exact T4 transposition of the sixteen bars featured after the transitional bars 113–114, at the beginning of the third Colour Stage.

harmony", considering that "[bar] 90 should be A Pleroma instead of B" (p. 263). Indeed, the pitch-class content of bar 90 fits better the governance of CC-A♮ than that of CC-B♮, which the fast *Luce* line highlights: F♮—partial 1 of the adjacent bars—would be the sole pitch outside the range of CC-A♮, while the governance of CC-B♮ would make of E♮ a non-harmonic tone, even if the adjacent bars were to be considered. Gawboy's pitch analysis of bar 90, however, is not applicable to the remaining statements of Subtheme B-89—not even to that of the close related bar 98. The chromatic pitch content and the functional instability of Subtheme B-89 have thus remained unexplained till the present day.

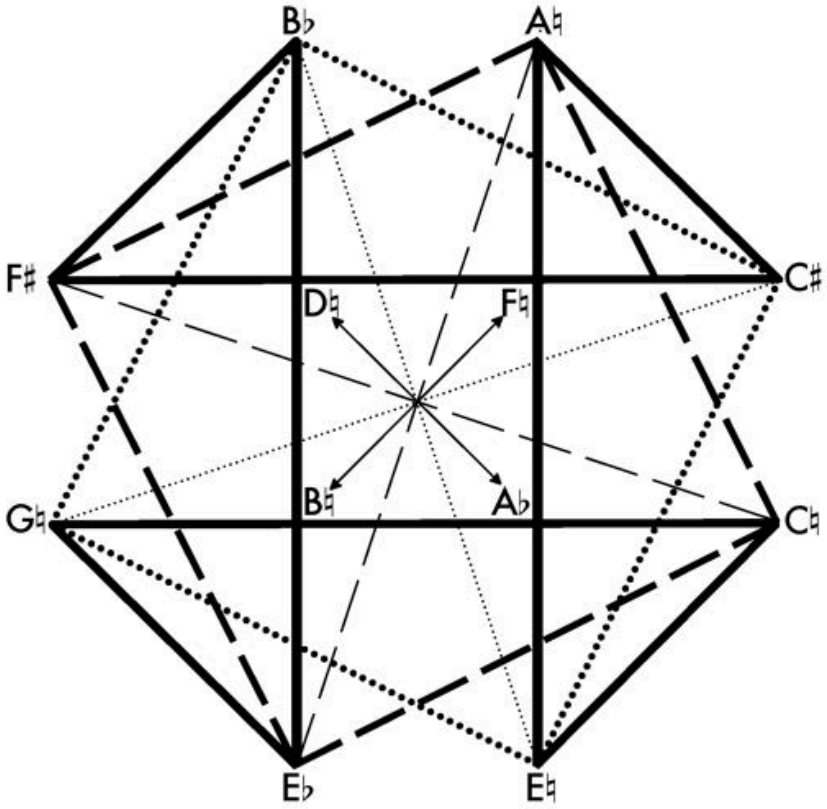
2.2.4.4. Making T3 and T4 transposition cycles compatible

The most natural way to integrate a T4 transpositional structure, such as Subtheme B-89, in a harmonic context characterized by T3-related chord centres is the simultaneous use of T4 related chord centres. Such coexistence could easily jeopardize the work's harmonic consistence, though, if it would not be framed by a systematic procedure. A comprehensive solution that, enabling the simultaneous use of different transpositional structures, would still ensure a stable harmonic frame was therefore indispensable. Scriabin found the most ingenious one:

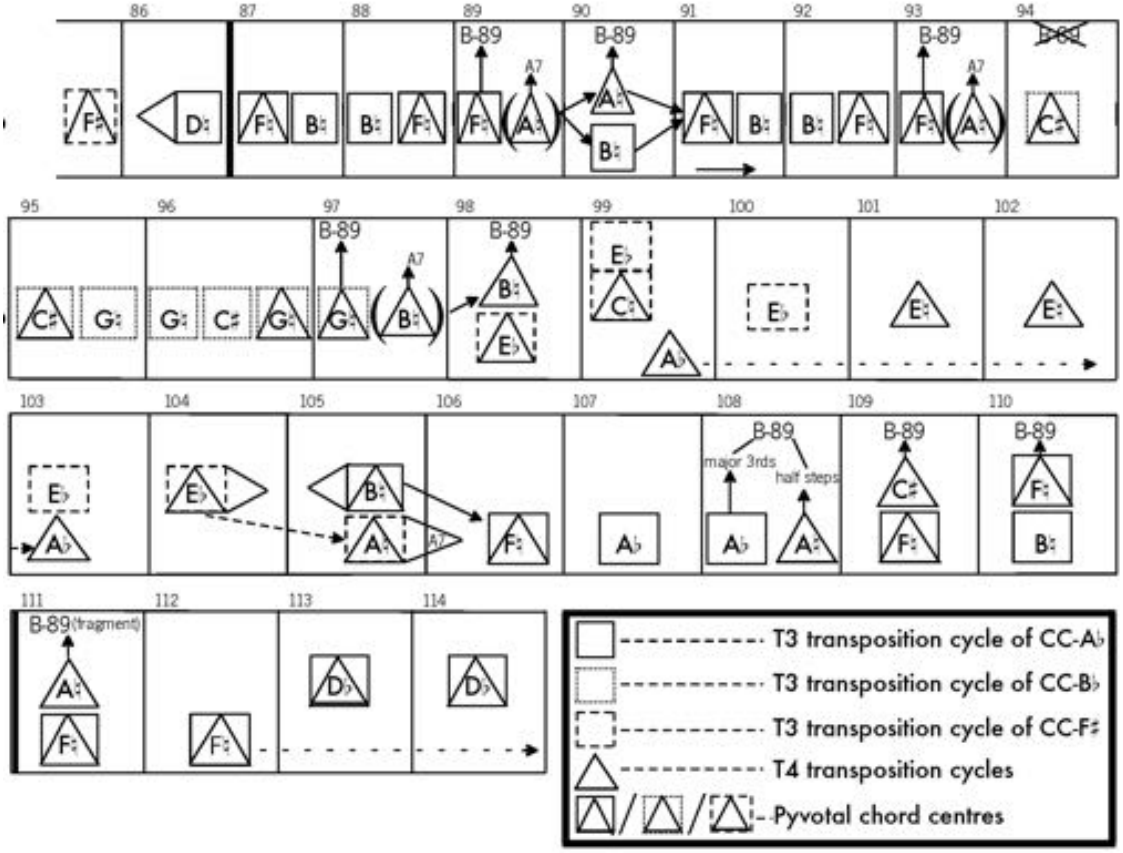
1. Subtheme B-89 is in each case introduced within the chord centre pointed by the fast *Luce* line.
2. With the sole exception of bar 108, that introductory governing chord centre—CC-F♮ in bars 89 and 93 and CC-G♮ in bar 97—plays a pivotal role between the theme's T4 transposition cycle and the particular T3 transpositional cycles to which the simultaneous governing chord centres pointed by the fast *Luce* line belong.

The stage's transposition model and its concrete implementation are illustrated in Examples 85 and 86. To fully understand the sophistication of the procedure its mechanic needs to be in each case detailed.

Example 85. Transposition model of the second Colour Stage

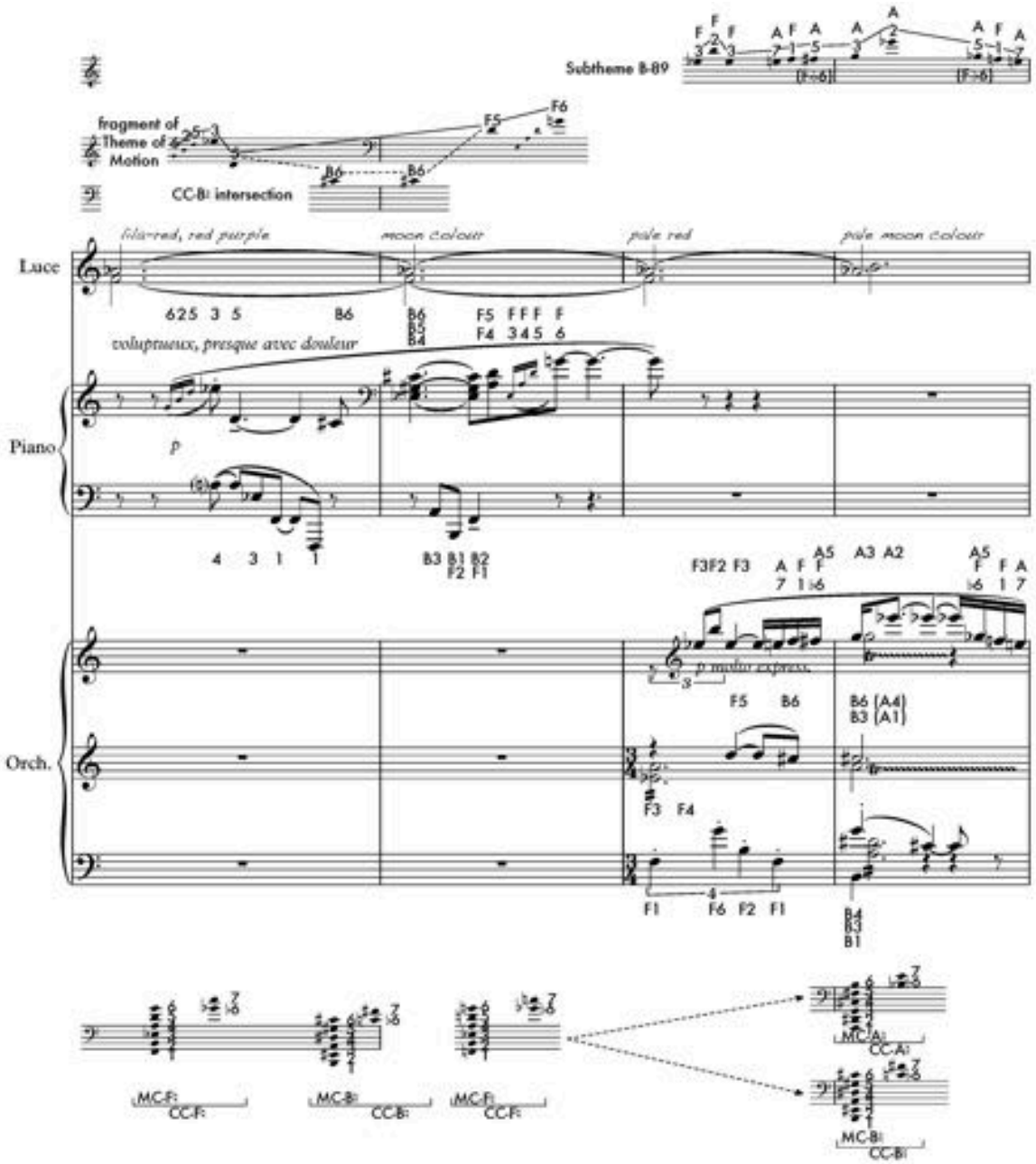


Example 86. Transpositional plan of the second Colour Stage



2.2.4.5 Bars 87–98: transposition cycles

Example 87. Bars 87–90

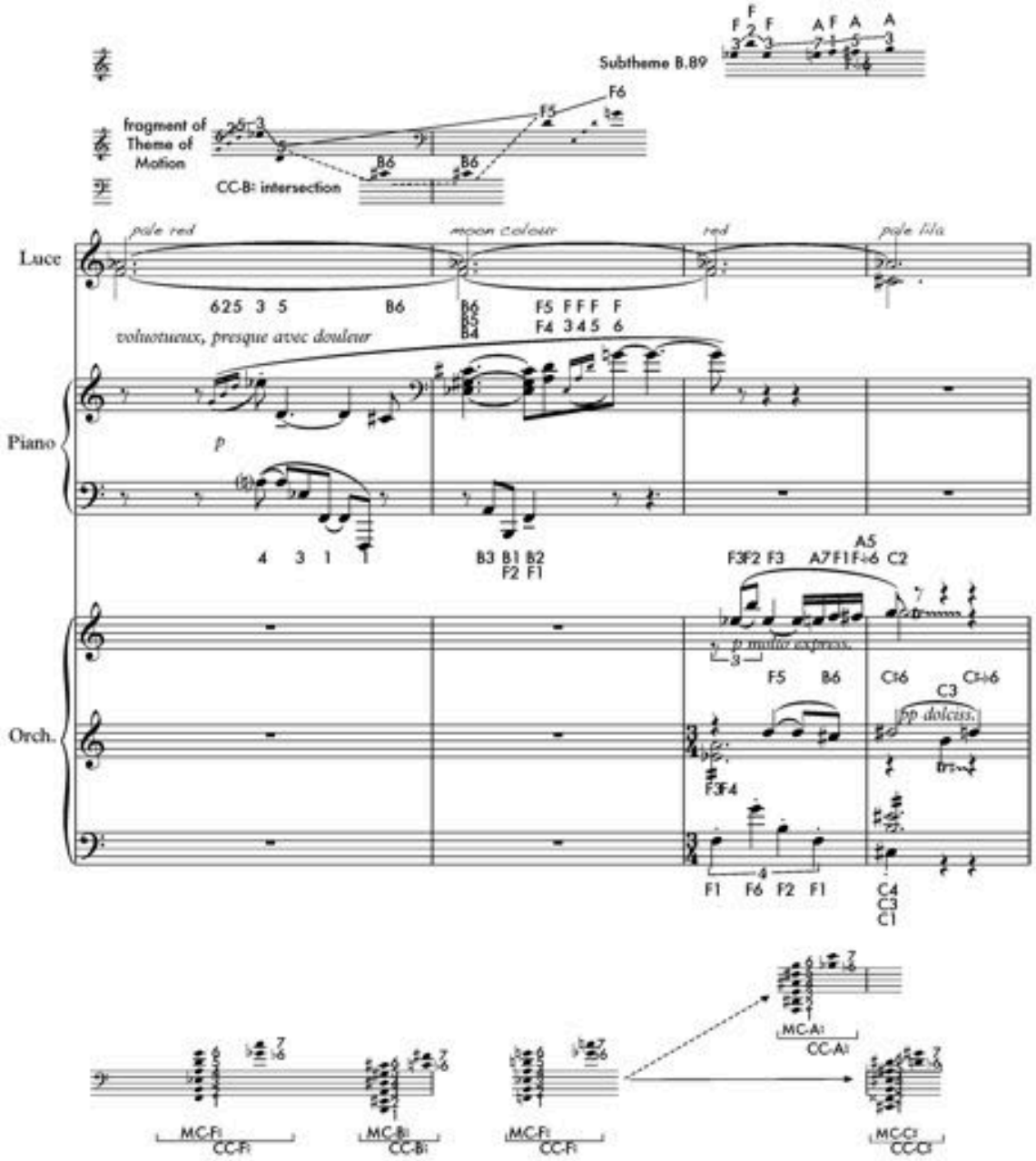


After the core of Theme of Motion featured in the CC-F♮/ CC-B♮-governed bars 87–88, the first statement of Subtheme B-89 is introduced in bar 89, which, as the fast *Luce* line points, is back to the governance of CC-F♮. Within the chromatic movement of its first statement, Subtheme B-89 features an E♮, which, alien to the bar's governing chord centre, is functionally partial 7 of the T4 distant CC-A♮ that will become the governing chord centre of the subtheme's varied statement of the otherwise CC-B♮-governed following bar. CC-F♮ is the sole common chord centre between the

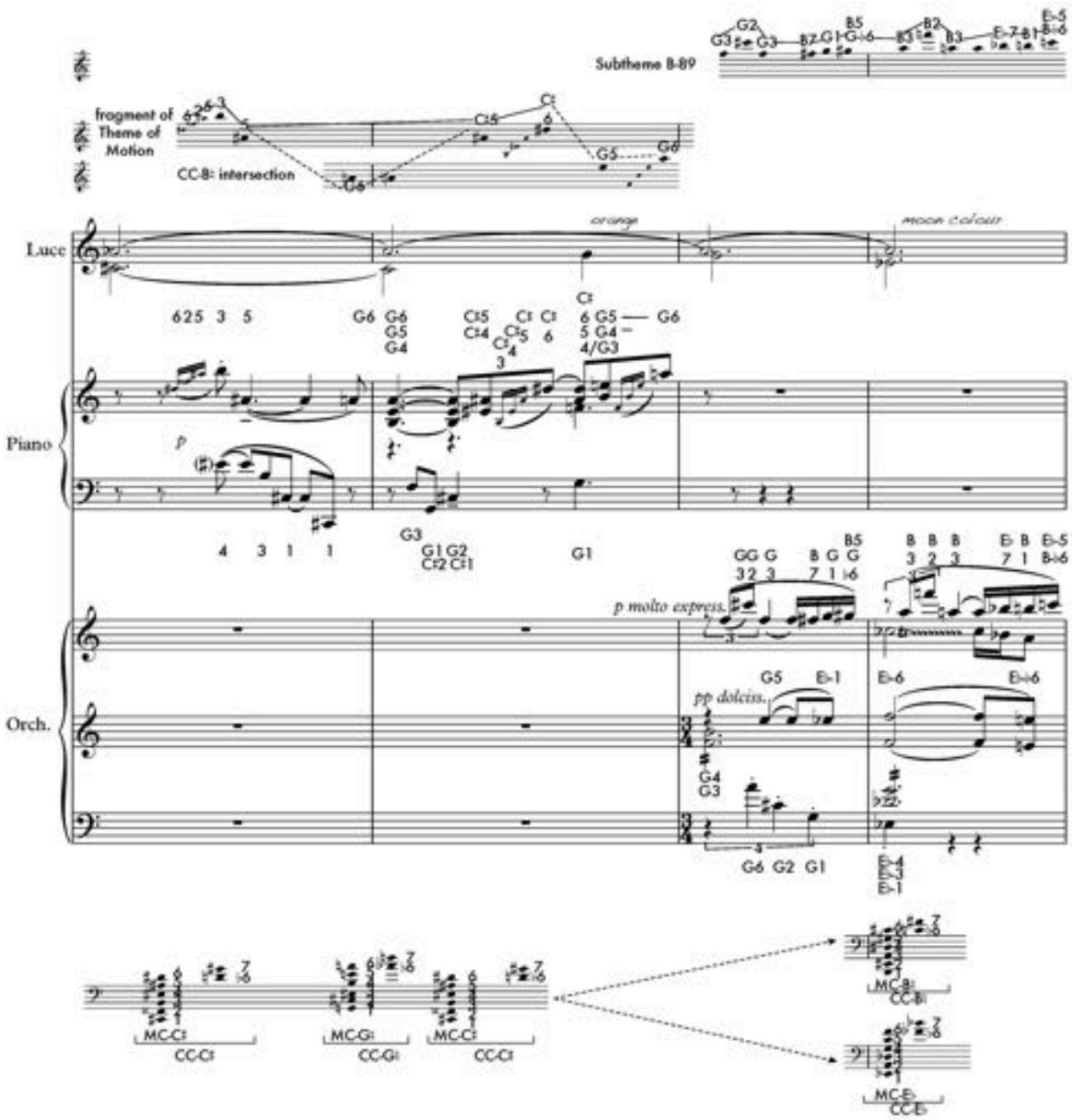
T4 and the T3 transposition cycles that include CC-A♮ and CC-B♮, respectively, and is thereby taken as pivotal chord centre between both.

As a restatement of bar 89, bar 93 similarly articulates partial 7 of CC-A♮ within its statement of Subtheme B-89. The following bar elides the expected varied statement of Subtheme B-89 within CC-A♮, though, while the fast *Luce* line points to the governance of the chord centre that completes with the expected CC-A♮ and the previous bar's CC-F♮ a T4 transposition cycle: CC-C♯. CC-C♯ introduces the T3 transposition cycle that will govern the next four bars, thus becoming the pivotal chord centre between the new T3 and the previous T4 transposition cycles.

Example 88. Bars 91–94



Example 89. Bars 95–98



The CC-C♯-governed bar 95 is an exact T8 transposition of both bars 87 and 91. The first two beats of bar 96, governed by CC-G♮ and CC-C♯, respectively, are therefore similarly related to the congener beats of bars 88 and 92. However, the third beat unexpectedly shifts to CC-G♮: far from frivolous, this unexpected shift transfers from CC-C♯ to CC-G♮ the pivotal role between the current T3 and the T4 transposition cycles, concomitantly changing the phrase's transposition factor from T8 to T2.[67] Significantly, the fast *Luce* line, which had not reflected the short governance of CC-G♮ at the beginning of bar 96—or that of CC-B♮ in the congener bars 88 and 92—highlights the

[67] This particular change of transposition factor is clearly premonitory of the similar change that will take place in the recapitulation.

unexpected transposition of the last beat of bar 96, thus stressing the new pivotal function of CC-G♮.[68] Subtheme B-89 is thereby played within CC-G♮, in bar 97, which, as a T2 transposition of bar 89, includes within the subtheme's chromatic movement the last partial of the T4 distant chord centre, partial 7/B♭.

Bar 98, the last bar of the first section of the second Colour Stage, merges the congener bars 90 and 94 together. Its explicit governing chord centre—CC-E♭, as the fast *Luce* line shows—transposes at T2 the governing chord centre of bar 94, mostly transposing its content as well. On other hand, thanks to the previous change of transpositional level, the unexpected articulation of Subtheme B-89, governed by CC-B♮ in this occasion, is T2 related as well with the varied statement of bar 90 or, what actually is the same, transposes at T2 the chord centre that the elided statement was expected to have presented in bar 94. CC-B♮ completes with the bar's main governing chord centre—CC-E♭—and that of the previous bar— CC-G♮—the second T4 cycle of the exposition's second part.

CC-E♭ prepares the introduction of a new T3 transposition cycle in bar 99, which the arrival of CC-C♮ will make explicit. CC-E♭ becomes, therefore, the pivotal chord centre between the T4 transpositional cycle of the previous bar, and the upcoming T3 transpositional cycle. The crescendo started in bar 97 and the ascending chromaticism within Subtheme B-89, in bar 98, propel the musical discourse towards the beginning of the second section of the second Colour Stage.

2.2.4.6 Bars 99–106: transposition cycles

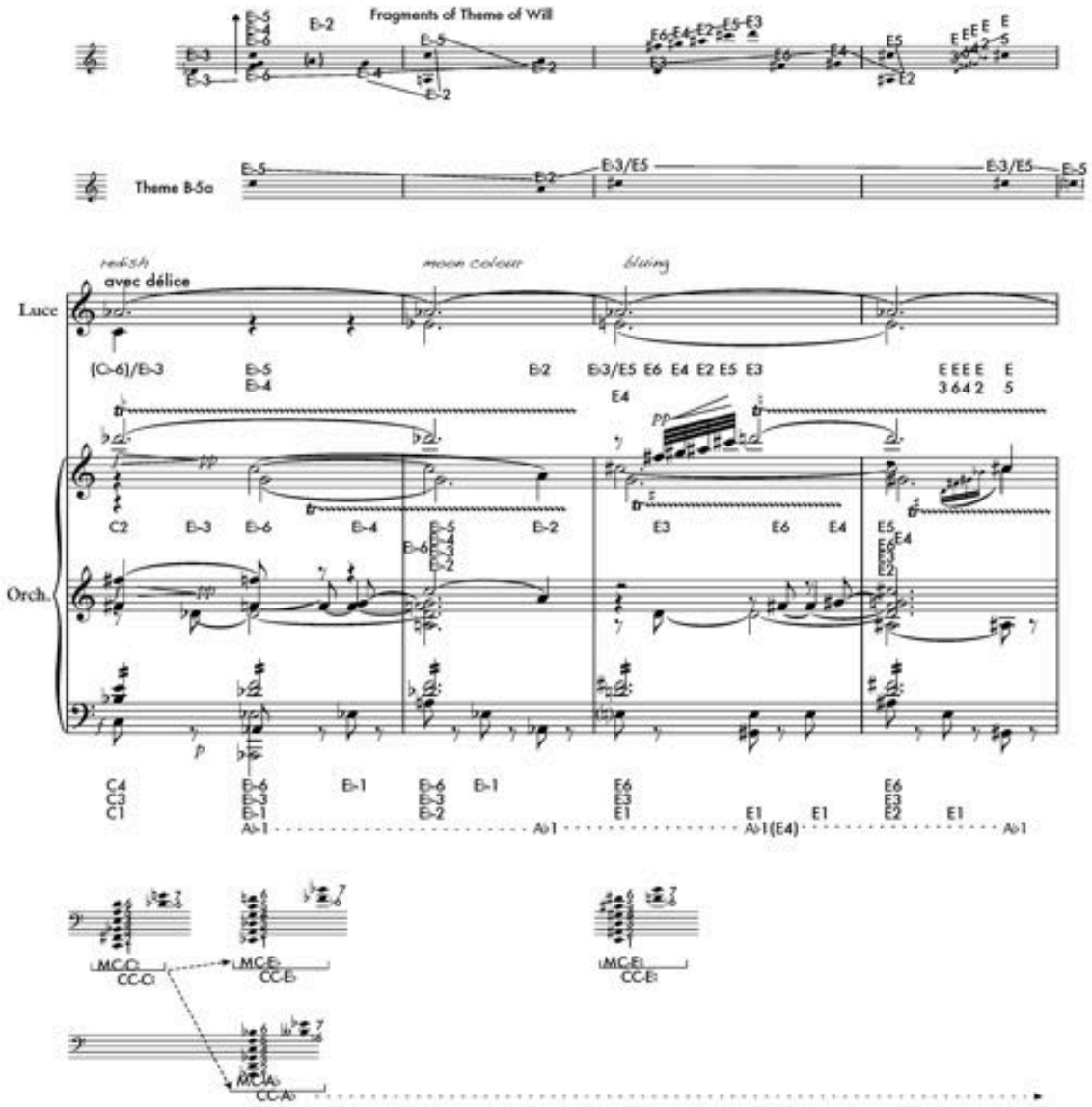
Even if it confirms the T3 transposition cycle introduced by CC-E♭, in view of the events of both bars 91 and 95—bar 99 comes up as unexpected as far as musical content and transposition level are concerned. CC-C♮, which is briefly introduced as the governing chord centre of the bar's first beat, is signalled by the forte dynamics as the pivotal chord centre between the T3 and the T4 transposition cycles of the next four bars. The bar's second beat makes the current T4 and T3 transposition cycles explicit by (a) introducing, as pedal note, the first partial of the T4 distant CC-A♭—the representative chord centre of the second Colour Stage—and (b) by resuming the governance of CC-E♭. The reintroduction of CC-E♭ governs Theme B-5a, the leading theme of the section, whose thematic material is completed by several fragmentary statements of Theme of Will.

Bar 101 introduces CC-E♮, the only missing governing chord centre within the T4 cycle of CC-C♮. Partial 1 of CC-A♭, which will be kept at the bottom of the harmony until the beginning of

[68] Functional variation in the fast line of *Luce* was already discussed in 1.2.1.3.1.

bar 103, is now articulated as the enharmonic partial 4/G♯ of the governing CC-E♮. Even if the theme's sequence of partials is ensured by its relation with the previous governing CC-E♭, the half step transpositional relation it concomitantly establishes with CC-E♮ underlines the melodic relation between C♮ and C♯, within Theme B-5a.[69]

Example 90. Bars 99–102

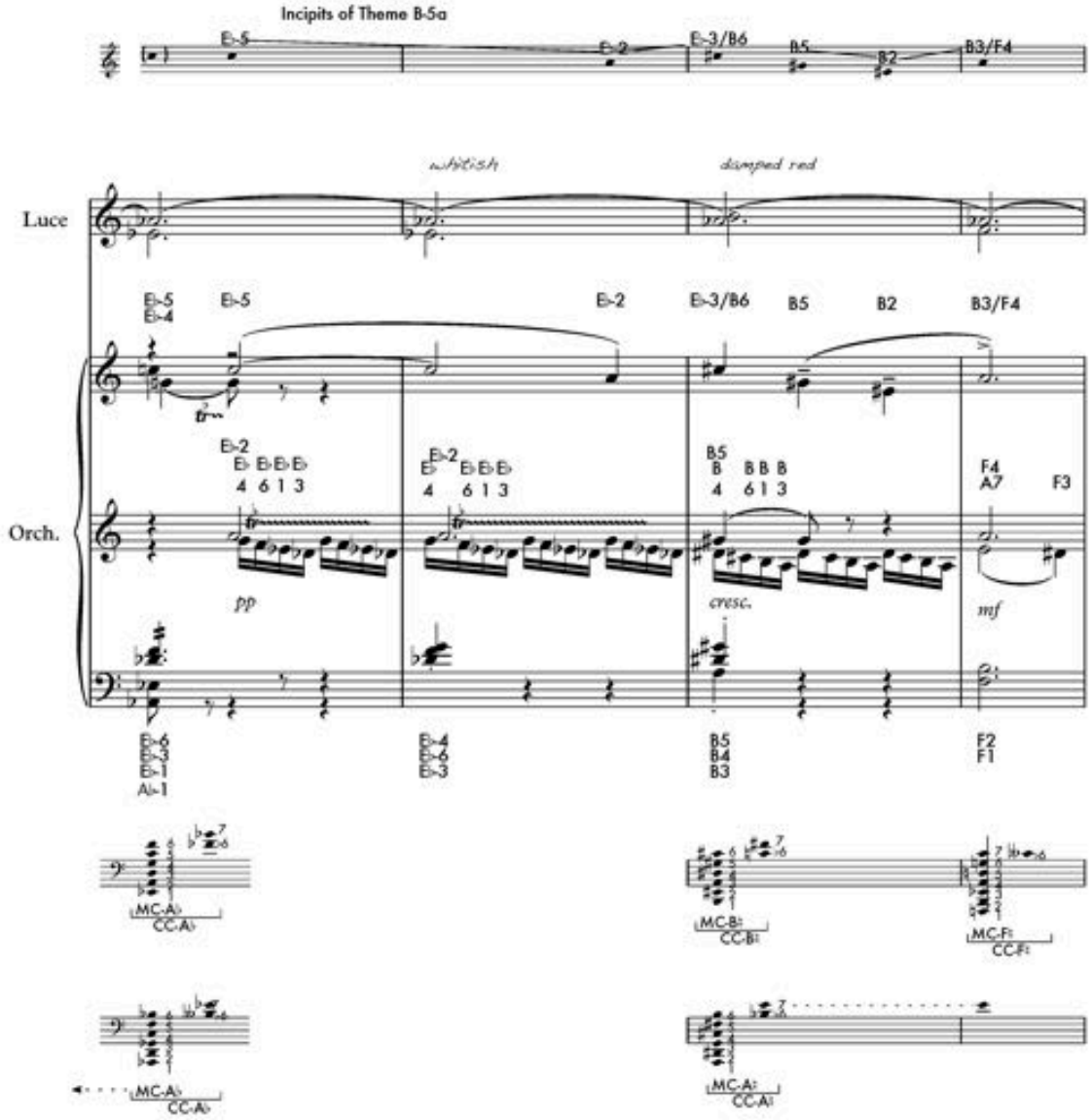


Bar 103 resumes the governance of CC-E♭, which will become the pivotal chord centre in the next T4 transposition to CC-B♮, in bar 105. The arrival of a new T3 transposition cycle, albeit highlighted by the fast *Luce* line, is far less assertive this time: bars 103–104, on one hand and bar

[69] This unprecedented feature, which foreshadows its extension in later stages of the work, has an even closer relation to the next statement of Subtheme B-89 in bar 107, as we shall see.

105 on the other, do not follow the stage's hitherto systematic procedure of featuring partial 1 of each pivotal chord centre in the bass line. This is particularly true in the CC-B♮-governed bar 105, in which the fable presence of partial 1/B♮, limited to an inner position within the viola's sixteenth notes, particularly stresses the bar's lowest pitch-class, A♮, suggesting a secondary centricity of CC-A♮. Concealed by the pitch content of bar 105, entirely consistent with the exclusive governance of CC-B♮, the secondary centricity of CC-A♮ will be retrospectively confirmed by the articulation of its partial 7/E♮ at the downbeat of bar 106, beyond the range of the bar's governing CC-F♮. The simultaneous articulation of the invariant A♮ as the accented highest note of the bar recalls its previous function as partial 1, before the erasure of the explicit trace of CC-A♮ in the bar's second beat, which chromatically resolves E♮ to D-♯, partial 3 of the governing CC-F♮.

Example 91. Bars 103–106



The major third between the lowest pitch-classes of bar 105 and 106, partials 1 of CC-A♮ and CC-F♮ respectively, reproduces the intervallic relation featured within the fast line of *Luce* in bars 104 and 105, thus revealing a two-step transposition between the T3 transpositional cycle of bars 99–105, on one hand, and the T3 transposition cycle that will govern its final section, on the other hand:

1. From the pivotal CC-E♭ to CC-B♮, in bars 104 and 105, as the fast *Luce* line signals.
2. From CC-A♮ to CC-F♮, in bars 105 and 106, as the bass line suggests.

The pivotal function of CC-E♭ in bar 105 has not been transferred to the explicit governing chord centre of bar 105, CC-B♮. That functional hand over takes place in bars 105–106, instead, between the concealed chord centre of bar 105, CC-A♮, and the governing CC-F♮ of bar 106.

The full implications of this unprecedented two-step transition will become clear at the beginning of the upcoming section.

2.2.4.7 Bars 107–114: transposition cycles

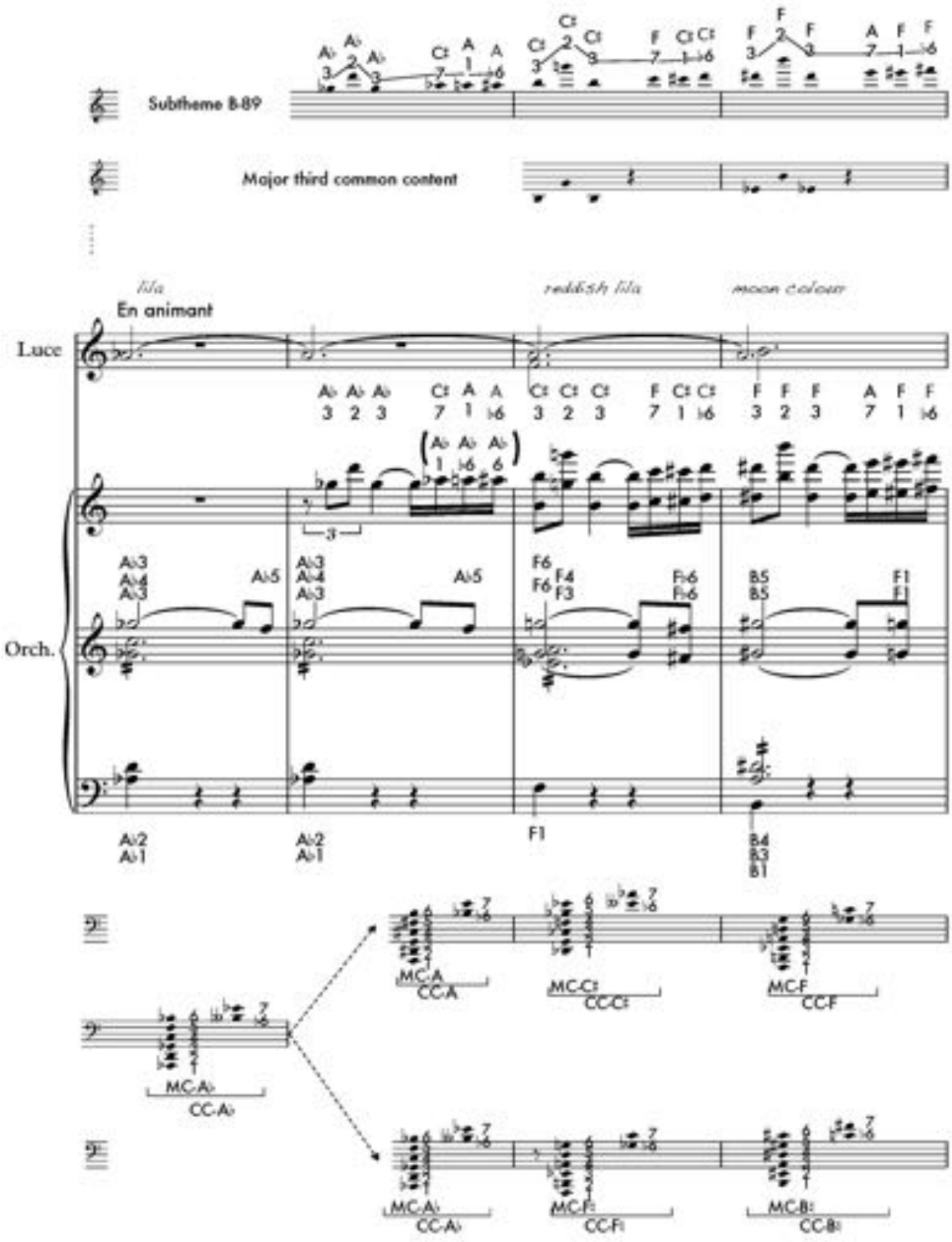
2.2.4.7.1 Bars 107–110

Considering the first two Colour Stages together, the presence of the representative chord centre of the second, CC-A♭ had been hitherto reduced to the fleeting last triplet notes of the Introduction's bars 23 and 25. Bar 107 features CC-A♭ as main governing chord centre for the first time so far. To highlight the significance of the moment, bar 108, which prolongs its governance, introduces an absolutely unique statement of Subtheme B-89:

1. In order to match the governing CC-A♭, the subtheme's first three notes are for the first time articulated outside the range of the current T4 transpositional cycle, belonging to the T3 cycle of CC-F♮/A♭, instead.
2. An unprecedented whole step between the subtheme's third and fourth notes changes the transposition level of its second part, enabling it to retrieve the T4 transposition cycle to which this statement of Subtheme B-89 was expected to belong. The governing chord centre of the Subtheme's second half is now CC-A♮, unveiling the premonitory function of its concealed presence in bar 105.

Resuming its previous T4 transposition pattern, Subtheme B–89 is then successively governed by CC-C♯, CC-F♮ and CC-A♮, in bars 108–110, whose remaining musical content belongs to CC-F♮ and CC-B♮.

Example 92. Bars 107–110



2.2.4.7.2 Bars 111–114: beginning the third Colour Stage

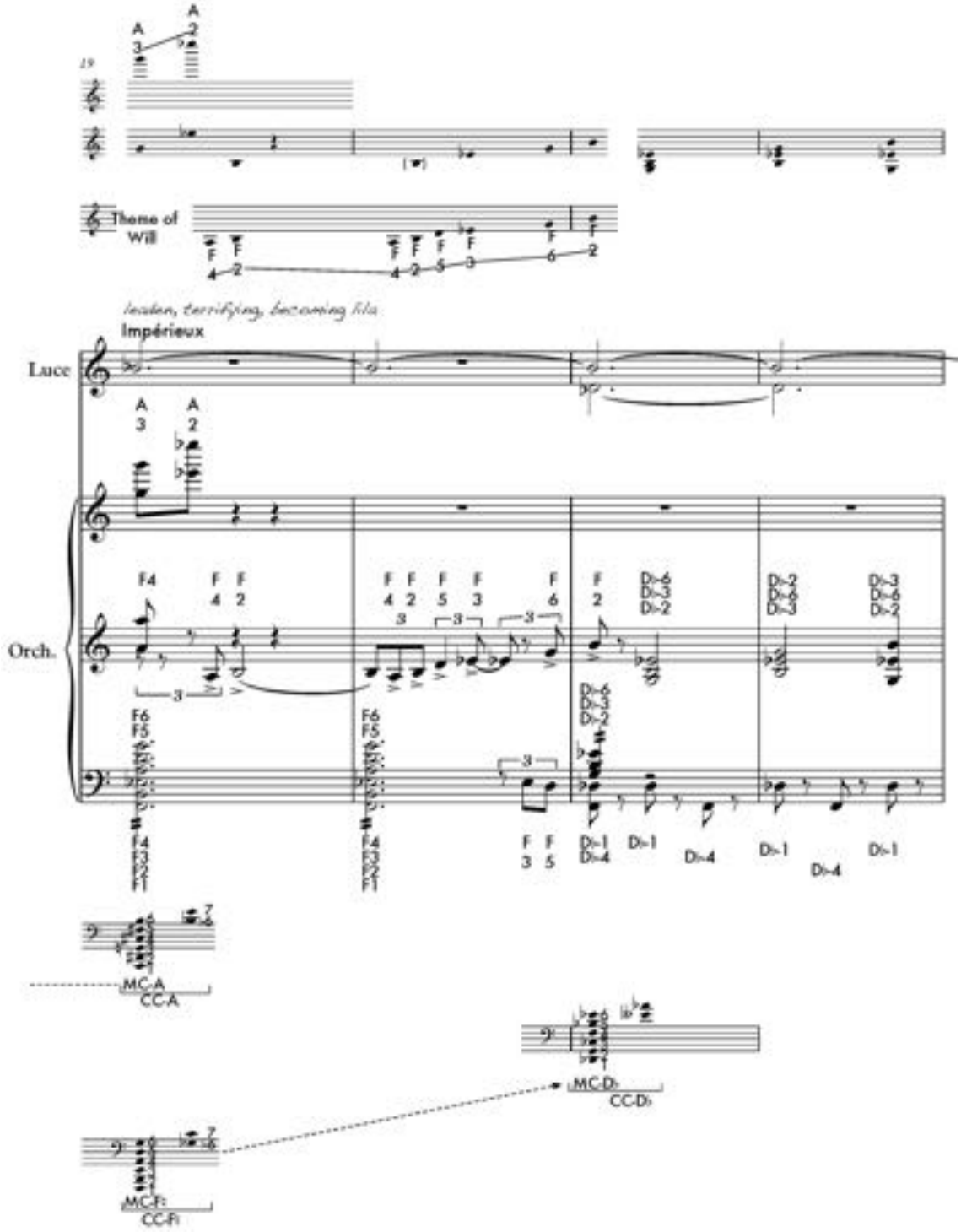
The slow *Luce* line switches to B♭, in bar 111, thus signalling the beginning of the transition towards the third part of the exposition of *Promethée* op. 60. Change in the slow line of *Luce* precedes change in its musical counterpart, this time. The pause in the fast *Luce* line, contrarily to the standard procedure thus far, does not indicate a coincidence between the stage's representative and the bar's governing chord centre: bar 111 is governed by CC-F♮,[70] still within the representative T3 transpositional cycle of the second Colour Stage. The intervallic relation between the bar's lowest pitch-class, partial 1 of the governing CC-F♮, and the B♭ featured by *Luce* foreshadows the intervallic relation between the same pitch-classes, at the bottom of the harmony of bar 115. In between, tacking *Luce* as its guide, the orchestra takes the transitional route to the third Colour Stage as it follows:

1. An unexpected complete two-bar statement of Theme of Will propels the musical discourse towards bars 113–114. Partial 1 of the governing CC-F♮ is introduced at the bottom of the harmony.
2. Bars 113–114, still within the transpositional pattern of the second Colour Stage, use the pivotal function of the previous governing CC-F♮ to introduce the T4 related CC-D♭. The use of CC-D♭, instead of the enharmonic CC-C♯ featured in the second Colour Stage, signals the introduction of the representative T3 transposition cycle of the third Colour Stage—that of CC-B♭, CC-D♭, CC-E♮ and CC-G♮.
3. The archetypal statement of the third major content of Subtheme B-89 briefly recalls the second Colour Stage, before the upcoming formal articulation. Thanks to invariance, F♮ is kept at the bottom of the harmony.
4. Finally, in bar 115, the arrival of CC-B♭ itself—the representative chord centre of the third Colour Stage—confirms the T3 transposition cycle introduced in the previous bar, as the new formal articulation begins, thus musically reflecting the beginning of the third Colour Stage, signalled by *Luce* four bars before. The rupture with the second Colour Stage is however not complete: F♮, partial 1 of the last pivotal chord centre of the second Colour Stage, will be maintained at the bottom of the harmony until bar 119, thanks to invariance in all four governing chord centres in-between.

[70] The two pitches articulated within the CC-A♮-governed incipit of Subtheme B-89 are invariant in CC-F♮.

Firstly introduced in bar 111, its long lasting positioning ensures it is simultaneously perceived as a pedal note of F♮.

Example 93. Bars 111–114



2.2.4.8 The symbolic role of the T3 transpositional cycles in the second Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60

Corresponding to its transitional nature, the second Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60 features an unprecedented harmonic instability thus far, introducing in its first two sections all three possible T3 transposition cycles.

The first T3 transpositional cycle, introduced in the transitional bar 86, is the stage's representative T3 transpositional cycle, by including CC-A♭ amongst its four members.

The second T3 transpositional cycle governs bars 94–97 and foreshadows the work's third Colour Stage, by including its representative chord centre—CC-B♭—amongst its four members. The transition between the first two T3 transposition cycles, in bars 93–94, will in fact be harmonically replicated in the bars that musically materialize the transition between the second and the third Colour Stages, featuring, significantly, precisely the same pivotal chord centres: CC-F♮ and CC-C♯/CC-D♭.

Finally, the third T3 transpositional cycle, which, introduced in bar 98, governs the stage's second section, evokes the first Colour Stage by including its representative CC-F♯ amongst its four members. Its retrospective character affects the section's thematic material, as well: its main theme is Theme B-5a, resumed for the first time since the work's Introduction, at the beginning of the F♯ Colour Stage.

The third and last section of the second Colour Stage summarizes the previous two, by making the transition to the third Colour Stage, while simultaneously recalling the genealogy of the main thematic element of the second Colour Stage—Subtheme B-89.

2.2.4.9 Highlighting CC-A♭

The transitional nature of the Second Colour Stage is stressed by a very particular circumstance: in its two first sections, none of the representative chord centres of the work's first three Colour Stages—CC-A♭, CC-F♯ and CC-B♭, respectively—is actually deployed within its own T3 transposition cycle.[71] This procedure is certainly due to the stage's harmonic instability: featuring three different T3 transposition cycles in such a short number of bars could otherwise easily shadow the role of CC-A♭ as the stage's representative chord centre. To ensure the predominance of CC-

[71] This is particularly significant, since all other chord centres are in each case articulated, considering the (a) transitional bar 86, (b) the interspersed bars 101–102 and (c) the implicit co-governance of CC-A♮ in bar 105.

A♭, avoiding CC-F♯ and CC-B♭ was however not sufficient: the presence of CC-A♭ had itself to be highlighted. This is ensured through the following procedures:

1. The first partial of CC-A♭ is featured as pedal note in the stage's second section, between bars 99 and 103. Such a presence is possible thanks to its pertaining to the T4 transpositional cycle that coexists with the T3 transpositional cycle formed by CC-C♮, CC-E♭, CC-F♯ and CC-A♮.
2. CC-A♭ governs the first two bars of the stage's third section—the section that resumes the stage's representative T3 transpositional cycle before starting the transpositional route towards the next Colour Stage
3. CC-A♭ is the sole non-pivotal chord centre within all three T3 transposition cycles whose governing function affects, even if only momentarily, Subtheme B-89—namely its first half, in bar 108. This is, in fact, the ultimate reason for the unique morphology featured by that particular statement of subtheme B-89. After ensuring the governing function of CC-A♭ is properly highlighted, the second half of the Subtheme B-89 is transposed to CC-A♮, so that its natural T4 transpositional cycle is retrieved, as previously noted.

2.2.5 Third part, bars 115–162: outline

The third part of the exposition is divided into three sections of sixteen, twenty and twelve bars, respectively.

The first section, bars 115–130, is successively governed by the T3 transpositional cycles of CC-B♭ and CC-A♭. It introduces an unprecedented combination of previous thematic material, which, treated as a new theme, is used from then on as a leitmotif.

The second section, bars 131–150, retrogrades the T3 transpositional cycles of the first in its first eight bars, which feature as main thematic element a merged statement of Theme B-5a+b. The central bars 139–142—the climatic bars of the exposition—resume the governance of CC-F♯, absent since the first Colour Stage, and introduce Theme B-139. The last eight bars of the section introduce the first independent statement of Motif 1-6-5. Predominantly governed by the representative T3 cycle of the Second Colour Stage, they foreshadow the fourth Colour Stage in the CC-C♮-governed bars 144–145, before introducing a long lasting pedal note of E♮ that starts the dissonant section of the exposition.

A six-bar subsection and a six-bar varied restatement form the third section, bars 151–162, which introduce an expanded version of Theme B-65. The increasing presence of CC-C♮ signals the ever-closer transition to the fourth Colour Stage.

2.2.6 Detailed analysis

2.2.6.1 Bars 115–130

The first section of the exposition's third part is subdivided into two eight-bar subsections, each of them formed by two sets of four-bars. The section's thematic material is entirely introduced in its first two bars, which feature an unprecedented fragmentary combination of previous themes:

1. Theme B-5c, in its first hitherto independent statement.
2. An independent close up on the theme's last three notes—Motif 3-5-2.[72]
3. Two simultaneous fragments of the Theme of Will in thirty second quintuplets.
4. A chromatic figure related to the premonitory chromatic figures of (a) the introduction's bars 23 and 25, (b) bars 53, 61, 63 of the second Colour Stage, and (c) the transitional bar 86.

In bar 115, marked *avec emotion et ravissement,* the woodwinds play Theme B-5c, which, after a trilled first note, is object of rhythmic compression in order to fit a ternary subdivision and a single bar unit. Both features will become prototypical for all its later restatements. Simultaneously with the articulation of Theme B-5c, the strings articulate an independent statement of Motif 3-5-2, highlighting the theme's last three notes. Their transposed retrogradation will be featured within the clarinets' fragmentary statements of Theme of Will, in the following bar.

After the reorchestrated restatement of bar 115, in bar 117, the CC-G♮-governed bar 118, transposes at T6 the thematic material of bar 116 to which a new occurrence of Motif 3-5-2 is added, maintaining, thanks to invariance, the four lower pitch-classes of bar 116 unchanged.

There are two significant differences between the otherwise transpositionally related bars 115–118 and 119–122.

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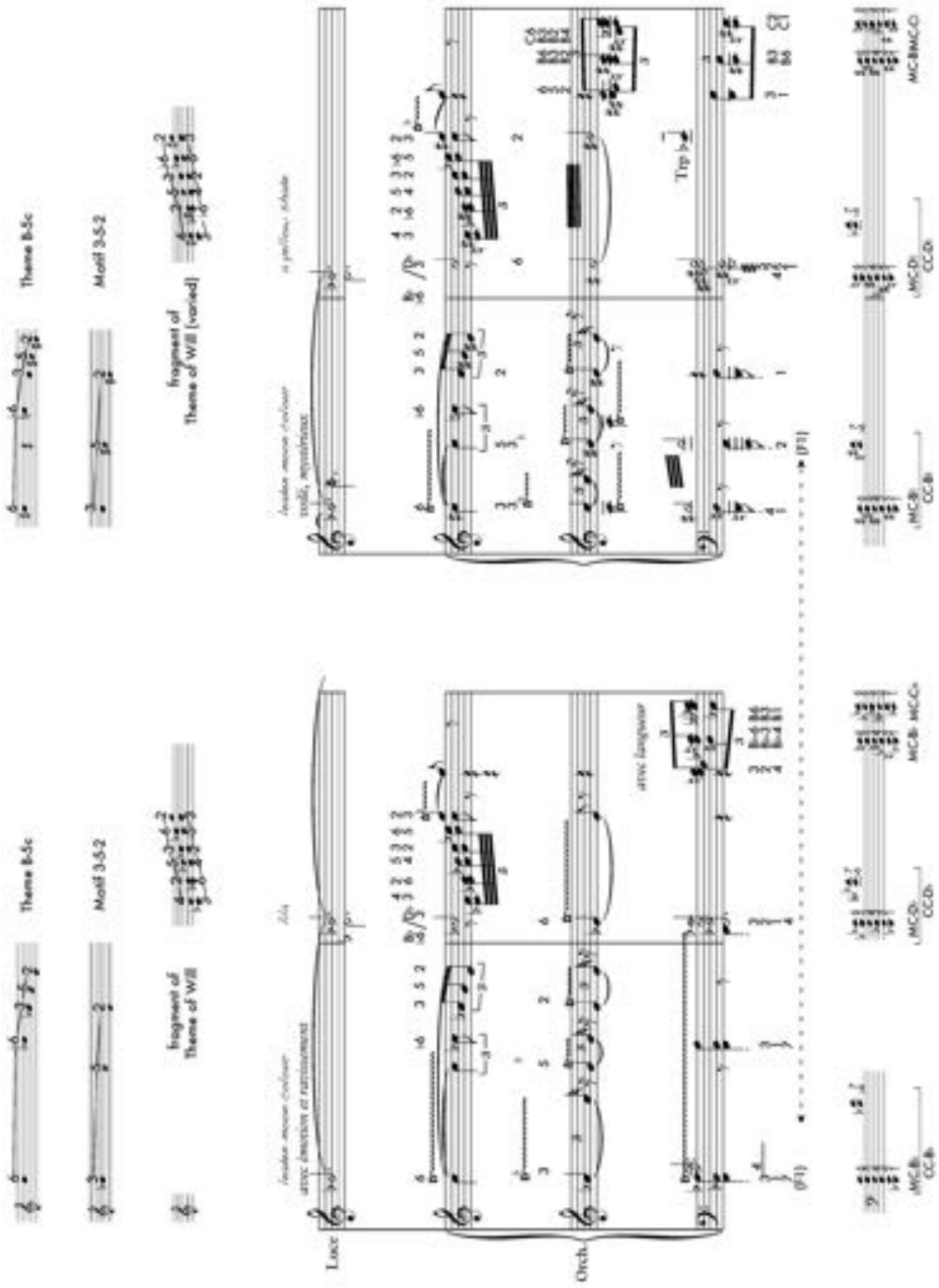
[72] In its first statement in bars 115—116(1) it is followed by partial 6, forming a retrograded four partial circular fragment of Theme of Will—, which starts with partial 3. In bars 118–119 it retrogrades a different four partial circular fragment, by featuring partials -2-4.

Example 94. Bars 115–116 and 119–120



The first results of the long lasting F♮ pedal note. Firstly introduced in bar 111, F♮ is consistently kept at the bottom of the harmony in bars 115–118. In spite of its invariance in all successive governing chord centres, it is perceived as a pedal note, thanks to its stable positioning. This is particularly true in bars 115 and 117, in which its intervallic relation with partial 1/B♭ evokes the

old dominant function—vertically in bar 115 and horizontally in bar 117. Bar 119, which otherwise transposes bar 115 at T1, unexpectedly keeps F♮ at the bottom of the harmony: instead of transposing the lowest pitch of its congener bar, in order to replicate its previous function as partial 7, it keeps the pitch unchanged, to precisely stress its new functional context, as partial 2 of CC-B♮. The reminiscent V–I relation of bars 115 and 117 is thereby confronted with the new ♯IV-I relation of bar 119 that replaces it. The following three bars replicate the ♯IV-I relation established between the two lower pitches of bar 119, but invert their relative positions by finally placing partial 1 at the bottom of the harmony. Scriabin once more stages the symbolic handover between the old and the new polarity, within the limits of his new sound space.

The second difference between bars 115–118 and bars 119–122 is introduced in bar 120: the expected partial 6/E♮ of CC-D♮ is replaced by partial ♭6/E♭ within the clarinets' fragments of Theme of Will. This unexpected replacement is immediately confirmed by the *trumpets con sordina,* which play, in bar 121, a *marcato* articulation of the same pitch-class/partial with no equivalent in bars 115–118. This feature had actually been foreshadowed in bars 115–118, in which an articulation of partial ♭6 had followed each statement of Theme B-5c.[73] The interchange between partial 6 and partial ♭6 increases proximity between the partial's content of Theme of Will and Theme B-5c, since the last four partials of Theme B-5c are now exactly retrograded within the modified fragmentary statement of Theme of Will.

In bars 123–126 a similar *marcato* articulation of partial ♭6 is played by the horns immediately after each occurrence of partial ♭6 within Theme B-5c, stressing even further its relation with the previous fragments of Theme of Will. In successive T6 and T0 transpositions of bar 119, bars 123–126 perform an overall descendent movement thus reducing the section's momentum. That descending movement is interrupted in bars 127 and 128 by two successive statements of Theme B-5c, within the same transposition level of bar 123. The solo violin starts a chromatic movement that successively highlights (a) partial 3/E♭ and partial5/D♮, the first two partials of Motif -2, and (b) E♭–G♮, the first two pitches of the third major archetypal statement of bars 113–114. The outburst of the piano, at the downbeat of bar 131, by playing partial 2/B♮, melodically introduces the third constituent of both sets, giving the way to the next formal section.

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[73] This significant articulation of partial ♭6 matches the downbeat of the following bar, in both cases. The pitch-class that materializes it—C♭ in the CC-D♮-governed bar 116 and the enharmonic B♮ in the CC-G♭-governed bar 118—is invariant in both new governing chord centres, but is only functionally stable in relation to the governing chord centre of the previous bar.

2.2.6.1.1 Representing the Human

According to Blavatsky, "the first two human races [are] the last of the Lemurians [Third Root Race] and the first of the future Atlanteans [Fourth Root Race]."

The combination of previous thematic fragments, in bars 115–116, at the beginning of the third Colour Stage, has no precedent in the *Promethée* op. 60, particularly by including the first independent statement of Theme B-5c, which will be massively restated, between this first independent statement and the end of the piece. On the other hand, the whole subsection formed by bars 115–122 will have a great significance in later stages of the work. Considering (a) the particular thematic combination they introduce had never been featured in the first two Colour Stages, (b) their positioning at the beginning of the Colour Stage that represents Blavatky's first human race, and (c) their positioning in later stages of the work, it seems that Scriabin likely intended them to be a representative leitmotif for the Human.

2.2.6.1.2 Generating expectation: the absence of CC-E♮

Bars 115–118 are governed by the representative T3 transposition cycle of the third Colour Stage: they feature three out its four constituents—all, but CC-E♮.

Bars 119–122 bring back the representative T3 transposition cycle of the second Colour Stage. Their governing chord centres are transpositionally related at T1 with those of bars 115–118, and therefore exclude CC-F♮, the congener chord centre of CC-E♮ at this transposition level. The immediate governance of CC-F♮ in the next bar and its overall predominance in bars 123–130 compensates, however, its short omission, highlighting even further the overall absence of CC-E♮.

CC-E♮ is destined to have a nuclear function in the formal plan of *Promethée* op. 60. Its highlighted absence in the first steps of the third Colour Stage, rather than diminishing its significance as the polar chord centre of the stage's representative CC-B♭, seeks to generate expectation towards its eventual return.

2.2.6.2 Bars 131–150: climax of the exposition and introduction of the work's dissonant section

Bars 131–150 are subdivided into two subsections of twelve and eight bars. The first subsection, bars 131–142, reverses the T3 transposition cycles of the previous section, before introducing Theme B-139 and the work's main chord centre—CC-F♯—in the Exposition's four climatic bars. Gawboy (2010) notices that these twelve bars, "accompanied by majestic bright colours and

dazzling displays in (...) *Luce,* [show] the heroic side of Prometheus, characterized by his theft of fire" (p. 271).

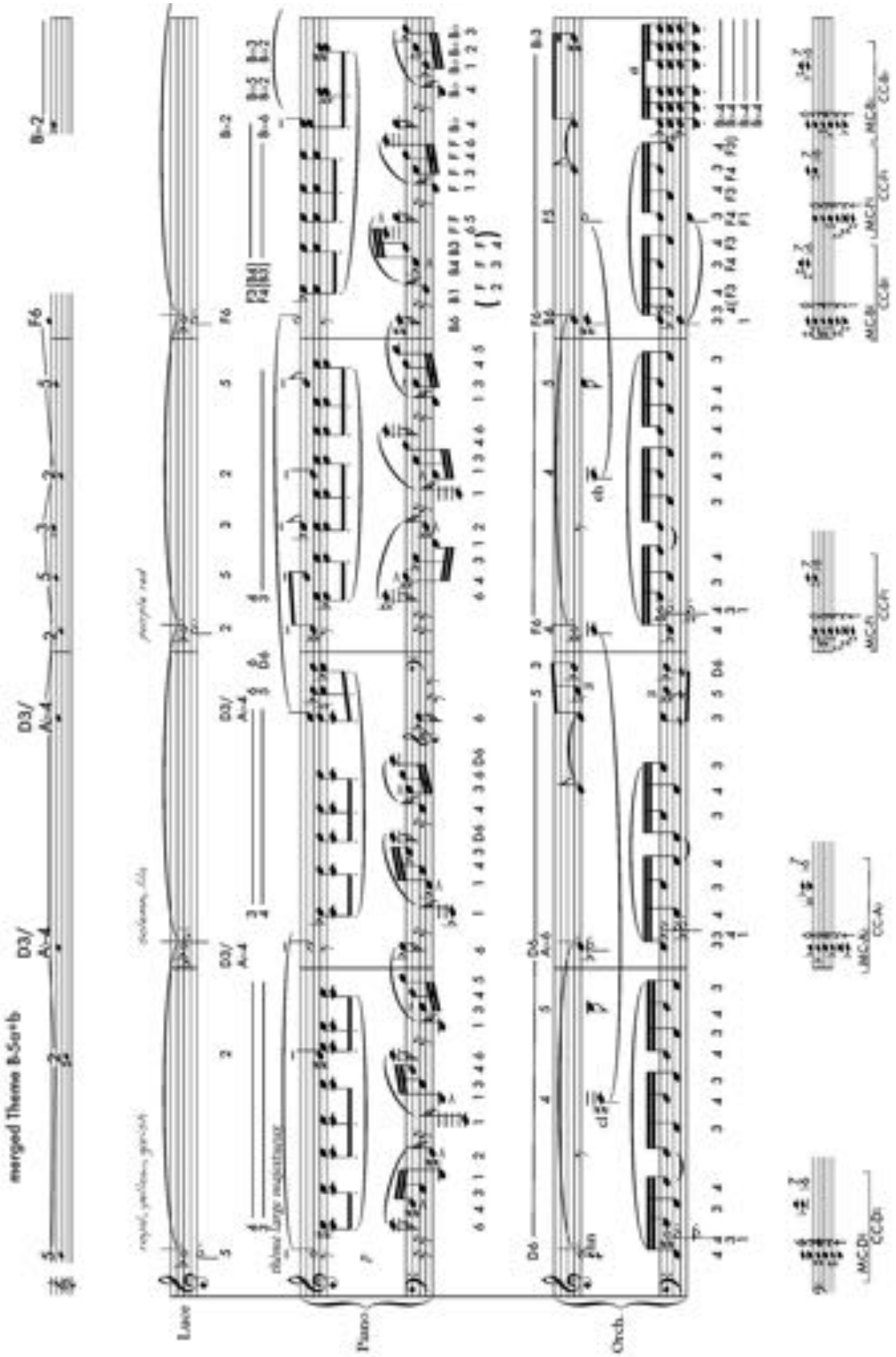
The second subsection, bars 143–150, abruptly reduces the previous momentum: "not all members of the third Root Race were ready for the Promethean gift" (idem). The previous climatic tension will be transformed into an inner harmonic tension, in the last eight bars of the section, leading to the introduction of the work's dissonant section in bar 149.

2.2.6.2.1 Bars 131–138: increasing expectation

Still within the T3 cycle of CC-A♭, the piano reintroduces, in bars 131–134, the first two parts of Theme B-5, which hadn't been sequentially restated since the introduction of the piece. The sequential articulation of Theme B-5a and b presents in this occasion two significant changes:

1. As a result of the T3 transposition between the CC-D♮/CC-A♭ governed bars 131–132 and the CC-F♮/CC-B♮ governed bars 133-134, the last pitch of the theme's first part and the first pitch of its second part are now merged in one single note, thus starting the evolutionary momentum that will lead to the exposition's climactic four bars—bars 139–142. This feature will become prototypical in all later combined statements of Theme B-5a+b.
2. Even if it implicitly remains partial 3 of the previous bar's governing CC-D♮, C♮, the third pitch-class of Theme B-5a, is explicitly harmonized as partial 4 of the governing CC-A♭, in bar 132. Underneath the surface of the merged statement of Theme B-5a+b, as a combined result of the new secondary function of its third pitch-class and the new transposition level of the theme's second part, a new sequence of partials is suggested: the five pitch-classes introduced after the theme's third note secondarily feature partials 4-2-5-3-6, the sequence of partials of Theme of Will.

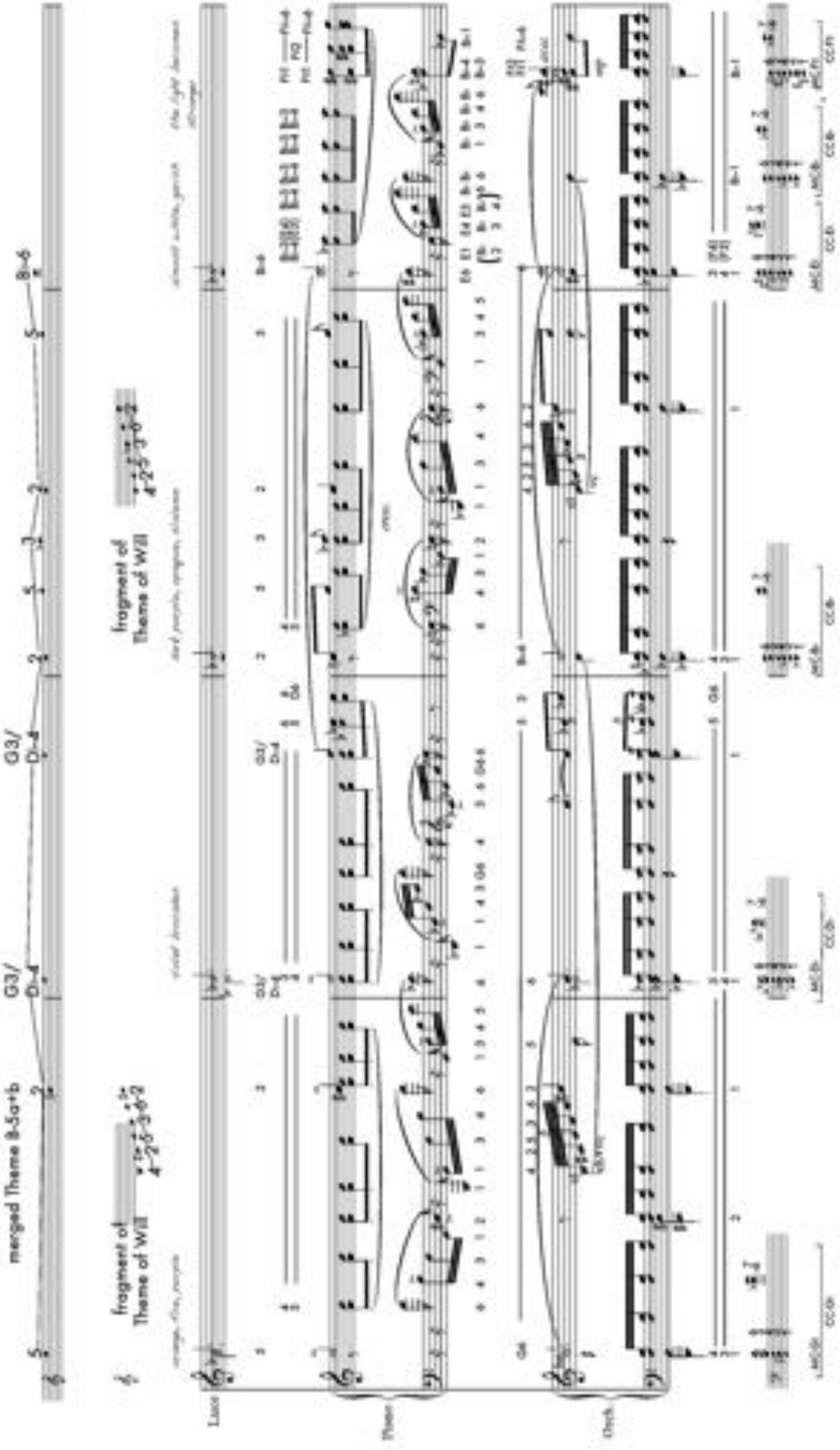
Example 95. Bars 131–134



In the first two beats of bar 134 the fast *Luce* light signals the governance of CC-F♮. Played beyond its range on the bar's downbeat, though, C♯ reveals the existence of a second governing chord centre in the bar's first beat. Considering that, in bars 131–133, the lowest position of the respective first beats had systematically been occupied by partial 1 of the successive governing chord centres, the elision of the congener F♮, combined with its replacement by B♮, as the beat's lowest pitch, establishes this last as a secondary partial 1, showing the covered co-governance of CC-B♮, to which C♯ is functionally related as partial 6. Except for C♯ and its congener partial within CC-F♮, G♮, all remaining pitches of the bar's first beat are invariant in the two governing chord centres.

Shadowed by the fast *Luce* line, the co-governance of CC-B♮ on the first beat of bar 134 completes the T3 transposition of CC-A♭, started in bar 131. The last beat of bar 134 changes the previous transposition level: it introduces the T5 transposition of bars 131–134 featured in the following bars 135–138, within the representative T3 transposition cycle of the stage—the T3 transposition cycle of CC-B♭. The co-governance of CC-E♮ on the first beat of bar 138, transpositionally related to the congener beat of bar 134 at T5, is similarly shadowed by *Luce*, which highlights the governance CC-B♭ alone. The sneaking presence of CC-E♮, whose context had been prepared in the previous four-bar set, increases the expectation that its consistent absence in the previous section had produced.

Example 96. Bars 135–138



Several features bind together the transpositionally related bars 131–134 and 135–138, inducing a strong evolutionary feeling towards the climactic bars 139–142.

1. Up from the second beat of bar 131, the solo clarinet plays a four-note motif. Its first three notes sequentially articulate, now within the context of CC-D♮, the last and first intervallic relations of Theme B-5b and Theme B-5c, respectively, featuring the same pitches of their original statement. The last pitch of the clarinet's motif anticipates the first note of the English horn's response of bars 133–134, which (a) transposes at T3 the first three pitches of the clarinet's motif and (b) inverts the intervallic relation of its third and fourth pitches. D♮, the last note played within the English horn's response, will be matched within the next four-bar set by the last note of the T5 transposition of the clarinet's motif, played in bars 135–137 by the solo cello and the English horn.
2. The horns bind the two four-bar sets together, by means of a continuous chromatic upward movement from E♮, in bar 131, to C♮, in bars 137–138. In a speedier gesture, the same pitch-classes are again related, in bars 135–138, as the encompassing notes of the merged statement of Theme B-5a and theme B-5b.
3. Underlining in both cases melodic notes within Theme B-5a+b, two fast fragmentary statements of the Theme of Will are added by the clarinets in bars 135 and 137 to the material of the congener bars 131 and 133, increasing the passage's momentum.
4. Featuring different rhythmical subdivisions to maximize the tension, the last two pitch-classes of the cello's motif of bars 137–138 are immediately object of a twice as fast restatement by the piano and the cellos, in bar 138(3). They are now part of a three-note chromatic gesture that reaches, at the beginning of the next bar, the highest note of the piano's accompaniment within the climatic bars 139–142.

2.2.6.2.2.Theme B-139

In the upbeat of bar 139 the violins introduce Theme B-139, which, marked *avec enthousiasme,* outlines an ascending movement encompassed by two downward jumps. Its two first pitch-classes—B♯/C♮ and E♮—retrograde those highlighted as encompassing notes of (a) the horns' chromatic ascent, in the previous eight bars, and (b) the merged statement of Theme B-5a and Theme B5-b, in the previous four bars. They will be further highlighted in bars 139, 141 and 142 as the highest notes of the two superposed fragments of the Theme of Will, played by the woodwinds.

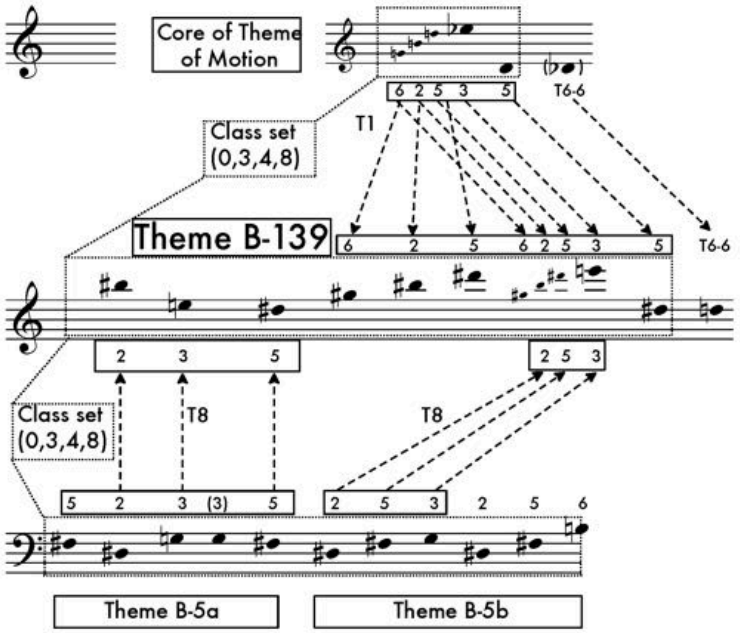
The origin of the new theme goes further back, though: it basically results of combining Theme B-5 and Theme of Motion. The first three notes of Theme B-139 sequentially rearticulate, within CC-F♯, the pitch-classes played as second, third and fourth notes of Theme B-5a. Moreover, with the exception of D♮, its last note, the whole Theme B-139 is set-class equivalent to Theme B-5a+b, if their original statement is considered. Significantly, between bars 139 and 142, the right hand of the piano's accompaniment is set-class equivalent to Theme B-5c.

From its fourth note on, Theme B-139 switches to the realm of the Theme of Motion. Played by the flutes and the violins, the triplet notes in bar 140—partials 6/G♯, 2/B♯ and 5/D♯ of the governing CC-F♯—anticipate the sequence of partials played within the grace notes of the following bar by the flutes and the clarinet, thus similarly relating to partial 3/E♮, played as the second eighth note of bar 141. These two ascending movements within the climactic bars of the third Colour Stage momentarily invert the theme's overall descending movement, but are immediately contradicted by the nuclear ninth downward jump of the Theme of Motion. The theme's last note, D♮, alien to the governing CC-F♯, creates an undefined expectation, if the congener C♯ within the similar fragment of Theme of Motion in bar 87 is considered: in bar 87, C♯ operates a T6 transposition of the chord centre that its re-articulation at the downbeat of the following bar confirms. In itself, the articulation D♮ within the Theme B-139 induces the same expectation. In bar 142, however, the previous directional role of D♮ is affected by a general diminuendo, which, preceding its articulation, decreases the theme's momentum. Indeed, the downbeat of bar 143, rather than rearticulating D♮, merely prolongs it until its melodic extinction, already as partial 5 of the new governing CC-F♮, at the second beat of the bar.

The reason for this unexpected development is to be found in the bass line of the previous four bars.

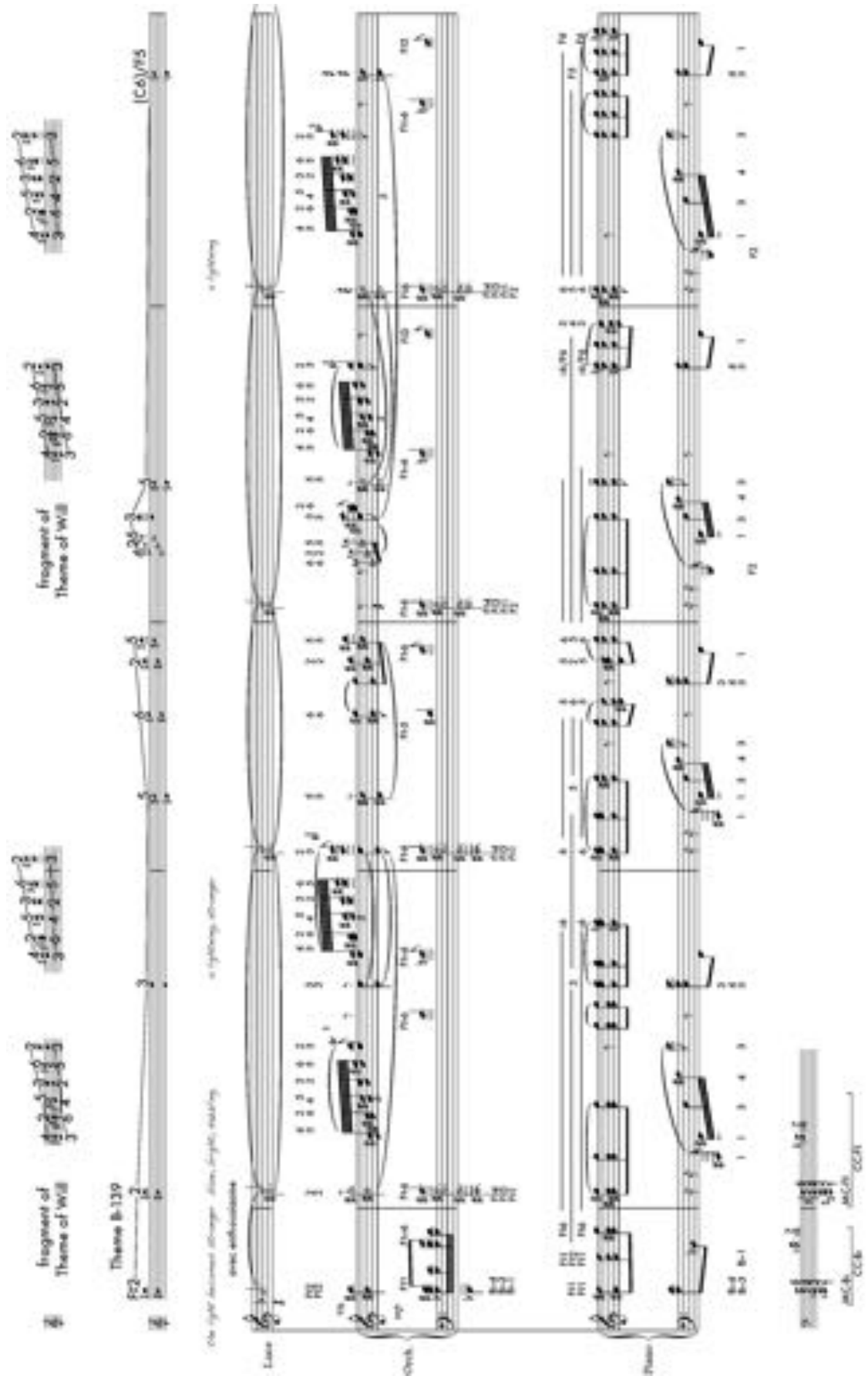
In bars 139–140, the lowest pitch of the harmony, F♯, is also partial 1 of the governing chord centre. In bars 141–142, which otherwise keep the same harmonic context, that position is taken by B♮ instead—a perfect fifth below partial 1 of the governing CC-F♯. Along with its register, the dual relation it establishes with F♯—horizontally with the lowest pitch of the previous and vertically with the second lowest pitch of bars 141–142—is inevitably perceived as a new reminiscence of a dominant-tonic relation. Bars 140–141 are in fact very close to bars 17–18 of one of the piano miniatures previously analysed, *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, and the B♮ is functionally equivalent in both cases, as partial ♭6 of CC-B♭—which, in *Promethée* op. 60, is signalled as the main chord centre of the third stage, by the slow *Luce* line.

Example 97. Theme B-139, Theme B-5 and Theme of Motion



In bars 141–142 of *Promethée* op. 60, however, B♮ has a significant second function: it anticipates, as pedal note, the second partial of CC-F♮, which will be kept at the bottom of the harmony in bar 143, the first of the two CC-F♮-governed bars that will follow. In the second of those bars, partial 1 replaces partial 2 at the bottom of the harmony, while partial 2 is articulated by the piano as the bar's second lowest partial. The striking similarity of procedures used to establish a V-I relation, in bars 139–140/141–142, and a ♯IV-I relation, in bars 143/144, shows a clear intention of once more staging the replacement of the old V-I by the new ♯IV-I polarity: the old dominant—F♯ in bars 139–142—is evoked to point out the partial that, in bars 141–142/143–144, replaces its old polar function within the new sound space: partial 2/B♮. Unprecedented thus far, the T11 transposition of the chord centre between bars 142 and 143 was for that purpose indispensable.

Example 98. Bars 139–142



2.2.6.2.3 Bars 143–150: introducing the dissonant section

In bars 143–144 the piano plays Motif 1-6-5, whose origins go back to Theme B-65 and, even further, to Theme of Reason, as we have seen. This first independent statement of Motif 1-6-5 is extruded from the developed statement of Theme B-65 that is about to come, and thereby foreshadows it. This fact becomes even clearer in the motif's T6 transposition of bars 147–148, featuring the same transposition level of the upcoming expanded statement of Theme B-65, in bars 151–152.

In bars 143–146, Motif 1-6-5 has a second significant role. The pitch-classes it articulates in bars 143–144 are partials 1, 6 and 5, within the context of CC-F♮. That numeric sequence of partials is reused in a different harmonic context between bar 144(3) and bar 146, thereby producing a different sequence of pitch-classes. Partial 1 and partial 6 are materialized by the same pitch-class—D♮—in bars 143(3) and 144, in the context of CC-C♮ and CC-D♮, respectively, while partial 5 is the main melodic note of the CC-C♮ in bar 146—the accented A♮, which, played by the trumpets, is the second defining pitch of a premonitory ascending perfect fourth.

All these refined procedures are justified by the formal significance of bars 143–146 in the exposition of *Promethée* op. 60, as premonitory of both the beginning of the work's fourth Colour Stage, in bar 183, and the correlated beginning of the development, in bar 193. Bars 143–146 will in fact be exactly restated in the transition to the fourth Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60: bars 143–144 in the last two bars of the third colour-stage, bars 181–182, and the CC-C♮-governed bars 145–146 in both the starting bars of the fourth Colour Stage, bars 183–184 and in the two last bars of the exposition, bars 185–186.[74] Gawboy (2010) pertinently observes that the governance of CC-C♮ in bars 145–146

> Reflects a narrative link between Blavatsky's third and fourth Root Races. Blavatsky's *Book of Dzyan* suggests that humans first received the first dull glimmerings of human *Manas* during the Third Root Race, although universal enlightenment did not occur until the Fourth (p. 235).[75]

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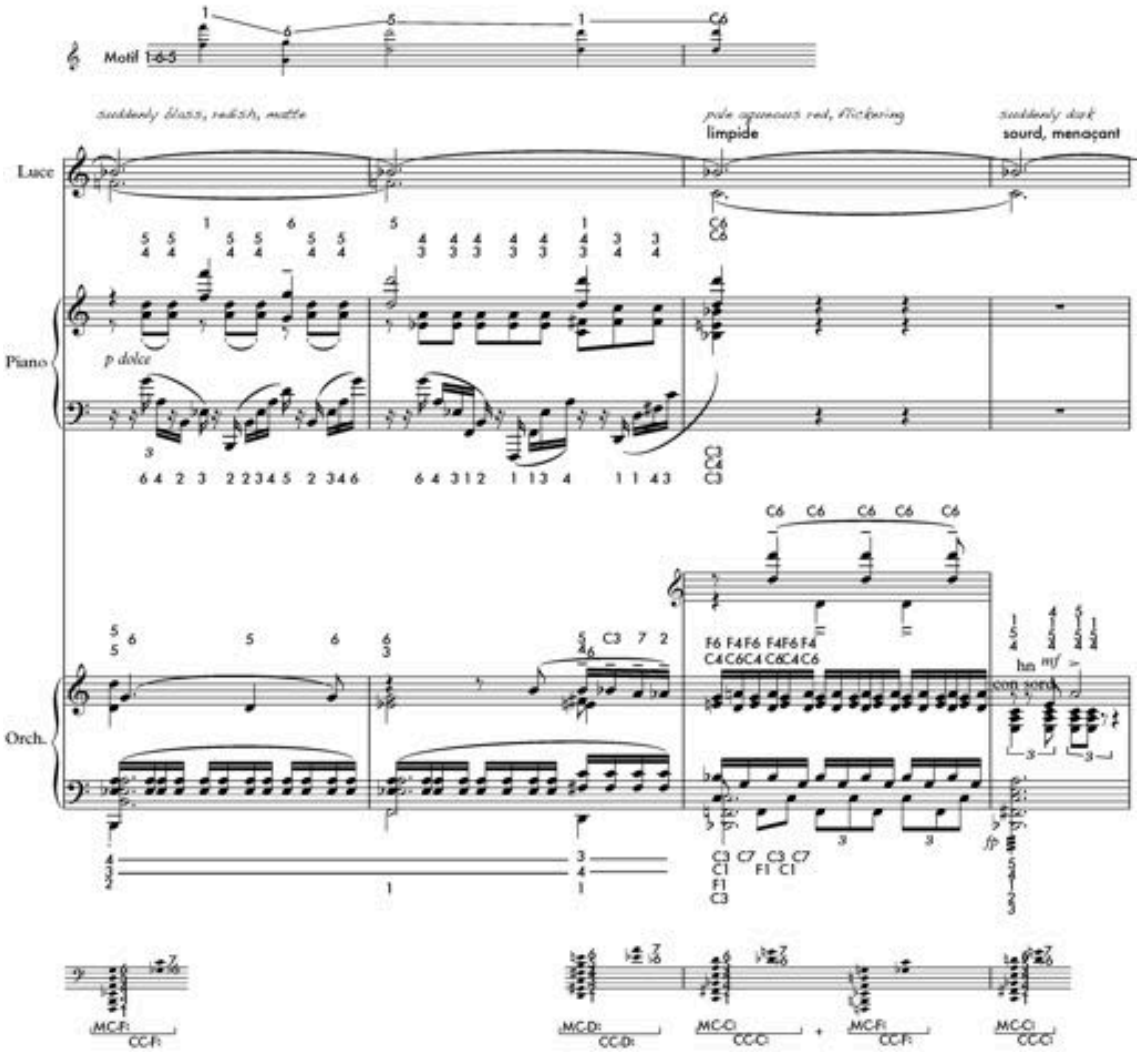
[74] The relation between bars 145–146 and 183–187 was noted by Gawboy (2010, pp. 235–236 and 272), for whom "these two measures exactly foreshadow the material at the beginning of Color Stage IV" (2010, p. 272)

[75] According to the *Book of Dzyan*,

> The Sons of Wisdom, the sons of Night, ready for rebirth, came down, they saw the vile forms of the First Third, 'We can choose', said the Lords, 'we have wisdom.' Some entered the Chhaya. Some projected the Spark. Some deferred till the Fourth. From their own Rupa they filled the Kama. Those who entered became Arhats. Those who received but a spark remained destitute of knowledge; the spark burned low. The third remained mindless. Their Jivas were not ready. These were set apart among the Seven. They became narrow-headed. The Third were ready. 'In these shall we dwell,' said the Lords of the Flame (Blavatsky, 1888, Vol. II, p. 18).

Example 99. Bars 143–146



On the other hand, the positioning of partials 3/B♭ and 6/D♮, in bar 145, at both ends of the orchestra's register—for the first time since the Introduction—and the accented A♮ of the following bar 146, recall, respectively, the starting chord of *Promethée* op. 60 and the first partial articulated within the Theme B-5. More significantly, they also prefigure the T3 restatement of bars 5–8 in bars 187–190, which, at the end of the exposition, prepare the outburst of the development. The ominous E♮-A♮ perfect fourth of bar 146, marked *sourd, menaçant,* foreshadows, finally, the beginning of the development, matching the first gesture of the piano's right hand.

The Relation between the pitch content of bar 145 and the downbeat of bar 149 is also worthy of a closer look.

The B♭ featured at the lower end of Bar 145 as partial 3 of CC-C♮, the chord centre pointed by the fast *Luce* line, is simultaneously partial 1 of the stage's main chord centre, CC-B♭. Above it, two

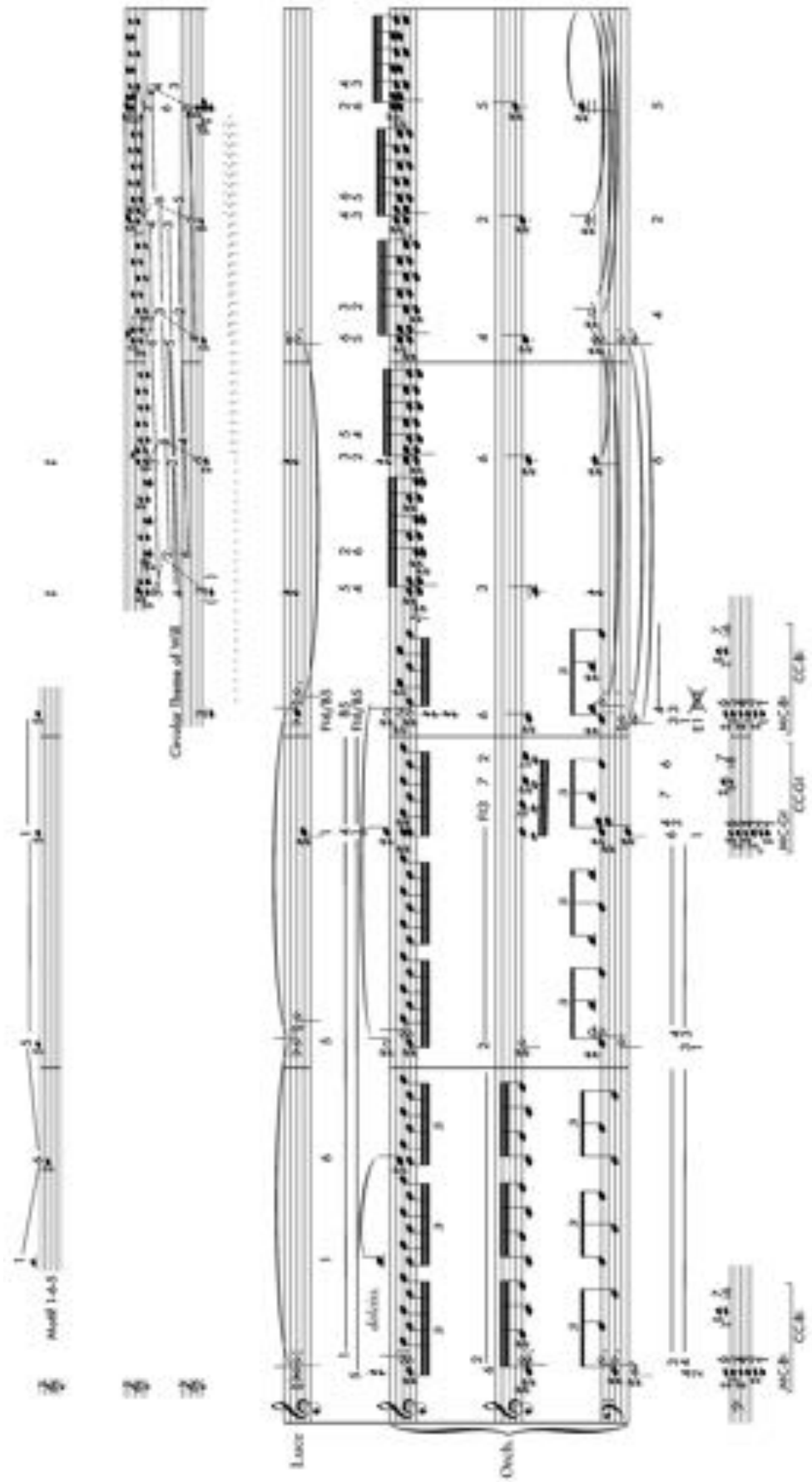
successive vertical perfect fifths are produced as result of articulating F♮, which that does not belong to CC-C♮—it is functionally partial 7 of CC-B♭—and C♮, which is its partial 1.

After the T6 restatement of bars 143–144 in bars 147–148, a T6 transposition of bar 145 was expected to happen in bar 149. Its two lower pitches are consistent with that expectation, but that which had been the third lower pitch of bar 145, is not transposed in bar 149. That absence is not frivolous, since the missing pitch would have materialized the root note of the bar's expected governing chord centre, which should have been CC-F♯. The governance of CC-F♯ is not confirmed, though, by the fast *Luce* line, which points to an unpredicted T11 transposition from CC-C♮ to CC-B♮, instead. The T11 transposition of the chord centre, combined with the T6 transposition of the bar's two lower pitches, has a surprising outcome in bar 149, enabling a new perspective of the functional role of the pitches articulated beyond the limits of the main governing chord centres in bars 145 and 149. The two lower pitches at the downbeat of bar 149, switch the functions their congeners had in bar 145: the second lowest pitch of bar 149, B♮, which transposes at T6 a pitch alien to the main governing chord centre of bar 145, F♮, becomes in bar 149 partial 1 of the main governing chord centre, while the T6 transposition of B♭, E♮, which was expected as partial 3 of CC-F♯, is now articulated beyond the range of the bar's main governing chord centre, CC-B♮.[76]

As it was already discussed in the formal analysis of *Promethée* op. 60, all these sophisticated procedures are meant to relate CC-C♮ and CC-E♮ as, respectively, the work's and the stage's polar chord centres, and to introduce this last's representative partial 1, E♮, as a thirty-bar-long pedal note. Introduced in a context that once more recalls the old V-I polarity, and establishing the new polar ♯IV-I relation that replaces it with the representative pitch-class of the third Colour Stage—the B♭ of the slow *Luce*—the E♮ pedal-note signals the beginning of the work's dissonant section. The expectation produced by the continuous absence—or the sneaking presence—of CC-E♮ in the previous sections is thus fulfilled.

[76] The arrival of CC-B♮ triggers an interruption of the slow *Luce* line, in bar 149: B♮ will shine alone in the fast *Luce* line, until bar 160, without reflecting the governing chord centres of bars 153–156 and 159–160. B♮ will be similarly highlighted in bars 163–164 and 167–168, in which it matches the governing CC-B♮. This momentary prominence of CC-B♮ foreshadows its key role in the transition to the Fourth Colour Stage, foreshadowed itself in *Luce's* bars 160–161, which feature its representative C♮ alone.

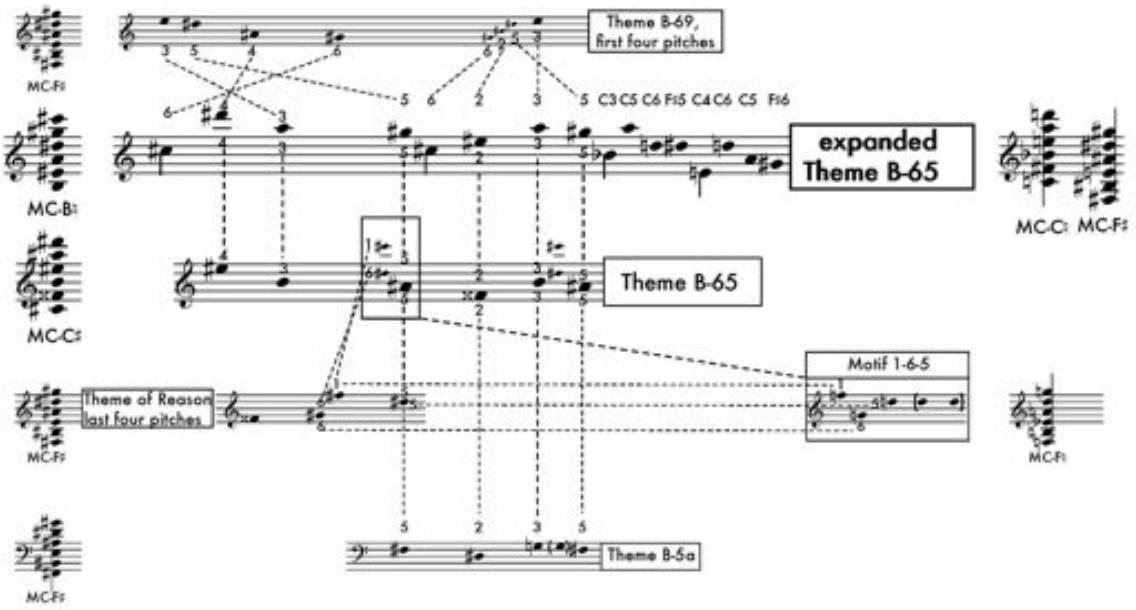
Example 100. Bars 147–150



2.2.6.3 Bars 151–162, expanded Theme B-65

Combined with four interspersed statements of Theme B-5c, the piano plays in bars 151–154 an expanded version of Theme B–65. The previous thematic material is in both cases very similar: in bars 149–150 flutes, horns, harp and violins articulate a varied statement of Circular Theme of Will, in such a way that its first vertical five-partial segment matches the second of bars 63–65.

1 Example 101. Expanded Theme B-65: relation with previous themes



The expanded Theme B–65 is, in this occasion, expunged of its former relation with Theme of Reason—its elided material having been unfolded into two independent statements, in bars 143–144 and 147–148, as we have seen. The intersection of the downbeat of the second voice with the upper voice, in bars 151 and 152, suggests a new relation with Theme of Motion, instead.[77] Both themes share the first eight partials, although not sequentially. They are related in such a way that (a) the first two partials of Theme B-65 retrograde the third and fourth of Theme of Motion, (b) the third and fourth partials of Theme B-65 restate the first two of Theme of Motion, (c) the fifth and six partials are in both cases the same and (d) the seventh and eighth partials of Theme B-65 retrograde the congener pitches within the Theme of Motion. Example 101 shows the way both theme B-65 and its expansion of bars 151–154 relate to previous themes of *Promethée* op. 60.

Theme B-65 is expanded in bars 153–154, by means of set-class equivalency—the three-pitch motif of the upper voice is set class (0,1,6) in bars 151, 153 and 154. The purpose of this expansion

[77] This new relation will be confirmed in the theme's restatement of bars 514–517, which merges the two voices in one.

is to express the polarity between the chord centres that should have been transpositionally related in bars 145–146/149–150, CC-C♮ and CC-F♯. The motion from spirit into matter, represented by CC-F♯ and CC-C♮ respectively, plays once more a central role: the two chord centres alternate without any overlap in bars 153–154, in which CC-F♯ is predominant, while only two short glimpses reveal its presence in the otherwise CC-C♮-governed bars 155–156[78]—Example 102. These last two bars have a significant prophetic role, as well, by articulating, on the piano's left hand, a particular morphology of a sequential five-partial segment of the Theme of Will—Bells-motif[79]—that will be rearticulated in the higher register of the orchestra in relation to all climatic moments of the remaining four Colour Stages of *Promethée* op. 60.

Bars 157–162 are a varied restatement of the previous 6 bars. In bars 157–160 the solo oboe and the solo flute play respectively Theme B-65 and Theme B-5a, while the piano's accompaniment plays fragments of previous themes.[80] Amongst these fragments, a derivation from the Theme of Will, which elides its starting partial 4 and intersperses partial 1 between partials 3 and 6, stands out. Example 103 shows the thematic pattern of bars 157–158, which will be reproduced in bars 159–160.

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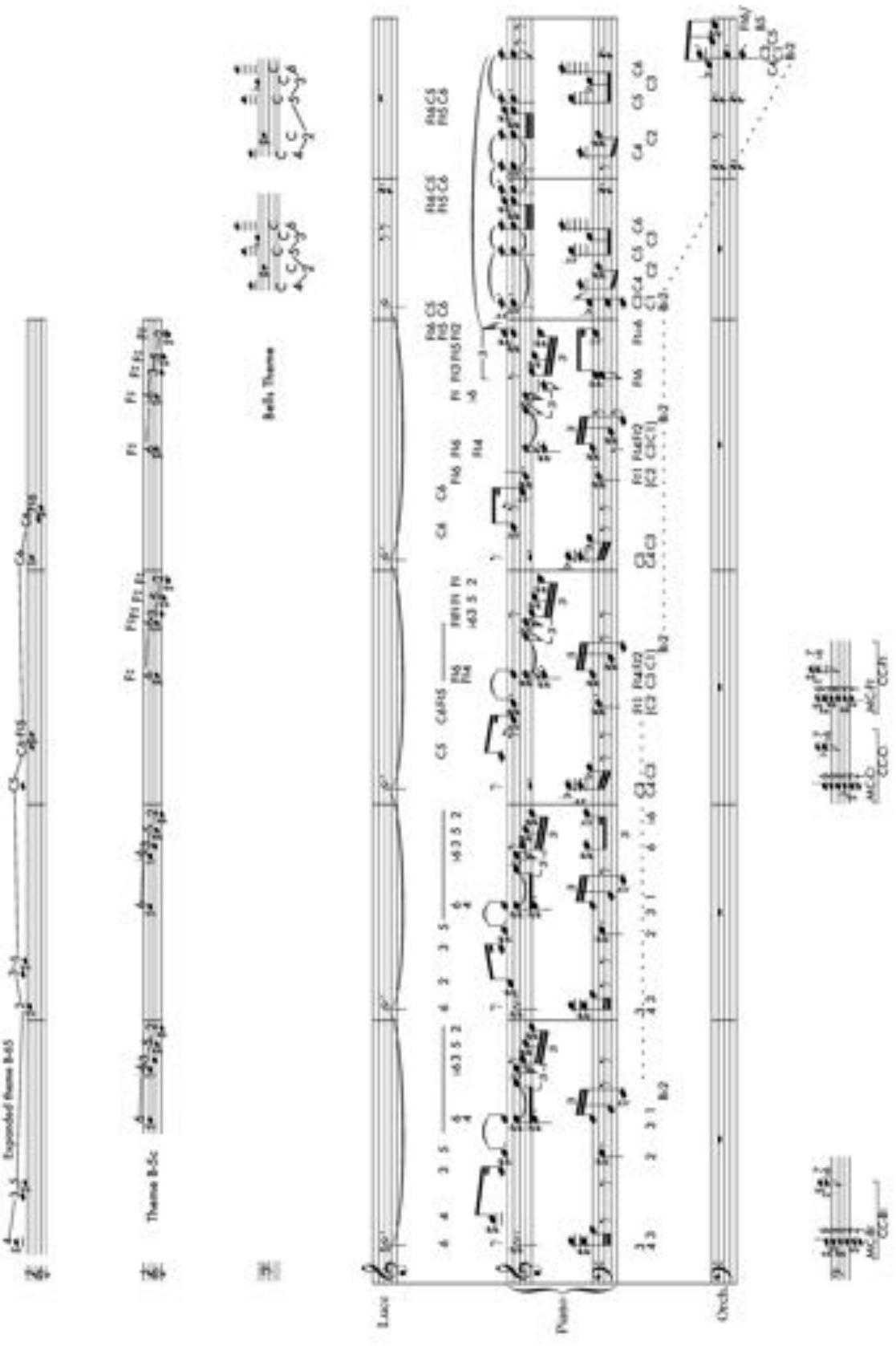
[78] According to Gawboy's (2010) analysis, "the conflict between the sustained B in the luce part and Scriabin's annotation of 'very red' [in the Parisian score] in bar 153 reflects the ambivalence between B and C Pleroma [MC-B♮ and MC-C♮] in the passage as a whole." (p. 274). The two chords would be "deployed simultaneously, roughly divided between right and left hands in [bars] 153–154" while bars 155–156, would be governed by MC-C♮ alone, tacking MC-B♮ "chord tones D♯ and G♯ (...) as chromatic embellishments" (Idem). The thematic content of the passage, however, does not confirm Gawboy's analysis. The statements of Theme B-5c of bars 151–152 are T8 transposed in bars 153–154, without any morphologic change. Its partials' sequence is therefore unchanged, under the governance of CC-F♯ alone, to which all pitches within the second and third beats of bars 153 and 154 belong.

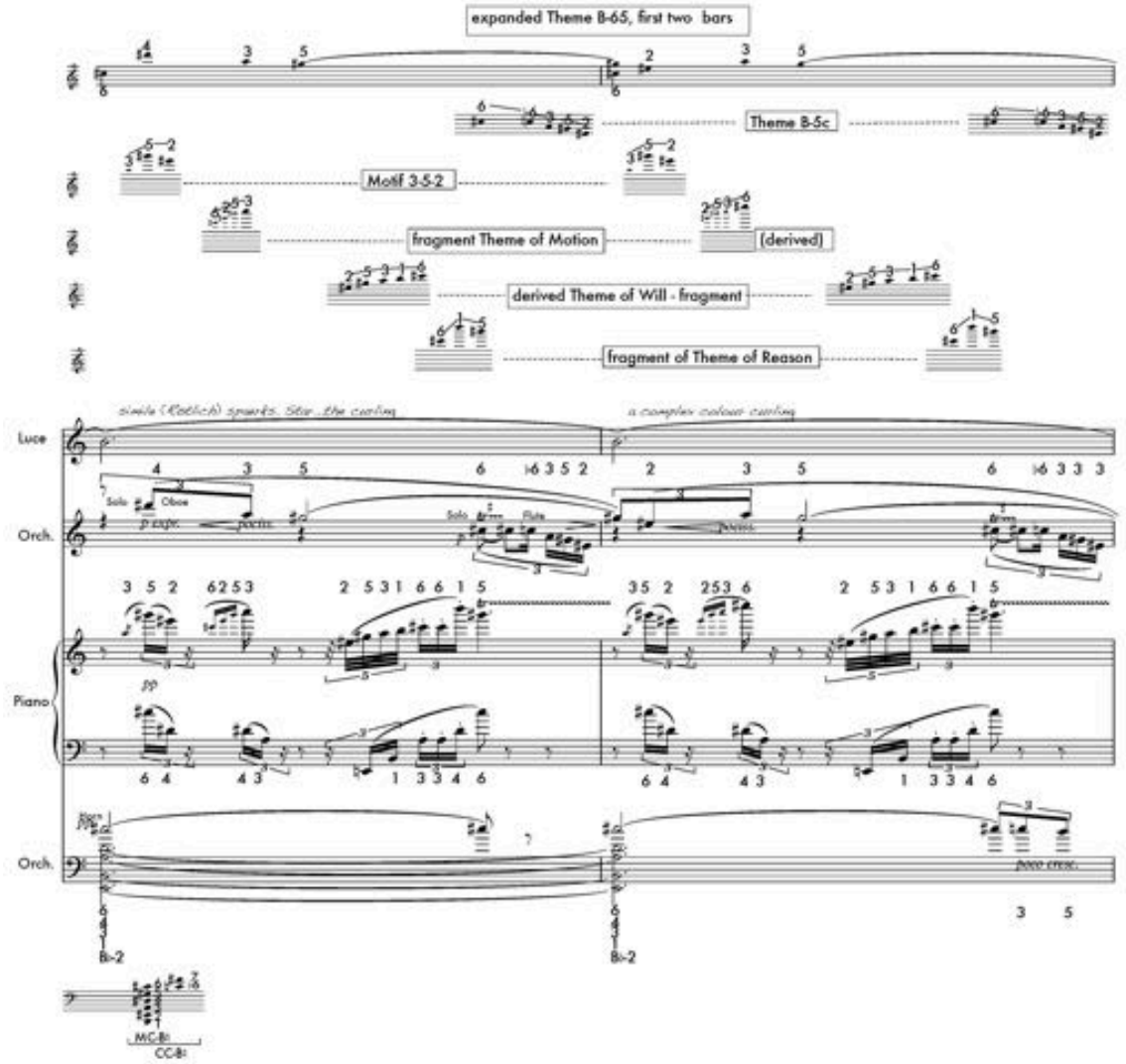
[79] The association of this motif with bells is taken from Gawboy (2010), who firstly refers to it in relation to bars 275–276. According to Gawboy, "in [bars] 275–276, bells suddenly enter (...). Here and in the remainder of the work, the use of bells signals a transformation or dramatic turning point" (290).

[80] The fragment of Theme of Motion played by the piano in bars 158 and 160, in spite of featuring a different sequence of partials, keeps its relation with the circular four-partial segment of the Theme of Will: it now articulates its original sequence, such as it had been defined by the right hand's accented voice of bars 61–63.

Example 102. Bars 151–156



Example 103. Bars 157–158



2.2.7 Close, bars 163–192

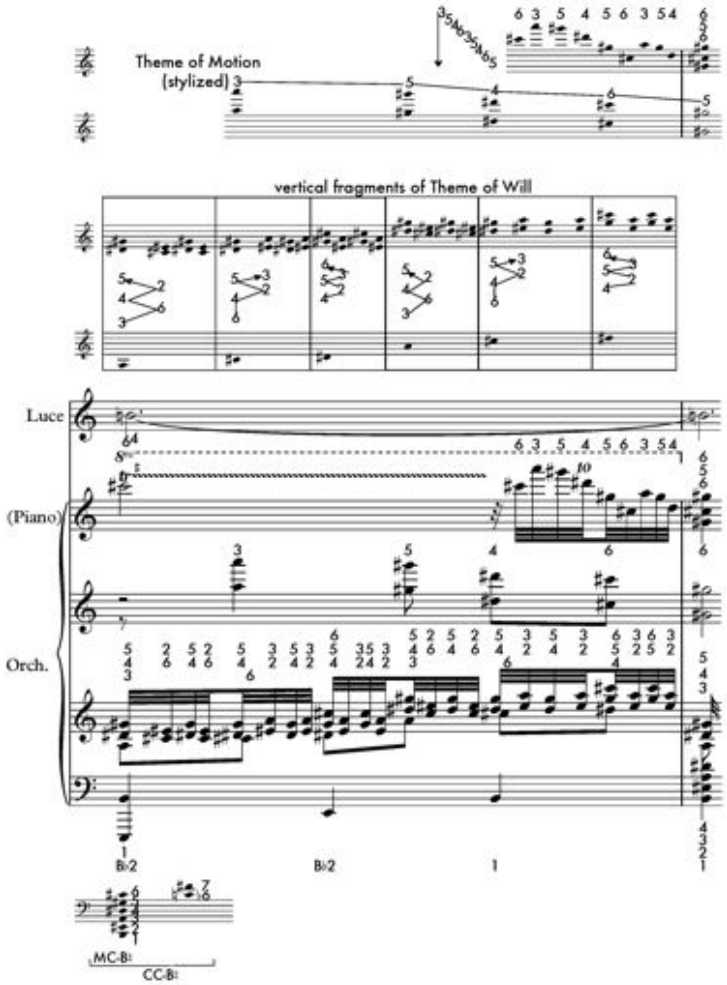
2.2.7.1 Bars 163–172

Bars 163–172, marked *onduleux,* are structured into two sets of four bars and one set of two bars. In the CC-B♮-governed bars 163–164/167–168, the solo oboe and the solo flute regain their leading role of bars 157–160. They play a stylized variation of Theme of Motion, which, by skipping the four-partial fragment independently played by the piano in bars 157–160—within the accompaniment of the varied restatement of the expanded Theme B-65—elides the theme's nuclear ninth downward leap. Cellos, violas and harp articulate a fragmentary three-partial rotation of the archetypal sequence of Theme of Will—partials 3-6-4—, which is sneakingly present all the way through. Each eighth note, considering those three-partial rotations, on one hand, and the thirty-second notes figurations of the

violins on the other hand, provides a sequential vertical statement of the theme's five partials, featuring three different rotations twice.

In bar 166, while the lower voices of violas and harp feature the expected B♭ within the second three-partial rotation of the archetypal Theme of Will, their higher voices and the cellos replace it with an unforeseen A♮. The purpose is to second the trumpets' ascending fourth, which, together with the governance of CC-C♮ in bars 165 and 166, again foreshadows the beginning of the fourth stage of *Promethée* op. 60, in bar 183. The piano is added to the orchestra in bars 167–170, which are otherwise an exact restatement of the previous four bars.

Example 104. Bars 167–168(1)



In bar 171 a complete five-partial rotation results of adding the two missing partials to the previous three-partial rotation of Theme of Will; it is immediately followed by a second rotation, which is interrupted after its fourth constituent. Significantly, the erased fifth constituent matches the pitch-class that is being maintained as pedal note since bar 149.

2.2.7.2 Bars 173–192: from the third to the fourth Colour Stage

The fourteen bars articulated between the upbeat of bar 173 and bar 186 lead the work to the beginning of its fourth stage by differently combining previously articulated material:

1. Bars 172(3)–180 restate bars 58(3)–66 at T10, thereby featuring Theme B-27 and Theme B-65. Their transposition level is determined by the intervallic relation of the pedal note of the original bars, F♯, and the congener E♮ of the transposed bars, which was being maintained since bar 149. The structural function of these restated bars was already discussed in the formal analysis of *Promethée* op. 60.
2. Bars 181–184 are an untransposed restatement of bars 143–146, with Motif 1-6-5 as main thematic material.
3. Bars 185–186 repeat the two previous bars, thus restating bars 145–146 for the second time.

As it was discussed before, rather than transposing bars 145–146 at T6, as expected, bars 149–150 had introduced CC-B♮, the chord centre that would govern the return of Theme B-65, in the following two bars. As a result of combining a T10 transposition of bars 65–66 with an untransposed restatement of bars 143–144, the CC-B♮-governed bars 179–180 and the CC-F♮-governed bars 181–182 are concomitantly related to bars 143–144 and 151–152 as well: they revert both their transposition levels and leading themes.

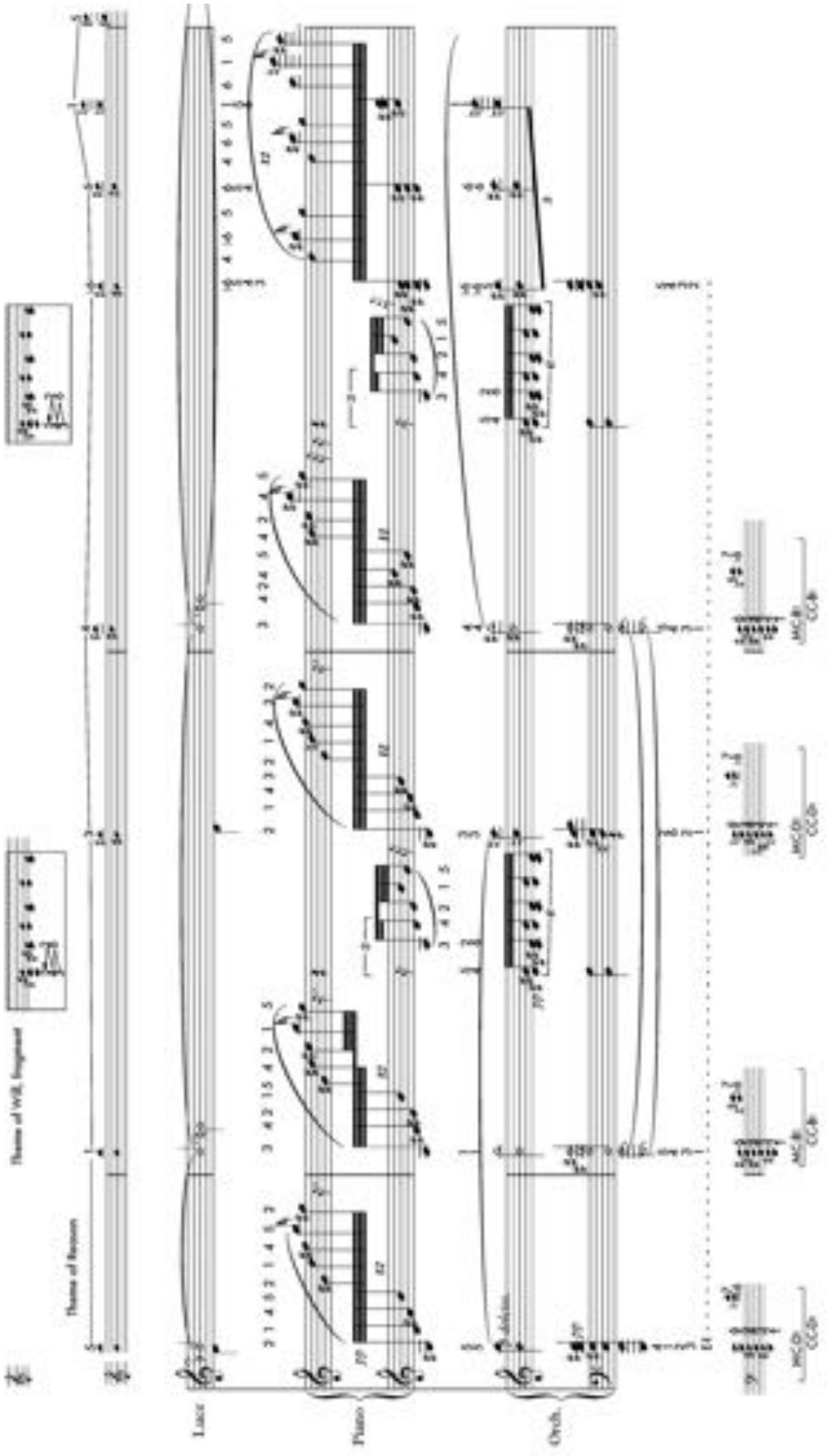
As result of restating bar 65, the E♮ pedal note is interrupted in bar 179. Its extraordinary length would surely have been enough to ensure the augmented fourth polarity with the B♭, which will be introduced in bar 183 and maintained at the lower end of the harmony in the following nineteen bars. To further highlight that relation, though, a short T1 transposition of the augmented fourth polarity is featured in between, relating the lowest pitch of bars 179–180, partial 2/E♯ of CC-B♮, and the lowest pitch of bar 181, partial 2/B♮ of CC-F♮. The suppression of the double basses at the downbeat in bar 181, considering the original statement of bar 143, has certainly the purpose of keeping this interspersed ♯IV–I relation at a different level, maintaining the main E♮-B♭ augmented fourth polarity of bars 178 and 183 alone at the orchestra's lower register.

This new combination of old material recalls the evolutionary process of Motif 1-6-5 by sequentially articulating it in all its three thematic contexts thus far: within Theme of Reason,[81] in which it first appears, as part of Theme B-65 and, as an independent segment, within the restatement of bars 143–144. These genealogic procedures, which had already been used in the transition from the second to the third Colour Stages of *Promethée* op. 60, signals an eminent change, within the work's structure. Bars 183–184 enhance that expectation. In bar 183, the restatement of bars 145–146 switches the chord centre to CC-C♮. The harmonic change triggers a simultaneous shift to C♮ in the slow line of *Luce*, which thus signals the beginning of the fourth Colour Stage. *Luce* and harmony precede the near outburst of the next formal articulation. Instead of the expected T6 transposition of bars 143–144/181–182, which would have undesirably taken the chord centre back to CC-B♮, bars 185–186 repeat the content of the previous two bars, in a second restatement of bars 145–146. Matching the length of the work's first chord, these CC-C♮-governed four bars precede the return of Theme B5-a, in bars 187–190, which keep the chord centre unchanged by T3 transposing the introduction's bars 5–8.

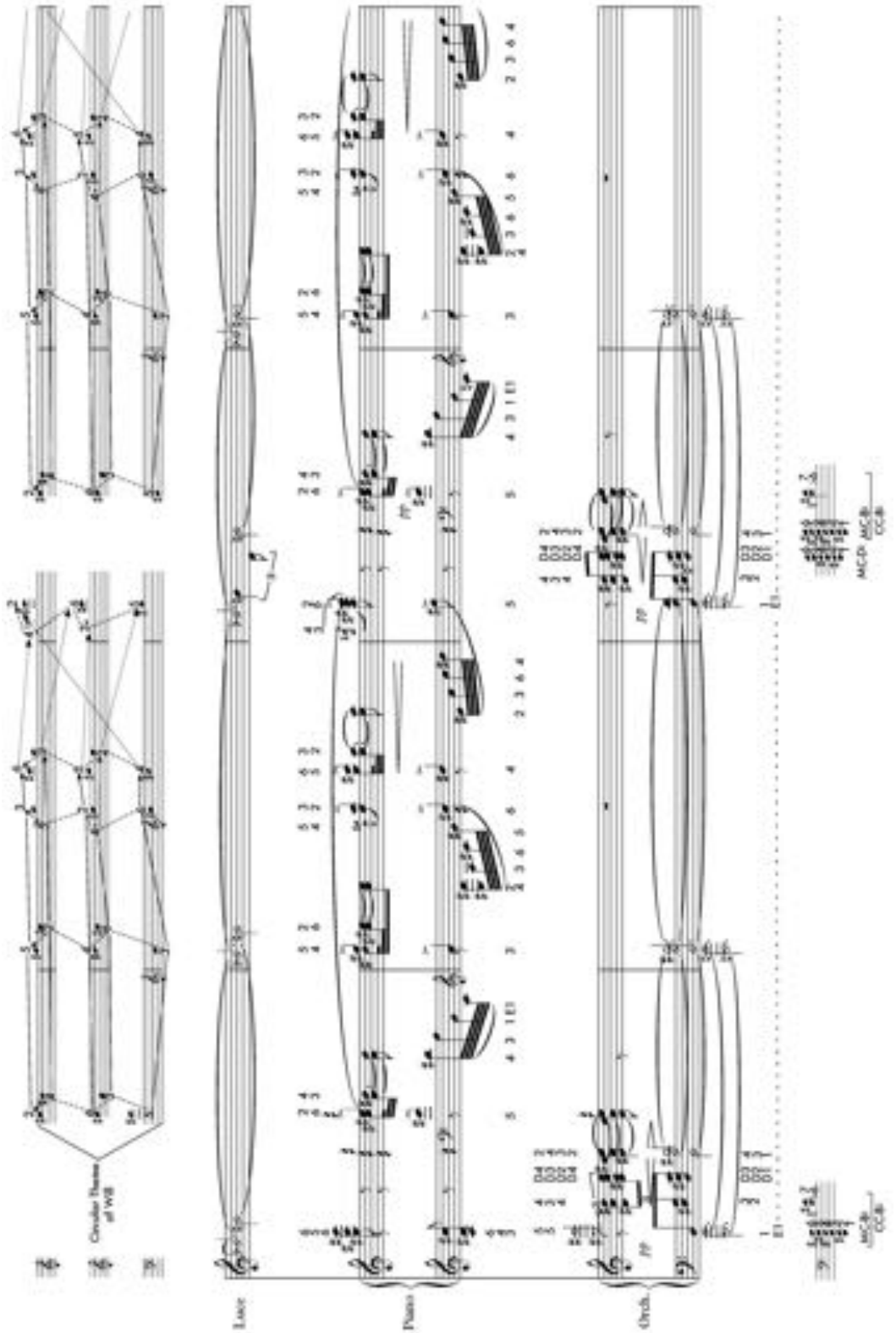
The last two bars of the exposition, bars 191 and 192, feature two new recurrences of bar 146: the trumpet plays its ominous E♮–A♮, in bar 191, and the horn repeats it one octave below, in bar 192. The echo effect thus produced is enhanced by means of orchestral texture, reduced to a pianissimo tremolo played by the three lower strings in a narrow low register. At the downbeat of bar 193 the outburst of the piano initiates the work's development, formally corresponding to the beginning of the fourth Colour Stage, ten bars before.

[81] The interspersed articulation of the Circular Theme of Will between the arpegiatted Theme of Reason and Theme B-65, which reproduces that of the original bars 61–64, does not jeopardize their genealogical relation, because the Circular Theme of Will is a necessary condition for the emergence of Theme B-65.

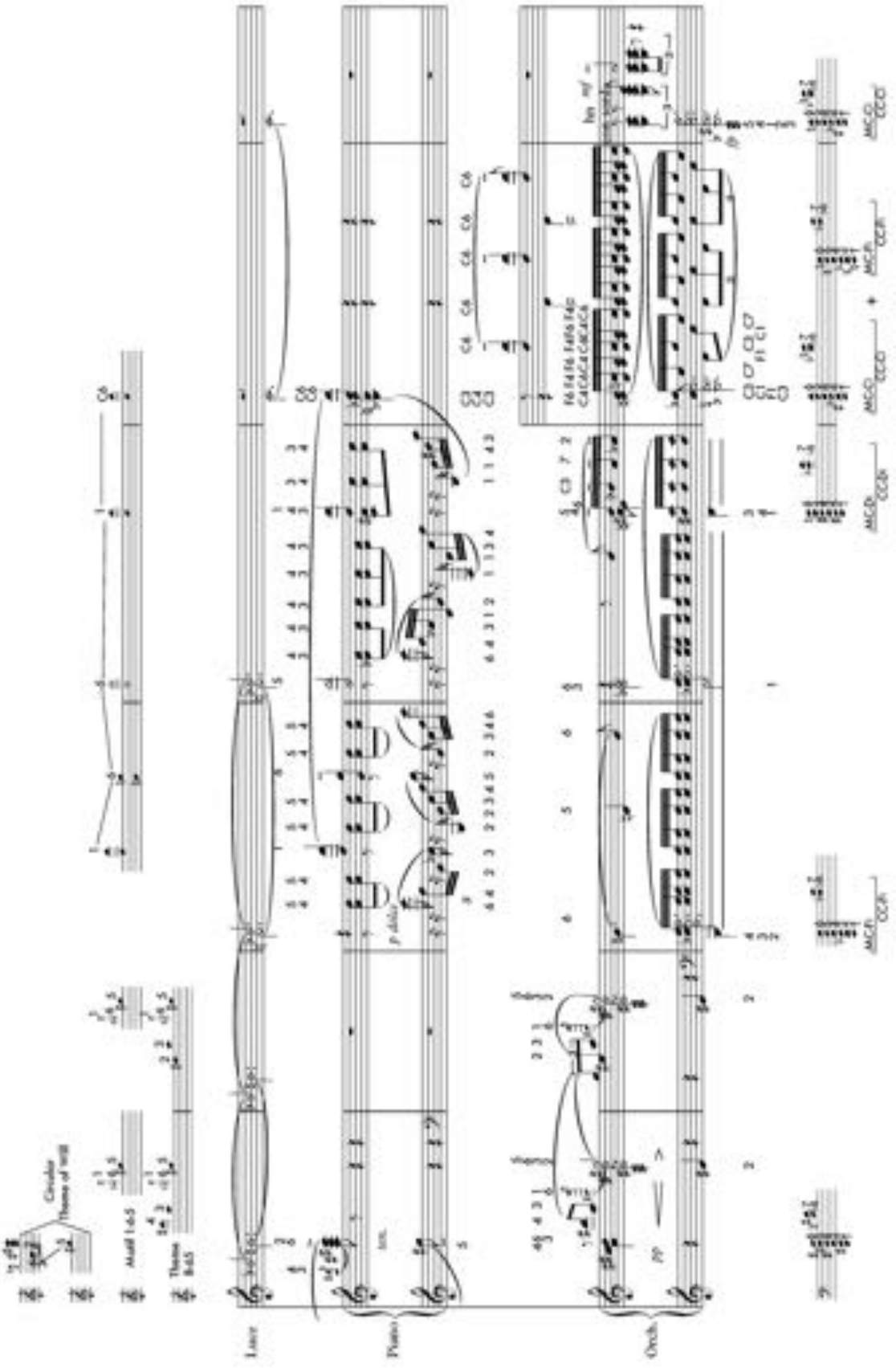
Example 105. Bars 172(3)–174



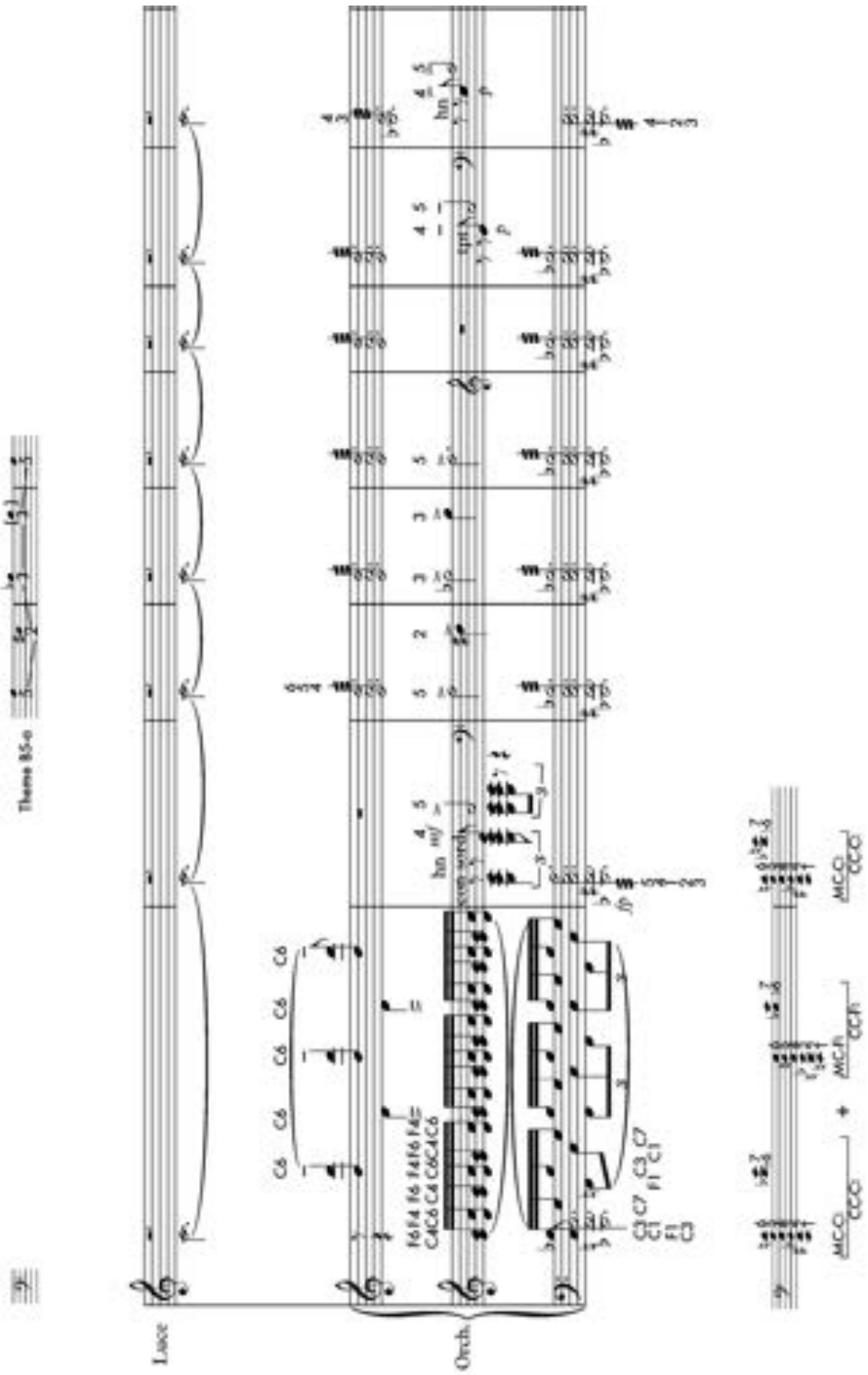
Example 106. Bars 175–178



Example 107. Bars 179–184



Example 108. Bars 185–192



2.3 Development: bars 193–370(2)

2.3.1 Blavatsky's fourth and fifth Root Races

Gawboy (2010) rightly describes Blavatsky's Fourth Root-Race as

> "A period of struggle, in both historical and metaphorical terms. In *The Secret Doctrine,* Blavatsky draws upon the many accounts of epic battles between gods and demi-gods in world myth, [which] reflect a pivotal moment in her own account of the true history. (p. 283)

According to Blavatsky, "allegorical accounts about the 'Wars in Heaven'" (1888. Vol. II, p. 103) include the "*war of the Titans* (...), the record of the terrible strife between the 'Sons of God' and the 'Sons of the Shadow' of the Fourth and the Fifth Races"(1888, Vol. II, p. 500). Related to this war of the Titans is the

> Allegory of Prometheus, who steals the divine fire so as to allow men to proceed consciously on the path of spiritual evolution, thus transforming the most perfect of *animals* on earth into a potential god, and making him free to 'take the kingdom of heaven by violence.' (Blavatsky, 1888. Vol. II, p. 244)

Blavatsky writes that,

> [In] the Fourth Root Race [...] man and all nature reached their lowest state of gross matter. From that time, i.e., from the end of the three and a half races, humanity and nature entered on the ascending arc of their racial cycle." (1888, vol. II, p. 308)

Blavatsky finds "Proto- and anti-types [of the old myth of Prometheus] in every ancient theogony" (1888, II, p. 420), such as "the rebellion of the proud Lucifer" (1888, II, p. 237), or "*Luciferus,* the name of the angelic Entity presiding over the *light of truth* as over the light of the day" (1888, II, p. 512). Other examples are

> "Typhon the Egyptian, Python, (...) the Suras and the Assuras all belong to the same legend of Spirits peopling Earth. They are not '*demons* commissioned to create and organize this

> visible universe,' but fashioners (the 'architects') of the worlds, and the progenitors of man. They are the *Fallen* angels, metaphorically—'the true mirrors of the Eternal Wisdom'" (Blavatsky, 1888, II, p. 516).

It is thanks to these "Fallen angels",[82] to the

> "Rebellion of the intellectual life against the morbid inactivity of pure spirit that we are what we are—self-conscious, thinking men, with the capabilities and attributes of Gods in us, for good as much for evil. Hence the Rebels are our saviours. (...) It is only by the attractive force of the contrasts that the two opposites—Spirit and Matter—can be cemented on Earth and, smelted in the fire of self-conscious experience and suffering, find themselves wedded in Eternity. This will (...) explains the 'rebellion' of the oldest and highest Angels, and the meaning of their cast down from Heaven into the depths of Hell, i.e., MATTER" (Blavatsky, 1888. II, p. 103)

However, because "Good and Evil are twins, [with no existence] *per se"* (1888*,* II, p. 96), what was meant as a gift—"free-will [and] intellectual self-conscious" as opposed to "passive slavery (...) [and] inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude" Blavatsky, 1888, II, p. 421)—became, due to "Selfishness and Egoism" of "the mortal man" also a "curse" (Blavatsky, II, p. 422). "Lower passions chain (...) higher aspirations to the rock of matter, to generate [,] in many a case [,] the vulture of sorrow, pain and repentance" (Idem). The "Drama of the struggle of Prometheus with the Olympic tyrant and despot sensual Zeus, [is] enacted daily within our actual mankind" (ibidem).

Struggle and conflict, which pervade both the fourth and the fifth Root Races, will be musically staged throughout the fourth and fifth Colour Stages of *Promethée* op. 60.

2.3.2 First part, bars 193–308: outline

Except for its last four bars, the first part of the development, belongs entirely to the fourth Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60 and is structured in five sections: thirty bars long, the first, eighteen bars long each one of the middle three and thirty-two bars, the fifth.

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[82] "Blavatsky also refers to them as "the Sons of the Flame of Wisdom"(1888, vol. II, p. 411), or "the Sons of Shadow" (1888, vol. II, p. 500), in other occasions.

The first section, bars 193–222, recalls the two starting gestures of the first and the third parts of the exposition: the first piano's entrance of bar 31 is deconstructed between bars 193 and 214, before a T4 transposed restatement of bars 115–121 is introduced in bar 215.

The second and third sections stage conflict by means of short-period rotation of their leading themes—themselves in permanent confrontation with several simultaneous secondary themes. A dramatic turning point in the third bar of the third section hastens the succession of leading themes towards the fifth—the stage's climactic section. The unique features of its last four bars are crucial in the transition to the second part of the development and to the fifth Colour Stage.

2.3.3 First part: detailed analysis

2.3.3.1 First section, bars 193–222

2.3.3.1.1 Bars 193–214

Bars 193–214 are structured into two sets of ten and twelve bars respectively. The tension introduced in the dissonant section of the exposition is dramatically stressed at the beginning of the development, with the return of the piano—its representative function will be discussed in the analysis of the work's final bars, to which this section relates.

In bars 193–196—marked *très accentué*—the solo piano plays a non-thematic version of its bellicose gesture of bars 30–31, while two incipits of its former thematic material—Theme of Will— are simultaneously played by the horns.

In the central part of bar 196, the transposition of the chord centre from CC-C♮ to CC-F♯[83] suggests a more complex frame, which bars 197–220 will retrospectively confirm. As Baker (1986) notices, "an interesting feature of the opening piano fanfare [bars 193–196] is that the ascending (...) motive, whose derivation from [Theme B-21] is not obvious, is the antecedent phrase of the descending phrase [,] extending the original [statement of Theme B-21]" (p. 246). Indeed, in the CC-C♮/CC-F♯-governed bars 197–200, the solo piano sequentially articulates (a) an incipit of Theme B-21 (b) the theme's complete statement, and (c) its extension, while the horns simultaneously play two progressively longer fragments of Theme of Will—with three and five constituents, respectively.

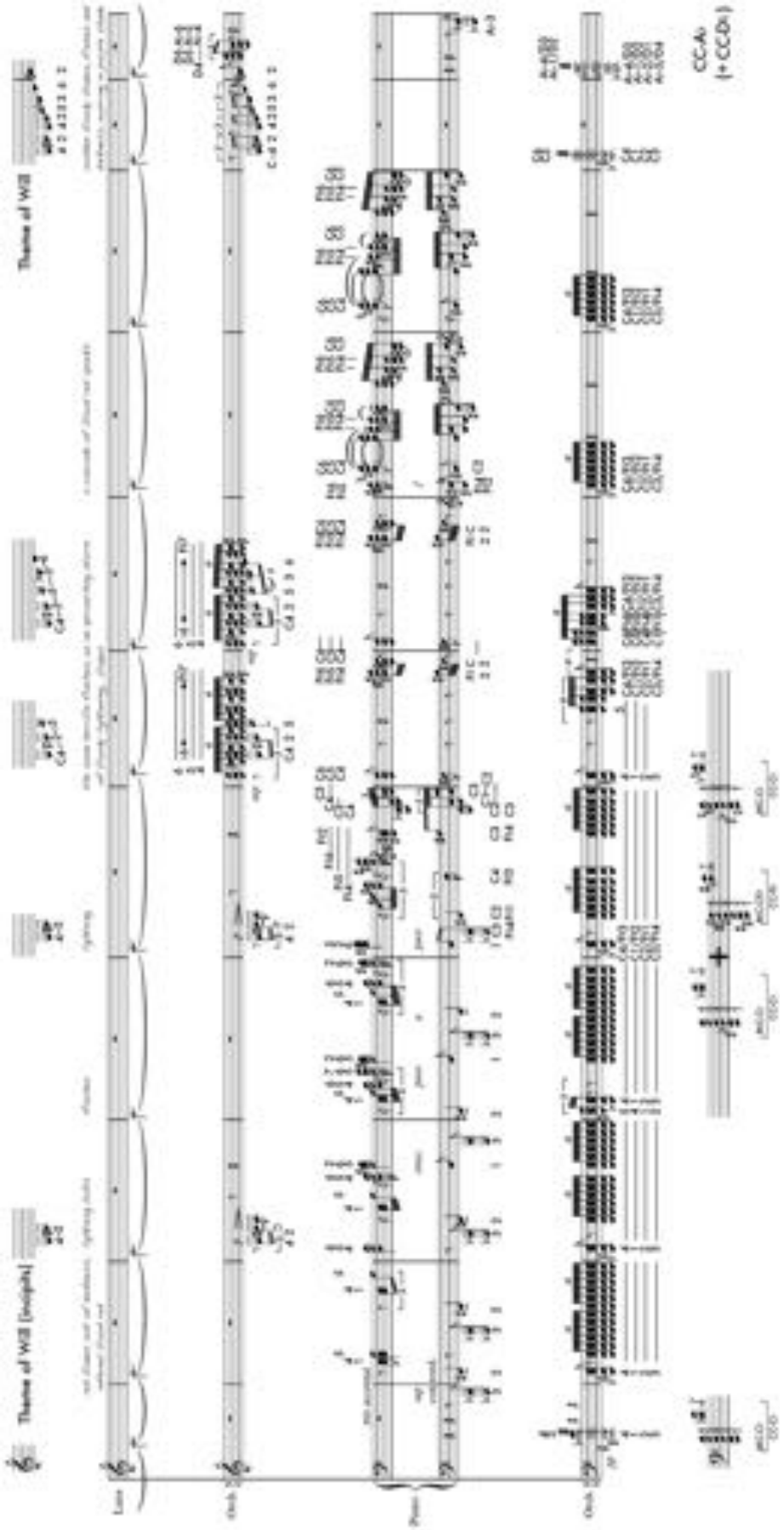
The association of Theme B-21 and Theme of Will is differently stressed in the last two bars of the set: Thanks to the T8 transposition of the chord centre in bar 202, its fragmentary statement of Theme B-21 and the complete Theme of Will of the previous bar, feature the same pitch-class as

[83] *Luce,* which features the stage's C♮ alone, does not reflect the introduction of CC- F♯.

starting melodic notes. The T8 transposition of the chord centre, in bar 202, introduces CC-A♭, which will be the main governing chord centre of the next ten bars.

Formally, bars 203–214 add a two-bar long statement of the Theme of Will to an otherwise transposition of bars 193–202. As far as governing chord centres are concerned, the tenth bar of the set introduces a significant change: rather than introducing a new T8 transposition, as the congener bar 202, bar 212 unexpectedly transposes the chord centre at T9, with the introduction of CC-F♮. The two bar-long statement of the Theme of Will, played by the trumpets within the same transposition level in bars 213–214, generates the expectation of a climax that the sudden pianissimo at the upbeat of bar 215 unexpectedly frustrates.

Example 109. Bars 192–202



2.3.3.1.2 Bars 215–222

Except for its last bar, the subsection formed by bars 215–222 is a T4 transposition of the first section of the exposition's third part, bars 115–121. Gawboy (2010) notices that their starting governing chord centre, CC-D♮, which contrarily to the original statement does not match the slow *Luce* line, "foreshadows its return at the beginning of the Fifth Colour Stage" (p. 295).

The congener bars 215–221 and 115–121 are very similarly related with the previous bars, as well:

1. The chord centre of bar 214, CC-F♮ is transposed at T9 in the CC-D♮-governed bar 215, repeating the transposition level that related the chord centres of the congener bars 114 and 115.
2. Bars 212–219 feature a T4 transposition of the pedal note that binds bars 111–119 together. As a result of the transposition of the chord centre between bars 211 and 212 it is introduced one bar later, in this occasion.
3. A two-bar statement of the Theme of Will precedes bars 215–222. Preceding the congener bars 115–121, bars 113–114 relate as a major third archetype to the Theme of Will, and were themselves preceded by the theme's complete statement, in bars 111–112.

The chord centre of bar 222 does not transpose the fourth bar of the eight-bar set at T9, contrarily to its congener bar within the original statement of bars 115–122, resuming the transposition level of the CC-F♯-governed bar 220 instead. A metric accelerando, which results of an unexpected new statement of theme B-5a, thrusts the development into the conflictive sections that follow.

2.3.3.2 Second section, bars 223–240

Bars 223–240 are subdivided into three subsections of, respectively, eight, six and four bars.

The first subsection, bars 223–230, introduces a different leading theme every two bars: it intercalates Theme B-5a between two statements of Theme of Will, in its first six bars, before featuring Circular Theme of Will in the last two. Both statements of Theme of Will, played by the trumpets, are stressed in the woodwinds by derived motifs, such as two simultaneous five-partial rotations of Theme of Will—on the second beat of both bars 223 and 227—and Bell Motif—played by the piccolo in bars 224 and 228, in two one-bar long statements.

Theme of Will and Theme B-5a, the leading themes of bars 223–228, interchange the main centricities of their original statements in the Introduction of *Promethée* op. 60: Theme B-5a is now governed by CC-F♯ and Theme of Will by CC-A♮. This inversion enhances thematic confront by relating both themes melodically: partial 2 of CC-A♮ and partial 5 of CC-F♯ correspond to the same pitch-class, D♯/E♭, which is thereby articulated as (a) the last note of Theme of Will, in bars 223–224, (b) the first note of Theme B-5a, in bars 225–226 and (c) the syncopated-*marcato* note of Theme of Will in bars 227–228. Melodic nexus will uninterruptedly relate alternating themes that belong to the same T3 transposition cycle until bar 258.

The T4 transposition cycle of CC-A♮, the governing chord centre of bars 227–228, is used in the CC-F♮-governed bar 229 to introduce a new T3 transposition cycle, whose arrival is highlighted by a fortissimo chord played by the orchestra *tutti*. The abrupt diminuendo to pianissimo that follows gives the way to the Circular theme of Will, which, introduced by the piano on the third beat of the bar, is the next leading theme. The Circular Theme of Will highlights, both rhythmically and melodically the D♮ that becomes, in bar 231, the first pitch-class played by the oboe within a two-bar long statement of the Theme B-5a.

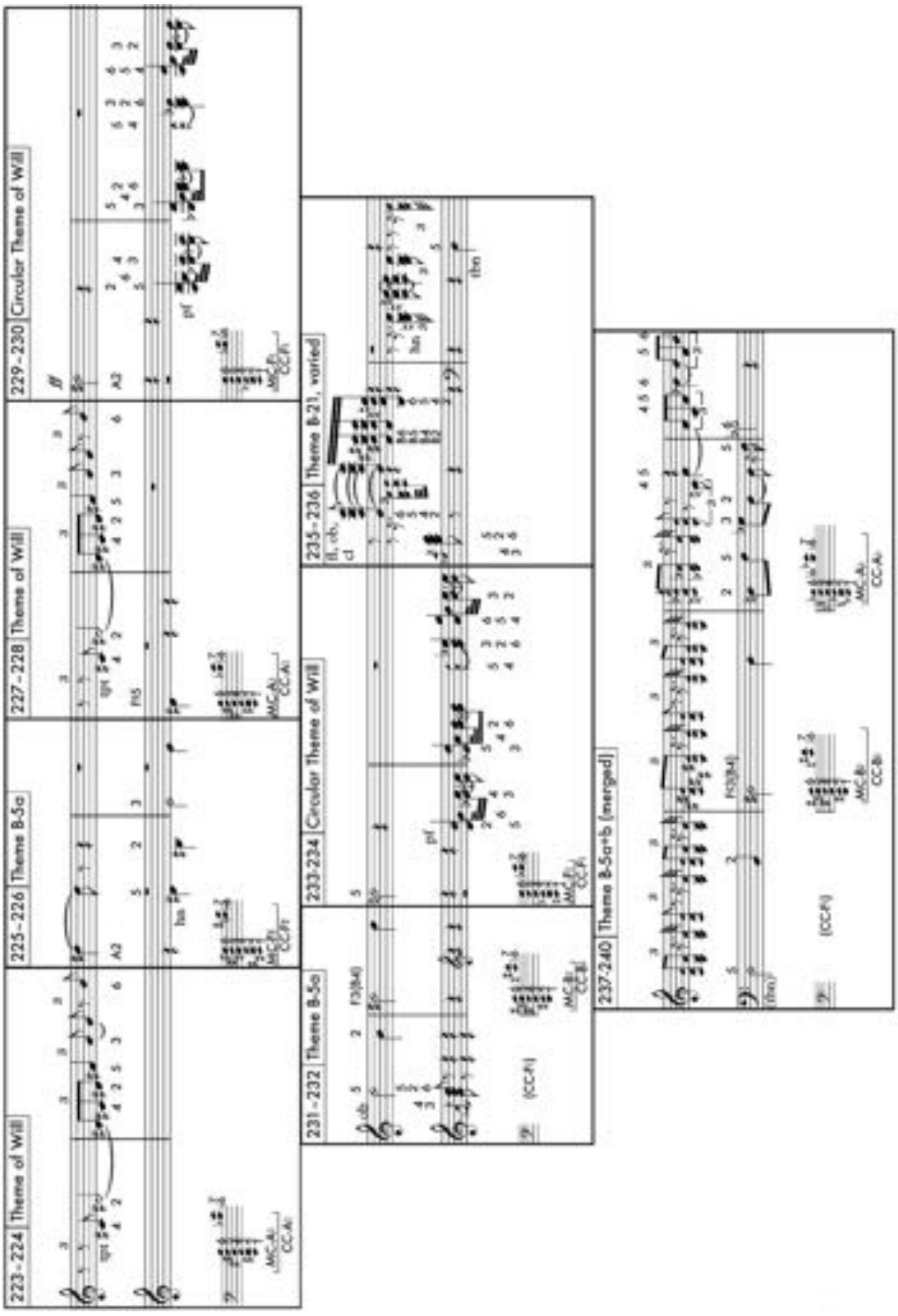
Bar 231, marked *avec un effroi contenu,* is the first of a six-bar set that introduces, in its third and fourth bars, a new statement of the Circular Theme of Will, before interrupting the previous two-bar long thematic frequency in its two last bars.[84]

The thematic interruption of bars 235–236 prepares the arrival of a longer leading theme, which will close the section: a four bar long merged statement of Theme B-5a+b. Introduced by the trombones at the upbeat of bar 237, it keeps the melodic nexus with the leading themes previously articulated within the same T3 transposition cycle. Between bar 239, marked *avec un splendide éclat,* and the downbeat of bar 241, horns V-VIII lead the transposition of the chord centre to the T3 cycle CC-D♭, by playing two horizontal fragments of Theme B-21, transpositionally related at T5, with partials 4, 5 and 6 of (a) CC-A♭, in bars 239–240, and (b) CC-D♭, in bars 240–241; the first two notes—F♮ and B♭—of the second fragment belong functionally to CC-D♭, but are invariant in the previous CC-A♭.

The section's thematic structure is outlined in Example 110.

[84] In bars 235–236, the motivic material of the higher woodwinds is taken from Theme B-21, while, vertically considered, the horns play a derived segment of the Theme of Will, similar to the one horizontally played by the piano in bars 157–160.

Example 110. Bars 223–240: thematic outline

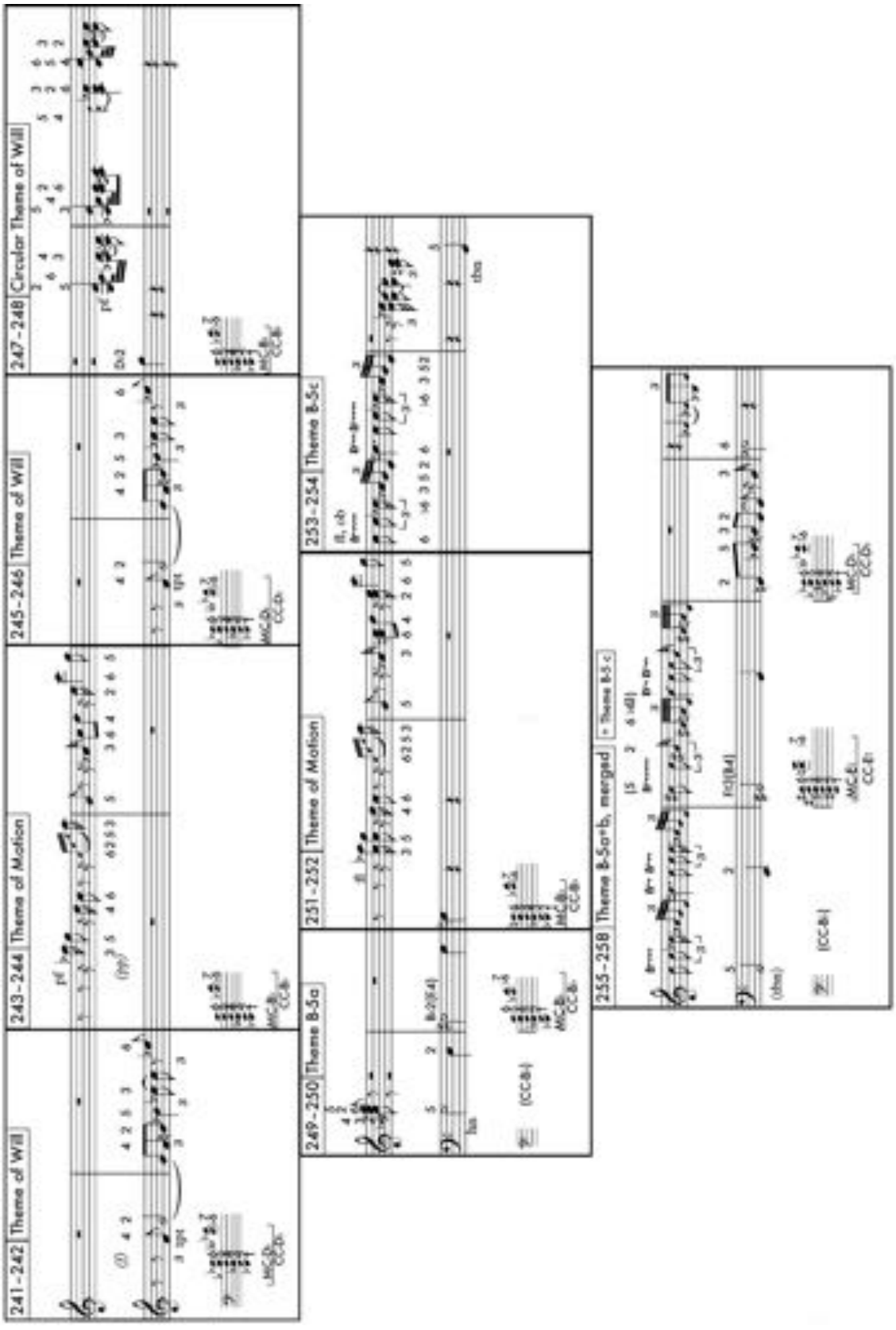


2.3.3.3 Third section, bars 241–258

Marked *plus animé,* the third section is similar to the second in number of bars and inner structure. Entirely governed by the T3 cycle of CC-D♭, it extends the pitch-class nexus to all its thematic elements.

Example 111 illustrates the thematic sequence of the section, which now includes a condensed version of Theme of Motion, and uses Theme B-5c as motivic material of its thirteenth and fourteenth bars. It is worth mentioning the subtle melodic nexus between the two starting themes of the section. The last note of the trumpet's *forte* statement of Theme of Will, which should have been G♮, is elided at the downbeat of bar 243; the same pitch is featured, instead, at the bar's second beat, as part of the piano's pianissimo statement of Theme of Motion.

Example 111. Bars 241–258: thematic outline



2.3.3.4 Fourth section, bars 259–276

Similar to the previous two sections in number of bars, bars 259–276 feature a different inner structure: they are organized in four sets of two, four, four and eight bars, respectively. The section features all possible T3 transposition cycles, starting and ending by the representative cycle of the fourth Colour Stage, the T3 transposition cycle of CC-C♮.

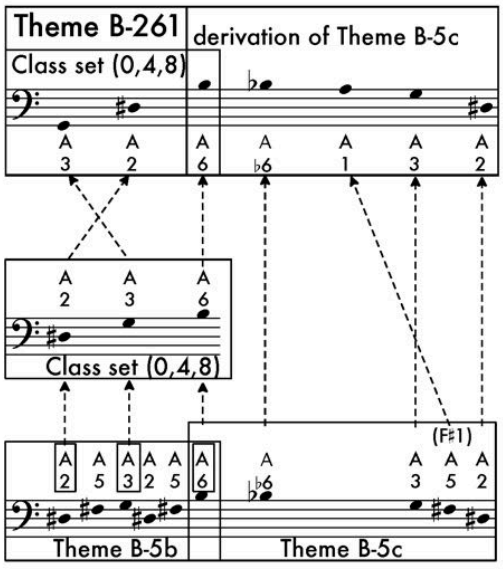
After the T5 transposition of bars 241–242 in the first two bars, marked *plus animé,* the third bar of the section interrupts the expected sequence by introducing a four-bar set whose musical content is absolutely unforeseen.

2.3.3.4.1 Theme B-261—the lowest state of gross matter.

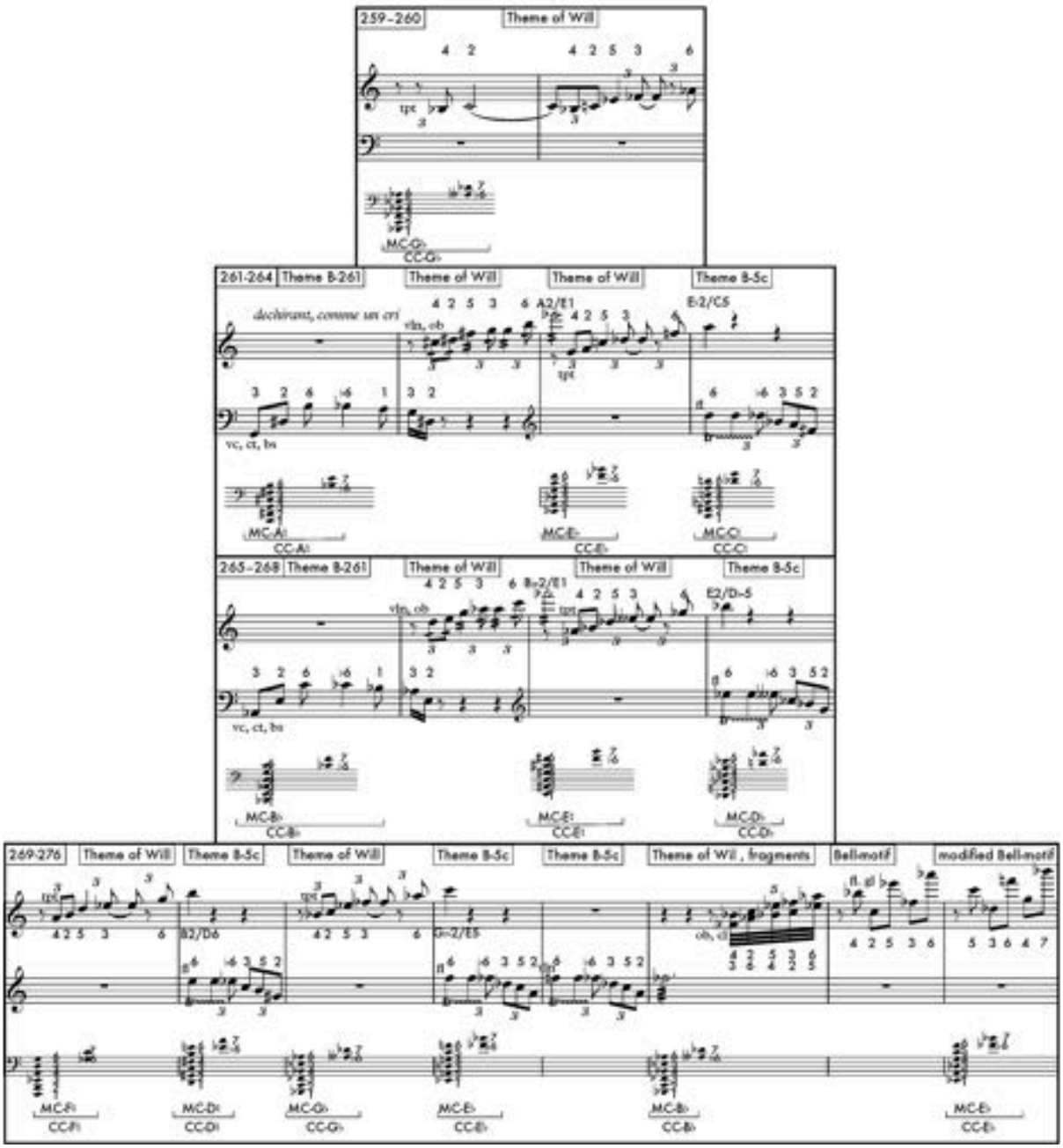
In an episode reported by Sabaneev, Scriabin described those *dechirant, comme un cri* bars, as the "most tragic" he had ever written (Sabaneev, 2005, P. 294). They are a dramatic turning point, indeed, not just of the fourth Colour Stage, but also of the whole evolutionary route of *Promethée* op. 60.

In bars 261–262—within the governance of the work's first explicit governing chord centre, CC-A♮—bassoons, cellos and contrabasses introduce the ascending third major content of Theme B-5b—set class (0,4,8) in the orchestra's lower register, by playing their complementary minor sixths. Their last note is also the first of a crucial derivation of Theme B-5c. This derivation replaces the pitch-class that represented the concealed centricity of the theme's original statement, F♯—partial 1 of CC-F♯ and partial 5 of CC-A♮—by the representative pitch-class of its main governing chord centre, partial 1/A♮, whose sequential positioning is changed in order preserve the overall descendent motion. Example 112 illustrates the procedure just described.

Example 112. Theme B-261, set class (0,4,8) and Theme B-5



Example 113. Bars 259–276: thematic outline



The thematic derivation of Theme B-5b+c, in bars 261–262

1. Recalls the theme's original transposition level, while simultaneously erasing that which then was its concealed centricity: CC-F♯, the representative chord centre of spirit.
2. Is signalled by a *dechirant comme un cri* expression mark.
3. Is positioned in the middle of the fourth Colour Stage.

Considering that these precise bars were described by Scriabin himself as the most tragic of his whole production, it seems almost inevitable to conclude they were designed to represent "the close of [the] middle racial point occurred during the Fourth Root Race, when man and all nature reached their lowest state of gross matter" (Blavatsky, 1988, vol. II, p. 308).

The presence of F♯ within the simultaneous statement of Theme of Will played by the oboes enhance the stage's thematic conflict. Its immediate T6 transposition of bar 263 produces a metric accelerando, which bar 264 contradicts, with the introduction of the *subitement très doux* Theme B-5c in its original form, governed by CC-C♮,[85] the representative chord centre of matter.

Bars 265–268 transpose at T1 the previous four bars, schifting the chord centre to the T3 cycle of CC-B♭, before the last two bars of the set are themselves object of two consecutive transpositions—at T1, in bars 269–270, and at T2, in bars 271–272—stressing the passage's metric accelerando.

Bar 273 re-orchestrates the musical content of the previous bar, and introduces a shift in the harmonic rhythm by keeping their transposition level unchanged: the chord centre will not leave the T3 cycle of CC-G♭ until the end of the section. The general crescendo and the combined statements of (a) one-beat-long fragments of the Theme of Will, in bar 274, (b) the Bell Motif, in bar 275, and (c) its derivation in bar 276—featuring partial 7 instead of partial 2—propels the musical discourse towards the climatic last section of the stage.

2.3.3.5 Fifth section: bars 277–308

After reaching the lowest state of matter in the previous bars, particles of matter's representative chord centre, CC-C♮ penetrate some figurations, within the fifth section, structured in four sets of eight bars.

A bass line overwhelmingly reminiscent of the old tonality binds the first three eight-bars sets together, enhancing the climax of the fourth Colour Stage in bars 289(1)–290(1), and the appeasing movement that follows. The function of that tonal reminiscence within the work's plan will only be disclosed in relation with the overall climax of the work, at the final bars of the development's second part.

The unique features of the last four bars of the section extend the sound space to the total chromatic, making the transition to the fifth Colour Stage.

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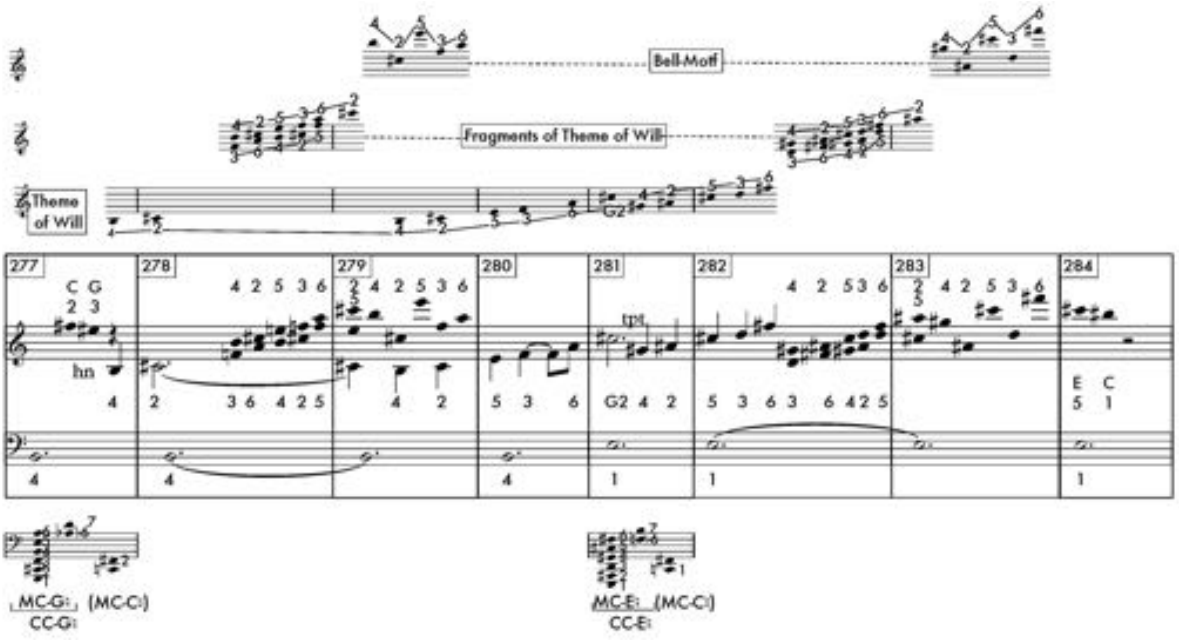
[85] The B♭, in the fast line of *Luce,* does not match the bar's governing chord centre, and is most probably a mistake. Considering the governing chord centre of bar 264, CC-C♮ is already highlighted in the slow line of *Luce* as the stage's main governing chord centre, and Scriabin's standard procedure in similar contexts, the fast line of *Luce,* should be paused instead. The fast line of Luce of bar 268, which transposes at T1 bar 264, features D♭ in the fast line, what seems to confirm the B♭ of bar 264 as a typo.

2.3.3.5.1 Bars 277–284

Bars 277–284 are formed by two four-bar sets governed by CC-G♮ and CC-E♮, respectively. Entirely related to the Theme of Will,[86] their thematic material is detailed in Example 114.

Two pitch-classes are articulated beyond the range of the successive chord centres pointed by the slow line of *Luce,* belonging to the stage's main chord centre—CC-C♮—instead: partial 2/F♯ and partial 1/B♯, articulated within the violins trills of, respectively, bar 277 and bars 283–292. The first, F♯, forms a CC-C♮-governed Motif 2-5-3 together with the congener downbeat pitch-classes of bars 278–280—A♮—and of bar 281—A♯/B♭— which are invariant in CC-G♮.

Example 114. Bars 277–284: thematic outline



2.3.3.5.2 Bars 285–292: the climax of the fourth Colour Stage

Structurally similar to the previous eight bars, bars 285–292 are the climactic bars of the fourth Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60. In spite of keeping the governing chord centre of the previous eight bars unchanged, a new harmonic context results of introducing a pitch-class alien to CC-E♮ at the bottom of the harmony: A♮. In spite of invariant within the stage's main chord centre, the functional purpose of its positioning is to anticipate, as a long-lasting pedal note, the significant governance of CC-A♮ in bars 293–300. The pedal A♮ is introduced after a four-bar long E♮, which is in its turn preceded

[86] On the second beat of bars 278 and 282 the woodwinds play two simultaneous fragmentary statements of Theme of Will. In the lowest, partials 3 and 5 interchange their relative positions.

by a B♮ of similar length. Even if the harmonic context unquestionably remains within the realm of the chord centre technic, the successive articulation of these three pitch-classes in the bass line inevitably recalls the old II-V-I cadenza. To fully understand the significance of this tonal reminiscence, its relation with the climactic bars of the fourth Colour Stage needs to be detailed:

1. As result of two successive T5 relations in the bass line, the arrival of an A♮ pedal note in the CC-E♮-governed bar 285(1), recalls the old dominant over tonic, dramatically stressing the tension accumulated in the previous three conflictive sections.
2. The introduction of the pedal note is followed, in the remaining two beats of bar 285, by the successive beginnings of (a) a four-bar long statement of Theme B-65, which intrinsically includes Theme B-5a,[87] and (b) a four bars statement of Theme of Will. Both themes act as leading themes, while a simultaneous incipit of Theme B-5c is frustrated after its third note, by the return of its starting pitch.[88]
3. The two leading themes converge at the downbeat of bar 288, by playing partial 5/C♯, which the sixteenth sextuplets of oboe and violins stress even further.
4. The climax of the fourth Colour Stage is materialized at the downbeat of the next bar, with the culmination of Theme of Will.
5. In spite of the shockwave effect produced by an immediate restatement of Theme B-65 within the same transposition level, the replacement of the previous statement of the Theme of Will by Theme B-5c, which is taken to its end in this occasion, slowly starts to reduce the stage's climactic tension as the subsection gets to its end.
6. In the subsection's last bar, horns and cellos extend the previous statement of Theme B-5c, performing an ascending movement[89] that leads to the second, though weaker, shockwave of the next eight-bar set.

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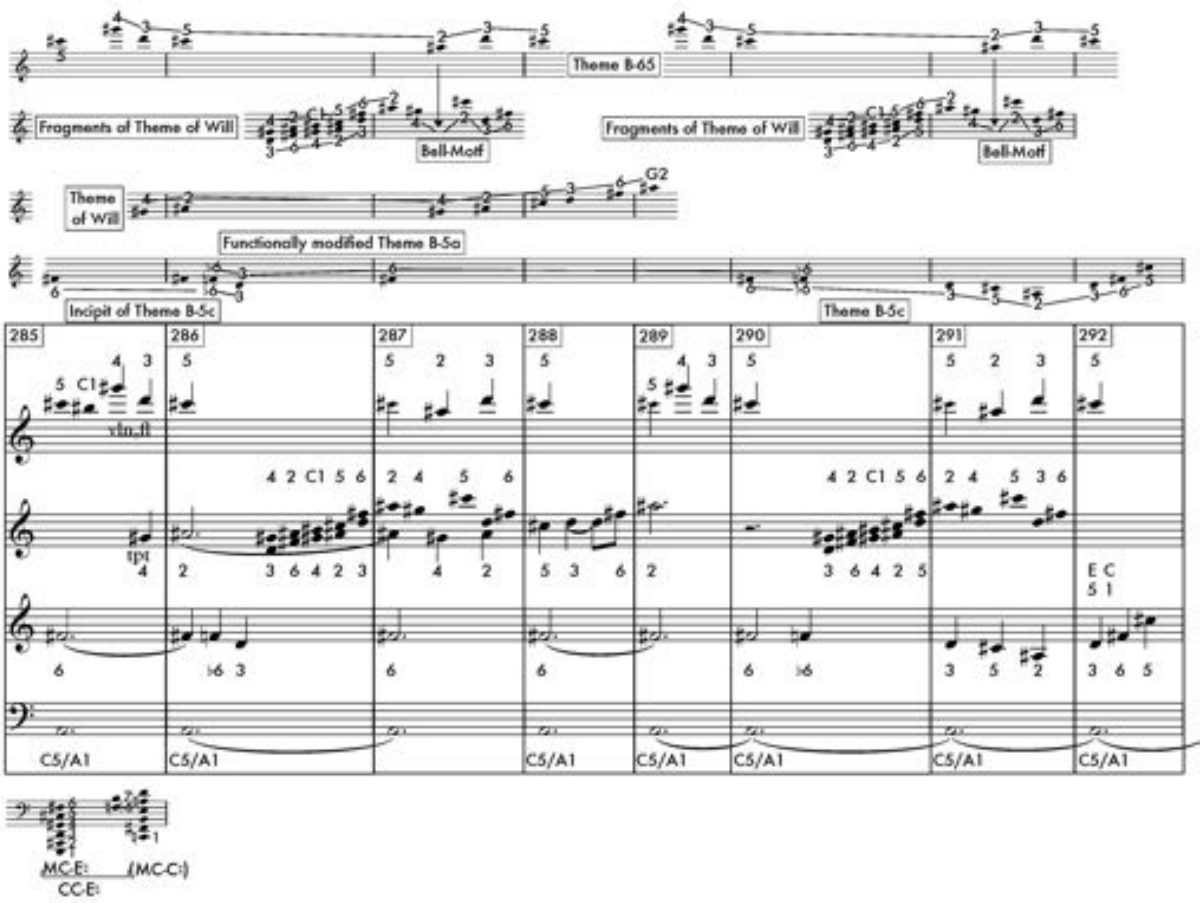
87 Theme is B-5ₒ is part of Theme B-65, as it was previously discussed.

88 The representative chord centre of the stage intersects one of the two simultaneous five-partial rotations of Theme of Will played by the woodwinds in the CC-E♮-governed bars 286(3) and 290(3), featuring partials 4, 2, C1, 5 and 6, instead of the original row—4, 2, 5, 3, 6. The sequential positioning of the root note of CC-C♮ within the row is advanced in order to keep the previous ascending motion unchanged. E♯, which is the second non-harmonic pitch-class—considering the main governing chord centre of bars 293–300, CC-A♮—, enharmonically anticipates partial 1 of the next governing CC-F♮.

89 This extension of Theme B-5c retrogrades the first and last pitches of its incipit of bars 285–286, in its first two notes, before featuring, in the last two, the encompassing notes of the five-partial sequential segment of the Theme of Will that violins and oboe will introduce in the following beat.

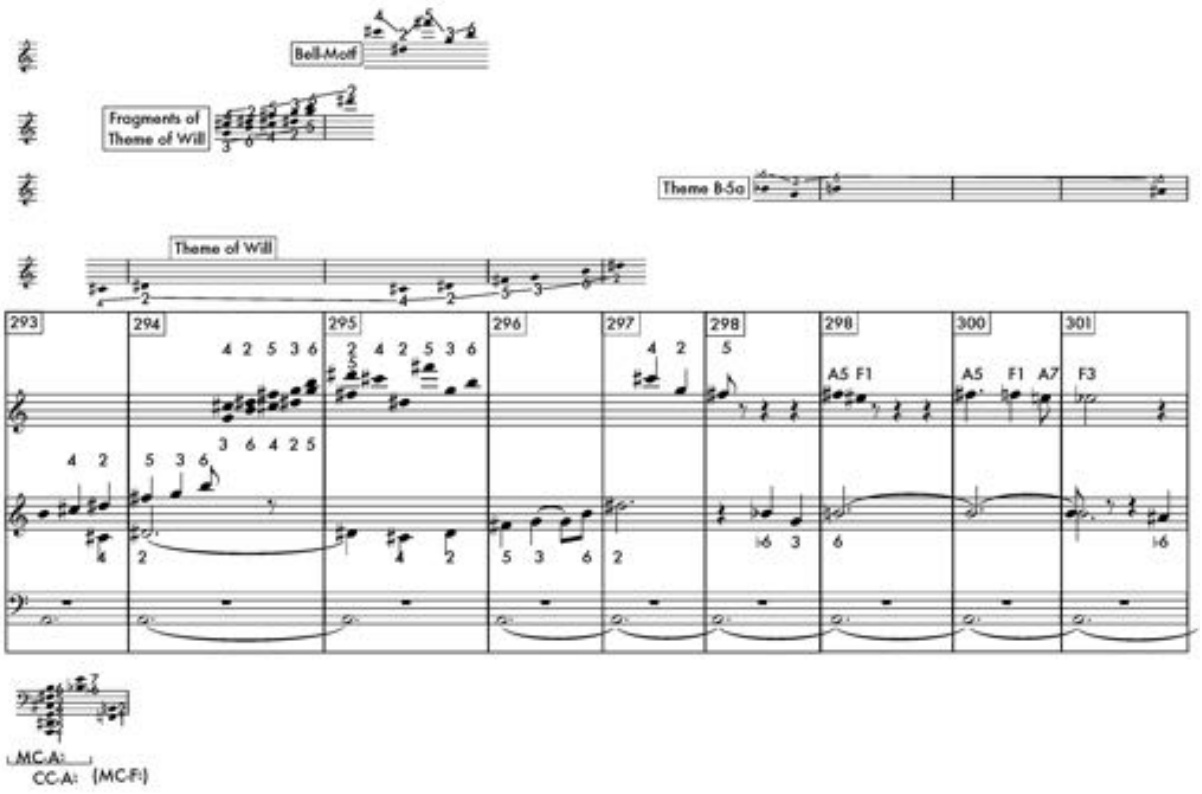
Example 115. Bars 285–292: thematic outline



2.3.3.5.3 Bars 293–300

The convergence of the governing chord centre, which now is CC-A♮, with the A♮ pedal note, at the beginning of bar 293, reduces the harmonic tension and enhances the feeling of a strong tonal gravity. Only one of the leading themes of the congener bars 285–288 is object of a T5 transposed restatement. The second, Theme B-65, is reduced to a three notes incipit, in bar 297. The harps glissando, the general diminuendo that follows and the melodic chromatic descent of bar 300 lead to the absolutely unique subsection that follows.

Example 116. Bars 293–301: thematic outline



2.3.3.5.4 Bars 301–308

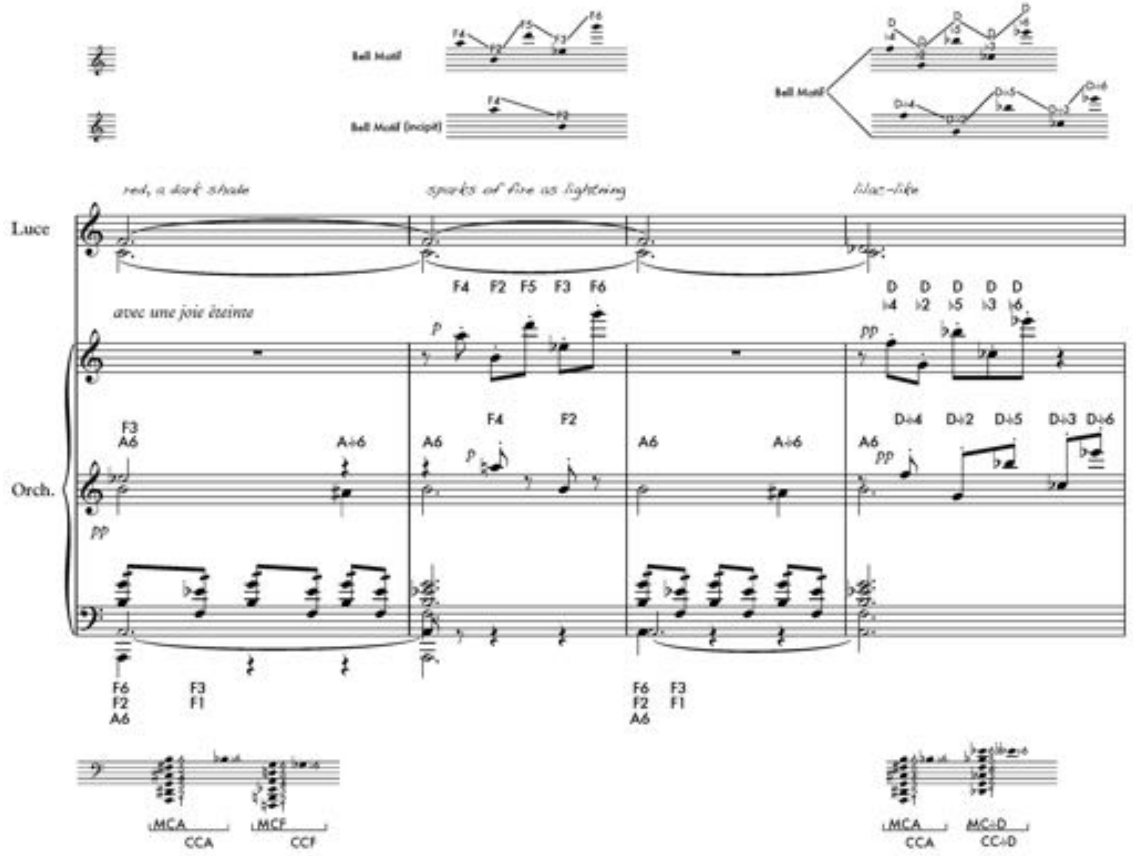
In bar 301 the fast *Luce* line points to the governance of CC-F♮, whose core set, MC-F♮, is clearly identified by the five pitch-classes that sound at the beginning of the bar and by the Bell Motif of the bar that follows.[90] The governance of CC-F♮ does not imply, however, any rupture with the previous governing chord centre: its influence is ensured by the sustained A♮ pedal note—invariant in CC–F♮—and also by the two-note incipits of Theme B-5c, whose second note, partial ♭6/A♯/B♭ of CC-A♮, is beyond the range of CC-F♮.

At the beginning of bar 304 the shift to D♭ in the fast line of *Luce* is immediately corresponded by the T8 transposition of the Bell Motif, played by flutes and celesta. The sustained harmony, on the contrary, keeps the five defining pitches of MC-F♮ unchanged. The two lowest pitch-classes of the bar are again the representative partials 1 of CC-A♮ and CC-F♮, the first of which is articulated beyond the range of CC-D♭. The simultaneous absence of D♭, partial 1 of the chord centre signalled by the fast line of *Luce,* rend the bar's centricity diffuse, inducing a restlessness feeling, which the particular rhythmical interaction within the combined statements of the Bell motif, enhances.

[90] Five is precisely the minimum amount of partials required to unequivocally identify a Mystic Chord, as it was already discussed.

The following four bars will provide an unexpected context to all described peculiarities of bar 304, whose bleak character is given a central position, in *Promethée* op. 60: its downbeat is the symmetrical axis of the work's 606 bars.

Example 117. Bars 301–304



The slow *Luce* line is interrupted in bar 305—it will be reactivated in bar 309, signalling the beginning of the fifth Colour Stage by introducing its representative D♮. Bars 305–308 are thus left in no man's land. The fast *Luce* line of these four bars is, on the contrary, unprecedentedly prolific: by simultaneously featuring the representative pitch-classes of the whole T4 transposition cycle formed by CC-D♭, CC-F♮, and CC-A♮ it points to the shared governance of the correspondent chord centres and retrospectively clarifies the restless harmonic context of the previous bar.

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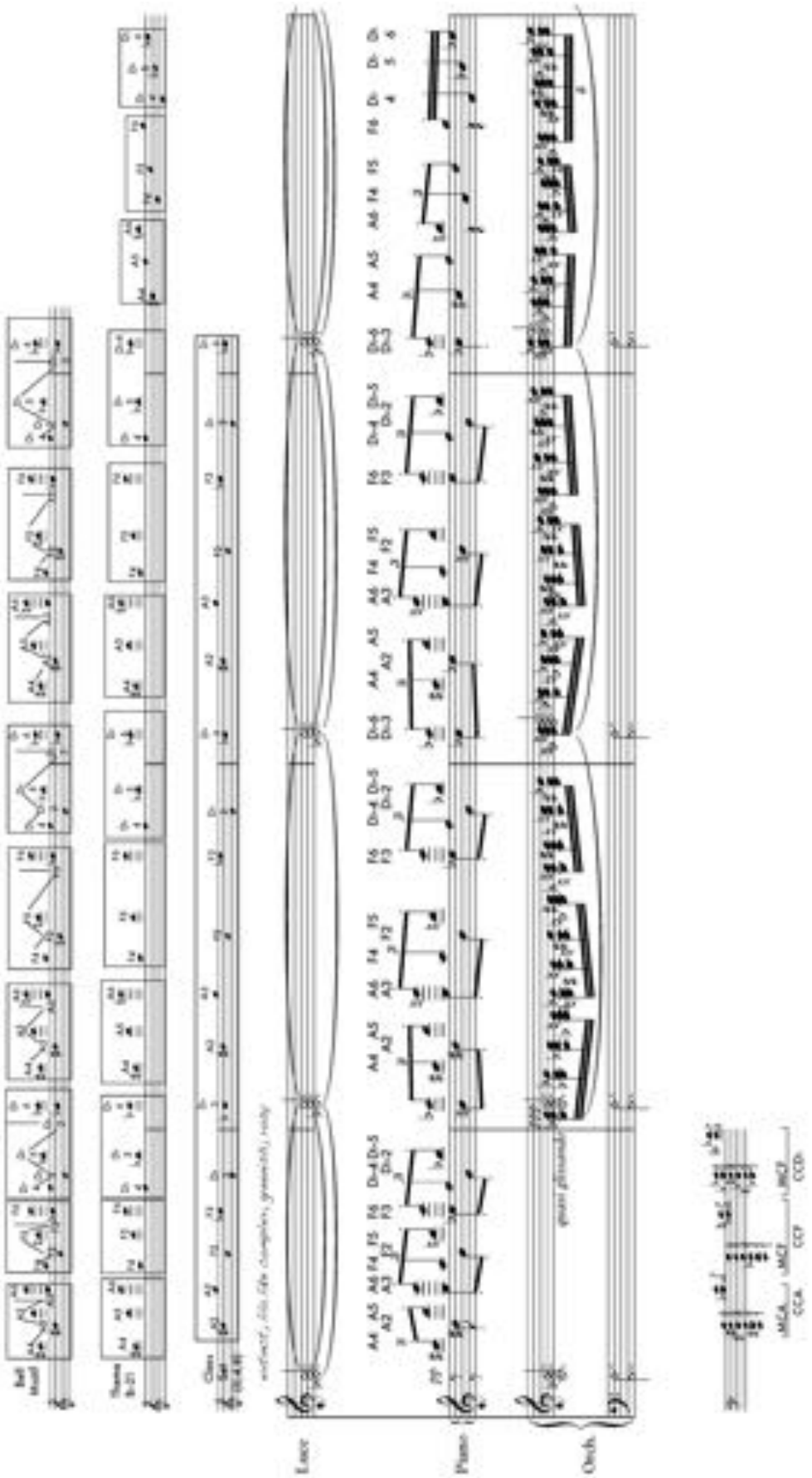
Example 118. Bars 305–308



The unique nature of bars 305–308 is confirmed by its pitch/ thematic content. Baker (1986) notices that,

> Absent since [bar] 250, the piano enters in [bar] 305 with a passage unique in its mechanical repetitions and its emphasis on the unadorned augmented triad. (...) However, this passage is actually a fanciful development of b_1 [Theme B-21] and c_2 [Theme of Will] (...). Three pitches are retained in all its forms—[E♭, G♮, B♮]—the augmented triad formed by all elements on the middle staff [left hand], conspicuous in the right hand as well. (p. 247)

Baker's perceptive analysis should nevertheless be completed.

As a result of combining the piano's right and left hands, bars 305–308 merge into a single statement both rhythmical configurations featured by the Bell Motif in bar 304. The new statement thus obtained is again played by the piano, which, with a one-bar periodicity, features a pattern of successive T8, T4 and T0 transpositions.

Individually taken, the piano's right and left hands expose the genealogy of the Bell Motif, and indirectly, that of theme of Will: the right hand articulates horizontally the characteristic quartel triad of Theme B-21, with the same pitch-classes of the second CC-A♮ quartel triad of the theme's original statement; the left hand, in its turn, unveils the theme's second ancestor, by articulating the same pitch-classes that, within the original statement of the Theme B-5, embodied the third major subdivision of the octave.

The three transposition levels of the Bell Motif within bars 305–308 correspond to the governing chord centres pointed by the fast line of *Luce*—A♮, F♮, and D♭/C♯. These three pitch-classes form together with E♭, G♮, B♮—which bars 305–308 "[retain] in al its forms", in Baker's words—the complementary set to the comprehensive whole tone scale featured by the slow line of *Luce,* in *Promethée* op. 60. The pitch-class content that results of juxtaposing both whole tone sets is made explicit within the strings' *quasi glissando* sixteenth notes, momentary extending the sound space to the total chromatic: significantly, these chromatic *quasi glissando* highlight E♭, G♮, B♮ as well.

The close relation between bars 305–308 and the bars that make the transition from the second to the third Colour Stages has already been discussed, as well as the pivotal function T4 related chord centres had then played, in switching from one T3 transpositional cycle to the other. In bars 305–308, the unprecedented governance of three T4 related chord centres—a complete T4 transposition cycle—is meant to transform that pivotal function into a representative one: each one of the three governing chord centres—CC-A♮, CC-F♮, and CC-D♭/C♯—represents one of the three possible

different T3 transposition cycles. All of them—hence, all twelve transpositions of the chord centre—are thus implicitly recalled, just before the beginning of that which, for Blavatsky, is our present Root Race, the fifth, "the *manasa*[91] period of our cycle of races" (1888, Vol. II, p.300).

By (a) extending the sound space to the chromatic total and (b) featuring the simultaneous governance of three chord centres that, together, represent all the remaining nine, bars 305–308, marked *avec une joie éteinte,* summarize, and thereby recall, all previous four Colour Stages.

At the last beat of bar 308, the hastening of the rhythmical subdivision in both the piano and the violins, compresses the material of the previous bars, enabling the beginning of the T4 transposition of bars 115–130 at the downbeat of bar 309.

2.3.4 Second part, bars 309–370: outline

Belonging entirely to the fifth Colour Stage, the second part of the development is structured in two sections of sixteen bars and one section of twenty bars. As a whole, it recalls the beginning of the third Colour Stage and the construction of its climactic bars. At the end of the development, the unprecedented elision of the ninth downward fall of the theme of Motion after a new climactic ascent represents a decisive step in the slow ascent towards the Spirit.

The central positioning of the ninth downward fall of the Theme of Motion in the climactic bars of the third Colour Stage, frustrating the previous ascent, led to the introduction of the work's dissonant section a few bars later; the climactic *victorieux* bars of the fifth Colour Stage pave the way for the beginning of the work's recapitulation.

2.3.5 Second part, bars 309–370: detailed analysis

2.3.5.1 First section, bars 309–324

Matching the beginning of the fifth Colour Stage, the first section of the development's third part is a T4 transposition of the first section of the third Colour Stage—bars 115–130. The transpositional level between the original and the transposed statements seconds the transpositional relation of the slow *Luce* line between the third and the fifth Colour Stages. In both the original and the transposed statements, the initial governing chord centre matches the chord centre indicated by the

[91] From *manas*—mind.

slow *Luce* line as the main chord centre of its Colour Stage—CC-B♭, at the third Colour Stage, and CC-D♮, at the fifth Colour Stage.

The restatement of these sixteen bars at the beginning of the *manasa* period, our fifth Root Race, is once more consistent with its likely leitmotivic role of representing the Human.

2.3.5.2 Second section, bars 325–340

Marked *suave, charmé,* bars 325–332 and 333–340 are two T4 transposed eight-bar developments of bars 131–134 and 135–138. The first four bars of each set—bars 325–328 and 333–336—articulate the same four-bar long merged statement of Theme B-5a+b, whose quitter mood is conspicuously disturbed by successive statements of (a) Theme b-5c, played by the woodwinds, and (b) Motif 3-5-2, played by violins, harp, celesta and clarinets. An unforeseen fragmentary statement of Theme B-21, played by the trumpets, matches the last pitch-class of Theme of B-5b, articulated at the downbeat of the fourth bar in each eight-bar set. Flutes and oboes subsequently play a new statement of the Theme B-5c, which, after the previous statement of the theme's second part, matches its expected transposition level: it remotely recalls, together with the four-bar long statement of Theme B-5a+b, the theme's complete statement, whose full accomplishment is prevented both by rhythm and orchestration. The interspersed bars 329–332 articulate a rapid succession of thematic fragments, taken from Theme of Will, Theme B-69 and from the *joyeux* variation of Theme of Reason. In the sixth bar of the second eight-bar set, bar 338, the clarinet foreshadows twice the transposition of Theme B-5a, which will take place three bars later. The hastening of the beat to ♩=72, in bars 339–340, and the return of the Bell Motif, featured in two different lengths by woodwinds, celesta and bells, announce the imminence of the next peak.

2.3.5.3 Third section, bars 341–370

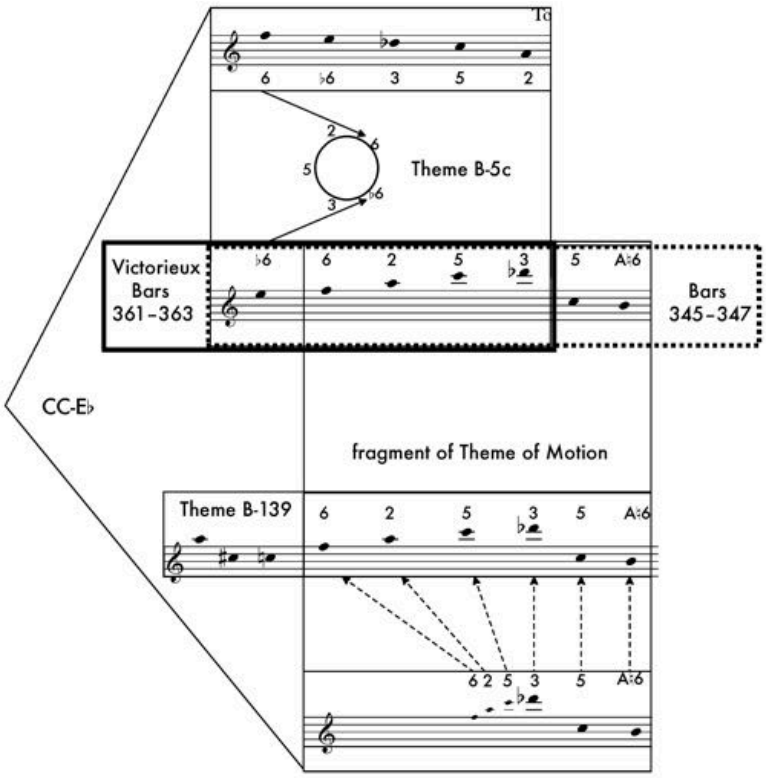
Bars 341–344, marked *De plus en plus animé,* boost the musical discourse towards the theme of bar 345, by means of a metric accelerando that results of two successive transpositions of the first three pitch-classes of Theme B-5a. The main theme of bars 341–342 and 343–344 is accompanied by Theme B-5c and by multiple fragments of Theme of Will, including Bell Motif and, a double retrograded fragment played by the solo piano. The general crescendo and the densification of the orchestra enhance the metric accelerando.

Bar 345 introduces what seems to be a new theme, but is, in fact, a simple derivation of Theme B-5c: it retrogrades the theme's five partials, tacking partial ♭6 as the first note of a raising

statement. The transformation that makes of the descending section of Theme B-5 a raising theme aims the work's climax. Failure in both bars 345–346 and 348–349 reveals a significant proximity with Theme B-139, consubstantiated in both cases by the immediate articulation of the ninth downward jump that represents the fall into matter.

Likewise frustrated in bars 351–360—a T2 transposition of the previous ten bars—the climax is finally reached in bars 361–368: the ninth downward leap, which had previously contradicted the ascent of the derived Theme b-5c is this time suppressed after its last note, assertively articulated in two similar peaks in bars 363 and 367. The close thematic relation of these two ascents with (a) bars 345–346 and 348–349 and (b) Theme B-139, suggests they represent a significant step towards the dematerialization that the *Victorieux* expression mark seems to confirm. Significantly, both peaks are reached within the governance of CC-A♭—whose relation with CC-F♯, in the final bars of *Promethée* op. 60, enacts the work's final act.

Example 119. Bars 345–347/361–363: relation with previous themes



The ninth downward fall after the climactic bars of the exposition preceded its dissonant section. Its suppression in the development's climax leads to the recapitulation, within the polar chord centre of CC-A♭—the stage's representative CC-D♮. Example 119 shows how the thematic material of bars 345–347 and 361–363 relates to Theme B-5c, Theme of Motion and Theme B-139.

2.4 Recapitulation

Far from a straightforward restatement of the exposition, the recapitulation of *Promethée* op. 60, is mostly a T8 transposition that includes (a) literal repetition, (b) elided subsections, (c) new developmental subsections and (d) reworked or varied previous thematic material. Similarly to the exposition, the recapitulation is structured in three parts, each one corresponding to a different Colour Stage, followed by a coda. The second part of the recapitulation, rather than reproducing the transitional second section of the exposition, which, matching the sixth Colour Stage, would inadequately represent Blavatsky's sixth Root Race, substitutes it by a secondary development. The recapitulation will be sequentially retaken immediately after, signalling the formal beginning of the seventh Colour Stage.

The transposition level that relates the exposition and the recapitulation reproduces the intervallic relation featured in the slow line of *Luce* between the first and third Colour Stages of the exposition and the fifth and seventh of the congener bars of the recapitulation. The transposition factor will be consistently kept until as far as bar 503—its change to T2, in bar 504 will be determinant in resolving the exposition's dissonant section. In the final bars of the work the brasses resolve, in their turn, the piano's ascent of the beginning of the development.

The last bars of the recapitulation are interspersed in the beginning of the coda.

The piano's entrance, at the upbeat of bar 375, which, as Gawboy (2010) says "triggers a strong sense of formal articulation" (214–215), matches the golden ratio of *Promethée* op. 60—374,5 bars.[92]

2.4.1 First part, bars 371–404

The fist part of the recapitulation features

1. A literal transposition of the first section of the exposition's first part at T8, whose distinct character is due to forte dynamics and orchestration.
2. A literal transposition of the exposition's bars 67–80.

[92] It is certainly because of this match with the work's golden section that Kelkel (1999) signals bar 375 as the fist bar of the recapitulation (p. 266). His analysis, however, does not seem to be consistent with the T8 transposition of bars 26(3)–30 in bars 370(3)–374, nor with their transposed restatement, immediately after the piano's entry, in both the exposition and the recapitulation.

The suppression of the second section of the exposition's first part in the recapitulation was already explained in the formal analysis of *Promethée* op. 60.

2.4.2 Second part, bars 405–450: secondary development in the sixth Colour Stage

The transitional bars 405–406, marked *de plus en plus lumineux et flamboyant,* transpose the exposition's congener bars 81–82 at T8. In bar 407, the first bar of the next four-bar set, the piano plays what seems to be a simple variation of bar 83: its left hand adds to the right hand's expected Theme of Motion, a five-partial sequence of Theme of Will. Immediately after the ninth downward jump of bar 408(1), however, the expected sequence is interrupted by the irruption of Theme B-21, which, played by the trumpets, triggers an entirely new developmental section. Correlated to the beginning of the sixth Colour Stage, as the articulation of E♮ in the slow *Luce* line of bar 409 will confirm, this new developmental section substitutes the transitional second part of the exposition, which formally corresponded to its second Colour Stage.

Change in the slow line of *Luce* matches this time its harmonic counterpart, as the introduction of CC-E♮ as the governing chord centre of bar 409 reveals. The relation between formal articulation and new Colour Stage is once more clear: the slow line of *Luce* changes four bars after the beginning of the recapitulation's developmental section, but matches exactly its first entirely divergent bar, considering the expected sequence of the exposition: in bar 409 the first violins play a derived five-partial sequence of Theme of Will,[93] which is also the thematic material of the piano's cadenza-like figure that bar 410 will conclude.

Bars 411–414 transpose the previous four bars at T2, with the exception of the quartel triads within Theme B-21, whose order is inverted in bar 412. Some obvious morphologic differences in *Luce* are particular revealing of the mechanics of its relation with the musical counterpart:

1. The fast line of *Luce* is off in bars 407 and 411, which are transpositionally related at T2, because their governing chord centres match the representative chord centres of the fifth and the sixth Colour Stages to which they respectively belong, and are therefore highlighted by the *Luce's* slow line.
2. When that coincidence stops, in bars 408 and 412, the governance of CC-G♮ and CC-A♮, respectively, is reflected by the fast line of *Luce.*

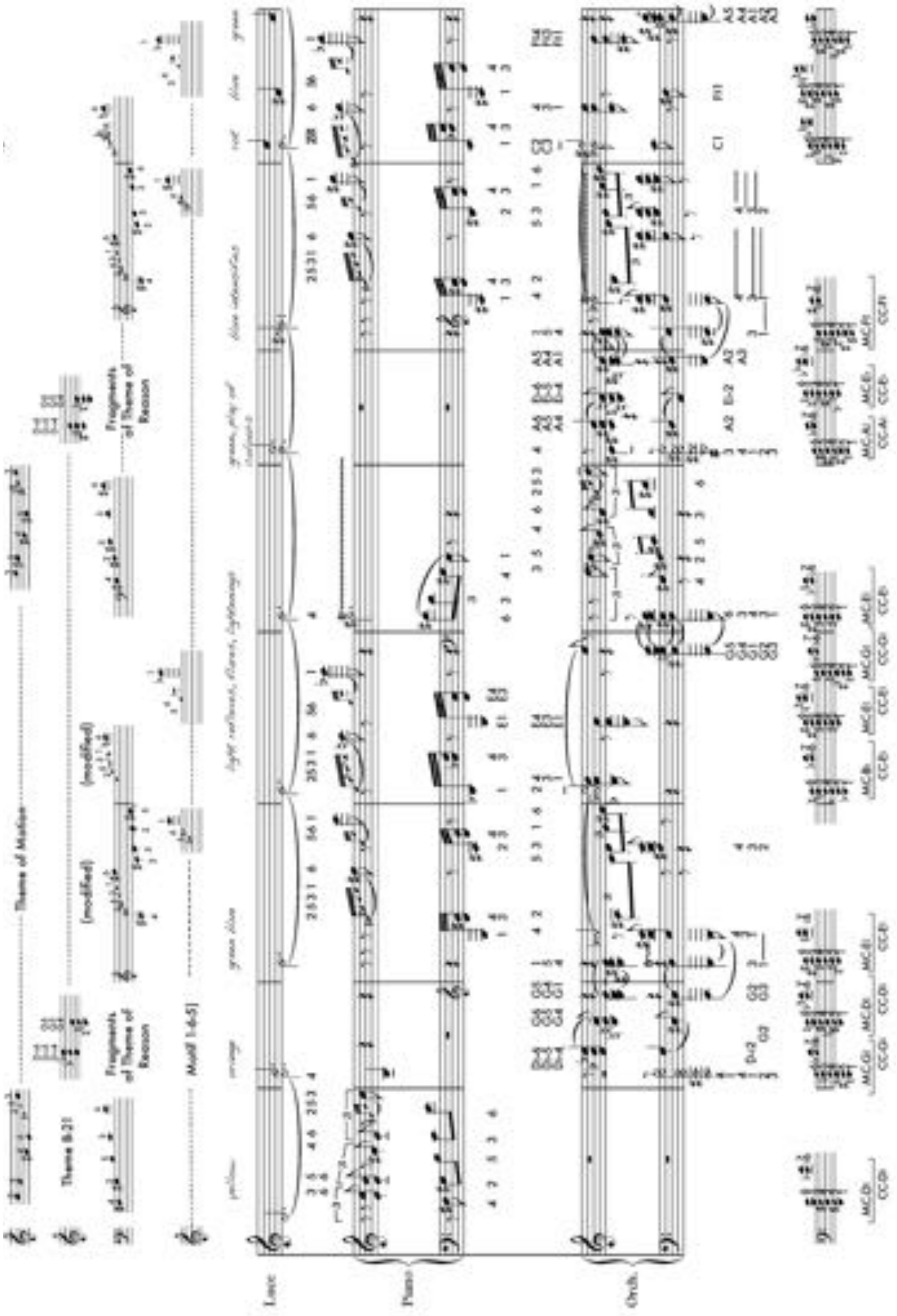
[93] This particular derivation of Theme of Will was firstly introduced in bar 157.

3. The fast line of *Luce* is off in bar 409 because the governing chord centre again matches the stage's main governing chord centre, but is on in its T2 transposition of bar 413, when that coincidence stops.
4. The paused fast line of *Luce,* in bar 410, again suggests a coincidence between the bar's governing chord centre and the stage's representative CC-E♮. The figurations of the piano's right hand, however, are only consistent with the governance of the T6 related CC-B♭, considering the two first beats together, while the third is clearly governed by CC-G♮—similarly to bar 408, its four lower pitches feature the same vertical sequence of partials of the work's starting chord. The fast *Luce* line of bar 414, which transposes bar 410 at T2, features, differently, a distinct pitch-class in each one of its three beats. It thus retrospectively confirms the governance of CC-B♭, on its first beat of bar 410, and that of CC-G♮, on its third beat. By featuring on the second beat a T2 transposition of the sole pitch-class featured in the *Luce* part of bar 410, bar 414 simultaneously discloses the previous co-governance of CC-E♮ in the second beat of that congener bar. The full harmonic context of these to congener bars and the way they differently relate to *Luce* is shown in Example 120.

In bars 415–416, which, marked *flot lumineux,* are the first two bars of the next four-bar set, cellos and bass clarinet play Theme B5-a. In this occasion, as the fast line of *Luce* indicates, each one of its four notes is treated as the root note of a new governing chord centre. In a procedure that provides Theme B5-a with an unprecedented thickness, the first violins second the bass line by playing, a major ninth above, the pitch-classes that correspond to each successive partial 6, while, in the middle voices, the violas and the second violins extend that procedure to partials 2 and 3, respectively. The English horn's leading motif anticipates a quarter note the second, third and fourth pitch-classes of the bass line, before the immediate answer of the first violins: seconded by each one of the three lower strings, they play a Class-Set equivalent motif.

The chord centre is transposed to CC-A♮, in bar 416(3), and to CC-B♭ in bar 417(1). This last starts a T4 transposition of the previous two bars, with only some minor differences within the piano's figurations—entirely formed by fragments of the Theme of Will.

Example 120. Bars 407–414



Bars 419–426 are a re-orchestrated T7 transposition of bars 407–414, except for *Luce,* which replicates twice the logic of bars 415–418 instead.

Flot lumineux is expanded to an eight-bar set in bars 427–434. The first four bars transpose at T6 bars 415–418, once more with minor differences within the piano's figurations. The transpositional relation of bars 431–432 and 429–430 replicates the one these last establish with bars 427–428, starting a metric accelerando that bars 433–434 will stress as it follows:

1. Bar 433, a differently orchestrated T3 transposition of the previous bar, (a) closes a six-bar T4 transpositional cycle of CC-D♭, at the beginning of the second *Flot lumineux*, and (b) starts a two-bar long T3 transpositional cycle, which once more starts and ends in CC-D♭. These two bars, together, summarize the general crescendo of bars 427–434.
2. Bar 434, rather than concluding the previous bar's articulation of Theme B5-a, hastens the harmonic rhythm by three successive transpositions of the theme's first beat at T3. This procedure thrusts the musical discourse towards the first beat of bar 435. Simultaneously, the chromatic motion featured by the first notes of the piano's figurations—G♯, A♮ and B♭—reaches its climax in the highest note of bar 435(1), C♭, after a ninth upward jump that retrogrades the ninth downward jump of the Theme of Motion. That chromatic movement from G♮ to C♭, in the piano part, makes explicit the half step symmetric subdivision of the major third, within the T3 cycle of CC-D♭.
3. As a result of the successive T4 and T3 transposition cycles of CC-D♭, the orchestra's register—and particularly that of the first partial of CC-D♭—is two octaves higher in bar 435(1) than it had been in bar 427(2). The ascending speed is exponential: it needs six bars to accomplish the first octave transposition and only two to complete the second.

After the climactic bar 435(1), the following four bars, marked *aigu, fulgurant,* feature a cascade-like descent, which alternates the governance of CC-D♭ and CC-G♮ with a one beat periodicity, before retrieving, in bar 439(1), the initial register of bar 427(2). The thematic material of the cascade-like descent consist of (a) successive T6 transpositions of the core element of the Theme of Motion, in the piano's right hand, and (b) its reduction to Motif 2-5-3. This last, played by the trumpets in eighth notes as a response to the piano's second beat, systematically signals the starting chord centre of the following bar.

After the intercaleted *flot lumineux-aigu fulgurant* episode, the piano brings Theme of Motion back, with a two-bar long statement in the CC-D♭-governed bars 439–440. The clarinet completes with Motif 2-3-5 the thematic material of bar 440. In the following two bars, the orchestra foreshadows bar 451 and its resumption of the T8 transposed restatement of the exposition by playing twice the thematic material of its congener bar 115 of the exposition. Its transposition level foreshadows the beginning o the seventh Colour Stage as well: after seven bars governed by chord centres within the main T3 transposition cycle of the sixth Colour Stage, it introduces CC-A♮, already within the main T3 transposition cycle of the following stage.

Bars 443–447 transpose at two different levels the previous four bar set: by keeping the governing chord centre of the previous two bars unchanged, the CC-A♮-governed bars 443–444 transpose bars 439–440 at T8; bars 445–446 introduce the polar CC-E♭, which will be kept until the end of the developmental section, in bar 451.

After the T2 transposed restatement of bars 439–440 in bars 447–448, the piano falls into silence in bar 449, two bars before the first entrance of the choir: instead of transposing the third and fourth bars of the previous two four-bar sets, bars 449–450 articulate two progressively shorter fragments of the Theme of Motion, which, stressed by a crescendo dynamics, thrusts the musical discourse towards the resumption of the T8 transposition of the exposition, in bar 451.

2.4.3 Third part, bars 451–511

2.4.3.1 Bars 451–467: the beginning of the seventh Colour Stage

2.4.3.1.1 Bars 451–458

After the replacement of the exposition's transitional second part by the previous developmental section, the formal restatement of the exposition is resumed in bar 451 with the sequential transposition of the exposition's third part. Bars 451–458 are therefore a T8 transposition of bars 115–122.[94] As it was already discussed in the analysis of the exposition, bar 115 had formally confirmed the beginning of the third Colour Stage, signalled by the slow line of *Luce* in bar 111. After forty-three divergent bars, the resumption of the recapitulative section in bar 451 provides an even stronger sense of formal articulation.

[94] The F♭ in the fast Luce line of bar 453, in the printed score, is unquestionably a typo: considering the bar's governing chord centre, but also the congener bar of the exposition—bar 117—a G♭ should be printed instead.

The correspondence between the governing chord centre of bar 115 and its Stage's main chord centre would normally induce a similar expectation for bar 451. This last, however, unlike its congener bar of the exposition, is not preceded by any previous shift in the slow line of *Luce.* This dissimilarity changes the terms of the sound–colour co-relation featured in the original bars: instead of harmonically matching the representative E♮ of the sixth Colour Stage, which is still active in the slow line of *Luce,* bar 451 anticipates the shift of bar 459,[95] by introducing the governance of CC-F♯, the main chord centre of the seventh Colour Stage. To properly stress the crucial formal function of bar 451, musically offsetting *Luce's* eight-bar-long focus on the previous Colour Stage was a critical need. Scriabin ensures it with the first entrance of the choir thus far. This first appearance of the human voice, in the formal restatement of bars 115–122, seems also to confirm their leitmotivic role of representing the Human.

In its first entrance, the choir is limited to the lower female and male voices—contraltos and basses, both of them *divisi*. The upper voice of the contraltos, doubled by the harp in bars 453–458, sings on the vowel "a" the thematic material played by the harp alone in the exposition, while the three lower voices sing, with the mouth shut, successive statements of S2, or set-class equivalent segments. The four voices are momentarily extinguished on the third beat of bar 458. Meant to offset the presence of the sixth Colour Stage's E♮ in the slow line of *Luce* during the eight bars that formally and harmonically introduce the seventh Colour Stage, the resumed silence of the choir changes the focus to the events of the next bar—and, most particularly, to the shift to F♯ in the slow line of *Luce,* which finally confirms the beginning of the seventh and last Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60.

2.4.3.1.2 Bars 459–467

Bars 459–467 feature the following thematic material:

1. A two-bar statement of Theme of Will—bars 459–460.

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[95] As it was discussed, in the first part of chapter III, the printed score features an E♯ in bar 459. Gawboy (2010) found that "Scriabin crossed out the E♯ between E and F♯" (p. 314) in the copy that now belongs to *Bibliothèque Nationale de France,* proving the printed E♯ to be a typo. She is not right, however, when, suggesting an E♮ in its place, she signals change to F♯ only in the following bar 460. In fact,

1. A switch in the slow *Luce* line of bar 460 would unprecedentedly separate bar 459 from the remaining bars of the phrase it introduces.
2. The fast line of *Luce* keeps a sustained D♭ in the whole phrase started in bar 459, transposing at T8, as expected, the F♮ featured in the formally equivalent bars 123–130. An E♮ in the phrase's first bar would be the sole exception of an otherwise similar T8 transpositional relation in the slow line of *Luce.*
3. The phrase started in bar 459, even if formally equivalent to bars 123–130, features amongst its considerable thematic differences a two-bar long statement of Theme of Will, which transposes at T8 the similar statement of bars 111–112. The shift to F♯ in the slow line of *Luce* of bar 459, unlike an hypothetical maintenance of E♮, is entirely consistent with a T8 transposition of the similar switch to B♭ that signals the outburst of Theme of Will in the first beat of bar 111. The sequential relation between bars 111–112 and bars 115–123, is in fact inverted in theT8 related bars 459–460 and bars 451–458.

By all these reasons, as Lobanova (2015) points (p. 350), the slow line of *Luce* in bar 459 should be corrected to F♯ instead.

2. A non-retrograded version of the derived Theme B-5c, which, firstly used in bars 345–346, was the main theme in the *Victorieux* bars 361–363 and 365–367.
3. The Bell Motif, played in eight and quarter notes by the flutes and high bells, on one hand, and by oboes, low bells and the first clarinet on the other hand
4. Four and five-partial rotations of the Theme of Will played by oboes and clarinets, in bars 465–467.[96]

In spite of featuring a written length of nine bars, the phrase introduced in bar 459 is perceived as a regular eight-bar set, metrically equivalent to the congener bars 123–130 of the exposition: thanks to beat and time signature change in bar 465—from ♩=104 and 3/4 to 𝅗𝅥=52 and 2/4, or 6/8—bars 465–467 are strictly equivalent to any pair of bars within the phrase's previous six bars—they are indeed perceived as a two-bar conclusion of the metric accelerando, which, started in bar 459, gives the way to the next section of the Recapitulation. Their notation as a three-bar set assigns them a new pivotal role: besides closing the sixteen-bar section started in bar 451, they also introduce the shortest structural unit of the Recapitulation's next section—the three-bar-set.

2.4.3.2 Bars 468–503

The upbeat relation bar 467 establishes with the following three bars parallels that which, in the congener bars of the exposition, binds together the last beat of bar 130 and bar 131. A new one-beat/one-bar metric equivalence is thus defined between bars 131–142 and their augmented and varied T8 transposition of bars 468–503—due to beat change, however, these last are perceived as almost two times slower. In its second entry thus far, the choir, doubled by metals and organ,[97] adds the leading Theme B-5a+b to the already very dense motivic texture of the orchestra, which, in view of the chamber-music texture of the exposition's bars, enhances the perception of a slower tempo.

The different harmonic contexts of bar 477 and the congener beat of the exposition are particularly illustrative of the functional interplay between any given partial 2 and the almost-dominant function of the chord centre it would represent as root note. As it was noticed in the analysis of the exposition, the fast *Luce* line of bar 134 highlighted the governance of CC-F♮ alone, in spite of the co-governance of CC-B♮ over the bar's first beat. Considering that CC-B♮ was the expected governing chord centre, the beat's lowest pitch—B♮—in spite of matching partial 2 of CC-F♮, was thus perceived

[96] They are not obvious horizontally, because of their short length, but become clear if all five pitches articulated within those bars are taken as a sequential set, from the lowest to the highest.

[97] The organ, which is used for the first time insofar, will be systematically related to the choir until the end of the piece.

as partial 1 of CC-B♮, with a quasi-dominant function towards the main governing CC-F♮. With a similar transpositional context in the preceding bars, bar 477 and bar 134 also feature the same relation between fast *Luce* line and, respectively, the lowest pitch of the bar/G♮, and the lowest pitch of the first beat/B♮. Bar 477 was therefore expected to transpose to CC-G♮ the co-governance of CC-B♮ in bar 134. The harmony of bar 477 contradicts that expectation, though: contrarily to that of bar 134, it does not feature any pitch outside the range of the chord centre pointed in the fast *Luce* line, CC-D♭. As a result, the bar's lowest pitch, G♮, is now limited to the context of CC-D♭ as partial 2.

Just as it had happened in the Exposition, the climactic bars of the subsection—bars 492–503—feature Theme B-139 as leading theme. In this T8 transposed restatement, Theme B-139 is unfolded into its two constituting segments by means of orchestration, unveiling its genealogy:

1. Doubled by horns, organ and trumpets, in the CC-D♮-governed bars 493–495, the sopranos sing the first part of Theme B-139—partials 2/G♯, 3/C♮ and 5/B♮—which had originally been taken from Theme B-5.
2. Remaining within the realm of theme B-5, the choir, horns and organ sustain the last of those partials in bars 496–498. Simultaneously, the trumpets diverge, by playing, alone, the theme's second segment, whose sequence of partials had originally been taken from the Theme of Motion.
3. Finally, in bars 498(3)–499 the trumpets resume their convergence with the choir, the horns and the organ, by playing Theme of Motion's characteristic ninth downward jump.

In bar 503 all leading parts signal the governing chord centre of the next bar by switching from the sustained B♮, partial 5 of CC-D♮, to A♯, which has the same function within the upcoming CC-C♯.

2.4.3.2.1 The choir's text

Lobanova (2015) was the first to establish a relation between the choir's text and the theosophical word "Oeaohoo"(p. 341).[98] "Oeaohoo" is, for Blavatsky, "the non-Separateness of all that live and has its being, whether in active or passive state, the Rootless Root of all, (...) the Eternal living Unity" (1888, Vol. I, p. 68). It also is, as the *Book of Dzyan* describes it, the "bright Space of dark Space", (Blavatsky, 1888. Vol. I, p. 71), explained by Blavatsky as the "differentiated [...] Ray", which

[98] Lobanova's "Mystiker, Magier, Theosoph, Theurg: Alexander Skrjabin und seine Zeit" was firstly edited in 2004.

> Dropped at the first thrill of the new 'Dawn' into the great Cosmic depths (...) re-emerges as the 'new life', to become, to the end of the life-cycle, the germ of all things. He is 'the incorporeal man who contains in himself the divine Idea,'—the generator of Light and Life (idem).

As Gawboy (2010) notices, the nearing "return to a divine state of cosmic oneness is not only indicated by the thematic return [of Theme B-5a+b], but also by the text the chorus sings in [bars] 467–503: 'Eaohoaoho, eaohoaoho, eaoho'" (...), [which] was often misunderstood (...) as nonsense sounds" (p. 225).

2.4.3.3 Bars 504–511

As it was discussed in the formal analysis of *Promethée* op. 60, bars 504–511 wrong-foot the expectations induced by the congener bars 143–150 of the exposition, thus becoming a turning point in the work's formal plan.

At a first glance, bars 504–505 seem to be the expected T8 transposition of bars 143–144, thus generating a similar aprioristic prospect towards the last two bars of the four-bar set, bars 506–507. These last, however, instead of fulfilling those expectations, unexpectedly transpose at T2 the material of bars 149–150, retrospectively changing the context of the previous two bars as well: bars 504–505, which seemed to transpose bars 143–144 at T8, were in fact eliding them, by transposing bars 147–148 at T2, instead. The hitherto transposition factor of the Recapitulation was thus altered. The orchestration of bars 504–505, even if, by itself, insufficient to change the way they are firstly perceived, provides a subtle but clear insight towards their true relation with the exposition's bars: it diverges from the orchestration of bars 143–144, but is absolutely identical to that of bars 147–148.

Changing the transposition factor from T8 to T2 has the most significant formal purpose. We have already described the procedure that prepared the arrival of the E♮ pedal note in bar 149. An augmented fourth distant to the representative pitch-class of the Third Colour Stage, the pedal E♮ established a quasi-dominant function with its stage's main chord centre, CC-B♭, introducing the dissonant section of *Promethée* op. 60. The events of bars 504–507 are crucial in the work's formal plan because, by summarizing the exposition's procedure, they change the recapitulation's transposition factor, making the way for the arrival, in bar 506, of an F♯ pedal note—instead of the expected C♮—that matches both the stage's representative pitch-class and the work's main chord centre. The quasi-dominant function of the exposition's E♮ pedal note is thus replaced, in the recapitulation, by the quasi-tonic function of the F♯ pedal note. An encompassing cadenza, between the

polar pitch-class of the third stage—E♮—and the representative pitch-class of the seventh Colour Stage—F♯—is thus staged, resolving the work's dissonant section. With this procedure, Scriabin achieves to assert the polarity of his new sound space, while simultaneously binding the work's two formal frames together: the whole tone scale from *Luce's* slow line and a sonata form.

The elided restatement of bars 143–146 in the Recapitulation is counterbalanced by the proportional addition of four bars, after the T2 transposition of bars 147–150. In the first two of those bars, the CC-C♯ governed bars 508–509, the solo violin plays a subset of Theme B-5c that retrogrades its first four partials starting by its second, before introducing partial 6/G𝄪 of the augmented fourth distant CC-G♮, thus foreshadowing the sequence of partials that the last three notes of the piano's right hand will feature in bar 518.

The thematic material of the accelerando bars 510–511 is entirely formed by different fragments of Theme of Will.

2.5 Coda, bars 512–606

2.5.1 Bars 512–573: interspersing the final bars of the recapitulation in the first part of the coda

Bars 512–573 formally start the dematerialization process, which culminates in the work's final bars, by interspersing the final sections of the recapitulation—bars 512–519 and 542–549—within the first part of the coda.

2.5.1.1 Bars 512–521 and 542–549: final bars of the recapitulation

In the transitional bars 512–513, marked *Prestissimo*, clarinets and violins play Motif 2-5-3, while, at the bottom of the harmony, partial 1 of CC-C♯ is played by the cellos as the asymmetric axis of a ♯IV-I and a V-I relation that once more relates the old V—I and the new ♯IV–I polarity.

In bars 514–519, marked *ailé, dansant,* the solo piano plays a T2 varied transposition of the exposition's bars 151–154, merging its two upper voices together. By expanding the congener bars of the exposition into a six-bar set, the re-exposed bars keep the original number of beats unchanged, in

spite of its different time signature[99]—the opposite happens in bars 520–521, two beats shorter than bars 155–156.

After the coda episode of bars 522–541, bars 542–549 materialize the expected T2 transposition of the exposition's bars 157–162.[100]

2.5.1.2 Bars 522–541 and 550–573

By rephrasing and adapting the thematic material of bars 427–438 to a new time signature, bars 522–541 bring back the *flot lumineux / aigu, fulgurant* episodes of the sixth Colour Stage.

In bars 522–523 the piano puts the first beat of bar 433 and the first two beats of bar 435 together, while the oboe plays, within CC-D♭, Motif 2-5-3. Bars 524–525 add Theme B-5a to an otherwise restatement of the previous two bars.

With some minor variations, bars 526–529 restate bars 427(1,2), 428, 429(1) and 431(1), eliding the previous content of bars 429(2,3) and 430.

Bars 530–537 restate the previous eight bars, with the exception of bar 537(2), which transposes the chord centre to CC-D♮, instead of the previously T6-related CC-A♮. The transposition to CC-D♮ is only unexpected if the previous eight-bar set is considered, since bars 534–537 are actually closer to the original bars 427–429 of the sixth Colour Stage, by sequentially restating them with only the necessary adjustments to a new time signature. The following bars 538–541 are a pyramidal structure that expands to twelve bars the previous eight-bar set: bars 538–539 transpose the previous two bars at T2, bar 540 transposes bar 539 at T2 and bar 541 transposes the previous bar at T6.

Interrupted in bars 542–549 by the final bars of the Recapitulation, the resumption of the coda restates, in bars 550–557, the beginning of its first part—bars 522–529.

The next eight-bar phrase—bars 558–565—features two T5 transpositionally related four-bar sets: in bars 558–559 and 562–563 piano and oboe play Theme B-5a, while different fragments of Theme of Will, in all its previous forms, are articulated within the figurations of the piano and of the woodwinds. Bars 560–561 and 564–565 are entirely formed by distinct fragments of the Theme of Will.

2.5.1.2.1 Bars 566–573

Bars 566–573 summarize and rearrange bars 492–511. Between bar 566 and the first quarter note of bar 569, the piano's left hand—doubled by the right hand and the flute in the first two bars—

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[99] 2/4 in bars 514–519 and 9/8 in bars 151–154.

[100] As discussed, bars 157–162 were a remarkably varied restatement of bars 151–156. The congener restatement of bars 512–519 in bars 542–549 is far less varied, ensuring its easier recognition after the intercalated coda episode of bars 522–541.

outlines Theme B-139 by reducing it to its third major content. Its transposition level is the same of the CC-D♮-governed bars 492–503: thanks to the invariance of G♯, C♮ and E♮, the shortly interspersed governance of CC-B♭ in bar 567 is a mere harmonic variation, which does not jeopardize the overall governance of CC-D♮ until the second beat of bar 569.

The lowest pitch-class of bar 568, G♮, parallels the G♮ featured in the co-related bar 498, likewise anticipating partial 2 of CC-C♯, which will govern bar 570.

In bars 568–569, the first two notes of the piano's left hand outline the ascending minor sixth of Theme B-139, before the third, A♯, changes the governing chord centre—A♯ is, simultaneously, partial 6 of the expected CC-A♭ and partial 5 of the next governing CC-C♯.[101] The piano's right hand and the flute, which seem to merely emphasize with chromatic upbeats the theme's outline, actually articulate a rhythmical variation of the motif played by the solo violin in bars 508–509, transposing it at T1.

The CC-C♯-governed bars 570–571 parallel bars 504–505, by featuring Motif 1-6-5, which is now played by piano and oboe. In bars 572–573 the sixteenth notes of piano and violin feature partial 5/ B♭ of the governing CC-C♯ and partial 6/A♯ of the T6 related CC-G♮, thus reproducing at T11 the B♮/A♯ chromatic relation of bar 569. Invariant in CC-C♯ and CC-G♮, the sustained pitch-classes—C♭, G♮, D♭ and F♮—feature, from the lowest to the highest, the partial sequence of the four lowest pitch-classes of starting chord of *Promethée* op. 60—partials 3-2-1-4—paving the way for the beginning of the codetta in bar 574.

2.5.2 Codetta, bars 574–606

According to Sabaneev, Scriabin described the last bars of *Promethée* op. 60 as "a sort of last dance before the actual Act" (2005, p.59). Scriabin intended them to deploy the "fastest tempo ever... particularly at the end, in 'vertige'. (...) At that point the contemplation of the harmony is reached and, what is ultimately the same, the dematerialization begins" (idem).

Marked *dans une vertige,* the unprecedented subdivision of the last 33 bars of *Promethée* op. 60 into three uneven sets of bars—with 7 (4+3) + 9 (4+4+1) + 17 bars, respectively—is certainly due to the vertigo character Scriabin indicates in the score. By retaking the events of the previous sixteen bars and dramatically increasing their speed and periodicity, the first two sections of the codetta magnify that vertiginous character.

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[101] For a more detailed explanation of the functional contexts of G♮ and A♯, in bars 568–569, the analysis of the congener bars of the exposition—bars 141–142— should be consulted.

2.5.2.1 Bars 574–580

Bars 574–575 and the T5 transpositionally related bars 576–577 double the harmonic rhythm of bars 558–561 and 562–565, respectively. The original bass lines and governing chord centres are thus compressed into two-bar sets, in both cases, while the twice as fast restatement within the first bar of each pair is now followed by a merged statement of Theme B-5b in the second.

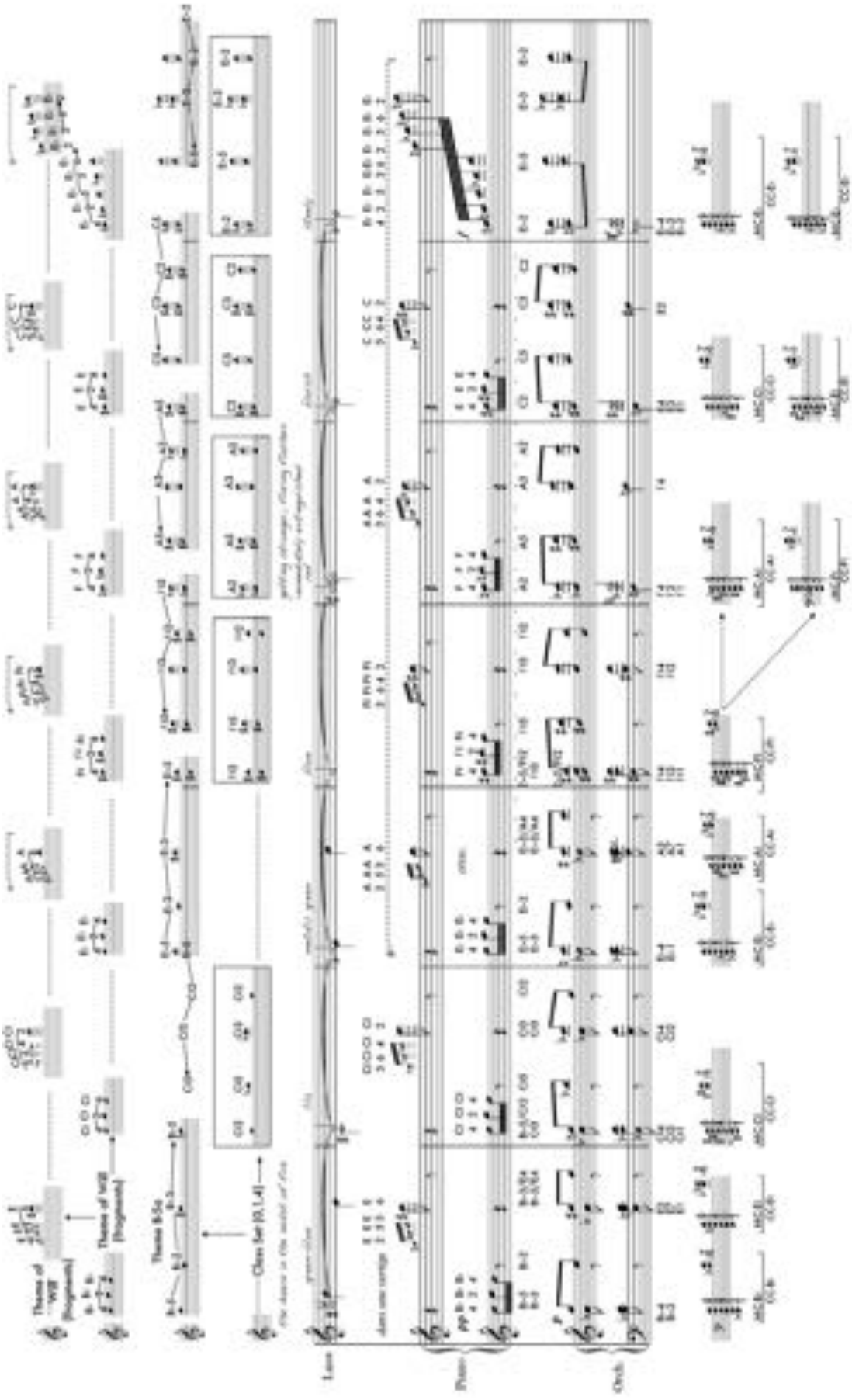
After the governance of CC-F♯ in bar 577, the fast *Luce* line features three successive T11 transpositions of the chord centre, in bars 578–580. The governance of CC-F♮ in bar 578 and of CC-E♮ in bar 579 is insufficient to explain all their pitch-class content, though: D♭, in bar 578, and A♮, in bar 579, do not belong to the chord centres pointed by the fast *Luce* line. The key to understand the complete harmonic frame of bars 577–580 is their leading theme. The exclusive governance of the successive chord centres pointed by the slow line of *Luce* would unprecedented result in three different sequences of partials within the three first statements of Theme B-5b, including a non-harmonic pitch in bar 579—A♮. Such a procedure would contradict, not just all previous statements of Theme B-5b, but also all thematic procedures in *Promethée* op. 60 thus far. The analytical approach must therefore be reversed: the successive governing chord centres of bars 577–580 that govern Theme B-5b in bars 577–580 are highlighted by its very sequence of partials, rather than by the fast line of *Luce*. The orchestra is divided into two independent groups[102] that move asymmetrically in opposite directions. Both of them perform an overall T9 transposition movement, between bars 577 and 580, but only the first, which includes the bass line, parallels the descendent chromatic motion of the fast *Luce* line. The second group, which includes the leading Theme B-5b, is successively transposed at T3, thus explicitly contradicting the fast *Luce* voice. Both (a) the absolute parallelism of the functional relations featured by the second group within the governing chord centres of, respectively, bars 577 and 580, and (b) the strict T3 transposition pattern featured all the way through, leave no doubt about the simultaneous governance of two chord centres in the middle bars of the set: CC-F♮/CC-A♮, in bar 578, and CC-E♮/CC-C♮, in bar 579. The governing chord centres of the second orchestral group, rather than reflecting *Luce's* fast line, remain in the realm of its slow line, completing a full T3 transposition cycle of CC-F♯. Both orchestral groups, which share the same governing chord centre in the CC-F♯-governed bar 577, are three times transposed, because three is the number of divergent and simultaneous T3 and T11 transpositions needed to produce a new unison: the final convergence of both orchestral groups, in bar 580, was thereby implicit in their divergent movement. This particular combination of T3 and T11 transposition cycles has also a very precise harmonic purpose: it is the shortest way of featuring the

[102] The first group includes strings, the piano's left hand, horns and bassoons; the second includes all remaining woodwinds and the piano's right hand.

complete T3 transposition cycle of CC-F♯—the main transposition cycle of *Promethée* op. 60—while simultaneously representing, with CC-F♮ and CC-E♮, the other two.

This asymmetric transpositional procedure seems designed to summarize, and thus recalling, the overall evolutionary motion of *Promethée* op. 60, just before the final dematerialization that, at the end of the seventh/F♯ Colour Stage, "[re-establishes] the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine [—closing the] "cyclic evolution" (Blavatsky, 1888, Vol. II, p. 422). The thematic material of bars 577–580 reinforces the transpositional procedures of the passage: as Example 121 shows, each pair of T3 related statements of Theme B-5b, the ascending second part of Theme B-5, includes one retrograded statement of Theme B-5a—the theme's self-embracing first part. The ascending movement and the return to oneness are thus thematically symbolized as well.

Example 121. Bars 574–580



2.5.2.2 Bars 581–589

Bars 581–589, subdivided into two four-bar sets, articulate two times a compressed restatement of bars 566–573, featuring as single, though significant, difference the transposition of the fourth bar of both sets to CC-A♭. Once more the sequence of partials of the four lowest pitches of the work's starting chord is repeated. G♭, at the bottom of the harmony, albeit invariant in CC-A♭, is functionally meant as a pedal note of the enharmonic F♯, the root note of the work's main chord centre: it will be kept in the same position until the final bar of the piece.

2.5.2.3 Bars 590–606

Bar 590, as far as its pitch content is concerned, is the second bar of a two-bar set that nearly replicates bars 587–588. Its surprising pianissimo dynamics, however, turns it into the first bar of what Scriabin has described as "the actual Act (...), [the] point [in which] the contemplation of the harmony is reached and, what is ultimately the same, the dematerialization begins" (Sabaneev, 2005, p. 59). Bar 590 articulates the six partials of MC-A♭ with a similar inner distribution to the opening chord of *Promethée* op. 60, but with a two octaves wider range that will remain unchanged until the end of the work.

In bars 591–593, the bells introduce two statements of the Bell Motif, in quarter and in eight notes. Considering the original sequence of partials of Theme of Will, a recurrence of partial 5 takes the previous place of partial 3: the crucial functional significance of G♭/F♯ as pedal note of the work's main chord centre leaves no room for its use as partial 3 in the CC-A♭ governed bars 589–601—an absence that will actually be paralleled in the CC-F♯-governed five last bars of *Promethée* op. 60, which replace partial 3 by partial 7/C♯.

Outlined by the choir and the organ, the trumpets' ascent of bars 594–601 replicates the pitch-class content of the modified Bell Motif. Gawboy (2010) perceptively notices that the trumpets' "ascent is taken from the piano's demonic, fiery ascents at the beginning of Colour Stage IV" (p. 322). The interdependence between both passages goes far beyond their thematic material, though: it determines also their transposition plan. In order to fully understand the intrinsic relation of both passages, the final bars of *Promethée* op. 60 have to be previously described.

Preceded by the organ, the choir re-enters in bar 594 to sing the six partials of MC-A♭. The choir's upper voice outlines the partials 2/D♮, 5/F♮ and 6/B♭ of the trumpet's theme. The ascending B♭ major triad thus formed is vertically incremented in the higher registers as well, brightening, without fundamentally changing, the colour of MC-A♭. The ascent's theme, the general

crescendo and the brightening of MC-A♭ are stressed even further by the trumpets' last gesture, which, in bars 600–601, summarizes the previous six bars. "Scriabin's annotation refers to the world's fiery end: 'inferno, the whole world engulfed'" (Gawboy, 2010, p. 322). The huge expectation thus created is nevertheless largely overcome in bar 602: matching the last note of the choir's, the organ's and the trumpets', "the harmony suddenly opens up to a shining F♯ major triad marked 'cataclysm, all in fire'" (idem).

Structurally, both the F♯ major triad of bars 602–606 and the auxiliary notes of their long lasting trills belong to the governing CC-F♯: the F♯ major triad features partials 1/F♯, 4/A♯ and 7/C♯, while the auxiliary notes that brighten it are partials 2/B♯, 5/D♯, and 6/G♯. Altogether, they form a heptatonic MC-F♯, which does not include its partial 3. Contrarily to the previous eight bars, however, the sonority of the major triad is absolutely predominant in bars 602–606. In spite of keeping unchanged the extreme registers of the previous twelve bars, the inner voicing of the transition from CC-A♭ to CC-F♯ grants it an extraordinary ascending quality:

1. The upper voice of the choir, the organ and the trumpets, instead of the most obvious F♮-F♯ chaining, culminates the previous movement with an ascending perfect fourth to A♯—the third of the F♯ major triad, which remains in the orchestra's higher register.
2. The choir's *divisi* basses, which had been singing an F♯ and a D♮ since their last entry in bar 595, perform one major third and one octave upward jump, respectively, reaching a common F♯ that narrows the choir's register. The trill's auxiliary notes, 2/B♯, 5/D♯, and 6/G♯ of CC-F♯, form a second T2 related major triad, which, far from reverting the initial predominance of the F♯ major triad, amplifies its blazing character.

We should now also consider the piano's fiery ascents of the beginning of the development. The rhythmical figures of its first three ascents, in bars 193–194, are strictly ♪=♩ related with those of their T8 transposition played by the trumpets in bars 594–599. Given the different tempos involved, their periodicity is almost identical. Both bars 193–194 and the congener bars 594–599 introduce in three steps, as the last melodic note of each ascent, a major triad formed by partials 5, 6 and 2 of their respective governing chord centres: The D♮ major triad, which is highlighted as the tenuto on-beat note every two beats in bars 193–194, and its T8 transposition in bars 594–599—the B♭ major triad—

which matches the downbeat of all uneven bars. The vertical presence of the major triad is increased in each ascent, without ever endangering the dominant harmonic colour of the chord centre.

The piano's hesitation, in its fourth ascent of bar 195, insinuates dissent: it fails to reach partial 5/A♮, repeating partial 2/F♯ as its last melodic note instead—partial 2/F♯ establishes, for the first time in the section, a descendent intervallic relation with the previous note. In the fifth ascent the piano retrieves the stamina of the first three, by reaching the pitch that was expected in the previous bar. The drama staged by the passage's pitch content is clearly stressed by means of rhythmical subdivision: each one of the first four ascents features a shorter rhythmical subdivision than the previous—eight notes, triplets, sixteenth notes and quintuplets, respectively; after failure in the fourth ascent, its quintuplets' subdivision is repeated in the fifth. Its success does not prevent the sixth ascent to stress the conflict firstly insinuated within the fourth ascent, by introducing, always in sixteen quintuplets, a new governing chord centre that *Luce* does not reflect: the T6 related CC-F♯. Finally, featuring a sextuplets subdivision, the following five bars widespread conflict between CC-C♮ and CC-F♯—the representative chord centres of matter and spirit. The complete statement of Theme of Will in the last of those five bars seems to indicate the prevalence of CC-C♮, but the following bars immediately take conflict to another transposition level, by featuring CC-A♭ and CC-D♮ as main and polar chord centres, respectively.

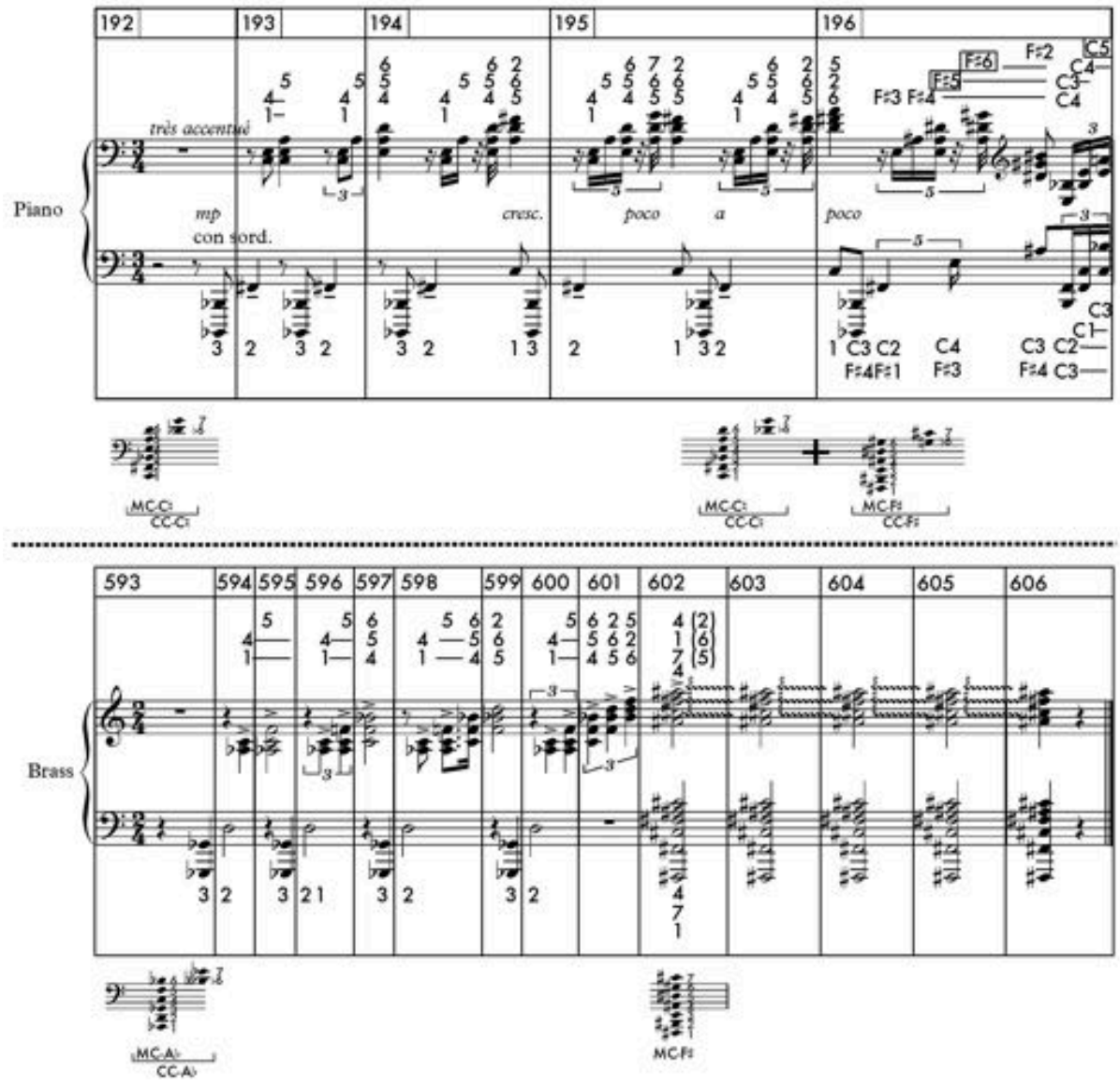
In bars 600–601, after the similarity of the first three ascents, the conflictive fourth and sixth ascents of bars 193–196 are elided. The fifth ascent is restated instead, retaking the triplets' subdivision of the third. The T8 transposition of the downbeat note, which had ben played at the end of the development's fifth ascent, is thus anticipated, making the way for the work's final act with the arrival of A♯ on the downbeat of bar 602. A♯ is precisely the enharmonic T8 transposition of the D♮ that the sixth ascent of the development was expected to introduce, had the governance of the previous CC-C♮ not been interrupted by the unexpected irruption of its polar chord centre. A♯ does not arrive as the expected culmination of the previously outlined B♭ major triad, though. It is articulated, instead, as the defining pitch-class of the most unexpected chord of Promethée: its final F♯ major triad.

If the development's bars 193–196 had succeeded in reaching such a climax, the major triad that would have followed the melodic D♮ major triad of bars 193–195 would have been precisely the one which, in bars 594–601, leads to the work's final act of bars 602–606: the B♭ major triad. This correlation becomes particularly obvious in the piano's second ascending cycle of bars 202(3)–210, which transposes bars 193(3)–200 to the same transposition level featured in bars 593(2)–601: CC-A♭. On the other hand, in the development, after the T8 transposition of bars 193–200 featured in bars

201–208, a similar T8 transposition was frustrated by the extension of conflict in bars 209–211 and the subsequent unexpected T9 transposition of the chord centre in bar 212. Had it not been so, and the next horizontally outlined major triad in the development would have precisely been the final F♯ major triad, the final chord of *Promethée* op. 60.

The first bars of the development and the final bars of the coda are thus bound by a clear evolutionarily relation that resolves in the last the widespread conflict of the former.

Example 122. Bars 192–196 and bars 593–606: conflict and resolution



It is inevitable to refer to the meta-textual content of *Promethée* op. 60 at this point. According to Blavatksy, Prometheus theft of the divine fire led to massive conflicts in the Fourth Root Race. The piano's ascent, at the beginning of the development, stages that conflict:

1. It starts within the governing chord centre that symbolizes matter: CC-C♮.
2. Its polar chord centre, CC-F♯, representing spirituality, irrupts in the piano's sixth ascent, to frustrate matter's rising movement.
3. The piano's following ascent, within CC-A♭, aimed to reach the F♯ major triad, but its, on its turn, frustrated by the polar CC-D♮—the leading melodic major triad of the previous attempt.

In Blavatsky's words, at that early stage "the lower passions chain the higher aspirations to the rock of matter" (1888, Vol. II, p. 422). "Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus,* 'he who sees only after the event'[,] because the universal philanthropy of the former (...) degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration" (idem).

The last bars of *Promethée* op. 60 recall the development's conflict by resuming its sound material and the chord centre of its frustrated second ascent. At the end of the seventh Colour Stage of *Promethée* op. 60, or, what is the same, at the end of the "cyclic evolution [,] (...) every animal element [has been] eliminated from (...) [Man's] nature. Man understands that *'Deus non fecit* mortem' (...) but that [Man] has created it himself"(Blavatsky, 1888, Vol. II, p. 422), "[thus re-becaming] (...) Prometheus before his Fall" (idem). Man is therefore ready for the final dematerialisation. Within the realm of the Mystic Chord, a totally unexpected harmony was for that final act indispensable. Paradoxically it might seem, after the harmonic context of the previous 601 bars, the F♯ major triad, the most banal chord of the whole piece, was that chord.

CONCLUSION

Scriabin's rupture with the tonal system was based on substitution rather than opposition. Introduced in 1909–1910 with the four works analysed in the present study, his new musical system established a new musical language, which based on a new tonality, was likewise capable of generating and fulfilling or frustrating expectation. Grounded on the chord centre and on the T3 transposition cycle, Scriabin's new musical system replaced the classic triad by a basic chord, the Mystic Chord, and the V–I polarity by a new ♯IV–I polarity. Similarly to the V–I polarity in the tonal system, in Scriabin's new musical system the ♯IV–I polarity was the generating force of both the harmonic and the formal tension. The transpositional route in three of the analysed works outlines a I–♯IV–I transpositional movement in very similar terms to a large scale classic I–V–I modulation, whilst in the fourth, *Poème* op. 59, n°1, a cadential ♯IV–I relation is featured at the end of each section, all of them ending within the work's main governing chord centre because of the particular plot described in the detailed analysis of Chapter II.

In spite of functionally similar to the V–I polarity of the tonal system, the ♯IV-I polarity has a very distinct nature, thanks to the morphology of the Mystic Chord: T6 transpositionally related Mystic Chords, albeit featuring the most distant intervallic relation possible within the octave's range between their respective root notes, are very close in pitch-class content. Revealing the influence of Blavatsky's theosophical occultism, tension and confrontation do not contradict the concept of oneness, in Scriabin's new musical system, rather emanate from it. This concept of oneness had radical consequences in Scriabin's new sound space. He made them explicit by stating that melody and harmony were now "two sides of the same coin", merged in oneness "as everything else" (as cited in Sabaneev, p. 55). His claim on the inexistence of a "single superfluous note" in *Promethée* op. 60,

since all its figurations belonged also to the basic chord (as cited in Sabaneev, 2005, p. 285), was a necessary consequence of his concept of oneness. Undervalued in all previous studies, his claim is confirmed in the present dissertation: the thorough pitch analysis of *Promethée* op. 60 provided in the present study shows that all its pitches are functionally related to a specific chord centre. The pitch analysis of the three piano miniatures reveals that the inexistence of non-functional pitches is extensive to all of them. Moreover, it shows that the coexistence of different chord centres—which was either refused, or accepted as a mere sporadic feature in previous studies—is a basic procedure of Scriabin's new musical language. A critical reassessment in the study of Scriabin's later works, focusing on (a) previously alleged non-functional pitches and (b) on the coexistence of different chord centres is therefore in order.

This dissertation also introduces the concept of pan-chord centre—a tonal area that results from expanding a particular chord centre to its complete T3 transposition cycle. By showing how it reinforces the inner functional relations of the Mystic Chord, this dissertaion also explains why partials 4 and 6 can be varied within any given chord centre, while partials 1, 2 and 5 remain in all cases unchanged.

The analysis of *Prélude* op. 59, a work built on confrontation between two basic chords, showed how their different invariant properties induce different transpositional procedures.

The common features found in *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58 and in *Promethée* op. 60 suggest that the first was likely written as a small-scale study for the second.

The analysis of *Prelude* op. 59, n° 1 has showed the sophisticated procedures used by Scriabin to elide one of the constitutive elements of the polarity—partial 2—in order to make it the protagonist of the work.

The analysis of *Promethée* op. 60 has for the first time explained how its overall form results of two distinct but intrinsically related formal frames: a sonata form and the whole-tone scale, which, featured by the slow line of *Luce,* both starts and ends in F♯, representing Helena Blavatsky's seven Root Races by establishing seven different Colour Stages. It has been shown that (a) changes in the slow line of *Luce,* harmony and formal group are strictly correlated, (b) the transposition factor of formal repetitions within the sonata form is determined by the concomitant intervallic relations featured in the slow line of *Luce,* and (c) the slow line of *Luce* plays a crucial role in establishing and resolving the work's dissonant section.

Finally, the comparison of the main governing chord centres and transpositional routes featured in each one of the three piano miniatures with those highlighted by *Luce* in *Promethée* op. 60 shows a congruent use of each particular transposition of the chord centre in all of them. *Feuillet d'Album* op. 58, marked "*con delicatezza",* features as main governing chord centre the blue-violet CC-F♯ that in

Promethée op. 60 represents spirit; *Poème* op. 59, n°1, marked "*Allegretto, avec grace et douceur",* features the closely related blue colour of CC-B♮; *Prélude* op. 59, n°2, marked "*sauvage, beliqueux"*, takes as its main governing chord centre the red CC-C♮, the chord centre that, representing matter, governs the conflictive fourth Colour Stage in the development of *Promethée* op. 60.

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GLOSSARY

Arhats — In theosophy[103]: that who, by entering the highest path of spirituality, is emancipated from re-birth.

Assuras or **Asuras** — In Theosophy: no-gods.

Chhaya — In Theosophy: Shadow; the astral image of a person.

Chord Centre — Set class that results of combining the original Mystic Chord with one or more of its possible extensions and/or varied forms.

Jiva — In Theosophy: Life, as the Absolute.

Manas — In Theosophy: Mind; the mental faculty, which, by making of man an intelligent and moral being, makes him different from animal.

Monad — The Unity, but in occultism it also refers to that immortal part of man which remains unchanged within all evolutionary moments.

Mystic Chord — Also called Synthetic Chord, Prometheus Chord or Chord of the Pleroma: the basic hexachord of *Promethée* op. 60.

Osiris — In Theosophy: the greatest God of Egypt, which, self-existent and self-created, is the primordial matter and infinite space.

Partial — Each constituent of the Mystic Chord or of the chord centre.

Python — In Theosophy: a Demon-dragon.

Rupa — In Theosophy: Body.

Suras — In Theosophy: general term for gods

Transposition cycle — Set of transposition levels that symmetrically subdivide the

[103] All defenitions related to Theosophy were taken from Blavatsky's "Theosophical Glossary" (1892).

	octave.
Transposition level	Intervallic distance between two similar musical objects, considering octave equivalence.
Typhon	In Theosophy: an aspect, or the shadow of Osiris; the lower cosmic principles, or the material realization of Osiris.